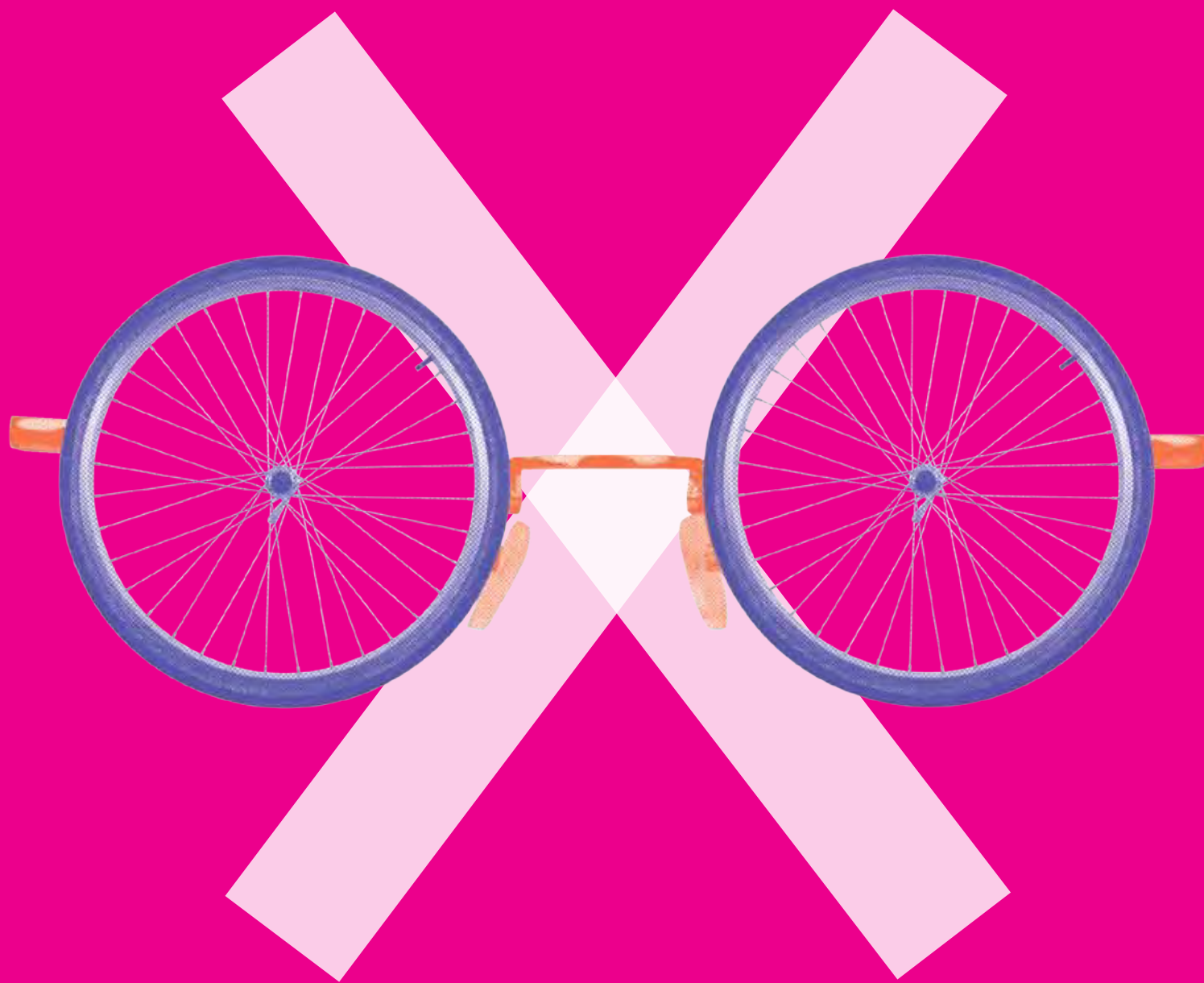


# south african Jewish Report

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# SA political quagmire: Young Jews take initiative

In a country mired in political uncertainty where tales of corruption and “state capture” have become dinner table fare, a group of young Jews, under the leadership of Howard Sackstein, chairman of the Board of Directors of SA Jewish Report, took the initiative during Purim to host former President Kgalema Motlanthe for a “brutally frank” evening of discussion. This veteran ANC politician exited public life at the end of the first Zuma presidential term but still remains a highly respected and influential figure in South African politics. Participants agreed that in order to ensure free and honest discussion, the evening would be off the record. Discussions covered, inter alia, Israel – South Africa relations; the economy; anti-Semitism; corruption and racism within the ANC; and the role of the ANC’s NEC. Of course the threat of a possible ratings downgrade was also on the agenda. Pictured is Howard Sackstein with Kgalema Motlanthe. See page 4



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# Always see Hashem’s love in what He does for us



Parshat Shemini Parah  
**Rabbi Yonatan Landau**  
**Ohr Somayach Savoy**

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter zt”l was once in a restaurant in France where he ordered a glass of water. After drinking it, he was presented with an exorbitant bill. The explanation given was that when one sits in a such a fancy restaurant, one doesn’t only pay for what one eats and drinks, but also for the luxury of sitting there and enjoying its surroundings.

On hearing this, Rav Yisrael declared that he now understood why we recite the “shehakol” blessing before drinking water. The blessing declares that everything came into being through the word of Hashem.

The choice of words seems puzzling: Why such an all-encompassing recognition of Hashem is required for someone thirsty for a glass of water?

Now we understand that we are using the opportunity of thanking Hashem for the water to also recognise the myriad other things that He has given us. The glorious sky, trees, fresh air and all that surrounds us.

This can be taken further if we look at the blessing after water.

We say “Borei Nefashos” after foods that are not bread or flour based, nor one of the seven species which the Land of Israel is praised for. Therefore it is a very all-encompassing blessing. In it we thank Hashem for creating us with “lackings” and “for all that You created”.

What do these words refer to? This is describing two different types of food that we thank Hashem for.

There are foods that satisfy our basic needs like water, meat, chicken and milk. Then there are foods that are not necessary, but are very enjoyable like mangoes, peaches and candy.

When having drunk a glass of water, we seize the opportunity to thank Hashem for not only providing us with what is necessary for healthy survival, but for additional pleasures of life that He bestowed on us.

With a closer look, we see that Hashem didn’t only provide delicacies for us, but He even made their appearance appealing. Imagine if an apple would be grey? What if a mango was black? Would we enjoy it as much?

Look at the amazing array of tastes that the world of food has to offer - not only different species, but different types within a species, each with a unique taste.

This week’s parsha places restrictions on what we may and may not eat. We only permitted certain land animals, fowl and fish.

In the context of what we recognise when we bless over a glass of water, clearly Hashem does not seek to deny us and make us suffer. Rather, says the Ramban, it is because food can affect one’s spiritual capacity to fulfil his mission and thus He guided us as to which foods help us attain this goal. Hashem should bless us to always see His love and care in whatever He does for us.

# Beth Din is set to ‘name and shame’ men who refuse a get

SUZANNE BELLING

The South African Beth Din has taken a leaf out of its London counterpart’s book by announcing last week that it will be “naming and shaming” recalcitrant husbands who refuse to give their wives a get (Jewish divorce).

“The Beth Din is taking drastic steps and we are prepared to name and shame men who refuse to give a get,” Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, Rosh Beth Din, told the SA Jewish Report.

Despite the Divorce Act amendment in the 1990s, when a movement spearheaded by the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, zt”l, succeeded in getting the South African courts to withhold a civil divorce unless a religious divorce had been arranged, some wives have still not insisted on a get or have overlooked this and not all of them realise the gravity of not obtaining one.

A get is granted by the husband under the auspices of Beth Din judges. The wife cannot marry someone else for 92 days thereafter, in case she is pregnant from her previous husband. Also, as a divorcee, she will not be permitted to marry a Kohen.

“Should there be no get, the woman would then still be considered married in Jewish law. She is not allowed to cohabit with, or marry a Jewish man (even in a civil ceremony). Should she have children from this union, they will be labelled with the stigma of ‘mamzerim’ (bastards) and will never be able to marry within the Jewish faith,” said Rabbi Kurtstag.

“Mamzerim” results from incest or adultery and, in the absence of a get, any union between a Jewish woman and a Jewish man is considered adulterous. She is forbidden to return to her husband or her new Jewish partner even after the get.

“Sometimes a woman who does not realise the importance of a get, can



Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag...  
“drastic steps”.

be stuck for the rest of her life.”

A get should not be granted under coercion, but out of free will, says Rabbi Kurtstag. In certain instances, halacha permits coercion through the Rambam’s interpretation that the free will was overtaken by the “yetzer hara” (evil inclination). Even beating the man was condoned in order to rid him of the yetzer hara and letting him see the error of not giving a get. This was not considered force.

Rabbi Kurtstag said that in Israel men were often jailed for withholding a get and some had been sitting for several years. This was not possible in South Africa, “but the Beth Din can impose cherem, effectively isolating the person from the Jewish community - preventing him from forming part of a minyan in shul, not being awarded any honours in the shul, “and even to the extent of not burying him in a Jewish cemetery.

“The Beth Din is prepared to take these steps. We need to stress the importance of a get and the consequences of not having one.”

Cherem has only been imposed by the Beth Din in South Africa on one occasion, when a husband ignored a Beth Din ruling. The High Court accepted this ruling.

Eventually the husband complied and cherem was lifted.

The Beth Din is currently faced with a difficult case in which the husband has remarried a non-Jewish woman, but still refuses to give his Jewish first wife a

get, effectively allowing him to carry on with his life, but causing her to become an agunah (chained woman).

A husband, not a wife, is obligated to grant a get, as he was the one entering into the contract of marriage by giving the ring to his wife.

The Beth Din is prevailing upon the man in question to relent, as he is Jewishly married to his first wife, who cannot marry or have an intimate relationship with a Jewish man, as she would then be committing adultery and be prohibited to both of them.

# Young Jewish adults celebrate Purim up in the sky

Over 1 000 young Jews came together in Johannesburg to hear the Megillah on a Johannesburg rooftop as part of a Chabad event celebrating Purim last week.

Rabbi Levi and Leah Lipskar of Chabad, who runs K Space, with the assistance of Galya Bender, set out to make sure that each young Jew experience Purim and the mitzvot while still ensuring that the Purim spirit was kept intact, Chabad said in a media release. Each “Mitzvah Stall”, set up at the venue, the 22nd floor of the Randlords’

building in Braamfontein, provided an interactive way of ensuring that each young guest was able to perform the mitzvot of Purim, while still having a party. In true Purim style, with great music and a wonderful vibe, Johannesburg’s Jewish youths celebrated till the wee hours of the morning.

K Space is an organisation which caters for young adults and students, through its Chabad on-campus arm. Its programming includes hosting events, learning classes and motivational business talks. A major part is the

offering of social responsibility opportunities to young adults through its Friendship Circle for children with special needs and their families. The K Space house is open at all times for students looking for a place to study as well as young entrepreneurs looking for a place to work.

It offers free WiFi, printing facilities, coffee, snacks, swimming pool, big screen DSTv and a fully stocked games room for some much needed chill time.



Photo: Joshua Clacher

Part of the large crowd celebrating Purim up high.

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# ISIS reportedly planning ‘imminent’ attack on Jewish school in Turkey

ISTANBUL - Islamic State terrorists are planning an “imminent” attack on Jewish kindergartens, schools and youth centres in Turkey, according to Sky News.

The most likely target of the attack is a synagogue in Istanbul’s Beyoglu district, which is attached to a community centre and school, the British newspaper reported on Monday.

The report is likely referring to the Neve Shalom Synagogue, which was previously hit by attacks in 1986 and 2003.

“We don’t know when it’s scheduled for. It could be in the next 24 hours or next few days,” an intelligence source told Sky News. “In light of these circumstances, extraordinary security measures are being taken above and beyond the high alert level already in place by the Turkish police, as well as vigilance within the Jewish community.”

Just hours earlier, Israel warned its citizens living in or visiting Turkey to leave immediately...

Just hours earlier, Israel warned its citizens living in or visiting Turkey to leave immediately, warning of an Islamic State threat. On Saturday, March 19, three Israeli tourists on a culinary tour were among five killed in a suicide bombing in Istanbul. It’s not yet known whether Israelis, who often vacation in Turkey, were targeted.

Sky News reported seeing an intelligence report saying the Islamic State was behind the attack in Istanbul

as well as the series of bombings in Brussels.

Islamic State has been blamed for four of six bombings in Turkey in the past eight months, including a double suicide attack at a peace rally in the capital, Ankara, in October that killed 103 people.

The information about the planned attack came from six Islamic State operatives arrested in the city of Gaziantep, in southern Turkey, in the past week, according to Sky News.

“Undercover and other covert counter-terror measures are being implemented around the clock. This is a more than credible threat. This is an active plot,” the source is quoted as saying.

Last Saturday, Turkish police warned of possible Islamic State attacks against Christians and Jews over the weekend. (JTA)



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## The SA rainbow seems to have lost some of its colour

MICHAEL BELLING

With increasing numbers of high net worth South Africans emigrating because of an uncertain future, Jews going to Israel often leave because of the attraction of Israel and not because of the negatives here in South Africa.

“People certainly take themselves to Israel because they feel Israel is the safest place in the world for a Jew, for his mind, body and spiritually. That’s where he is fulfilled,” Cape Town immigration lawyer Gary Eisenberg told SA Jewish Report.

“Those people who go to Israel, probably do so for reasons relating to their Zionist dispositions,” he said.

A report on emigration earlier this month indicated that Israel was low down among the preferred destinations for South Africans with a net worth of \$1 million or more, at four per cent, far behind countries such as the United Kingdom (36 per cent), Australia (15 per cent) and the US (11 per cent).

Two wealthy former South African businessmen who now live in Israel and spoke to SA Jewish Report on condition of anonymity, explained their main reasons for going to Israel.

One said he had felt a close tie to the country since going there as a volunteer after the Six Day War and had been back there often since. He went there because of the attraction of the country to him as a Jew.

Both were involved in philanthropic work in



Israel.

“If we don’t help ourselves, who will?” asked the one.

This was reinforced by the other: “We are involved philanthropically. If we don’t make a difference for ourselves being Jewish, nobody is going to do it for us. Different people can do big or small things and it takes a lot of people to do a lot.”

Leon Isaacson, managing director of Global Migration SA, said: “Broadly speaking, for Jews there is always a positive pull (to Israel), as opposed to any other country, that you don’t find

with any other migration.”

Both Eisenberg and Isaacson pointed out that emigration was complex, including issues relating to family, investments and South Africa itself.

Eisenberg said that in general people were leaving South Africa for three main reasons:

- They did not feel they were physically safe in South Africa;
- They felt the government itself was unable to govern properly and South Africa was becoming a failed state, full of corruption, leading to the devaluation of their net worth;

- For their children, they felt the quality of education was declining rapidly and the labour market was closing to inhabitants of European origin, with fewer opportunities for university graduates in the labour market.

Isaacson added that he had seen increasing numbers of people over the past two years looking to emigrate.

One of the businessmen in Israel that Jewish Report spoke to said he understood this. “It’s common cause that as beautiful and fantastic as South Africa is and as beautiful as the people are, corruption and fraud lead to a higher level of unhappiness

“It is so sad. We need positive growth and positiveness. In Mandela’s time there was an incredible feeling, a huge positive feeling and goodwill.

“Which board is now going to make the decision to invest in a plant with a 20-year horizon?”

The poor were suffering most today, he said.

The other said that looking at the negatives, more people were now telling him “well done” than before, that he had planned correctly.

He added that in South Africa many were economic prisoners because of the exchange rate.

Isaacson also pointed to a move in the opposite direction. “Another thing we are seeing is quite a few Israeli firms looking to expand in Africa using South Africa as a base. We help with work permits and visas.”



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# Former President Motlanthe brutally frank and refreshingly honest

OWN CORRESPONDENT

At the invitation of the ANC, Howard Sackstein, chairman of the SA Jewish Report and chairman of the Jewish Achiever Awards, convened a dinner between 25 prominent members of the South African Jewish community and former President Kgalema Motlanthe. Sackstein, as a founding member of Jews for Social Justice, the Jewish anti-apartheid movement, facilitated many of the initial discussions between the Jewish community and the ANC, Mass Democratic Movement and Cosatu in the 1980s. He also took the only official ANC delegation to ever visit Israel. In 2008, (then) President Motlanthe succeeded President Thabo Mbeki as the third president of a democratic South Africa. He later became deputy president to President Jacob Zuma. As an act of de-

fiance, at the ANC’s electoral conference in Mangaung, Motlanthe ran for the position of president of the ANC against Zuma, but was convincingly defeated by the incumbent president, who won re-election. Motlanthe exited public life at the end of the first Zuma presidential term and was succeeded as deputy president by Cyril Ramaphosa. However current media rumblings are placing Motlanthe back in the political spotlight. According to a recent article in The Mail & Guardian, “In a rerun of Mangaung 2012, Kgalema Motlanthe is being thrust forward as the preferred candidate for the presidency of the ANC.” Also according to the paper, a well-placed executive at the ANC’s Johannesburg branch has claimed that 70 per cent of the ANC’s 135 branches in Johannesburg support Motlanthe to succeed President Zuma as the next president. The ANC member told the Mail & Guardian that: “Kgalema has not taken a break from politics. We are launching his campaign... The primary objective of this campaign is to restore the dignity of the ANC. But, beyond that, it is to bring back the hope of citizens be-



Community members pose with Kgalema Motlanthe at Howard Sackstein's home.



Motlanthe and Nadav Ossendryver.



Kathy Kaler and Motlanthe.

All participants agreed that in order to ensure free and honest discussion, the evening would be “off the record”.

cause they have lost confidence in the ANC.” The meeting between Motlanthe and the Jewish community which took place at the home of Sackstein on Purim, began with Sackstein narrating the story of Purim and how the Prime Minister of Persia had been recalled by the Persian King. All participants agreed that in order to ensure free and honest discussion, the evening would be “off the record”. Discussions covered Israel/South African relations, anti-Semitism and racism within the ANC. Talks also covered the economy, corruption within the ruling party,

the role of the ANC National Executive Committee and its approach to the President, the succession race within the ANC itself, the “Fees Must Fall” protests, conservation, job creation and the potential of a ratings agency downgrade of South Africa. The former president stayed for nearly three-and-a-half hours and would not leave until he had dealt with every question raised in the discussions. The very robust evening was characterised by honesty, pragmatism and a very frank assessment of South Africa and its current situation. The issue of whether Motlanthe was in the race to succeed Zuma,

was also discussed in a very open and frank manner. One of the highlights of the evening was when an ANC branch chairman told the former president that ANC members in her branch were saying to the party: “Not in my name - the corruption and greed has gone too far and something must be done to stop it.” The comments did not come as a surprise to Motlanthe. Although refreshingly honest, the evening was warm, friendly and enormously engaging. Motlanthe was intelligent, thoughtful and knowledgeable on a wide range of topics. All parties agreed to continue ongoing discussions.



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# Peres, Lenk refute Israel ‘isolation’ canard

ANT KATZ

Israel's Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk told the SA Friends of Israel (SAFI) advocacy conference in Johannesburg earlier this month that when he had hosted former Israeli President Shimon Peres in South Africa, one of the questions Peres had been asked was about Israel “being isolated” in the community of nations.

Peres (92) had come to speak to South African Jewry.

In response Peres had answered that “Israel does have a few small friends,” recounted Lenk. “Like China... like India... like the USA... like Europe... like Africa...” A thunderous standing ovation greeted the ambassador's introduction. Lenk reinforced Peres' statement,



Israeli Ambassador Arthur Lenk, left, with SAFI co-chairman and conference host Mark Hyman.

telling SAFI's 600-odd enthusiastic delegates to the conference: “They (the major countries in the world) don't think we are a problem.” And he stressed that the Holy Land was far from isolated. It enjoyed security co-operation treaties with neighbours Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority. “We have strategic

relations with Saudi Arabia and most of the Arab countries.”

Syria, said Lenk, “is no longer a threat to Israel. Hezbollah has its attention on other things and it is bleeding”.

He said that both Greece and Cyprus had very good and wide-ranging treaties with the State of Israel.

At Lenk's meeting with Israel's top diplomat, Dore Gold, who visited South Africa in March at the invitation of Gold's counterpart at the SA Department of International Relations and Co-operation (Dirco), Dirco had asked the Israeli delegation questions about their relations with other Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and SA) countries.

The Israeli director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was able to report that Israel enjoyed strong

partnerships with all of these states.

“Africa has been front page news almost every day this week in Israel,” said Lenk. The prime minister of Kenya had visited Israel and Gold had been in South Africa. Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu will also be travelling to four African countries this year, added Lenk.

There are, however, certain challenges Israel faces, Lenk said “Lebanon is a threat. Hezbollah is a danger. Iran is a problem.” Israel, said Lenk, would keep

its eyes on all of them.

“Having circled the globe, let's hone in on South Africa,” Lenk said. “We (Gold and Lenk) spoke to the South African government about core issues - they are saying that they want to see growth in our bilateral relationships in many important areas.”

Lenk said he did not expect South Africa to say so publicly, but that he had been happy about what had been discussed.



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# Dyslexia has absolutely nothing to do with ‘intelligence’

SUZANNE BELLING

Besides their brilliance and success - what else did Albert Einstein, a world-renowned scientist; Steven Spielberg, a brilliant film maker; and Tony Factor, a business entrepreneur - have in common?

Apart from being Jewish, these three notable personalities shared the pattern of learning difficulties associated with dyslexia.

Due to a lack of knowledge about dyslexia among lay people, many very wrongly equate it with “sub-intelligence”, say the experts. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth.

Educational psychologist Ashley Berman points to three variations of dyslexia, some affecting visual memory, others affecting auditory faculties and then a mixed type.

Some children have difficulty reading and spelling words that are not written phonetically. They also are prone to getting confused between b/d, p/q and to omit letters. This is known as dyseidetic dyslexia. Berman explained that this may also implicate visual memory more generally. “In dyseidetic dyslexia, children can often manage phonetic reading,” Berman said.

In the case of dysphonetic dyslexia, they battle to retain the basic phonetic/ orthographic (sound-letter) system which makes up English. Sometimes a difficulty with writing (called dysgraphia) is also apparent. Children may then find it hard to organise and express their thoughts and ideas in written form.

“We need an insightful, multisensory approach,” she says, advocating that parents should encourage a love of books and reading in their children. Very often, because reading is so challenging, the child's vocabulary and expressive language is not sufficiently developed. Reading and writing for all high school subjects is very much about

comprehending the depth of a word (for example a word like ‘economics’) as well as being able to express thoughts with precision and depth.

“Children should read books with at least 90 per cent accuracy decoding per page. Therefore, parents should read higher level books regularly in order to develop a rich resource of language. This will, hopefully, engender a love for literature or books and also help them when they are reading because they may be able to work out words if they know what they mean.” Discussion on a higher level should accompany the reading.

“Dyslexics are usually very highly intelligent and there are many internal resources which can be accessed to support reading and understanding.”

### Origins

Dr Oswald Berlin, a German ophthalmologist, introduced the term dyslexia in the 1880s - from the Greek word “dys” (meaning ill or difficult) and “lexis” (meaning word). He used it to describe a specific reading disturbance in the absence of pathological conditions in the visual organs.

In a later publication Berlin stated that dyslexia, “presuming right-handedness”, was caused by a left-sided cerebral lesion. He referred to “word blindness” and recorded his observations on six patients with brain lesions who had full command over verbal communications, but had lost the ability to read.

The EdubloxSA website states that over the next century Berlin's narrow definition broadened: “Today the term dyslexia is frequently used to refer to a ‘normal’ child - or adult - who seems much brighter than what his reading and written work suggest.”

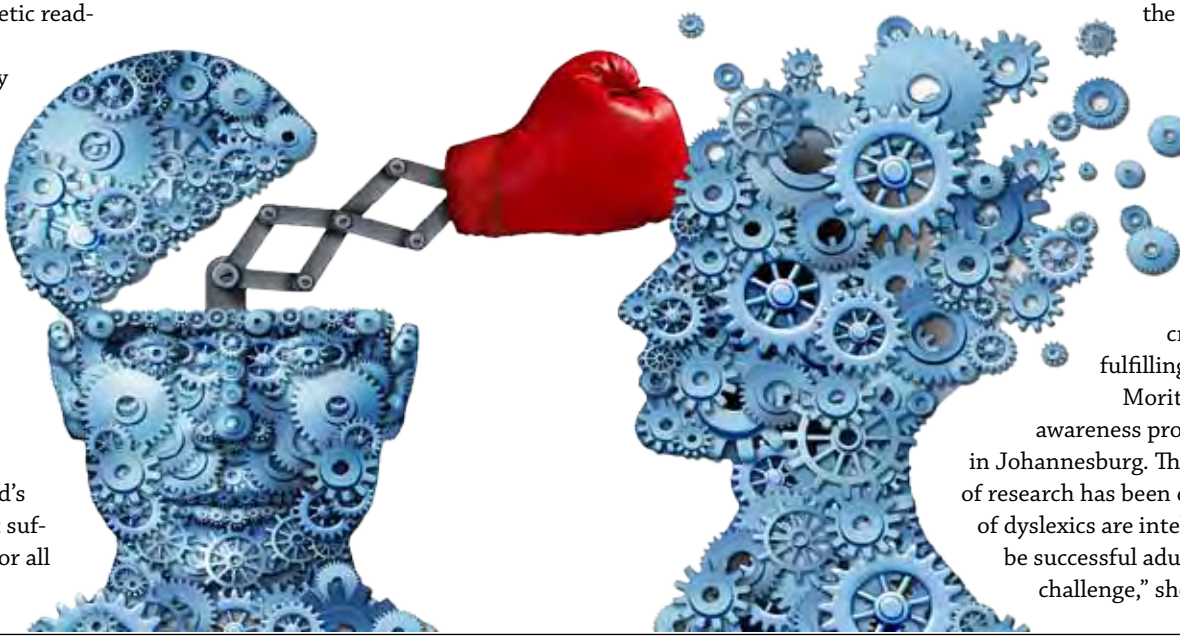
Occupational therapists also work with dyslexic children. Says occupational therapist Merissa Moritz, “Part of our role is to assist in finding creative ways that give meaning to letters and numbers to each child, who should be viewed as an individual and find out what makes him or her tick. And to explore the type of learner the child is.

“Treating any child with any challenge - not just dyslexia - does not come in isolation. It involves the co-operation of all the therapists working with a particular child, the school and, of course, the parents, with the child being the centre of the team. One cannot work in isolation.

“Every child has a strength and it is important to find and channel this.

“Modern technology and teaching methods have developed to such an extent - including computer programs - and allow children with dyslexia to enjoy independent working, whether it be school exams, assignments or creative writing. This assists them in fulfilling their true potential.”

Moritz points out the “incredible work and awareness programmes” of schools like Bellavista in Johannesburg. They have awareness evenings. “A lot of research has been done on dyslexia and the majority of dyslexics are intelligent and creative and grow up to be successful adults. Dyslexia is not a limitation, it's a challenge,” she says.



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# Too poor to play

The local Jewish sports scene has been very busy with Maccabi trials these past few weeks. Teams are being selected for tennis, swimming, netball, futsal, water polo, cricket and more. It is an exciting honour to be chosen to represent South Africa at the 20th World Maccabi Games in Israel in July 2017.

The South African delegation has grown from just 19 participants at the 2nd Maccabiah in 1935 to a sizeable 360 players at the last Games in 2013. That figure set the record for the largest team from the Diaspora relative to the community's size. The numbers representing South Africa are even more of an achievement when one considers the gloomy decline in the value of the rand.

Interestingly the dollar-based cost of land arrangements for Maccabi which includes food, accommodation and attendance at the opening

ceremony has remained a steady \$3 950 for the last three games. Thus for North American players, the cost of participating has not increased.

For South Africans, however, the cost of land arrangements in 2009 was R30 000 when the rand was at R8 to the dollar but will total about R60 000 in 2017 (at best). In 2017, the total cost for Maccabi including flights, will amount to a whopping R90 000! It has more than doubled since 2009. Even if a South African player can afford to go, it is still a dilemma for most whether it is worth the money.

The same has occurred with the much-loved ulpan programme. In the 1980s it was about R7 000 or R8 000 to spend three months touring the country and studying Hebrew intensively along with fellow classmates.

It also inculcated a deep patriotism for Israel and numerous Jewish day

school pupils who went on the programme later settled in Israel. Today ulpan no longer exists. It is simply unaffordable, and while programmes like Birthright Israel, funded by philanthropists from North America, are available to almost any young person wanting to visit Israel for 10 days, it cannot replicate the ulpan experience that many of my generation remember.

According to economic data analysed by South African economist Mike Schussler, on a ranking of the average per capita income of South Africans, we were 50th in the world in 1990. By 2014 we had dropped to 86th place. Today the average citizen of China, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Belarus and Bulgaria are all richer than the average South African and we now fall into the bottom half of the world in terms of income.

Unsurprisingly Cliff Garrun, chair-

man of Maccabi South Africa, says that the upcoming 2017 Games is unlikely to see a team of the size of the 2013 Games. Smaller numbers of players are trying out for the various sports because the price tag is perceived as just too hefty.

For the 2013 Games, Maccabi South Africa went on a big fundraising frenzy and raised an impressive R1,3 million (mostly from one donor) which was allotted to about 60 of the 360 players. Amazingly no-one who was selected was left behind and the subsidies were given out based on players' assessed financial needs.

Now, with the cost of the Games being double that of the last one, Maccabi is expecting to take a team of half the size compared to last time and is still going to need a lot of luck and generosity from donors to send their well-deserving athletes to Israel.

It is indeed a pity. Any athlete who



## South African Jewish Report

has participated will tell you that it was the highlight of their sporting careers.

And what does the weak rand mean for our community more broadly? What will it mean for our ability to see the wider world and for our children whose dreams are to backpack through Europe or study abroad?

Will it mean grandparents cannot visit their children who have emigrated? Is this indeed the beginning of a much dreaded isolation? Only time will tell...

– Vanessa Valkin, editor

# Why 3 videos of a West Bank shooting are roiling Israel

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It began as an all-too-common story: A Palestinian assailant in the contested West Bank city of Hebron stabs and wounds an Israeli soldier. Israeli forces shoot him dead.

But hours after the incident last week Thursday, a political and moral firestorm engulfed Israel. A video showed a soldier executing the already incapacitated attacker.

One day later, after condemnation from the highest reaches of Israel's government, a second video appeared to show that the attacker might have still posed a threat. In response, the IDF released results of an investigation indicating the soldier was at fault. Then came a third video showing the soldier shaking hands with a far-right activist after the incident.

The duelling views of the clash are the latest instalments in a running debate over how far Israeli soldiers should go in responding to the ongoing wave of Palestinian knife attacks. The incident has raised questions about the Israel Defence Forces' rules of engagement, how the army should treat soldiers who break protocol and - within Israeli society - the limits of criticism of the IDF.

Here's what happened, how it has played out and what it says about Israel's response to the terror wave.

Last week Thursday morning, two Palestinian men armed with knives, attacked an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint in Hebron, lightly wounding him. Nearby soldiers shot the two men dead.

But a video taken by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem shows that one of the attackers was killed only after the attack, while he was lying on the ground. In the video, an Israeli soldier approaches the scene, cocks his gun, aims and shoots the man as an ambulance passes by. After the shot, blood flows from his head onto the pavement.

The IDF arrested the soldier and senior Israeli officials criticised his response. Last Friday, the army charged the soldier with murder.

"What happened today in Hebron does not represent the values of the IDF," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week Thursday. "The IDF expects its soldiers to behave level-headedly and in accordance with the rules of engagement."

Backlash soon followed the criticism. Four-fifths of posts about the shooting on Israeli social media support the soldier, according to Buzzilla, a social media analytics start-up.



Israeli soldiers removing the body of a Palestinian man who stabbed a soldier in the West Bank city of Hebron on March 24.

And a video of the attack released one day later seemed to corroborate the claim that the attacker could still be dangerous: Paramedics urged people to stay away from the attacker, as he could be preparing to detonate explosives.

Politicians to Netanyahu's right have criticised him for rushing to condemn the incident and insufficiently supporting Israel's troops. On Saturday, Education Minister Naftali Bennett wrote on Facebook that officials should withhold criticism until the IDF finishes its investigation. Bennett and Netanyahu argued over the incident at last Sunday's Cabinet meeting, according to Israeli reports.

"Are we out of our minds?" Bennett wrote. "We're at war. A war against cruel terror. It's possible the soldier erred. It's possible he didn't. It's possible he felt that the terrorist had an explosive and could detonate it at any time, and by shooting him he would save lives and prevent a subsequent attack."

In response to the criticism, the IDF released the results of its investigation thus far, which indicate the soldier arrived at the scene only several minutes after the terror attack and acted independently. His officers had checked the attacker and rejected the possibility that he had

a bomb.

Last Sunday, a third video surfaced showing the soldier shaking hands with far-right Kahanist activist Baruch Marzel after the attack.

"On the professional front, we have found that the [other] soldiers acted appropriately, and we praise their actions and their quick foiling of the terrorists," IDF spokesman Brig Gen Moti Almoz wrote on Facebook last Sunday. "On the values front, after an initial investigation by the commanders, we have found that this is a severe incident."

Netanyahu is hardly the first to criticise Israeli soldiers' response to the terror wave. Since its outset last year, perceived oversteps in the IDF's response to the stabbing attacks have drawn criticism from leaders both within and outside of Israel. Since September, more than 200 Palestinian stabbing attacks have left 34 Israelis dead and hundreds wounded, according to Israel's Foreign Ministry. Israeli forces have killed more than 200 Palestinians, most of them attackers, according to news reports. Centrist and right-wing Israeli politicians, including Yesh Atid Chairman Yair Lapid and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, have encouraged soldiers to kill attackers on the spot.

The US State Department, as well as Sweden's Foreign Ministry, have criticised Israel for a disproportionate response to the attacks. Even IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot told high-schoolers last month that he "doesn't want a soldier emptying a magazine on a girl carrying scissors", while Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon said the next day: "We need to know how to win and still remain human." Eizenkot, in turn, was criticised for not defending his soldiers.

The problem is not with the IDF's rules of engagement, but rather with how they're enforced, former Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben Meir told JTA. He said "99,9 per cent" of IDF actions were appropriate, but that the army needed to make a concerted effort to educate soldiers about conduct in fighting terror and to enforce norms.

"When there's continual terror, it creates pressure and tension, so what we need to learn from this situation, the most important thing, is to keep the rules of engagement," said Ben Meir, who heads the National Security and Public Opinion Project at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies. "If everyone does whatever they think, everything will fall apart." (JTA)



# In our era of doublespeak, dictators receive peace prizes



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

While South Africans have been preoccupied lately about Guptagate and the future of the country in which a liberation movement leader - President Jacob Zuma - has become a betrayer of the struggle for a democratic country, the bizarre antics of another African liberation movement leader in our northern neighbour should give us pause.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, 92, has led the country since independence in 1980, his rule characterised by violent land seizures, economic decline, mass emigration and systematic human rights abuses.

Zimbabwe is a foreboding symbol for South Africans of the direction in which our country should never go. Yet the world of realpolitik is governed by different forces.

On Monday, Mugabe was warmly received by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, although the United States and European countries have imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe for human rights violations. He was visiting Japan for the fourth time as president.

The Japanese leader said he wanted to work with Mugabe to help with Japan’s push to reform the UN Security Council. He called him an esteemed African elder. Not surprising to some analysts, since Mugabe even chaired the African Union in 2015 - to the chagrin of human rights activists.

In October 2015, China awarded Mugabe the Confucius Peace Prize, which was set up in 2010 as a Chinese alternative to the Nobel Peace Prize. This happened after the Norwegian Nobel committee gave its peace prize to the jailed Chinese dissident writer Liu Xiaobo, enraging Chinese leaders who had jailed him for co-writing a pro-democracy manifesto. At the time of the Confucius award, the Chinese President referred to Mugabe as a renowned African liberation leader and an “old friend” of the Chinese people. Previous winners of the Confucius Prize include Vladimir Putin and Fidel Castro. Mugabe, however, was reported

to have declined to follow up on the award. The title “1984” was given by satirical author George Orwell in 1949 to his iconic book about doublespeak - the crazy world of Big Brother in which peace means war, freedom means slavery, love means hate, and other inversions deriving from politicians’ machinations. But he might just as well have called it 2016, so contradictory is the world these days.

Qiao Damo, chairman of the Confucius award committee, said he supported recognising Mugabe’s achievements: “If Zimbabwe did not have Mugabe as its president, the country would be facing great difficulty...”

We live in a strange world, where a peace prize is given to the despot of Zimbabwe and the world’s most powerful countries warmly welcome him. It is not that Japan and China are regarded as rogue regimes, however, beyond the pale of decent diplomacy. On the contrary, they are respected members of the international community with excellent relations with virtually the entire world, including Israel.

When Dore Gold, DG of Israel’s foreign ministry visited South Africa last month, he boasted to a Jewish community gathering in Sandton that Israel was developing closer ties with both China and Japan, thus disproving allegations that it was becoming isolated internationally due the activities of BDS and its policies towards the Palestinians. South Africa, too, has amicable relations with both countries.

While Guptagate has caused embarrassment and anger among South Africans at the failure of the country’s first black government to govern properly, the fact that there is such a furore across the spectrum about Zuma’s corruption and self-enriching shenanigans should give us satisfaction. The uproar proves that the determination of South Africans for building a free, prosperous, non-racial country remains intact, despite the setbacks.

Also, the fact that it has been exposed by our vigorous free press to all and sundry, is cause for celebration. This could not have happened in Zimbabwe, which still stands as a portent for where we don’t want to go.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog [sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com](http://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com)

# Robyn Lenn flies the flag for women

MARGOT COHEN

One of the most impressive Jewish women leaders to have visited South Africa in recent times is Australian Robyn Lenn, who is in the country this week.

She was officially installed as the new president of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2014.

ICJW, founded more than 100 years ago, represents Jewish women and organisations in 42 countries around the world. Lenn is the first Australian president of the ICJW since Dr Fanny Reading, who was a vice-president in 1949.

Lenn, a dynamic personality, mentioned in passing that she had visited 16 affiliates of her organisation in countries as far afield as Mexico, Sweden, Cuba, Canada, Bulgaria and Slovakia. During the course of this year she plans to visit Panama, Columbia, Poland, Russia and Spain.

She intends increasing the organisation’s focus on the portrayal of women in the media and on the role of women in the environment and sustainable development. “We also intend to give a big push on work against sexual objectification of women,” she explained to Jewish Report.

ICJW’s longstanding commitment is to achieve gender equality, upgrading women’s rights and enabling women’s empowerment for all women around the world.

Lenn was awarded the Medal of the Order of

Australia and has appeared in Who’s Who of Australian Women since 2006. She served as national president of the National Council of Jewish Women from 2003 - 2007 and has held many positions in the organisation.



Robyn Lenn

One of the issues which Lenn has prioritised is that of a get (divorce document), the refusal by men to grant it and helping agunot (chained wives).

“I see women as important co-contributors to every aspect of the modern world. I aim to build better relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish organisations and communities,” she says.

ICJW representatives are at this moment meeting with fellow NGO members, setting up meetings on relevant issues. These gatherings are taking place in New York this week. The topics are: Women in politics - successes and failure and challenges - jointly with Albania, Israel, World Jewish Council; and Save our Girls, sexualisation, exploitation and the media.

“I have a particular interest and wish to see action from ICJW affiliates in their communities,” says Lenn.

Lenn lives in Sydney. Her husband Phillip, an engineer, passed away two months ago. The couple have four children and seven grandchildren.

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## A photograph of Associate Professor Mark Blumenthal standing behind a large, blue dilution refrigerator. The fridge has a circular logo on its front. Various scientific instruments, including a vertical stack of black and white components and several large, shiny, spherical dewars, are mounted on top of the unit. The setting is a laboratory with other equipment visible in the background.





# Jews are well-represented at this year’s Naledi Awards



Sharon Spiegel-Wagner

PETER FELDMAN

The Jewish acting fraternity has always played a major role in the development of the arts and many have won awards both here and on the international stage.

A number of Jewish arts practitioners have been nominated for the prestigious Naledi Theatre Awards this year, and their fate will be known at a glittering ceremony at the Lyric Theatre, Gold Reef City, on April 19.

These awards, now in their 12th year, reflect the vibrant and diverse nature of the South African theatrical landscape today. These are premier awards for theatre excellence in South Africa.

A musical about the late Jewish composer Marvin Hamlisch, “I’m Playing Your Song - The Marvin Hamlisch Story” received several nominations.

Alan Swerdlow was nominated for Best Director and Best Production of a Musical, while Sharon Spiegel-Wagner (Best Performance in a Musical Female) and Adam Pelkowitz (Best AV/Animation) also received nods from the judges; Bryan Schimmel was nominated (together with Jonathan Roxmouth) in the Best Score/Arrangement/Adaptation category.

Swerdlow also received another nomination for “PYTHO-Nesque” in the Best Ensemble category.

Daphne Kuhn, producer and owner of the Auto & General Theatre on the Square, Sandton, received no fewer than 22 nominations for productions staged at

**A number of Jewish arts practitioners have been nominated for the prestigious Naledi Theatre Awards this year.**

her theatre during 2015.

“I am particularly thrilled to receive 22 nominations in different categories for plays produced at Theatre on the Square”, she said. “It is certainly an encouragement for me to strive for artistic excellence and I do not like to look at it competitively. We are often disappointed when certain performances or productions escape the notice of the judges - while others unexpectedly capture their imagination. That is the nature of the game!”

She added that it was important that artists are acknowledged for quality work, as it is an industry where there is no financial reward. “I am presently the only Jewish woman producer and theatre owner in South Africa, that I am aware of, that has produced independently for over two decades.”

Margot Fleisch was nominated in the Best Costume category for “Miss Diedrich Regrets” and Nadya Cohen got a nod for her set design for “A Voice I Cannot Silence”.

On hearing of his nominations, actor/singer Adam Pelkowitz said he was “gobsmacked”. As he was in Cape Town performing in “Sweeney Todd”, his parents went to the nominations. “I am so glad and proud that they got to hear my name being called.”

His experience as a professional film editor helped him to create the projections for the Marvin Hamlisch musical. “I’d never done anything like this before.” Pelkowitz also received an acting nomination for his role as Beadle Bamford, the sly, oily, pompous sidekick of corrupt Judge Turpin in “Sweeney Todd” which he described as his favourite musical ever.

Sharon Spiegel-Wagner said she had waited her entire career to be noticed and “when it finally happened you are not sure how to respond. All I can say is that I’m truly grateful and I take none of my work for granted.”

Talking about her role, she said: “This project

was the most challenging in my career to date. Each show has its uniqueness and its obstacles but this is the first time I’ve done a two-hander with none other than the incomparable Jonathan Roxmouth.

“As there was only one actress but several female characters in the script, I was left with the task of playing them all. At first I didn’t believe it was possible. How could I change costumes, wigs, my accent and age in no more than a few seconds? Not to mention play iconic characters such as Carly Simon, Cher and Barbra Streisand!

“I simply did what any other actress would do - I researched all the women, listened to all the music I could and worked hard to achieve the essence of each girl. I didn’t want to impersonate - that would be impersonal. I wanted to represent these women the way I understood them and expose their humaneness.”

Musician and composer Bryan Schimmel says: “It’s always wonderful to receive acknowledgement for one’s work, this being my 30th official year in the industry.”

Talking about his collaboration with Jonathan Roxmouth, he said: “It was a double gift working with a master of all trades like Roxmouth and the genius material of Marvin Hamlisch.”

He added: “When I work with him he is able to converse with me in musician discourse which very few theatre performers are able to do. The result is one of true creative collaboration.”

• *The Naledi Theatre Awards event is open to the public; booking is at Computicket. Tickets are R350 (R200 for pensioners and students) and include the pre-show cocktail party and wine.*

**Daphne Kuhn, producer and owner of the Auto & General Theatre on the Square, received no fewer than 22 nominations for productions staged at her theatre during 2015.**

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## ‘Jerusalem Forever’ fundraiser a huge success

OWN CORRESPONDENT

A Jewish musical concert to raise funds for OneFamily which supports victims of terror in Israel was held at the Victory Theatre in Orange Grove. The concert, “Jerusalem Forever”, was a big hit with singers Adam Davis; Ilan Herrmann; Mark Samowitz; Ezra Sher; Ezra Altschuer; Shlomy Brill; Eliezer Slasky and the Yachad Acapella Yeshivah College Choir, performing for a packed audience.

Rav Ilan Herrmann, the event organiser, this week transferred the R70 000

which was raised from the concert to the OneFamily Group.

“As a community we came together and have made a collective gesture to this wonderful organisation and to our brothers and sisters in Israel,” says Herrmann. “OneFamily is very grateful for our contribution to their important work.”

With victims of terror attacks increasing, the need is so great for such organisations and OneFamily is at the forefront of this challenge. To donate to OneFamily, simply go to their website [onefamily.org](http://onefamily.org)

South African Jewish Report

**OMG... I don't believe you aren't advertising in the Jewish Report**



As of last week Thursday morning, all but three of Tay's tweets had been deleted from the account, and no new tweets had been posted in 11 hours. - Ha'aretz

“His attitude to life is everything in moderation,” she added. “He eats and sleeps moderately, and says that a person should always be in control of their own life and not have their life control them, as far as this is possible.” - Australian Jewish News and JTA

In a statement, the Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester said: “The Greater Manchester Jewish community recognises the formal written warning given to PC Shahid Shah for posting a “grossly offensive” image on Facebook of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu imposed on a photo of Adolf Hitler.

A panel heard that the 39-year-old officer “only apologised

She added that he had “shown remorse” and had deleted his Facebook page. - Jewish Chronicle, London

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MUSLIMS SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO INTEGRATE INTO WESTERN CULTURE

The pubescent contentment experienced during visits to Belgium, by Cnaan Liphshiz (in his article “When Brussels meant freedom from fear for an Israeli”) is unfortunately now a narrative merely confined to reminiscence.

The recent terrorist attacks in Brussels, and indeed, the terrorist attack some years ago, known as the “Jewish Museum attacks”, put an end to the serene beauty and memories of the Brussels of yesteryear.

It seems that Europe now has a vexing problem of immigrant Muslims failing to integrate into Western culture and society.

A study by the Bertelsmann Foundation shows that most people in Spain, Switzerland, France, Germany and Israel believe that Islam does not fit in the Western world. In the US, Canada, Sweden and Great Britain, less than half said that Islam does not fit in the West.

Perhaps those polls show concern about Muhammad’s teachings and Islam’s impact on society.

Consider what Dr Zakir Naik, a renowned orator, and doctor of medicine and president of the Islamic Research Foundation (India), recently said: “if he is terrorising the terrorists, if he is terrorising America the terrorist {...} I am with him. Every Muslim should be a terrorist.”

Conversely, a Canadian Muslim professor at Mount Royal University, Calgary, Mahfooz Kanwar, said: “If you

want to live under sharia law, go back to the hellhole country you came from, or go to another hellhole country that lives under sharia law.”

The failure of Muslims to integrate, is entirely the responsibility of Islam and Muslims themselves.

Professor Kanwar, cites examples of Muslim families who do not want their children to attend music and co-ed physical education classes for religious reasons.

He tells them: “This is Canada, and in Canada we teach music and physical education in our schools. If you don’t like it, leave.”

The frequent excuses made by apologists and disciples of Islam, that Muslims in Europe are excluded from society are becoming threadbare.

Imams at mosques in Belgium reportedly disallowed prayers for infidels that were killed or injured in the two terrorist bomb attacks. Instead, they prayed for Muslims who were either killed or injured.

The enigma is Islam, which forbids assimilation with non-Muslims, or what they call infidels.

Is it conceivable that the world is beginning to comprehend the problems in the Middle East and Israel?

**Nathan Cheiman**  
**Northcliff, Johannesburg**

‘RENEWALISTS’ MAY BE ANSWER TO SECULAR JEWS’ IDENTITY PROBLEMS

Beverly May writes in her op-ed piece that secular Jews, while identifying as Jewish, have no formal structures and therefore no-one represents their views in this community. In Israel, it has been remedied with great success.

While the Progressive (Reform) and Masorti (Conservative) movements do exist in Israel, they have never gained much traction among the sabra population. Israelis are generally not attracted to the synagogue-centred, overtly religious, Diaspora-culture Judaism that these two movements provide. Progressive and Masorti movements are seen as culturally alien to Israeli reality.

Instead, secular Israelis have created an indigenous alternative of their own - Hithadshut Yehudit or the Jewish Renewal movement (not to be confused with the neo-hippy, neo-Chasidic American Jewish Renewal movement - that has nothing whatsoever to do with the Israeli Jewish Renewal movement).

The Israeli Jewish Renewal movement is in essence an intellectual

and cultural movement that seeks to infuse Jewish identity with cultural meaning and purpose, by drawing on the rich traditions of Judaism and animating it within the context of a shared heritage in a modern, individualistic world.

It has fostered intensive learning programmes all over Israel, wherein secular Israelis study Talmud, Kabbalah, halachah, and every other traditional text you can think of.

There is even a secular yeshiva in Tel Aviv where men and women together learn from morning to night as intensively as they would in a religious yeshiva.

Additionally, some of the Israeli Jewish Renewalists have decided that just because they’re secular doesn’t necessarily have to mean that they don’t believe in G-d or that the Jewish tradition can’t assist us in building a relationship with Him.

Therefor they have created batei tefillah (houses of prayer) all over Israel and have created mutually supportive communities of free-

thinking, cultural Jews for whom Judaism is spiritually edifying and transformative but not dogmatic.

The Israeli Jewish Renewalists do all of the above with no assistance or guidance from the Orthodox rabbinate whatsoever; neither do they want it. It is a completely independent movement, and in fact, the Renewalists have started ordaining their own secular rabbis. The movement is experiencing strong growth, particularly among Ashkenazi secular Israelis and Russian olim.

Renewalists seek to exert control over all their own affairs of matters like marriages and cultural affirmations (which would essentially be their own form of conversion to Judaism).

South African secular Jews with the same concerns as Beverly May has expressed, may seek to create a similar such movement here. Maybe contact the Israeli movement to see how it’s done.

**Jared Joel**  
**Sydenham, Johannesburg**

THERE ARE TOO MANY MIDEAST ISSUES JVJP REMAINS ‘SILENT’ ABOUT

In their letter in last week’s Jewish Report on behalf of Jewish Voices for a Just Peace Rina King and Jessica Sherman take issue with criticism of their “voices” remaining silent to the plight of the invisible Palestinians. They tell us that they “dare to disagree”.

JVJP emphasises that it advocates for a just solution where Palestinians will not have to live as refugees. Who would disagree, especially those living like refugees in Lebanon or fleeing Syria? Interesting that not one Palestinian from Gaza or the Palestinian territories have been documented among those refugees flooding into Europe.

Now if King & Co say they know what it feels like to be unwanted by a host country, they surely understand the need for a sovereign Jewish homeland, but do not support such an entity and have stated so publicly.

They criticise Israeli computer games (I would dearly like to see proof of these), and shooting ranges; I wonder what percentage of Israeli children visit shooting ranges. But they remain silent in the face of official Palestinian school curricula teaching children hatred, silent in the face of Palestinian TV programmes depicting Jews as pigs, silent in the face of the Hamas charter, and silent in the face of little children as young as 11 years killing innocent civilians.

King & Co presumptuously assume that most Jews

blindly support Israeli violence against civilians. I, together with thousands of mainstream Jews, are also committed to human rights and non-violence, not only by Israel but any country that practises such abuses, including the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and others.

We don’t confine such protests to a specific area but choose to “voice” such a protest to the Arab, African and world at large, where Israeli violence fades in comparison to the genocide we are witness to in the DRC, Darfur and Syria.

As Jews we shouldn’t be selective in our protest against violence. At the same time I also believe that peace between Israel and Palestine needs to be achieved without irrational risks and like thousands of mainstream Jews, have an unwavering commitment to Israel’s survival and state this unapologetically without “daring”.

No, it’s not about the Palestinians: it’s Israel that JVJP wants destroyed. They disguise this behind the veneer of concern for the Palestinians, but not all Palestinians. So, in whose name do they speak?

I thank King & Co for their invitation to attend their Liberation Seder and look forward to reading the Hagaddah together with them.

**Allan Wolman**  
**Rosebank, Johannesburg**

NO FAVOURS ARE DONE THROUGH THE DISTORTION OF FACTS

Allan Wolman, in response to our letter in Jewish Report, writes: “SAJFP’s claim of ethnic cleansing is an interesting accusation.” However, it is neither interesting nor productive to characterise the ethnic cleansing of 1948 as “an interesting theory”. This attempt to repress, deny and conceal past events, damages not only to those expelled, and their descendants, but also to Israelis and Jews around the world.

Both sides suffered casualties in the 1948 War; the part played by other Arab countries was far from honourable and much of their rhetoric was reprehensible. It is also true that approximately 700 000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from, or deliberately intimidated into leaving, their homes. Laws were quickly passed to prohibit their return. Only in this way was it possible to achieve a Jewish majority in the region.

These facts are widely accepted by scholars, for instance, Derek Penslar and Avi Shlaim at Oxford University. Jewish-Israeli historians like Benny Morris, Tom Segev, and Ilan Pappé concur. And these are just some of the high-profile Jewish academics.

While the hegemonic Zionist narrative, most forcibly advocated by the State of Israel, tends to ignore, misrepresent or minimise this aspect of the war, we do it no favours by collaborating in such distortions.

Editorial error in Edelstein's SAJFP letter

There was an editorial error in Merlynn Edelstein's letter in last week's paper. It read: “SAJFP campaigns for the recognition of the 1948 borders and opposes the continued, ethnic cleansing of Palestine.” It should have read: “SAJFP campaigns for the recognition of the 1948, and continued, ethnic cleansing of Palestine.”

SA Jews for a Free Palestine says it campaigns for recognition of the ethnic cleansing that was carried out in 1948 and which is still continuing in various ways, since then. There was no mention of borders.

We apologise for the confusion and subsequent error.

ME SITUATION: PALESTINIANS DON'T SEEM TO BELIEVE IN QUID PRO QUO

I write in regard to the Jewish Voices for a Just Palestine letter in Jewish Report's last issue.

Every argument why Israel should belong to the Jews, ranges from the fact that we have no other land to call our own where we can live without persecution so we can develop lifesaving and world-sustaining Torah through which G-d's blessing comes to the world, science and medicine, to other arguments such as historical ones.

This for instance include that Jews were there for thousands of years and of course the strongest one being that even after the brutal Roman conquest, Jews still maintained a presence there, which substantiates the biblical claim that the land was promised to the Jews by G-d and that is where we lived until exiled.

There are other practical recent arguments such as Jews being exiled from Arab countries, after living there for thousands of years, with the creation of the State of Israel and no reciprocal quid pro quo of a citizen exchange programme.

The argument I have seen to try countering these claims, which seem to work with associations like the UN and JVJP, is the old Kazar theory where all Jews today are descendants of the Kazar where presumably the whole Kazar nation survives and all existing Jews perished at the hands of anti-Semites.

These Kazar claims would be quite easy to refute if all Jews believed in the chain of tradition of the Torah, essentially the oral

There are those who argue that (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu does not have the right to claim to act in the name of all Jews. Whatever the merits of this argument, the fact is that he does make this claim. By doing so he implicates us in all the crimes committed by the state: we are made complicit in the demolishing of Palestinian homes; complicit in the arrest and detention of children in the West Bank; complicit in the daily humiliation of ordinary Palestinians at teenage-manned blockades.

Because we are already implicated in Israel's various violations, SAJFP actively campaigns against these crimes. However, there are many legitimate causes and we recognise that everyone has the right to advocate for the one(s) he/she feels most strongly about.

Should Wolman seek redress for the mistreatment of Palestinians refugees in their host counties, we would certainly support that and welcome him as a comrade in the struggle for human rights.

If, however, this is just an attempt to use one set of abuses (crimes committed by ISIS) to ensure that another set (crimes committed by Israel) can continue, then we cannot endorse either his strategy or his ends.

**Merlynn Edelstein**  
**Jews for a Free Palestine**

Torah, but also many Jews don't hold to its teachings so we can't simply claim that a Jew is someone who believes and keeps or at least strives to keep the Torah as it has been passed down in a coded form for generations.

So, I will have to put forward my bulldog theory as to why Israel is right. There are some dogs that if they are not well locked up and/or disciplined, will attack others almost indiscriminately.

We see that Israel has to vigilantly defend itself. A case in point is the bombings in Paris and Belgium and numerous other places around the world. Even offering a bone or in this case a juicy steak, such as the Jews giving the fertile well-developed potential goldmine of Gush Katif, didn't meet with reconciliation and peaceful overtures but rather a new wasp nest of rockets and terror activities.

In the South African apartheid situation it is more logical to say that the whites took the blacks' land as opposed to the Israel situation. But even in South Africa apartheid wasn't dismantled overnight.

I stand corrected but it seems to me that each pillar of apartheid that was dismantled was met with a quid pro quo reduction in international sanctions and easing of MK threats. In Israel it seems the exact opposite is true. Giving the Arabs Gush Katif, only results in Jewish deaths, trauma and making life difficult.

**Eli Knight**  
**Johannesburg**



A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



**Above Board**  
**Jeff Katz**  
National Chairman

## Terror: be alert at all times

During the meeting earlier this month of the World Jewish Congress in Buenos Aires, delegates including representatives from the SAJBD attended a ceremony at the Israeli Embassy to mark the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attack there.

They also visited the AMIA Jewish community centre, where several years later an even more horrific terrorist atrocity took place. The latter attack in particular forced the Jewish world at large into realising that individual Jewish communities needed to implement their own security measures in order to supplement those provided by their respective governments. It was around that time that the then Jewish community leadership in South Africa established the Community Security Organisation (CSO).

In the early 1990s, terrorist attacks were still comparatively rare events. Since 2000, however, the global situation has steadily and significantly worsened, to the point that no country can now truly feel safe.

Ever since the massacres in Paris last November, it was anticipated that Belgium would be next, and last week that sickeningly came true. The country’s worst incident prior to this had been the attack on the Jewish Museum. Similarly, the most lethal terrorist attack in France prior to last year’s outrages were the murders of several children at a Jewish school in Toulouse.

While acts of violence and hatred might start with Jews, they never end with us.

Because of the greater affluence and international standing of European countries, terrorist incidents there have tended to overshadow those of equal or often even greater seriousness elsewhere in the world.

That is particularly true when it comes to Africa. Not only have a high proportion of the very worst attacks taken place right here on this continent, but the scourge of terrorism is clearly spreading.

Mali, Burkino Faso, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Chad, have now joined Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Egypt and Tunisia among the African countries that have suffered major terrorist attacks in recent years.

In the last couple of weeks we have also seen horrific attacks in Turkey and Pakistan. While South Africa has mercifully been spared so far, we need to remember how during the late 1990s Cape Town experienced a prolonged series of bombings by suspected local Islamist groupings, including on a synagogue and a Jewish book shop.

The lesson for all of us, as always, is to be constantly vigilant, while working at all times with the CSO to ensure that proper security measures are in place. We allow the terrorists to win if they prevent us from continuing to live our normal lives, as proud Jews and as South African citizens.

That being said, we must be realistic enough to recognise the reality of the threat posed and adopt whatever measures we can to confront it.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00

*This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies*

A column of WIZO South Africa

## Improved status of women is a WIZO priority

WIZO abhors the indiscriminate wave of violence in Israel which has inflicted terror and harm on so many innocent Israelis and tourists. Likewise, our thoughts and prayers are with those who have suffered in the recent Brussels attacks.

Earlier this month, as a counter-offensive to the annual Israel Apartheid Week, WIZO women in Johannesburg and Cape Town participated in a solidarity rally with Israel. This anti-Semitism and anti-racism rally by Jewish community members, was joined by Israel’s Christian friends as well as those of other faiths.

Purim celebrated the strength and courage of Queen Esther, but we know hundreds of women who, without a royal title, show the same fortitude and resilience at home and in the workplace. In every Jewish household and every WIZO household there is a queen devoting her time to uplifting herself, her family and her community.

We are so fortunate to live in a democracy where the most liberal Constitution in the world celebrates its diverse culture, open society and guaranteed civil and political liberties for all citizens, regardless of race, religion, gender or creed. Often we take for granted the simplest rights and values that in so many countries women have to fight for on a daily basis. WIZO supports Human Rights Day in South Africa,



**WIZO South Africa**  
**Moonyeen Castle**  
President

March 21, the day on which we remember those who perished in the long struggle to attain democracy and human dignity for all South Africans.

Likewise, Israel shines as a beacon of freedom and hope in the Middle East and women are very much a part of the fabric of Israeli society, unlike their counterparts in surrounding countries. We should remember trailblazers like former Prime Minister Golda Meir or Alice Miller, a civilian pilot and aeronautical engineer who successfully petitioned the High Court of Justice to take the Israeli Air Force pilot training exams after being rejected on the basis of gender. She was originally from South Africa.

However, gaps in salaries and positions of authority in civil, governmental and religious spaces still exist and the proverbial glass ceiling that keeps women in Israel from attaining their full potential is something WIZO works tirelessly to crack open. We do this through a variety of programmes that include empowerment courses and leadership skills training, through activism and even having a permanent lobbyist in the Knesset.

Improving the status of women is an important part of the WIZO charter and has taken its rightful place among our many, many other projects.

*This column paid for by WIZO SA*

Daphne Kuhn and Steven Boykey Sidley present

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Jewish Report



# KDVP grade 4s learn all about bensching



KAREEN SANDLER

Proud parents and motivated teachers gathered at Delta Park on Friday, March 4, to witness the grade four learners of King David Victory Park as they enjoyed bensching after a picnic meal. The children were taught about gratitude by Rabbi Ricky Seeff. The picnic was a culmination of the children learning to bensch and was enhanced by their learning in Hebrew about going on an outing. This inspiring morning of davening, breakfast and fun, was accompanied by some entertaining sing-alongs with Johnny Sklaar. Pictured is Johnny Sklaar getting the King David Victory Park grade fours to sing along after the blessing.

# Tamir to head a Junior City Council committee

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Tamir Bender, a grade 11 pupil at Yeshiva College in Johannesburg, has been elected onto the executive committee of the Johannesburg Junior City Council. He will head up the Sports and Recreation Committee. Yeshiva College is extremely proud of Tamir’s achievement and wishes him well.



Photo supplied

# Sydenham kids get rolling towards Pesach!



Photo - Jenny Miller

JENNY MILLER

The excitement of Purim is over. The Sydenham Pre-Primary children returned to school on Tuesday and no time was wasted in introducing the theme of Pesach. The teachers have started teaching the children about Moses, Egypt and the Plagues. Now with just three busy weeks ahead of them, the children have begun working towards their Haggadahs. Captured “slaving” away are Amber Saevitzon; Nicola Goldblatt; and Maytal Shein.

# Autumn has finally arrived at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School

CARON LEVY, PRINCIPAL

Autumn has arrived in the playground at Rosabelle Klein Hebrew Nursery School! After arriving at school on Tuesday following the long weekend and seeing the grass like an autumn leaves carpet, the children decided to help the assistants by raking and collecting the multi-coloured leaves from the ground. Not only was this an exercise in fun and team work, but it got all the bodies working so early in the morning! Pictured are some of the grade R and Middle Group children lending a helping hand.



Photo: Caron Levy

# Purim is such fun at Yeshiva College...

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Purim was celebrated in a truly phenomenal and memorable way at Yeshiva College in Johannesburg. The day began with a beautiful Megillah reading for the primary and high schools and continued with carnivals, parades, shpiels, dunk tanks and more. The spirit of Purim truly came alive on Yeshiva’s vibrant campus – and an uplifting and inspirational day was had by all.



Photo supplied

Purim princesses - Gabriella Meyberg; Eliyana Joffe; and Liat Graff.

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The Little Steps Project is a group of concerned people whose aim is to improve the lives of underprivileged children. We have focused on two non profit organizations in Marlboro that provide for the kids and to improve their facilities. We are in the process of helping to upgrade the day care facilities. We hope to increase the development of skills through workshops with experienced teachers so that the children can benefit from this and be more equipped to enter into the school system. Help us make a real difference and get involved.

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What's On

Friday (April 1)

- Bet David Kids Club provides fun Shabbat activities for children ages 3 - 10. Time: 18:00 - 19:00. Enquiries: Kendyll - youth@betdavid.org.za Bet David Kabbalat Shabbat Service from 18:00 – 19:00. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783-7117.
- Sydenham Shul hosts a Community Shabbat Dinner, with special “Sinai X” guest, international speaker Rabbi Y Y Jacobson from New York who will speak on “Power, Wisdom, Wit and Humour”. Adults: R230, children (3-11): R120. Booking: Shul office (011) 640-5021 or online www.sydshul.co.za
- UZLC has its speaker Mo Skikne, on “A short history of Gen (Jannie) Smuts”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Saturday (April 2)

- Bet David Torah Study and light breakfast. Time: 08:45 – 09:45. No charge. Youth service and activities for children ages 3 - 10. Time: 10:00 – 12:00. Shabbat morning service. Time: 10:00, followed by a brocha.

Monday (April 4)

- UJW adult education division hosts Geoff Sifrin, journalist and former editor of Jewish Report, on “The Jewish Press”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (April 6)

- Cape Town Holocaust Centre hosts the film screening of

documentary “Turkish Passport”. Entrance is free; donations welcome. RSVP essential: (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za Security: Please bring a form of identification.

- Chev Social Services Enrich 2016 presents “The Big C: The Road Ahead: Understanding the Journey after Diagnosis” with Carin Marcus (social worker), Michelle Goodman (founder of the DL Link) and Dr Rapoport (oncologist). Venue: Jewish Life Centre, 2 Gayre Drive, Strathavon.Time: 19:45. Cost: R50: Light refreshments served. Booking: Sharon (011) 532-1696 or enrich@jhbchev.co.za. CPD points available at R100.
- Cape Town Holocaust Centre shows the film: “Turkish Passport”. Turkish ambassador will be attending. Venue: 88 Hatfield St, Gardens. Time: 18:00. Entrance free, donations welcome. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP: (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za.

Second Innings hosts an outing to the South African Museum of Military History for the film, “Nicky's Family”. Time: 09:15 for 09:45. Cost: R90 (incl the film and tea and snacks). Booking is strictly in advance. Enquiries: Book with Laura at (011) 532-9701.

UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, formerly of Department of English at Wits, on “The Written Word Leaps off the Page” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Thursday (April 7)

- Bet David's weekly discussion group with Rabbi Adrian Schell covering “Rabbi, What is Kosher? - A Progressive view on Kashrut”. Time: 18:00 – 19:30. No charge. Venue: Bet David, Morningside.

On our website this week

ANT KATZ

Wits bestows doctorate on Bidvest's Brian Joffe where he graduated as a chartered accountant in 1971. He received his degree from Chancellor Dikgang Moseneke on Tuesday.

Algemeiner lists top 100 Jews in the world today. See the story.

Top Trump man charged with common battery for roughly handling Breitbart's frum reporter. Newspaper refused to support her and editor resigns.

Secret mission nets 500-year-old Torah - Sochnut brings last remaining Jews from war-torn Yemen (except 50 who chose to stay). Rabbi in last 19 brings 500-year-old Torah. See pictures.

US Girl Scout 'thin mints' now parev - Scouts worked hard to make sure famous cookies can be enjoyed after meat and by vegans. They join Ben & Jerry's who now have parev ice cream

Travel time from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem cut to 30 minutes - Israel's biggest ever civil project will open in 2018 - cutting travel time by 60 per cent and alleviating traffic on the roads too.

ISIS: “Imminent” attack on Turkish Jewish



school. The upside of ISIS' attack on Israelis in Turkey last week is that Erdogan & Davutoglu are talking to Rivlin & Bibi for first time since 2010.

Israel scrambles jets after EgyptAir hijacking as a precaution.

Only in Israel do more men pray than women - Study by Pew Research Centre from surveys taken over the last few years in 192 countries. Women are generally more religious than men.

Charedi rockers stay in Belgium – World-famous Gil and Aryeh Gat were headed to “Purim in Antwerp” last week Monday. It was cancelled but brothers joined City's 12 000 Charedim in solidarity.

Democratic primaries: Bernie thumps Hillary in Washington and Alaska - Sanders won both contests by huge margins on Shabbos, reducing the delegate-gap with front-runner Clinton to under 300.

London kids in Purim costumes - French photographer Estelle Hanania spends many a Purim in ultra-Orthodox Stamford Hill taking quirky, gorgeous shots of kids. Now there's her book.

Top read last week: Over 2 000 new users visited www.sajr.co.za to read the three stories of the Bobroff family doing a runner and leaving bobba Elaine carrying the can.



# Jewish trainer Art Sherman wins world’s richest race

**JACK MILNER**

Victory for California Chrome in last Saturday night’s \$10 million Dubai World Cup, the world’s richest race, saw the horse become the biggest earner in American history. The \$12 532 650 earned by California Chrome surpassed the previous record of \$10,5 million held by Curlin, who won the Dubai World Cup in 2008.

California Chrome is trained by Art Sherman, one of the few Jewish trainers in the US.

Sherman was born in Brooklyn, New York and is the son of Russian Jewish immigrants. At the end of the Second World War he moved with his family to Los Angeles, where his father opened a barber shop.

As he began to reach his mid-teens, Sherman realised his family’s genetics would make it unlikely to pass the five foot, two inches (157,5cm) mark and he began to consider a career as a jockey after receiving considerable encouragement from his family as well as customers in the barber shop where he often went to help out.

Sherman’s career as a jockey began in the mid-fifties when he was already 17, although he failed to enjoy any real success. In 1980, at the age of 35, he hung up his racing boots to become a fulltime, licenced trainer, enjoying regular but not spectacular success during his 35-year career until he first met California Chrome.

Perry Martin, who bred and is one of the owners of California Chrome, considered the horse a Derby contender even before the colt raced. When the colt was ready to enter race training as a two-year-old, he asked Steve Sherman, who had trained horses for Martin before, to recommend a trainer based in the highly competitive southern California area.

Steve suggested his father, Art, who had



an “old school” reputation for patience with young thoroughbreds and a small racing stable of about 15 horses, which allowed each animal to be given individual attention.

Art liked the enthusiasm of Martin and partner Steve Coburn but when Martin emailed a “Road to the Kentucky Derby” plan outlining which races California Chrome should run, Sherman was dubious.

It all worked out to a “T” as California Chrome won the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, the first two legs of the Triple Crown, in 2014. At this stage Sherman was already 77, which made him the oldest trainer to win a Derby.

Unfortunately California Chrome failed to win the Belmont Stakes, the final leg of the Triple Crown and then suffered an injury.

He was brought back into training last year to contest the Dubai World Cup, but

failed to win but this year Sherman said his charge was at least five lengths better than last year.

He drew No 11, not a great draw in this race on sand over 2000m, and was ridden as usual by Victor Espinoza. He raced wide the entire race, suffered a saddle slip, and still went on to win by 3,75 lengths in course record time to claim the \$6 million first prize.

The good news for South Africa is that Mubtaahij, trained by South African Mike de Kock, stayed on for second spot and earned \$2 million. De Kock also placed fourth in two other races on the night and earned around R39 million. That would be equivalent to winning the Durban July 17 times!

Amazingly Sherman downplays his role in training California Chrome. “This horse is my California rock star. I’m just his manager,” the modest trainer remarked.

## ‘Jew’ Messi is slammed for Egyptian show donation



Messi’s “good deed” gets him a kick in the teeth.

**JACK MILNER**

It is amazing that no matter how much one tries to do the right thing, someone will knock it - and pour on the insults - even if you are soccer superstar Lionel Messi.

The Argentinian has come under fire in Egypt for donating his shoes to charity. Appearing on the programme “Yes I am famous”, on the Saudi-owned Egyptian network MBC, Messi gave his female host a pair of his shoes and asked her to have them auctioned off in Egypt, earmarking the proceeds for needy children.

But shoes apparently have a negative connotation in Arab culture and are considered an insult or humiliation, so Egyptians expressed their anger on social media, accusing Messi of belittling them. Some people remembered Messi had

visited Israel three years ago and said: “It’s no wonder. Messi is a Jew.”


Actually, he is not.

Among Messi’s detractors was Egypt’s former national team captain, Ahmad Hassan. “This is hugely insulting to the great country of Egypt. With all respect to him as a football star, we do not need his shoes,” he was quoted in privately-owned Egyptian newspaper Youm7.

But Hamem Emam, a retired Egyptian soccer player who is considered to be among the most popular in the Middle East, came to Messi’s defence. “It is common for soccer players to donate their shoes,” he said. “Messi was not showing a lack of respect for Egyptians.”

Emam pointed out that another former Egyptian soccer player, Mahmoud El-Khatib - nicknamed Bibo - also donated his shoes to charity.

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CT PROGRAMME | 10 APRIL

01 The Art of Decision-Making



Rabbi Zev Leff Live

Rabbi Zev Leff is one of the most colourful and creative Torah thinkers of our time. Known as a master of the “chiddush” (a novel Torah insight), his riveting philosophical and textual explorations weave together seemingly disparate narrative strands to create dazzling illuminations on Torah themes and interludes. Rabbi Leff is Rosh Yeshiva and communal leader of Moshav Matityahu, and one of the farm community’s early pioneers.



On the headsets



Red channel  
Rivkah Slonim

About this talk

Thermostats not thermometers

In this engaging and analytical talk, Rivkah Slonim unlocks a fundamental Jewish source to reveal a central theme of Jewish theology. How do we create an abode for the Divine in this corporeal world? Every day, at every turn, with every decision we make.

About the speaker

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Green channel  
Rabbi Paysach Krohn

About this talk

Six-point checklist

Rabbi Paysach Krohn gives us six points – and a couple of great stories – to ponder when making important decisions.

About the speaker

Storyteller supreme Rabbi Paysach Krohn is also an internationally renowned lecturer and best-selling author. Over the course of more than half a century, he has travelled the world, collecting and recounting hundreds of true stories of the remarkable, the unbelievable and the inspirational.



Blue channel  
Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz

About this talk

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Coffee break



02 Open Source



Rabbi David Milston Live

Refreshing, daring and inspiring. A man who has served as director at one of Israel’s most prestigious seminaries – Midreshet HaRova – for more than two decades. Rabbi David Milston’s advanced and bold teachings have connected with thousands of women of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. He fuses classical and modern-day Torah explanations, providing piercing insights on today’s issues.



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Red channel  
Rabbi David Aaron

About this talk

In a relationship with the Author

The Torah is not a book we study. It’s an opening. A door. How do we open it? And what is behind it? Discover how G-d speaks to us – through us; how we can find ourselves through Torah learning.

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Green channel  
Lori Palatnik

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Parent teacher

In this insightful talk, Lori Palatnik reveals that if you are a parent – you are a teacher. She gives critical advice on raising a child with one voice.

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Blue channel  
David Sacks

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Coffee break



03 Safe Spaces



Slovie Jungreis-Wolff Live

Powerful and compassionate, soulful and worldly, insistent and understanding, Slovie Jungreis-Wolff is an acclaimed relationships and parenting instructor. Her groundbreaking book, *Raising a Child with Soul* has been a source of guidance and support to countless parents around the world, providing them with the keys to raising children with gratitude, respect, compassion, and healthy priorities.



On the headsets



Red channel  
Dr David Pelcovitz

About this talk

Spaces for children to grow

Dr David Pelcovitz draws on classical Torah sources and scientific research to identify best practice for creating optimum spaces for children to grow.

About the speaker

New York professor of psychology, Dr David Pelcovitz, is an expert on parenting. He intertwines his psychological expertise with Torah insights, and has authored books such as: *Balanced Parenting: Love and Limits in Raising Children* (which he co-authored with his father) and *Breaking the Silence*, a book on child abuse in the Jewish community.



Green channel  
Rabbi Abraham Cooper

About this talk

Building digital fences

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Blue channel  
Rabbi Shais Taub

About this talk

Give me some space

It is essential to give each other the room to discover and explore the Torah without enveloping each other in our own perspectives.

About the speaker

Rabbi Shais Taub is not your archetypal rabbi. He is the creative director of Jewish.TV, has been profiled in *The New York Times* and has written about less-than-conventional topics, like the death of Amy Winehouse. He is the author of: *G-d of Our Understanding: Jewish Spirituality and Recovery from Addiction*. National Public Radio dubbed Rabbi Taub “an expert in Jewish mysticism and the Twelve Steps”.

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# JHB PROGRAMME | 3 APRIL

01

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Coffee break



03

## Safe Spaces



Rabbi YY Jacobson Live

The "Master of soul-speak". One of the most well-loved, sought-after speakers on the circuit. His words cannot help but ignite the genuine seeker inside us all. Rabbi YY Jacobson, with his distinctive cocktail of psychology, philosophy and social commentary, combined with his warmth and wit, has captivated audiences across six continents.



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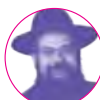
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