

Chag Sameach to all our loyal readers, stakeholders and advertisers, from our management, editorial and advertising teams.

Owing to Yomtov next week, our next print issue will be out on Friday October 3.

South African Jewish Report

www.sajr.co.za



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Acts of goodness and kindness can change the world

Chabad House is distributing 57 750 charity boxes in the shape of an Ark (Acts of Random Kindness) to enable people to give to a charity of their choice or to someone less fortunate than themselves. Chabad House will not take these boxes back, as this is not a fundraiser for the organisation. The boxes are being distributed in point-of-sale containers at retailers and businesses. According to Rabbi David Masinter, director of Chabad House / Miracle Drive, “working together increasing in acts of goodness and kindness can really change the world for good and bring Moshiach which the world so desperately needs. Let’s make it happen this Rosh Hashanah.” Pictured are Rabbi Masinter with passersby Dane Levingrad and Greg Wickstorm, holding some of the charity boxes. Rabbi Masinter says they only started the promotion this week, but has had such an overwhelming response that they have ordered another 100 000 boxes.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s Rosh Hashanah Message

The depth and breadth of Torah learning going on in the SA Jewish community bodes well for a future of vitality and growth.

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Gap between haves, have-nots a source of concern

Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi appealed to the Jewish community: “In the next 20 years, we hope you will assist us... in ensuring our economy is accessible to everyone.”

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Only ‘good Jew’ is seen as ‘anti-Zionist Jew’

How is it that professional academics can, without the slightest irony, dictate to others on the basis of their nationality what interpretation of events they must endorse to be heard?

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Delectable Rosh Hashanah recipes

Kitchen guru Sharon Lurie has cooked up a storm for a perfect Yomtov.



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Moshe Ahrens: Between democracy and anarchy

Some of them may even admit in their heart of hearts that the catastrophe was one of their own making.

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Be aware of security risks, community is warned

The community has been urged to be on the alert, as there has been indications of an “increased security risk”. A statement signed by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; Zev Krengel, president of the SAJBD; Mary Kluk, national chairman of the SAJBD; Avrom Krengel, chairman of the IUA-UCF; and CSO management, make some practical suggestions.

The statement read: “We have received information which indicates an increased security risk to our community during the course of the next month or so. Internationally a number of countries have released statements about increased risk of terrorism worldwide. However, the information we have relates specifically to South Africa.

“As communal leadership we have developed a multifaceted response to the increased threat level. The CSO is working very closely with our shuls and schools to upgrade their security, both from a physical as well as process point of view.

“We are working very closely with South African government security services, who are committed and dedicated to doing everything that needs to be done in this situation.

The CSO has identified a number of practical steps that the community should take to assist it in its task and to minimise any possible risk:

- “We ask that as a matter of course, any activity that appears in any way suspicious or out of place be reported without delay to the CSO National number 086 18 000 18 or CT number 086 18 911 18. This does not only apply to Shabbat and Yomtov, but at all times. Please be on the lookout for such activity, and encourage others to do the same.
- “Those interested in assisting their shul/school security team, please do so. Your participation would be very welcome.
- “Community members are asked as a matter of course not to congregate in the street outside their shuls prior to or after the services.

All social interaction should take place only once within the secure environment provided by the shul or other communal installation. Once outside this environment, people should disperse without undue delay.

- “As has been demonstrated many times, proper levels of vigilance on the part of the community combined with the timeous communication of relevant information to those entrusted with ensuring the community’s security is an effective way of preventing possible incidents.

“With this in mind, the community is urged to keep personal and communal safety concerns at the forefront of their minds, particularly during this period, and to assist and cooperate with security personnel at all times.

Pro-active partnership and support between all organisations and institutions is the key to successfully responding to this kind of challenge. Let us all work together for the benefit of our community.”

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

Take no rest and give him no rest!



Rabbi Sholem Bacher
Craighall Blairgowrie Hebrew Centre

Moshe Rabbeinu assembled the entire nation on the day of his departure from physical life. This assembly included our elders and tribal leaders all the way down to the wood hewers and water carriers.

On Rosh Hashanah too, we assemble to accept Hashem as our King and to harness the capacity to change ourselves and the world.

The past year has been difficult for our people. I was privileged to grow up in a society that rarely experienced overt expressions of anti-Semitism. Occasionally we heard nasty comments about Jews, muttered in an undertone, as we walked to shul on a Shabbat. Yet such incidents were few and far between.

So, it was thankfully hard for us to conceptualise the kind of social political climate of raw hatred that generations before us experienced; to imagine the active and passive support of so many for the atmosphere that resulted in the Holocaust. It was challenging to perceive how educated nations with modern cultures could

perpetrate such deeds.

Sadly in recent times we experienced this pattern first hand. Seemingly rational people are swept mindlessly into irrational hatred. We note a structure similar to the historic pogroms of Eastern Europe.

The infamous blood libels where our ancestors were accused of murdering other people’s children for religious reasons, falsely portrayed as part of the ritual requirement of baking matzah for Pesach. These falsehoods caused immense hatred toward Jews and ignited violence and death.

It would seem that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Once again in our generation, our brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael were accused in a libellous way, of lack of compassion for others, for the young of other nations.

Strange and unusual bedfellows united to propagate this message. The only common cause was to endeavour to berate the Jewish people.

Paradoxically, in darkness and despair our nation thrives. Hope and light shine brighter than ever. We experienced tremendous unity as we prayed together for a miracle to “bring back our boys”. Then we cried together with the news that these three special souls had given their

lives, “Al Kiddush Hashem”.

In the Haftorah of this Shabbos, the Prophet Isaiah says: “Al Domi Lochem. Ve-Al Domi Loh”, “Take no rest and give him no rest.” Hashem implores us to cry ou: “Ad Mosai.” To ask: “How long will our nation experience pain?”

On the one hand we recognise the incredible potential of this painful long exile. This “Galus” is a catalyst that unleashes our nation’s strength as we unite and rise to unprecedented heights. However, we may not be complacent, or comforted by achievements that are accomplished with so much pain.

We plead for an end to this darkness. We act on our responsibility to prepare this troubled world for redemption with acts of goodness and kindness.

Isaiah promises us that the world as we know it will change. There will be a new and wondrous recognition of our people. As he says: “And the nations shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory.”

The whole world will see Hashem’s joy as He celebrates over his people. “As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall your G-d rejoice over you.”

May we merit this Rosh Hashanah to usher in the era of redemption.

L’Shana Tovah

Shabbat Times

Parshat Nitzavim - Vayealech
September 19 / 24 Elul
September 20 / 25 Elul

17:44	18:34	Johannesburg
18:15	19:14	Cape Town
17:32	18:23	Durban
17:52	18:42	Bloemfontein
17:54	18:46	Port Elizabeth
17:44	18:36	East London

Yomtov Times Eruv Rosh Hashanah
Wednesday September 24 / 29 Elul
Light Yartzeit candle
Candle-lighting Times

17:46	Johannesburg
18:15	Cape Town
17:35	Durban
17:54	Bloemfontein
17:57	Port Elizabeth
17:48	East London

Rosh Hashanah Day one Thursday
September 25/1 Tishrei

18:36	Johannesburg
19:18	Cape Town
18:26	Durban
18:44	Bloemfontein
18:49	Port Elizabeth
18:39	East London

Friday September 26/ 2 Tishrei
September 27/ 3 Tishrei
Shabbat Shuva

17:47	18:37	Johannesburg
18:15	19:19	Cape Town
17:36	18:27	Durban
17:55	18:45	Bloemfontein
17:58	18:51	Port Elizabeth
17:49	18:41	East London

FAST OF GEDALIAH
Sunday September 28/ 4 Tishrei

Fast Begins	Fast ends	
04:43	18:24	Johannesburg
05:14	19:05	Cape Town
04:28	18:13	Durban
04:47	18:32	Bloemfontein
04:45	18:36	Port Elizabeth
04:37	18:26	East London

KASHRUT ALERT

The kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, has announced that all Kiri and Babybel products bearing the Hechsher of Rabbi M A Bamberger (who passed away in February this year) that were produced after January this year, are not kosher certified by Rabbi Bamberger and therefore not approved by the Beth Din.

South African

Jewish Report

enquiries: Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860-13-2652. Board of Directors: Howard Feldman (Chairman), Issie Kirsh (Deputy Chair), Marlene Bethlehem, Bertie Lubner, Benji Porter, Herby Rosenberg, Howard Sackstein, Elton Bondi, Michael Sieff, Steven Krawitz, Denese Bloch.

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Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s Rosh Hashanah message - 5775

It was a decision that changed everything, yet had to be made on the spur of the moment and its consequences are still felt being almost 2 000 years later. The Roman Empire had invaded the Land of Israel and surrounded Jerusalem.

Vespasian, the Roman military commander in Judea, had just been appointed emperor. He had deep respect for Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, the great Talmudic scholar and leader of the Jewish people, and so granted him one request, including the possibility of saving Jerusalem and the Temple.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai boldly requested: “Give me Yavneh and her sages.” (Gemara Gittin 56b). He believed that Torah learning is vital to the Jewish future, that it is our lifeblood and the secret to our continuity.

Jewish history has vindicated the seemingly controversial decision of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai: it is an undisputable fact that throughout the centuries since then, communities and individuals for whom Torah learning has been a central value and way of life, are the ones who have survived and thrived; they have been beacons of vitality, growth and inspiration.

The depth and breadth of Torah learning going on in the South African Jewish community is an important sign of our vibrancy and strength, and bodes well for a future of vitality and growth. We have much to be proud of and grateful for.



As we approach Rosh Hashanah with all of our resolutions for the new year, let us all commit to enjoy the full benefit of the wonderful Torah learning programmes offered by our shuls.

Torah learning is spiritually, intellectually and emotionally refreshing. The Mishnah in Pirkei Avot (6:1) says that a Torah scholar is like a ma’ayan hamitgaber, a spring which flows stronger and stronger.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains the analogy: Even if there is mud covering the spring, the waters will burst forth and wash away the mud until the spring returns to flow as it did before.

Like an overflowing spring the life-giving waters of Torah give us increasing strength. As long as the fresh waters of pure Torah are pumping, they will cleanse all impurities, uplift us, and bring renewed vitality. Thus, according to the

Midrash (Eichah Rabbah), G-d says: “Even if they were to leave Me but would learn my Torah, the light within it will return them to the good.” Torah learning changes our perspective on life and enables us to understand Hashem’s worldview, thus bringing us closer to Him.

The poignant prayer of Avinu Malkeinu, Our Father Our King, refers to two different aspects of our relationship with Hashem. Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains that describing G-d as a king reflects our identity as His loyal servants who must obey His commandments, even against our will; describing Hashem as a father refers to our identity as His children, which reflects a relationship of love and closeness.

When we learn Torah, we relate to Hashem as a caring Father who lovingly explains to His children how to live and why. As we learn Torah we gain a better understanding of His instructions, guidance and wisdom for our lives. The exact sequence of the wording is significant: We refer to Hashem first as our Father and then as our King.

This Rosh Hashanah let us all resolve for the new year to rejuvenate and inspire ourselves by embracing and participating in the Torah learning opportunities available across our community. In this merit may Hashem inscribe and seal us all for a good and sweet year filled with all blessings.

Making space for G-d

DINA COOPERSMITH

Elul, the Jewish month preceding Rosh Hashanah is an acronym for the Hebrew words: *Ani l’dodi v’dodi li* - “I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me.” This month we have a special opportunity to become closer to G-d, our “beloved friend”, anxiously waiting to hear from us.

However, as Rosh Hashanah approaches and the 10 Days of Repentance begin, we start referring to G-d as “Avinu Malkeinu” - our Father and our King. What happened to the “friendly” G-d we were getting to know? Why the sudden shift in gears from love and closeness to fear of a stern, kingly figure? In Elul, G-d is the visiting friend who knocks on our door, as hinted to in the Song of Songs that writes (5,2): “The sound of my friend (*dodi*) knocking”. The question is: Do we hear the knocking? And if we do, do we open the door and let Him in?

During Elul, G-d is no longer the stranger we leave standing at the closed door. He’s our close friend that we welcome into our home, hoping he’ll stay a while. And when a guest we invited to stay in our home arrives from afar, we open the door, make sure he felt at home.

Likewise, we need to make G-d feel at home as our houseguest and make room for Him. That means making some room in our hearts. Just how much space do we have to set aside for G-d? The Midrash on Song of Songs (5:2) says: “Open up for me an opening like the eye of a needle and in turn I will enlarge it to be an opening through which wagons can enter.”

Making room for G-d and letting Him in, starts by clearing out some distractions and desires that control us and get us off track. For different people, these distractions manifest themselves in different ways. For some, it may be spending too much time surfing the Internet, watching TV or movies.

For some, it might be overeating or an inability to share of their wealth or possessions with others, and for others it may be a tendency to hurt their loved ones with words, lies or disloyalty. This is the time to take a look at your values and priorities.

We need to make the firm commitment to create a permanent, defined place where G-d can make Himself comfortable, become a part of the family, and move into our home.

He’s not even an elderly father we’re allowing to move in. Rather, He is the King! It’s His house!

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Jordana - My ‘paintbrush is my hand, hardwired to my brain’

ROBYN SASSEN

Meet our cover girl: Beit Shemesh-based artist Jordana Klein (pictured), who enjoys gallery credentials in Jerusalem and Manhattan. Born in Florida, US in 1965, she moved to Israel in 1997. She was educated in New York and Jerusalem, and has been painting fulltime for over 20 years. She studied painting and fine arts in New York at The School of Visual Arts, The Fashion Institute of Technology, Stern College and The New School, and Jerusalem’s Israel Museum. “Painting is in my blood,” she writes on her website. “The paintbrush is my hand, hard-wired to my brain. “They speak directly, without conscious inter-



Photo courtesy Jordana Klein

ference. The paintbrush is my conduit, taking the innocent colour sitting alone on my palette and forcing it to life; to mix and socialise with others. “When I paint I create, adapt, discover and - hopefully - delight. For me it is all about the journey. The trying of new things, putting colours where they don’t belong yet still make sense. Creating order out of chaos, and sometimes chaos out of order; interpreting the world as I see it or as I would like to see it; putting a unique Jordana spin on it.” We gratefully acknowledge the use of Klein’s piece “The Seven Species” (60x70cm) on our glossy cover of this year’s Rosh Hashanah edition. Klein’s beautiful and well-organised website is www.jordanaklein.com

Only on the web this week

Shuvu Bonim Breslov news

So much news has happened since we reported on the 2nd botched attempt to arrest Rabbi Berland last week. Some highlights of updates on SAJR.co.za:

- Rabbi Berland left SA Tuesday night
- Detained at Schiphol on Wed am
- Lawyer flew from Israel Thursday
- 8-hr court ordeal Fri, freed on bail
- Reason: No Israeli arrest warrant
- Extradition hearing only If warrant
- Berland trashes Israel in the media
- See followers celebrating at Kotel
- Hear Yossi talk with Rav’s lawyers
- Rav’s followers leaving in droves
- And so much more, daily updates



timely event, or afterwards.

Read all about it on SAJR.CO.ZA and see what’s coming up. Feel free to join us. Our last live blog from the Absa Jewish Achievers had around 3 000 visits from over 1 200 users. Let’s try and break that record on Sunday - the programme is full and very, very interesting.

Holiday publishing

Please note that the publishing schedule for the Jewish Report and SAJR.CO.ZA will change from the norm over the next month due to the High Holidays.



There will be no newspaper next week due to Rosh Hashanah. The weekly newsletter will be published on Monday September 22 and the website will be updated from Sunday 21 to the afternoon of Wednesday September 24. The following week – ending Friday October 3, we will publish as usual.

Citizen Cohen - the live blog

Once again the Cape SAJBD is holding a unique and fascinating conference to suit the times. SAJR will be there and publishing a live blog from 08:30 this Sunday 21st. See the agenda, speakers and panels - and you, too, will want to follow the event live. You can pose questions which SAJR Online will pose to speakers during this unique and



For the two weeks ending Friday October 10 and Friday October 17, there will be no newspapers due to Succot. In both cases the weekly newsletter will be published on Mondays (October 6 and 13 respectively) and the website will be updated on all days except on Chagim and Shabbos. From the week ending Friday October 24, we will return to our normal publishing schedule.

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

Tripartite alliance bodies want Israel boycott

The governing tripartite alliance of the ANC, Cosatu, the SA Communist Party, plus the SA National Civics Organisation, in a media release affirmed that they “are now heightening our campaign aimed at boycotting and isolating Israel as a state founded on the basis of apartheid, which according to international law and several UN conventions is a crime against humanity”.

The statement added: “We therefore pledge ongoing solidarity with the people of Palestine and will enhance our support for the boycott, disinvestment and sanction initiatives against the state of Israel.

“The alliance further calls on transport sector workers, at South African docks and airports to neither offload products from Israel nor upload products bound for Israel. We also call on retail sector workers to refuse to handle or package products manufactured in or originating from Israel.”

The signatories to the statement are Gwede Mantashe, secretary-general of the ANC; Zwelinzima Vavi, general secretary of Cosatu; Solly Maphaila, deputy general secretary of the SACP and Robert Tsikwe, deputy secretary-general of Sanco.



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Gap between haves and have-nots remain a source of concern



DAVID SAKS

Despite a strong focus on the upsurge of anti-semitism as a result of the Gaza conflict and the presence of anti-Israel demonstrators outside the venue, Sunday’s SAJBD Gauteng Council conference, with its theme of South African Jewry 20 years into democracy, had a largely positive focus.

Speakers, including Michael Katz and Colin Coleman, emphasised how much the country had accomplished, despite the serious challenges it still faced, how much the Jewish community as a whole had benefited from this and what part Jews had played, and could still play, in building on those achievements.

It was also stressed that while the recent rise of anti-Semitic activity was a cause for concern, South Africa’s robust democratic culture provided the necessary vehicles through which to address such threats and bring those responsible to book. The conference took place at Investec in Sandton.

Outgoing Gauteng Council Chairman Jeff Katz, said that democracy was about more than just being able to vote every couple of years or so. What was even more important was that such basic democratic rights as freedom of expression, thought and religion and protection against unfair discrimination, freedoms were respected.

“It is because these fundamental democratic values are so firmly upheld in our country that the Jewish way of life has been protected and indeed is thriving,” he said.

SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn gave an overview of anti-Semitic incidents recorded since the commencement of the Gaza war and how the Board had responded to them.

Whereas only 52 incidents had been logged during the whole of 2013, 116 cases had been recorded in the July-August period alone. A high proportion of these had come about through what Kahn referred to as the anti-social media, that is, via Twitter and Facebook, as well as on other online forums.

This, she pointed out, was an international phenomenon, as shown by the popularity of the “hitlerwasright” hashtag. Holocaust-themed anti-Semitism, whether framed in terms of wishing that Hitler had “finished the job” or saying that Jews were themselves acting like Nazis, typified the kind of invective directed against the community and Jews in general.

In response, the Board had among other things, laid criminal charges against four individuals, instituted proceedings on the basis of hate speech against four others at the SA Human Rights Commission and in several cases lodged complaints with the employers of those responsible.

What made the task more difficult was that in numerous cases, threats and racist abuse against the community were made under false names and accounts, and sometimes via the wholesale identity of real individuals who were completely unaware that their profiles had been thus hijacked.

The Board was working closely with local law enforcement and international Jewish organisations in tracing those responsible.

Charisse Zeifert, SAJBD Head of Communications, said the coverage of the mainstream media of the Gaza conflict had been overtly biased, with the overwhelming emphasis being on Palestinian suffering and with references to military actions by Hamas being rare or omitted altogether.

Overall it had been a case of working in an environment where Israel’s guilt was assumed to be a given and where there was very little openness to hearing a different perspective.

About 60 people took part in a demonstration outside the venue under the auspices of the ANC Youth League. ANCYL provincial chairman Matome Chiloane, whose call, “Down with SAJBD, down”, was greeted with loud cheers, said: “South Africa is not going to be free for them if the people of Palestine are not free.”

By contrast Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi, deputising for Premier David Makhura, thanked Jewish South Africans for their role in the struggle against apartheid, saying that the Jewish community enjoyed a special place in the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Lesufi called on citizens from all cultures, to work together to fight high levels of poverty and inequality. With reference to the Jewish community, he said: “In the next 20 years, we hope you will assist us... in ensuring our economy is accessible to everyone.”

Colin Coleman, head of the South African office of Goldman Sachs and a former anti-apartheid activist, identified some of the major accomplishments of the past two decades, among them a GDP that had increased three-fold and a redistribution of public spending aimed at alleviating the poorest members of society.

The most serious problems were unemployment, amounting to one-third of the potential workforce and including a high proportion of youth, and the enduring inequality along racial lines of wealth distribution.

Michael Katz said that while the community had declined somewhat in numbers, in terms of quality Jewish communal life had been strengthened in nearly every sphere. Anti-Semitism existed, but it was not state policy. He said while South Africa had won the fight against legal inequality, the fight against social inequality and poverty still had to be overcome.



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JR0414

Free speech - or free-for-all?

After former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination in November 1995, Talia Sasson, a lawyer in Israel’s state attorney’s office, headed up a government team to investigate the legal approach to incitement and hate crimes.

It consisted of the internal security services (Shabak), IDF and state attorney’s office and went on for nine years. Sasson spoke about it recently at Limmud in Johannesburg.

Prior to the assassination, while implementation of the interim agreement with the PLO was underway, vicious street protests occurred where Rabin was publicly called a traitor deserving of death for accepting the Oslo Accords and agreeing to remove Jewish settlements as part of a peace process with the Palestinians.

The question facing Sasson’s team was how - from a legal perspective - both freedom of speech and democracy could be preserved in situations when they seemed contradictory.

Freedom of speech demands that people may say whatever they want, even if others don’t like it. Yet when people are calling for the prime minister or someone else to be killed, there must be a red line beyond which this cannot be allowed - which becomes a reduction of democracy. Although it is also, says Sasson, paradoxically a defence of democracy.

In describing the period leading up to the assassination, she said: “I was in meetings with the government every two weeks about implementing the interim agreement. Once at a meeting with the attorney general three weeks before the assassination, Rabin started by addressing the attorney general: “I saw on TV a person standing in front of the people of Israel and saying, ‘We have reached the badge and we will reach the man’,” - a direct threat to Rabin’s life.

“Rabin asked the attorney general: ‘What are you doing about it? This is a criminal offence. Why don’t you do something?’ But in response there were only mumblings about not being able to find the right the man who said it, he was among crowds, and so on. We found him only after the assassination.”

The point is that there is no perfect scientific way of determining when the red line of incitement has been crossed. Only after something ghastly like an assassination has taken place, do we see how dangerously it was crossed. Until then it is a matter of judgement.

Newspapers and other media are intrinsically part of this scenario. A man shouting that Rabin the traitor deserves to die, may have said it among 100 people in a street, but when printed or televised, it reaches hundreds of thousands, if not millions. And the “delegitimation” of the target is spread multifold.

Newspapers - print or online - see themselves as key defenders of free speech in a democracy. But where is their own red line?

To our embarrassment, our red line was crossed last week, when in our online version we carried a story with a cartoon image showing Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu with a “Hitler” moustache, comparing him with Hitler for his stance against Israel.

The legal aspects of this can be picked apart for a long time in great detail. Incitement? Hate speech?

In our immediate context as a newspaper, it boils down to a lack of perspective, slipping through our normal editorial controls and allowing the debate on such important issues to sink to an unacceptably low level.

The leadership of the paper, ranging from the editor to the Board of Directors, quickly responded by immediately taking down the story and issuing an unconditional apology.

Talia Sasson says incitement cannot be totally stopped. The red line is not scientifically clear enough: “So what can we do? The answer is in the leaders. Leaders must condemn openly and aggressively where there is incitement against someone from their own political playground.” Our South African Constitution, likewise, recognises that freedom of speech must always come with responsibility.

We recognise that at the Jewish Report. We have at the highest level rejected the publishing of the “Hitler-Tutu” image, and publicly apologised to Archbishop Tutu himself. We hope he accepts it, and our desire for honest, robust debate within our pages, but always with dignity and respect.

– Geoff Sifrin, Editor

Sabbatical year of Shmita and spiritually responding to terrorism



A field near Rosh HaAyin in Israel, left barren for the 2007 - 2008 sabbatical year of Shmita.

RABBI AVI WEISS/JNS.ORG

The sound of the shofar is in the air. The Hebrew month of Elul has come, preparing us for Rosh Hashanah. But this Rosh Hashanah, in the year 5775, will be different. This year is a sabbatical year - a Shmita year.

According to Jewish law, every seventh year the land in Israel must remain fallow. Not surprisingly, this law has inspired much debate on just how it should be implemented, but I don’t wish to get caught up in the legal intricacies here. Instead, I want to delve into the tradition’s deeper, internal meaning, as it resonates powerfully in contemporary times - especially when we consider the worldwide threat of terrorism.

The key to understanding Shmita is to reflect upon Shabbat - the Sabbath. For author and translator Dayan Dr Isidor Grunfeld, the essence of Shabbat is to remind us of G-d’s mastery over the world.

For instance, in our workaday world we engage in creative work; ideally that work is effective, and successful. But the concern is that, if successful, we may come to believe our achievements derive from our might and our power. We can forget that our creative energies and successes in fact come from G-d. And so, for one day during the week, we withdraw from productive creativity to demonstrate that it is not we who are masters of the world, but G-d.

So, too, the Sabbatical year, Shmita. For six years we are mandated to work the land. Here again, we could become so successful in our endeavours that we forget to credit G-d’s hand in the result. And so, for one year, the land remains fallow: a reminder that the earth belongs to G-d. In the words of the Torah: the seventh year will be a “Sabbath to the L-rd”.

The blowing of the shofar is a declaration that G-d is Master. For many, that sound is nothing less than the strains of a holy trumpet celebrating the coronation of G-d, the Ruler of rulers.

In mystical literature, the shofar is a romantic flute. It’s the musical instrument used by the shepherd or farmer in the midst of nature, singing and playing beautiful music to G-d, revelling in the marvels of the world.

This speaks to a second approach to Shabbat and Shmita. Philosopher and psychologist Erich Fromm considered Shabbat a day to take cognisance of - to celebrate - the ecological beauty of the world. “Menuchah”, argued Fromm, is the state of rest between human beings and nature. Work, or “melachah”, is any disturbance in this equilibrium. For this reason, on Shabbat we neither pluck an apple from a tree nor cut a blade of grass. In this, one day in seven, we promote perfect harmony with nature.

So, too, for Shmita. Like Shabbat, it teaches an important ecological lesson. For six years we plow, sow, harvest, and cultivate the land. Just as we can tire from our labours, the land too can grow weary.

Thus, for the Sabbatical year, we step back, leave the land untouched, allow it to reinvigorate, and replenish its energy. As the Torah says of Shmita: It will be a Sabbath year “of solemn rest for the land”.

A third approach to the Shabbat-Shmita connection sees Shabbat as a day of self-reflection. In its first mention of Shabbat, the Torah states G-d finished His work on the seventh day. But, if G-d finished His work on the seventh day, He worked on Shabbat.

Indeed He did, says the great commentator Rashi. In six days, or stages, G-d created the world. On Shabbat, G-d was creatively involved in assessing, in contemplating, its purpose. In the spirit of imitatio dei, we do the same.

As Rabbi Norman Lamm has written, for six days of the week we engage in the creation of the outer world; on Shabbat we engage in the creation of the inner world, seeking the inner meaning and purpose to life itself.

Abraham Joshua Heschel explains it another way: For six days, we focus on having more; on Shabbat, we focus on being more - we remember that “to have more is not to be more”. Or perhaps, for six days we are involved in the world of existence, but on Shabbat we are involved in the world of essence - of being at peace, real inner peace.

So too, for Shmita. For six years we work the land: We engage in the outer world. But in the seventh year we too need a sabbatical, to contemplate the deeper questions of meaning and purpose. As the Torah states: And the Sabbatical year will be “for you/for your sake”.

This search for inner meaning can also resonate with the sound of the shofar. The voice of the shofar does not emanate from the larynx - it emanates from the inner breath, the inner soul, that part of us that seeks the deeper purpose of life.

It’s been a very difficult time

This has been a very difficult time. Recently, Steven Sotloff was beheaded by ISIS or, as the group now calls itself, the Islamic State. Steven was a courageous journalist, a Jew who even in captivity fasted on Yom Kippur. His atrocious murder follows the similar execution of James Foley just two weeks earlier.

With these actions Islamic State has demonstrated that humans can become beasts - actually, lower than beasts - for no beast other than humans kill for such purposes.

When we see the video or hear the audio of these horrors, we can feel hopeless and helpless. But there is something we can do. You and I, individually and collectively, can make a difference. Each of us can respond to profanity by living lives of holiness.

Of course, there must be a strong geopolitical response to Islamic State to defeat these barbarians and their ilk. That comes from governments acting in the name of their citizens. At the same time, however, we can individually contribute a complementary spiritual response to bolster our countries’ actions.

One such spiritual response is to incorporate the message of Shmita into our lives: to not take our blessings for granted, to take time to contemplate and celebrate the beauty around us. This message declares our commitment to a merciful G-d, who mandates that we respect the world and its inhabitants by living lives of meaning, godliness, and goodness. (JNS.org)



Rabbi Avi Weiss is senior rabbi at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, Bronx, NY, and founder of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School and Yeshivat Maharat.

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Only ‘good Jew’ is seen as being an ‘anti-Zionist Jew’

Demonstrations against Israel are so commonplace now as to generate little interest, even within the Jewish community. The protest gathering that took place last Sunday outside the venue of the SAJBD Gauteng Council conference was different, however.



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

This was the first time, at least that I can remember, that a Board gathering with a specifically Jewish rather than Zionist-themed agenda, was picketed. There was nothing specifically related to Israel on the conference programme. Rather, the main theme was on 20 years of democracy in South Africa, with an additional focus on the recent upsurge in anti-Semitism in the country.

This evidently made no difference to those taking part in the protest, which took place under the auspices of the ANC Youth League. For them the SAJBD, as an avowedly Zionist-supporting organisation, is a legitimate target for “the people” at large to rally against, regardless of what it might actually be engaged in at the time.

There have been other moves in recent years to exclude Jewish organisations from participating in public events. There was a case of SAUJS at Wits being snubbed when it wanted to sign on to a campaign against human rights violations in Swaziland, and last year an attempt - unsuccessful - was made to exclude the SAJBD from participating in the annual Gandhi Walk in Lenasia.

In both these, and other similar cases, the defence is always that it is not Jews per se who are being boycotted, but “Zionists”. If necessary, the names of those Jews who have come out against Israel will be trotted out to stymie charges of anti-Semitism. Boycotting such people would indeed - heaven forbid - be racist and anti-Semitic, according to this view.

However, it is quite justifiable to boycott the other kind of Jews - those who support the racist, criminal State of Israel - at least until they see the error of their ways and recant. The only good Jew, in other words, is an anti-Zionist Jew.

The message all this is sending, with the youth wing of the ruling party and (Cosatu) the powerful trade union component of government having now come on board in a big way, is that the participation of organised Jewry as identifying components of the greater national culture is henceforth conditional on its ceasing to express support for Israel.

It may well be that in the future, even remaining silent on that score will not be enough and a formal denunciation of Israel will be required of Jewish organisations if they are to be allowed to participate on public forums. Such a scenario is by no means far-fetched. Already at two reputable universities, resolutions have been put forward making the future invitation of Israeli academics conditional on the latter making a prior statement condemning alleged hu-

man rights violations by their own government.

A large majority of the humanities faculty of Rhodes (things there have changed a little since I studied under those auspices) passed such a resolution, which the Senate declined to adopt in the end.

None of this is remotely rational. How is that professional academics can, without the slightest sense of irony, dictate to others solely on the

basis of their nationality what interpretation of events they are required to endorse in order to be heard and claim to be doing so in order to further the cause of democracy and human rights?

Academics are not as a rule overly courageous when it comes to opposing the (apparent) consensus view of their colleagues, but given the sheer egregiousness of this piece of neo-Stalinistic bullying, one would expect even from them something of a backlash.

There have been some honourable exceptions, but in the end most have been afraid to speak out, fearing that they will be smeared with the Zionist brush and ostracised.

There can be little doubt that this same timidity and group-think is at work in the mainstream media, in the NGO environment and probably in many other contexts, such is the witch-hunting fury that the anti-Israel hate lobby has been able to generate.

Almost without exception, Jewish communal organisations in South Africa are de facto Zionist organisations. That Zionism is explicit in the policies and programmes not just of the SAZF and its many affiliates and the SAJBD, but of the Board of Jewish Education, the UOS, the Union of Jewish Women, SAUJS, the Jewish media and a host of educational, fundraising and cultural groupings.

Only welfare organisations arguably have no explicit Zionist platform, and even there no-one doubts the loyalties and affiliations of those who belong to them. As a result, boycotting “Zionists” and boycotting Jews is inevitably one and the same thing.

For the moment, those who are maligning the Jewish establishment and seeking to exclude them from participating in the larger national discourse are a fringe element, but they are steadily gaining ground.

A great deal of courage and determination will be required of our community in the coming years to stand up to these threats. Our challenge is to continue to assert, without compromising, our steadfast support for Israel and the Zionist ideal while at the same time continuing to play our part as committed, identifying citizens of South Africa, who have nothing to apologise for.

Sadly, if the record of the media, academia and civil society, is anything to go by, it is a battle we are going to have to fight, and win, largely on our own.

Nando's Kosher wishes all our customers a Happy New Year and well Over the fast.

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‘Palestine’: Between democracy and anarchy

MOSHE AHRENS
FORMER ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER
AND DIPLOMAT

What would the state of the Palestinians be if the aim of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria and Gaza were to become reality?

Less than 100 years after being created by Messrs Sykes and Picot, the Syrian and Iraqi nations are gradually disappearing from the roll of nations. The Palestinians, as a national entity, are a newer creation - their origin dating back to the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1964.

The Arabs who resided in the area of western Palestine, which was mandated by the League of Nations for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, for many years considered themselves, and were considered by the rest of the world as well, as simply belonging to the Arab nation. For the past 50 years they have generally been recognised as members of the Palestinian nation.

Unlike the Syrians and the Iraqis, the Palestinians at the moment are alive and kicking as a nation, demanding the right to establish a state of their own - a Palestinian state - and to a seat at the United Nations, a privilege still accorded to the Syrians and the Iraqis, but possibly not for long.

So, how have they fared compared to their Arab cousins, the Syrians and the Iraqis? Although their representatives complain that the Palestinians are denied the self-determination they consider their right, and that they are under occupation and are being oppressed, they have little reason to envy their cousins in Syria and Iraq. There heads are literally rolling. Hundreds are being massacred daily and hundreds of thousands have fled for their lives.

The state of the Palestinians depends on where they are located. The Palestinians living in Israel, citizens of a democratic state in which the rule of law prevails, may have reasons to complain, to bewail the catastrophe they insist befell them at the hand of the Jews 66 years ago, but they must surely be envied by Arabs living in any of the Arab countries, most certainly by those who have

the misfortune of residing in Syria and Iraq. Some of them may even admit in their heart of hearts that the catastrophe was one of their own making.

The Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria, who live under Israeli “occupation”, encountering roadblocks as they travel around the country, and who know that these encumbrances are the direct result of the wave of terror the Palestinians unleashed against the Jewish civilian population some years ago, probably do not envy their Arab cousins in Iraq and Syria, and would certainly not want to exchange places with them.

Would they prefer Hamas rule to Israeli “occupation”, and exchange places with their brothers in the Gaza Strip? Not likely. They probably envy the advantages enjoyed by their Palestinian brethren residing in Israel on the other side of the 1949 armistice lines, and if given the choice might even decide to join them.

The Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem actually have that choice - they can opt for Israeli citizenship, and some of them have done so. The rest are entitled to many of the social and health services available to Israeli citizens.

If given the choice of remaining under Israeli sovereignty or living in a Palestinian state, the polls indicate that the majority would prefer to continue in Israel.

Worst off are the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Although nominally living under Palestinian sovereignty, they suffer from the unkind rule of Hamas, a terrorist organisation, and from ravages of Hamas-Israeli belligerency whenever Hamas decides to rocket Israeli towns and villages. They might well feel that their brethren in Judea and Samaria are better off than they. What would the state of the Palestinians be if the aim of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip were to become reality? Would it be a democratic state in which the rule of law prevails - or would it shortly degenerate into sectarian and tribal violence, into a state of anarchy like the one that characterises Syria and Iraq these past few years?

If that is their future, the Palestinians really do not have much to look forward to.



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Community Talk



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South African Jewish Report

Unity Challenge 2015 launch – Jerusalem Marathon

Thursday September 18
at the Creative Counsel building, Melrose at 19:30.
For more information contact
info@unitychallenge.co.za | (011) 485-3624.



Calling all King David Victory Park alumni

The King David Schools' Foundation invites all VP alumni who matriculated from King David Victory Park, to join us at one MEGA reunion to celebrate the 50 years of this incredible school's history.
Date: September 21, 2014 (all expats come home for Rosh Hashanah)
Time: 19:00 - till late
Venue: King David Victory Park High School Hall
Cost: R250 pp
Bookings: Gila Glazer glazerg@kdsf.org or (011) 480-4701



Shabbos Project going global this year

WIZO, as a non-profit organisation concerned with the welfare of women, has committed its involvement and commitment to the Shabbos Project taking place on October 24 and 25. The particular initiative that WIZO will drive and promote, is the lighting of Shabbat candles, one of three special mitzvot performed by women.
This is a mitzvah brimming with symbolism, importance and the light and warmth of Judaism. This year the Shabbos Project is also going global. WIZO, through its extensive network in over 52 countries, will therefore assist in promoting this project and spreading the light globally.



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- www.bikkurcholim.co.za or Joy (011) 440-3606 (am).

Beloved brothers and sisters

Rosh Hashanah is a celebration of the creation in all its dimensions: "Olam", the world, the space which contains us; "Shana", the year, the time we are given on earth; and finally - "Nefesh", the soul, which sustains our life - making the difference between life and death.
The High Holidays are given to us so that, firstly, we will be renewed, then cleansed and then, finally, rejoice before the Throne of Glory. Before this can happen, however, we must engage in the process of Teshuva, replying to G-d and returning to G-d.
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From shofar blowing to onsite shul services and delicious, traditional Yomtov menus, the theme right now is definitely inspired by apples and honey.
Lucky for us Rosh Hashanah always arrives in South Africa with the promise of spring, in a



season of renewal and rebirth.
It's a time of optimism and hope, of gratitude and confidence that, please G-d, this new year will bring joy, good health and good fortune to us all. The Chev wishes all our friends a Shana Tova u'Metukah.

Applications are invited for bursaries for 2015

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South African Jewish Report



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South African Jewish Report



The power of baking challah



Moms and their children making challah.

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY SHEVA MESSIAS
PRINCIPAL, KDLPPS**

It started out as a prep meeting to discuss what we would be teaching the children during the month of Elul. We wanted to bake round challah and discuss the significance of it.

We then thought of inviting moms. Having 40 moms baking challah is very powerful and as we have over 80 grade Rs, that could be doubly powerful!

We have been saying tehillim for Elana bas Yocheved, a young, newly-married occupational therapist and acrobatic dancer who had a terrible accident and was in a coma. (We have since established that Elana is in a stable condition and

could now be moved from a hospital in Rustenburg to Johannesburg.) We have witnessed the power of challah baking.

We have also been saying tehillim for Benyomin Yonah ben Channah Leah, who is fighting cancer. We decided to have the challah bake in their merit.

We set our tables on the basketball courts and covered them with our beautiful Carmel Shabbat cloths which had recently been given to us as a gift. Challah dough was donated to us. People from the Chief Rabbi's Shabbos Project heard about us and came to make a video and asked us to challenge other schools to participate in a Challah Bake. We challenge King David Victory Park and Yeshiva College.

A very meaningful time was had by all.

KD Sandton bakes challahs in merit of Daniel



Moms and their children making challah in the King David Sandton hall.

CHANA LEWIN

King David Sandton recently hosted a “Kids Challah Bake” organised by Lara Kahanovitz, a mom at the school, and her team. The objective was for the boys and girls to be able to do something positive in the merit of their school friend, Daniel Rock (10) who is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

Some 400 children, including some moms, teachers and grannies, took part in tehillim and tzedakah, praying for Daniel's refuah shleimah. Not only was it a very meaningful evening for everyone

involved, but the boys and girls had a lot of fun making challah and sprinkling sweet toppings of chocolate chips, coloured sugar and rainbow sprinkles - for a shana tova u metuka.

They arrived at school just as the sun was setting, 400 of them, chatting and laughing, in anticipation of the communal challah bake.

The focus was on positive action and the children were given the message by Mora Chana Rivka Lewin that children hold the key to power in their prayers, especially psalms. She led them in tehillim. The children came away with a sense of importance.

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שנה טובה

Move over, Pablo Picasso!

LANA JACOBSON

The Gaza war had little or no effect on talented “Picasso wannabe” child artist students in Israel’s Ra’anana.

Sixty talented children aged 10 and 11, attending summer art camp in the long July school holiday season, uncannily fashioned colourful optimistic artworks.

The theme of summer camp was “About Picasso”. The children boarded a bus and visited a museum in Jerusalem displaying Picasso art. They were taught all about Pablo Picasso, his life, his drawings as a child, later as a painter, sculptor and co-founder of Cubism. They also learnt about his influence as a modernist artist of the 20th century.

The children were then told to create three different mediums - based on their own interpretation of Picasso’s work - a painting, a paper mache plate, and a 3D sculpting using coloured paper. The idea was to sculpt with wood, colour with acrylic on canvas, and create a colourful wall plate using paper mache.

Artist and teacher Orly Ichilov, says: “I’ve been teaching children art and graphic design in Tel Aviv for 13 years and I believe the children have to create art with love and happiness, regardless of their surroundings. In this case the children kept returning to their art from bomb shelters, and it gave them a feeling of safety.”

She need not have concerned herself about the



happiness factor. While deeply absorbed in their artistic creations, a siren went off and the children calmly put down their paint brushes, left their posts and filed into the bomb shelter.

When it was safe again, they emerged, resuming their projects and rather than depicting the dark trauma of the war, or relating to Picasso’s famous Guernica painting of the Spanish Civil War, they created optimistic and happy art, with a profusion of bright colours.

On one particular day, there was such a bombardment of Hamas rockets, fired into Tel Aviv and the surrounding suburbs, that the children were assailed by sirens one after the other... They were forced to leave their classrooms and pile into the bomb shelter three times within a short period.

Were the children terrified?

Artistic 11-year-old Frankie Brown replies: “No. I was not at all scared because if I die all of my friends die also with me. But we had to stop in the middle of our projects, and it is a nuisance.”

Ori Gal, a 67-year-old teacher of 3D architecture and member of the Muse organisation that hosts public exhibitions of exceptional artworks, said that About Picasso summer school demonstrated how, “while the war raged, we chose this time to create art and continue our lives undisrupted.

“Children under continual threat of Hamas rockets fired at Israel, lived normal lives and created happy images.”

Pretoria Yeshiva celebrates its barmitzvah

DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

This past week Pretoria’s Yeshiva Mahon L’Hora’a celebrated its 13th Tekes (smicha ordination ceremony) where the current group of bochurim received smicha from Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Levi Wineberg.

In keeping with tradition, Rabbi Wineberg gave a brief, humorous description of each new rabbi before calling them up to receive their certificate.

This yeshiva is now well and truly entrenched in the community, with an exciting programme where the bochurim get deeply involved in the community and all its members, young and old.

Saying goodbye each year does not get any easier, he says.. While bochurim come from all over the world, it was good to see siblings of previous years’ bochurim this year as well as the sons of Rabbi Wineberg and Rabbi Sholom Ber



New Rabbis: Yossi Overlander (London); Mendy Wilansky (New York); Motti Groner (Johannesburg); and Hillel Sperlin (Montreal), handing flowers to Rebbeztens Shterne Wineberg and Aviva Fox.

Groner graduating. Two bochurs from overseas, Yoni Lewkowicz from Arizona is the product of former Pretorian, Rabbi Billy Lewkowicz and Avi Junik (from London) is the son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Junik who attended Torah Academy Yeshiva 27 years ago.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Junik from London spoke on behalf of all the parents in thanking the Pretoria Jewish community for opening their homes and their hearts to the bochurim over the year(s) and giving them a home-from-home experience.

Rabbi Wineberg made special mention of Rabbi Mendel Goldman, the shadchan “who took a programme without a home to a home without a programme” which has now come of age and is celebrating its barmitzva.

Former graduates, Rabbis Dovid Rabin, Motie Hadar, Yisroel Stein, Moshe Medalie and Yosef Chaim Barber, travelled from as far as Mauritius to attend the eventful evening.

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WHY SHOULD FRIEDMAN’S ASSUMPTIONS BE MORE VALID THAN THOSE OF OTHERS?

Steven Friedman has genuine concerns about the implications for Israeli Arabs regarding the founding raison d’être of a Jewish homeland in its ancestral place as set out in the UN Resolution which provides for independent Arab and Jewish states.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 which preceded the ending of the British Mandate, foresaw “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities, or the rights and political status of Jews in any other country”.

The Arab and Palestinian narrative has never accepted the idea of a Jewish state in their midst as they have seen it as one colonial occupying power being replaced by another.

This is the basis of the conflict.

Israel has been established as a Jewish state and thus the Law of Return as a section of the Nationality Law, accommodates it inherently as a state for Jews everywhere in the world. Ethnicity and national rights are indivisible.

Provision is made in the Nationality Law for former citizens of British Mandatory Palestine, Jews and non-Jews and their descendants, to enjoy full civic and citizenship rights in a democratic political and social culture.

As in South Africa and other countries, inequalities in Israel exist for historical reasons.

It is correct that in effect there is no such thing as Israeli nationality, but this is as irrelevant as saying that South Africa has 10 official languages. All those who qualify under the Nationality Law are granted full citizenship rights.

The question is: Does any country or structure, such as the Israel Land Authority, have the right and duty to protect and safeguard the national characteristic of the state and majority of the population, without it being regarded as fascist and discriminatory?

Is there a valid case to be made out for benign discrimination in a democratically open society and milieu?

Human rights are a two-way street and tyranny of the minority can be as unacceptable as that of the majority.

Where I part company with Friedman is his apparent blindness to the bloodthirsty Hamas Charter and actions against its enemies, Jews and Muslims alike. He is guilty of the same assumptions of motive for which he criticised Victor Gordon.

His objection concerning his disagreement with an assumption logically carries the seeds of its own negation. The logic can equally be applied to both sides of any conversation. Hudna is a tactic, well-documented in Islamic texts, only to prepare for the next conquest. This is fact, not opinion.

Can Friedman point to any other area of sharia which has passed beyond the Middle Ages that he should assume only the hudna precept should not be taken seriously? Or assume that Hamas is not an organisation that adheres to and is informed by strict Islamic precep?

He seems to feel that Israel should be grateful for being offered a permanent promise of non-acceptance and conflict.

Israel has learnt the hard way that international guarantees are useless. And so on having his assumptions questioned in the same manner in which he asserts his own justification to disagree. The implication of his logic is that his assumptions are more valid than the other. This is a weak standpoint in which to rationally engage differing perspectives.

**Stephen Paul
Three Anchor Bay,
Cape Town**

The letter has been shortened - Editor

FRIEDMAN’S PRONOUNCEMENTS: THE MIND BOGGLES

Professor Steven Friedman (Professor of Distortions?) claims Hamas is a “rational actor which believes its interests are served by a compromise”.

Where in Hamas’ charter calling for the destruction of Israel, followed by the rest of world Jewry, is the rationality or compromise? Or is that a rational thing in Prof Friedman’s mind?

Even the supposedly more moderate PA leader told Israel to “prepare the body bags” for its citizens. And the reason why there was only one death (do you really find that death regrettable, Prof?), is because Israelis were “herded into shelters” and thanks to the Iron Dome!

As for his claim that he “personally heard representatives of communal organisations claim that all non-Jews are anti-Semites”, considering his writings, I highly doubt he ever heard such tripe or attended a legitimate Jewish gathering since his barmitzvah.

Do the kidnappings and terror attacks not count as putting Israel in imminent mortal danger?

The only reason the IDF hasn’t flattened Gaza (despite its military superiority), is because it’s too moral and decent for its own good. Where does Friedman get the audacity? Words fail me!

**Roni Hirschowitz
Eastleigh, Edenvale**

RELIGION MAKES PEOPLE BELIEVE THE UNBELIEVABLE

Religions are a mental disease. They make people believe the unbelievable. I have no doubt that our religion has been and continues to be our biggest tragedy. It is the cause of all the other tragedies along our history.

Eighty per cent of our people outside of Israel already understands it (the assimilation rate). For me Simchat Torah is as sad as Tisha B’Av. Wishing you and every Jew Shana Tova.

**Yossi Bogacz
Highlands North, Johannesburg**

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YOU DON’T LIKE A PRODUCT OR STORE, SHOP ELSEWHERE

Woe is me (is it permissible to say woe is us?) when we begin to perceive everything in direct connection with ourselves?

Numerous shirts are striped. Who immediately ascribes a striped shirt with concentration camp style pyjamas? With regard to the Zara shirt -improper in that it carried a yellow star- it was doubtless ill-considered but probably not ill-meaning. Did the Nazis have a monopoly on all stars?

But to threaten to boycott a legitimate business with an unfortunate connotation? (I understand that the” offending” garment was immediately withdrawn.)

Do we have to stoop to the depths of the fanatic Muslims in seeing every-thing as a BDS factor?

You don’t like the shirt - so don’t buy it! You don’t have to emulate Fatima in Durban who “requested” that Dis-Chem remove all Israeli products from their shelves.

Kol hakavod to Ivan Saltzman for his sensible response. If Fatima does not like the Israeli products, nobody is forcing her to buy them and if she feels so strongly about Dis-Chem/Saltzman’s response, she doesn’t have to keep on buying at Dis-Chem and is free to shop elsewhere. Her loss...

Jack Miller
Gresswold, Johannesburg

STEVEN FRIEDMAN’S ‘LOGIC’ DEFIES ALL ‘LOGIC’

In one section of his letter (replying to Victor Gordon), Professor Steven Friedman states that “a severe obstacle to a peace settlement [is] the view that... Jewish Israelis are in imminent mortal danger”.

It is not surprising to realise that that view is held by many whose relatives and friends have been killed or injured - and they are not all Jewish either. Friedman complains that people were “herded” into shelters: should the Israeli authorities have waited for large numbers to be killed before taking steps to protect them?

And beyond ridiculous is the use of some expressions, for instance: “stoned to death”, so strongly emotive but in the last some say 2000 to 3 000 years only applicable to certain

enemies of Israel; Do I need to name them? In view of this kind of verbiage I will not even bother to address various other illogical and non-factual items in the letter.

I wish only to mention that it did not escape my notice that the esteemed professor ends his letter with the information that he is the direc-tor of the Centre for the Study of Democracy. So, that is why he limits his criticisms to Israel, because there are no other democracies in the Middle East...

And I will most certainly ignore any response to my letter.

Gwen Jacobson
Johannesburg

HAMAS WOULD ALSO KILL FRIEDMAN - AS HE’S A JEW

Professor Steven Friedman is an honourable man, but very ill informed.

Hamas has stated that they want to kill every Jew. That would include him if he were there.

The rockets being fired by the thousands into Israel are not a fireworks display for fun. These rockets have explosive warheads and are being fired to do damage. Israel is very fortunate that it has the Iron Dome radar system with its interceptors.

No reasonable person wants any loss of life of any kind. However, if Hamas wants to fire from schools, mosques and homes, they obviously do not care about their own people. They used building materials supplied to Gaza, for building tunnels into Israel to cause mayhem.

I was in Israel during this time. I went with grandchildren into bomb shelters. This is real. Kids are scared. Life has been disrupted.

So, yes Professor, it ill behoves you, a learned man, to only see what you want to see. Get more information. See what you are dealing with.

Alan Porter
Glenhazel, Johannesburg

PRAISE FOR ANGELA MERKEL

I cannot praise German Chancellor Angela Merkel enough for her statements in support of Jews and Israel, promising “that people in Germany are threatened and abused because of their Jewish appearance or their support for Israel, is an outra-geous scandal that we won’t accept”.

She is a sterling and righteous leader and may G-d bless her.

If only we had leaders like her instead of the ANC/SACP regime which does just that - threat-ens and abuse Jews for our support of Israel.

Not the latest ANC/SACP resolution calling for boycotts of Israeli goods and labelling the very founding of Israel a “crime against humanity”.

Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

WE FAR TOO GLIBLY CALL PEOPLE WE DISAGREE WITH, NAZIS

Comparing Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu to a Nazi was just plain stupid and disgusting; not every anti-Zionist is an anti-Semite, though most probably are.

Not every anti-Semite is a Nazi and most are in fact not.

There is a famous picture of Tutu wearing a kippah and praying for an end to apartheid with my father (Rabbi Ben Isaacson) in the eighties.

Unlike most anti-Zionists, he has taken the moral high ground on many issues, even against China and his once beloved ANC.

His views on Israel are certainly one-sided and largely misinformed and his relative silence on Islamist violence is deafening.

However, I do not believe he is an anti-Semite and a Nazi - he couldn’t be further from it.

We abuse the Nazi metaphor by calling each other Nazis: chareidim, settlers, left-wingers, right-wingers and Palestinians call police, government , their opponents and one another Nazis when they don’t like what they do. And our detractors call us Nazis.

Just like comparing Israel to apartheid is an insult to those who suffered under apartheid, calling anyone who doesn’t share the Nazi philosophy a Nazi is an insult to the memory of the six million.

There are plenty today - even a few Jews - who could justifiably be called fascists, or perhaps even Nazis, but the archbishop is not one of those.

I couldn’t care about political correctness, but I do care about the truth.

Rabbi Yoni Isaacson
Johannesburg

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The science of shofar

How our body’s reaction to hearing the shofar’s blast primes us for real change.

YVETTE ALT MILLER

Each day of Rosh Hashanah, our synagogue services are punctuated by a hundred calls from the shofar, a ram’s horn that reverberates with a distinctive, alarm-like cry.

The shofar’s rousing blast speaks to us more intensely than words ever can. It’s a personal call to each of us to wake up and use the opportunity of Rosh Hashanah to change.

Modern science has documented the physical responses human beings undergo when we’re subjected to loud, resonant sounds such as the shofar.

Sometimes called the “fight or flight” response, the physical changes we undergo when confronted with a sudden, urgent alarms helps us deal with immediate threats. During Rosh Hashanah, these changes can help us see the world differently, giving us a different perspective and helping us see areas where we need to grow.

1. Our senses are sharpened

When we’re startled, the hypothalamus in our brain immediately starts producing hormones, altering our physiological state. One of the first is Neuropeptide-S, a small protein that makes us more alert. It decreases our need for sleep, and sharpens our alertness and feelings of energy.

Our brains also send a signal to our adrenal glands to start releasing adrenaline and norepinephrine, two hormones that increase our heart and breathing rates and sharpen our sense of concentration.

Within moments, we’re transformed into a new state of alertness, able to see dangers and details we overlooked before.

On Rosh Hashanah, these moments are invaluable. The energy we gain as we hear the shofar’s loud blasts gives us - for a moment - a new, sharper state of consciousness, and a different way of looking at the world.

2. Emotion grows stronger

Another effect of sudden stress is simplification in our thought processes. When we’re startled, our brains release catecholamines, neurotransmitters which stimulate a part of our brain called the amygdala, a centre that relies on emotional - rather than purely rational - thought.

This shift helps us to not overload on details or become bogged down as we make decisions: it’s the part of our fight-or-flight response that helps us decide to “run!” in times of danger.

It can also give us the clarity to see our behaviour clearly, without the rationalisation that’s part of more nuanced, everyday thought.

Thinking with our amygdala in the moments after the shofar’s blasts helps us to see ourselves more honestly, to perceive our behaviour as good or bad, without the rationalisations. It can give us the courage to admit our shortcomings and the clarity to know what to do in the future.

3. Long-term memory is switched on

At the same time our amygdala is stimulated, so is our brain’s nearby hippocampus, the region that stores long-term memories. It helps make sure we don’t waste these moments, that we learn from the stress we’ve just experienced.

This means that anything we’re about to experience in our newly heightened state will make a lasting imprint on us, remaining lodged in our memories longer than ordinary experiences.

This helps to ensure that our Rosh Hashanah resolutions have a more lasting impact. All our thoughts - our emotions, our resolutions and decisions to change - will all become a deep part of us, lodged in our long-term memory.

When we hear the loud shofar blasts, our brains become more sensitive; knowing this

can help make sure that we use these precious moments to instil positive messages and resolutions to grow deep in our memories, to draw from all year long.

4. Our brain becomes more active

While all these changes are taking place, during times of stress our brains become more active overall. Nerve cells in our brains receive more messages than normal, and we experience increased brain activity. We’re able to process much more information than during less-

intense moments.

The period when we can hear the shofar’s call is very brief. Yet if we let it, it can stimulate us to think more deeply and make more lasting decisions than we’re accustomed to.

Judaism teaches that it’s possible to make even major decisions and change our lives in an instant. The extra capacity we have for thought and mental activity during this period makes change more possible.

As we listen to the urgent, loud sounds of the shofar, our bodies are perfectly calibrated

to react to this loud, insistent call by giving us greater energy and focus. Let’s use it to analyse our past deeds and resolve to grow in the coming year.

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Answering Rosh Hashanah’s call

The shofar’s cry is G-d calling out my name, looking for me.



SARA DEBBIE GUTFREUND

If you have ever lost a child in a crowded place, you know the raw fear. Has anyone seen a two-year-old with a blue shirt on? He has brown hair. A Gap baseball hat with green letters?

A couple of years ago we lost our toddler in an amusement park in Israel. One second he was right in front of us, and the next thing we knew he was nowhere to be found. At first we thought he had to be at most a few feet away, and we called out his name. No response.

After a minute of looking around and shouting, I began to panic. Where could he have gone? We started stopping people and asking them to help us. I fought back tears as I ran past the jumping castles and bumper cars. By then we had a small crowd circling the area and calling his name.

When I finally spotted him, I couldn’t believe what I saw. There he was, sitting in a pool of colourful, plastic balls laughing with another little boy that he didn’t even know. For a moment, I just stood there with tears of relief weaving their way down my cheeks. And then I ran and gathered him into my arms.

All this time he didn’t even know that he had been lost. He didn’t know that he couldn’t just walk away on his own. He didn’t know that being separated from us was dangerous. He looked up at me in confusion when I picked him up.

“Why Mommy cry?” he asked me. Because you were lost. Because you didn’t even know that you were lost. Because you don’t realise how dangerous it is to be separated from us. But I couldn’t say any of that. I just buried my head into his soft curls and cried harder.

With Rosh Hashanah on our doorstep, I think about that moment. I realise that sometimes I, too, don’t realise how dangerous it is to be disconnected from the Source of my life. Too often I go through my days as if I’m the one writing the script.

Meanwhile, He is looking for me. He sends out search parties. He calls my name. Has anyone seen her? She was here just a second ago. She doesn’t even know how to get back. She doesn’t realise that she can’t survive on her own. Why doesn’t she answer my call?

On this Day of Judgment we are all found, no matter how far away we have wandered. The King picks each of us up and gathers our lives into His arms.

And then He cries. Tekiah. The shofar. Why is the King crying? The wailing gets louder and louder. It speaks through the power of its wordlessness. Your life is on the line. Why don’t you call out to me?

Shevarim-Teruah. Your job. Right now it’s being described and set for the next year, down to every penny that you will earn. Tell me what you need.

Tekiah. Your health is being written out now, every single detail of how you will feel every day. Wake up.

Shevarim. Your children, your family, everything that you care about is being decided today. And I am waiting for you to call out to Me. Don’t you hear me calling your name? Don’t you hear my cry? Where are you?

“On Rosh Hashanah will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed... who will live and who will die... who will rest and who will wander...”

Today is the beginning of time. Today we remember and are remembered. Today we see that we did not create ourselves, and that we cannot survive on our own. A recent photo in the newspaper showed Israelis trying on gas masks.

The masks looked so strange, almost like alien costumes. But then I realised that putting on a mask to breathe is a lot less strange than the miraculous reality of how we actually breathe on our own each day. We think that we are “just” breathing, but really the King is creating and decreeing every single breath that we take.

We think that we have decided what we are going to be doing this year, but the Creator of the world has His own plans. Our lives are gathered in His arms. The shofar’s weeping cradles us. We are found. We are remembered.

We are standing before the King. Our lives are on the line. Here is our chance to speak up and say: I need You. Please sustain me. Please heal me. Please bless me. I see now that I am lost. I hear You calling my name. Please give me the words. Please give me the voice. I want to answer Your call.

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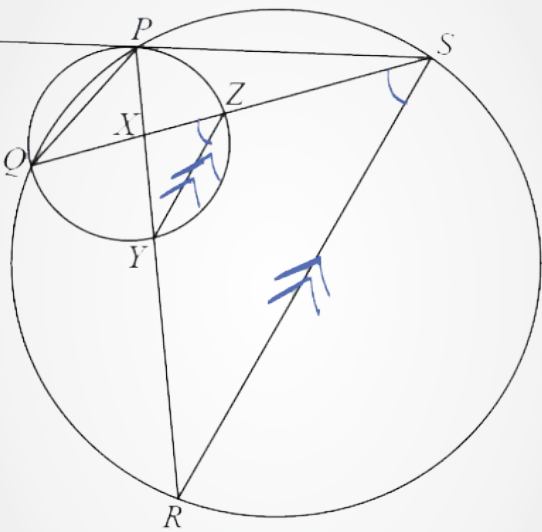
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Red carpet gala dinner raises funds for Durban community

LAUREN SHAPIRO
DURBAN

A red carpet evening at the Durban Jewish Centre last week, saw the Jewish community congregating for a single cause: to raise awareness of the financial situation of the community, and the funds to support it.

The Israel United Appeal/United Communal Fund (IUA/UCF) gala fundraising event was sponsored by Investec and hosted by the Council of KwaZulu-Natal Jewry.

UCF Chairman Jeremy Droyman noted that the committee, with an annual budget of R5,6 million, is currently running at a deficit. He pointed to an increasing amount of unbudgeted costs, for example the rapidly escalating costs of the Community Security Organisation (CSO).

“Like healthcare and schooling, the Jewish community needs to now pay for its own private security,” Droyman explained. “The threats are real and we need to upgrade our infrastructure.”

The UCF supports several affiliate organisations such as Durban Jewish Social Services, Meals on Wheels, Beth Shalom (Durban’s Jewish home for the aged), and the Durban Holocaust Centre.



Photo: Terry Haywood

Raymond Goss, Marco van Embden, Jeremy Droyman, Anna Moshal, John Moshal, Mary Kluk.

Funds are also allocated to Israel through the IUA.

Keynote speaker Marco van Embden shared his thoughts on how a community impacts an individual and how individuals in turn can impact a community.

As chairman of Cape Town’s UCF (which is combined with both the IUA and welfare committee), Van Embden proceeded to turn the campaign on its head, restructuring it much like a business, and in four short years nearly doubled its funds.

“Much of what drives me is to ensure Jewish survival and continuity, and just maybe these are

the core to this drive tonight,” Van Embden said.

In fundraising for organisations like the UCF, he noted: “You are not asking for yourself; you are asking for the voiceless, the unseen, the poor and the needy. You can’t get much closer to G-d’s work than this.”

Droyman echoed this in his speech: “Without fail all our donors have a strong sense of community. For them, giving is not a burden but an obligation, not a cost but a pleasure.” He hoped that bringing friends and family together and reminding us of our communal organisations,

would revitalise this sense of community.

“Every member of the community is called upon to contribute in accordance with his or her means,” said president of the CKNJ Ronnie Herr. “It is because of the generosity and the vision of the UCF’s contributors that Durban is a strong, vibrant and caring Jewish community.”

Honorary president of the CKNJ, John Moshal, closed the evening with an emphasis on the mitzvah of giving, something the Durban Jewish community has and will continue to do long into the future.

Gauteng’s first-ever Jewish Scout Group



Members of the 1st Magen Scout Group at their investiture ceremony.

DAVID SAKS

After a long time in the planning and formative stages, the first-ever all Jewish Scout Group in Gauteng was formally launched last Sunday, with the investiture of 15 Cubs, 6 Scouts and 2 Scouters (adult leaders) at their meeting venue at Froggy Pond, Sandringham. The Group decided on using the title “The 1st Magen Scout Group”.

The enthusiasm for the project was well exhibited by both the Scouts and Cubs being invested and by the large number of parents and family members who attended to lend their support to the occasion.

Sunday’s investiture started 18 months ago when now Group Scouter Ronnie Lurie, approached the District Commissioner of the Gauteng Northern District, Don Norris, about the possible formation of a Scout Group to consist of members of the Orthodox Jewish community.

Partnering up with Gilad Spitalnik who drive the launching of the Group in the community, things moved ahead.

The “1st Magen Scout Group” hold their meetings on Sunday afternoons at 15:00 at Froggy Pond, Club Street Sandringham.

Further details can be obtained from Group Scouter Ronnie Lurie on 082-301-9556 or Pack Scouter (Cubs) Gilad Spitalnik on 072-857-0849.

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This female dynamo has a love for Torah

SUZANNE BELLING

The world of Torah should be open to women, is the philosophy of Rebbetzen Dr Yael Ziegler (pictured), described by Rabbi Ramon Widmonte, dean of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning and executive director of Mizrachi South Africa, as “a talmida chachama” and “one of the world’s foremost teachers of Torah”.

On her first visit to South Africa, with many speaking engagements during the month of Elul prior to Rosh Hashanah, Dr Ziegler told the Jewish Report: “We should aspire to a higher level of learning and further our relationship with G-d and the community.”

Dr Ziegler is unique insofar as she teaches men too, as she did during public shiurim in Johannesburg to much acclaim.

Residing in Gush Etzion, Israel, Dr Ziegler grew up in Philadelphia, US. She studied Judaica and political science at the Stern Women’s College, which is the women’s branch of Yeshiva University. She has an MA and a PhD, the latter from Bar Ilan University, having made aliyah in 1991.

In 1993, she met her husband, Rabbi Reuven Ziegler, pursuing her studies and her lecture tours of the United States and Europe in between giving birth to her five children - all boys, except the eldest (19), a girl, who is at present doing her National Service in Israel.

“It has been a very difficult time for us in Israel, a time of trouble, but it is also a time when the nation comes together,” she said. “Teaching Torah in the different Jewish com-

munities, one feels the excitement.” She is particularly impressed with South African Jewry - “they are enthusiastic and passionate”.

With Dr Ziegler’s background, it is small wonder she gravitated to the study of Torah. “My background is both religious and academic, with my father a scientist who combined academic rigour and love of Torah.”

Her three brothers are rabbis, her one sister teaches Bible in Chicago, while another sister lives in Israel. “So it is good to have a close family member nearby, but I do visit the States every year to lecture and see my family.”

Dr Ziegler is a lecturer in Israel at Matan, the Institute of Advanced Learning for Women. “We have many programmes, including those for women and the general public and jointly with Bar Ilan University. This year celebrates the 25th year of women’s Torah learning [at Matan].”

She also teaches in Migdal Oz, Midreshet Moriah and Herzog College. Her husband is the head of Magid Publishers, Jerusalem. Dr Ziegler’s book - essays on The Book of Ruth, is to be launched next month.

Dr Ziegler’s visit to South Africa furthered the mission of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning, the aim of which is “to create a vibrant modern-Orthodox programme for Jewish scholarship, education and thought that inspires our community with a lifelong love of Jewish learning”.

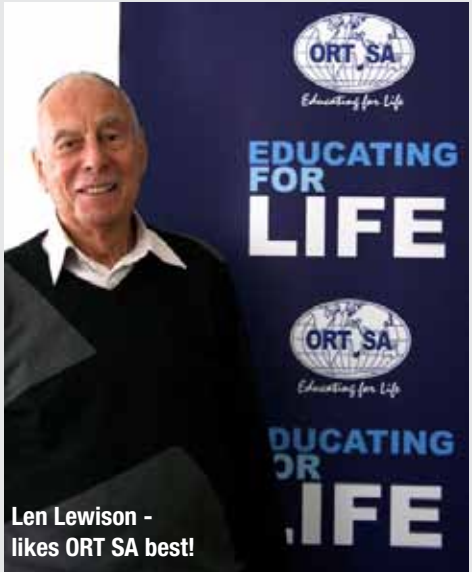
The Academy is affiliated to Waverley, Sandton, Greenside, Mizrachi, Pine Street, Victory Park and Sydenham Shuls.

It utilises material produced by the London School of Jewish Studies, the president of which is Jonathan Lord Sacks, former chief rabbi of the Commonwealth. It has close to 1 000 students in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban.



Photo: Suzanne Belling

ORT SA’s Classic Golf Day 41 years young



ORT SA’s Classic Golf Day is turning 41 this year and is still going strong. In a media release. ORT’s Solly Burgin and Alan Mendelsohn, co-conveners of the golf committee, invite all golfers and wannabe golfers to join them on October 26 “for another fantastic fun-filled day”.

Prizes include a weekend away at a luxury game lodge, hampers and luxury goods. Corporates are invited to sponsor a hole or to make up a four ball.

This year’s raffle pays tribute to Len Lewison who was co-opted onto the ORT SA Golf Committee 33 years ago.

“I think at the time they needed at least one serious golfer on the committee and I was instrumental in getting the Killarney Golf Course secured on a Sunday - unheard of in charity golfing circles,” said Lewison. He added that he often got approached by other charities to do a golf day, but ORT SA was the one he liked to support.

• Contact ORT SA to book your participation: Debbie@ortsa.org.za



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-Jonathan G., June 2014

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Sharon Lurie - synonymous with fine Jewish food

Sharon Lurie - also affectionately known as “The Butcher’s Wife” - tells how over the busy periods of Yomtov she would go into the butchery to answer phones and take orders. Every order that came through was either for brisket or scotch fillet.

For her there had to be more to the forequarter than two cuts.

That was her “aha” moment when her culinary writing and marketing took shape.

As a butcher’s wife, she had to “shecht” the old myth that kosher meat was tough, dry and boring and with the support of her family and Random House Struik, she embarked on a culinary journey that she is still traveling today.

She is the author of two award-winning, cookery books, “Cooking with the Kosher Butcher’s Wife” and “Celebrating with the Kosher Butcher’s Wife”. As best-sellers she acclaimed international recognition and was endorsed by the largest European chain of kosher butcheries in Great Britain, who re-published her book.

She is a food consultant, writes for various local and international magazines and has her own cooking show on ChaiFM.

Her passion for food goes back to the days when she’d watch her mother kashering her own meat. Being the only daughter, with three brothers, bonding time with her mother, was often in the kitchen. Being a professionally trained chef, her mother taught her, from the beginning, the “right way” to do it.



Shredded chicken and lokshen soup

When I see a recipe for chicken soup, I kind of say to myself: “Who doesn’t know how to make chicken soup?” However, there’s chicken soup and there’s “dishvasser” (dishwater). This is a chicken soup that will please G-d do as it’s supposed to, open all those blocked physical and emotional passages, giving you a year filled with health, love and laughter.

Chicken stock

- Little oil for frying (about 2 tbl)
- 4 chicken carcasses or 8 skinless drumsticks
- 6 chicken thighs, skinless
- 4 chicken breasts, on the bone
- 2 pieces of meaty shin

Method:

Fry all the above meat in a large soup pot. Once lightly browned (avoid burning as this will alter the taste of a wonderful soup) add enough water to cover the meat by about 3 - 4 cm. Bring to the boil. Once boiling, reduce to a simmer and allow to cook for a further three hours. After three hours, remove from heat and allow to cool. Strain the stock, remove white meat from breasts and shred into long strips. Discard bones. Meanwhile, finely chop the following or chop/slice in food processor:

- 3 large onions
- 6 carrots
- 1 celery root peeled and chopped. (You can also use the sticks and leaves, chopped).
- 6 sticks of celery (If you’re using the celery root as

well, then you only need 3 sticks of celery).

- 6 leeks
- 1 large bunch of flat-leaf parsley (finely chopped)
- 1 x 500g pasta (Fettuccine-style - perhaps a bit thicker)
- 4 Tbl chicken stock powder

Method:

- Heat a little oil in a large soup pot.
- Add all the vegetables you’ve just chopped, allow to cook until limp for about 10 minutes.
- Keep stirring while cooking the vegetables.
- Pour the strained and cooled chicken and beef stock over the vegetables, add 2 tsp salt and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and allow to cook for another hour. If the liquid stock doesn’t cover the vegetables by about 5 cm then add more water to bring up the level.
- Place all the shredded chicken meat back into the soup with the pasta, bring it to the boil again, stir gently so as not to break up the pasta. Add chicken stock powder and stir in gently.
- Switch off heat and allow the soup to cool down and absorb all the lovely flavours.
- Reheat when ready to serve.
- Taste your soup to see if it needs more salt.



Sticky honey and apple crisps

- 1 box phyllo pastry
- 1 bottle honey (500 ml)
- 2 red apples
- Cinnamon and sugar mix
- 1/2 – 3/4 cup warmed apricot jam

Method:

- Phyllo pastry (normally contains 2 rolls pastry. Unroll one and separate the sheets).
- Line a tray with tin foil and spray with a little olive oil.
- Place the first sheet of phyllo pastry directly onto well-oiled tin foil.
- Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with a little cinnamon.
- Place next sheet of phyllo on top of the first and paint with apricot jam.
- Follow with the next sheet of phyllo and drizzle with honey.
- When you get to top layer, paint with olive oil, drizzle with honey and place thinly sliced apple on top of the final layer.
- Sprinkle with icing sugar and bake in a preheated oven 140 deg C for 45 minutes.
- Switch oven off and leave apple crisps in the oven for 30 minutes.
- Remove from oven, allow to cool and break up into rough squares.
- If you find they are getting a little soft, place them into a warm oven 140 deg C for about 15 - 20 minutes to crisp up.



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Simanim salad with crispy leek crunchies



- 250g fresh leeks (chopped 1/2 cm slices)
- 1/2 cup cornflour/maizena
- Oil for deep frying
- 250 g raw beetroot peeled and finely grated
- 500g baby spinach leaves
- 2 red onions (cut in half, then thinly sliced)
- 2 sticks celery, finely sliced
- 1 or 2 avocado pears, sliced
- Pomegranate seeds or plump crimson raisins
- 3 crispy small red apples (cored and peeled) sliced into 1/8 ths or paper thin rings.
- Beetroot shoots

Method:

Place the leeks into a Ziploc bag and add the maizena to the packet. Shake well so that the leeks are well covered and absorb some of the cornflour. Deep fry the leeks and set aside when golden brown and crispy.

Salad dressing

- 100g fresh dates (remove pips)

- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 3 tbl honey
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup oil

Method:

Place dates into a small bowl or jug and cover with boiling water. Set aside for 20 minutes to soften then add honey, vinegar and blend until smooth.

Once the dates, honey and vinegar have blended together smoothly, slowly add oil in a fine stream until completely combined.

Plate the salad by placing the spinach on the platter followed by finely sliced red onions, celery, pomegranate seeds or crimson raisins, finely grated raw beetroot, avocado pear, sliced red apples and baby beetroot shoots.

Just before serving, toss salad with dressing then finally sprinkle with leek crunchies. (No matter how many you make, there will never be enough!)

Pomegranate and rosewater sorbet

- 750 ml 3 cups fresh pomegranate juice
- 1 tbl rose and pomegranate syrup/rosewater
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 egg whites

Method:

- Dissolve sugar in pomegranate juice with water over low heat.
- Remove from heat and add rose and pomegranate syrup/rosewater and give it a good mix.
- Set aside to cool and then freeze in 2 litre container.
- Once ice starts forming around the edges of the container - this should take about 2 hours - scrape it off the sides towards the centre
- Leave in freezer for another hour. Just before removing it from the freezer, whisk the egg whites until firm.
- Add them to the partly frozen sorbet and



whisk until well-combined.

- Refreeze and after 2 - 3 hours remove the sorbet from the freezer and re-whisk, ensuring that you incorporate all the sorbet until well-blended. It's at this point that I prefer to put the sorbet into a food processor and blend it until smooth, then refreeze. If you don't have a hand blender or food processor, then breaking it down with a fork and whisking will still work.
- The more times you blend the sorbet, the creamier it will be.

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Pomegranate and red wine reduction glazed beef

This quick and easy meat dish is everything you want for a Rosh Hashanah meal and more. It has the symbolic pomegranates, carrots, pumpkin, figs and dates. This is not beef cooked in a sauce, but rather a glazed beef dish where the flavours of the glaze delicately enhance the meat and surrounding vegetables.



- 2 1/2 - 3kg raisin rib or 2 raisin rib flaps to make up 2 1/2 kg
- Or 2 1/2 kg - 3 kg fresh brisket
- Or 2 top rib flaps totalling 2 1/2 - 3 kg
- Or 2 1/2 - 3 kg roll of beef
- 2 tbl oil
- 2 large onions sliced in half and then into rings (semi-circular)
- 3 cloves fresh garlic crushed
- 2 cups dry red wine (use a good quality wine)
- 1 bottle Pomegranate Chilli Preserve
- 100g pitted dates chopped (optional)
- 1 x 55g pkt brown onion flavoured soup (Pick n Pay)
- 1 heaped tablespoon wholegrain mustard (readymade)

- Vegetables**
- 3 - 4 tbl oil
 - 500g baby carrots
 - 500g cubed butternut
 - 2 or 3 figs quartered
 - 1 tsp dried thyme

- Method**
- Pat meat dry with a paper towel.
 - Place a little oil in large soup pot and brown meat until golden brown
 - Remove meat from pot and place into a roasting pan.
 - To the same pot in which the meat was browning, add a little more oil and fry the onions until soft.
 - Add wine and dates and stir with a whisk getting all those lovely brown bits of meat off the bottom of the pot.
 - Allow wine to reduce (evaporate and thicken up a bit while stirring).
 - Add the whole bottle of jam and stir until it dissolves into the onions and wine reduction.
 - Add the onion soup and mustard and stir well.
 - Crush some black pepper over the meat, sprinkle with a little salt and pour glaze over the meat.
 - Roll the vegetables in a little oil and sprinkle with thyme. Place the vegetables around the side of the meat, cover with tin foil.
 - Place into preheated oven 180 deg C covered for 1 hour. Reduce heat to 150 deg C and allow to cook for another 3 hours. If you are using two pieces of meat to make up 3 kg, then you won't have to cook the meat long; after the initial 1 hour you will only need to cook the meat for a further 2 hours on 150 deg C. If, however, it is one large piece of meat, then you will have to cook it for the 3 hours.

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The new New Year – or the same resolutions?

Do you arrive at Rosh Hashanah stunned to discover that you’re making the same resolutions as the year before? Here’s how to break the pattern.

EMUNA BRAVERMAN

A friend of mine was cleaning out her garage this summer. Her progress was impeded by her perusal of the years of journals stored there. All that time. All that ink. All those identical entries. “I feel fat. Tomorrow I’m going to go on a diet.”

How many of us have similar journals? How many of us end each day discouraged by our lack of progress, reasserting the same old commitments? How many of us arrive at Rosh Hashanah stunned to discover that we’re making the same resolutions we made the year before - and the year before that - and the year before that?

Do we have any motivation left? Do we have any credibility left? I certainly don’t believe myself anymore. Perhaps the A-mighty is more generous.

How do we break this pattern? How do we treat this New Year as truly new, as a real opportunity for growth and change? What goals do we have a realistic chance of

achieving?

Change doesn’t happen overnight.

Deep down, we all want to be great. We all aim to scale lofty heights. “I’ll never lose my temper again.” “I’ll be endlessly patient with my children.” “I’ll be the perfect wife.” “I won’t worry about money, my weight, earthquakes... fill in the blank... ever again.” And we fall down flat. Because change doesn’t happen overnight. And when change does happen, it’s not usually immediately evident.

Change happens slowly, incrementally over long periods of time. The accomplishment is in the persistence, in the ability to continue to look ahead, to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

It’s common wisdom that fad diets are ultimately unsuccessful. Even though we may initially lose a lot of weight, if there are no tools for real change of habit, and if we don’t plan to live on a steady fare of grapefruits, we will soon revert to old patterns.

This is true of all attempts at change. We need logical, thoughtful planning with rational, accessible steps. There are no quick fixes.

Every year I plan to work on letting go. It’s one of my challenges to recognise that the A-mighty’s running the world (and doing a better job than I would!) And every year I wake up the day after Yom Kippur and I haven’t let go. I’m still maintaining my illusion.

I am no longer choosing that goal. Not because I’m giving up, and not because the goal is inappropriate inaccessible. Because it’s the wrong model.

Are you like me? Do you have a stack of books piled beside your bed that you really are going to read? If you get one read, do you add two more to the stack? Does the pile ever diminish? Does the goal become to get through the stack rather than the pleasure or learning that comes from the reading? Is there so much knowledge that you want? Are you planning on acquiring it all tonight?

What if instead I picked one book and read a page a day? I wouldn’t become a great Torah scholar (on the other hand the old technique wasn’t getting me there either). I may not be the star of the book club (although I may actually remember some of the details of the book!) But I would really learn and accomplishing something, and grow from having persisted. From having actually slowed myself down. From having changed old destructive patterns.

And if that took six months, then I could start another one after that. Even if it took a year, or two, or seven - as long as I stayed in the fight.

This principle could be applied to all areas of life. Perhaps you want to curb your gossiping. Pick 15 minutes per day that you won’t gos-



sip. After six months, add five more minutes. And so on. Don’t focus on the gossip you engage in the rest of the day (this system is not carte blanche to fill the rest of your hours with juicy slander!). Focus on those special 15 minutes. You’ll be a different person.

We all read stories of exciting and heroic acts done in a brief moment - saving a child from a burning fire, lifting a car to pull out a trapped loved one, wrestling a bank robber to the ground. These are wonderful stories. But it’s not how you build a life of greatness.

I want to be great overnight. But this year I’m accepting that’s not going to happen. It’s not even the goal.

True growth and change, true closeness to the A-mighty comes about in those small, consistent steps. I want to be great overnight. But this year I’m taking a deep breath; I’m accepting that’s not going to happen. And even more importantly, I’m accepting that’s not the goal.

And hopefully through this slower pace, I will achieve real change and restore my credibility.

There is a wonderful story told about some Chassidim who hid to watch their rebbe pray in the morning. He would approach the ark to grab the Torah and then jump back as if stung. “How can you approach the holy Torah?” he would berate himself. “You’re so wrapped up in your ego and material concerns.”

“That’s true”, he would argue. “But I’m working on myself to change.” And he would step forward. “But you said that yesterday,” he would reprimand himself, falling back again. This dialogue was repeated over and over until finally the rebbe mustered up a new degree of determination and resolution. “This time I really mean it,” he said and he grabbed the Torah.

Let’s mean it this year. Let’s take those small steps to grow and change, to unite our people and come closer to our Creator. And in the merit of our baby steps, may the A-mighty cause great change for Jews throughout the world and particularly in the land of Israel. Shana Tova.

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The coronation of G-d as King

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The fundamental theme of Rosh Hashanah is the coronation of G-d as King over us. A coronation is a solemn and awe-inspiring ceremony, and the holy trembling in every Jew’s heart at the onset of the “Days of Awe” goes far beyond fear of punishment.

The specific term for this feeling is “yirat harome-mut” (Awe of G-d’s grandeur), fear stemming from each Jew’s contemplation of his personal role in the King’s coronation.

In addition to the collective aspects of Rosh Hashanah worship, the coronation renews each Jew’s personal bond with G-d, his direct inner connection as an individual. Each man and woman personally asks G-d to accept the coronation, thus creating the bond of “We are your people and You are our King”.

Therefore we omit tachanun, the daily prayers of supplication, nor do we confess on Rosh Hashanah,



although it is the first of the Ten Days of Repentance. For sorrow, however great, over past deeds is forgotten in the different mood the coronation evokes: oneness with G-d and yirat haromemut.

Moreover, repentance then is not ordinary regret for the past and resolve for the future, but rather “teshuvah” according to its inner meaning: the soul’s return to its source. This spiritual service corresponds precisely to the renewed individual bond of the King’s coronation.

Only after the holiday does ordinary repentance commence, with confession and slichot, following as a necessary consequence of the coronation. Renewed oneness with G-d evokes desire and resolve to be fit for such an exalted status, requiring vigorous effort to uproot anything which diminishes it, ie sin, and even inadvertent sin. (Igrot Kodesh, vol. 22, p. 510)

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Learning to read.

ROBYN SASSEN

“If I am only for myself, who will be for me?” Chevrach Kadisha-endentured social worker Darrin Wolberg, quoted the words of Hillel in a recent talk he gave to a Second Innings audience. Literacy, loss and intergenerational interaction, headlined his focus on the Second Innings School Project, which he established in 1998 in collaboration with Grecia Gabriel.

“The project, now in its 16th year, is an example of community partnerships,” he said, describing how, in 1998, an Orange Grove Primary School teacher Brenda Solomon, spoke to a Second Innings gathering, about the huge classes and poor literacy of children in her school.

“After that talk, a group of people said: ‘How can we help?’ In this project, we seek to harness the power of volunteers who are retired.

“We trained 12 volunteers to go into three schools to work with children. And it worked. Today there are over 70 volunteers, in active participation in 12 schools, in and around Johannesburg.

“The aim of the programme is to enrich language. We understand that by simply having a conversation with a child in English, even if English is that child’s second or third language, you assist in developing language skills.”

The second programme Wolberg spoke of, faces loss. “In 2005 our volunteers in the schools reported on increased incidence of loss. According to Unicef’s report in 2002, it was estimated that by 2015, 20 per cent of South African children would be orphaned.

“An HSRC study in 2005 estimated that there were

over two million orphans in South Africa at the time,” he said, drawing attention to the increase of child-headed households in the country, run by children of 16 or younger.

From 2005, Wolberg began learning of unintended programme outcomes. “Suddenly we started hearing about relationships between participants: the development of life skills; the idea of what being a granny meant to the volunteers, and to the learners. We also learned it was fun for both volunteers and learners.

“We started understanding that the volunteers were not just supplying literacy skills, but emotional support. And the children were responding to that, and sometimes turning to the volunteers as a trusted adult in their lives.

“You’d be surprised as to what the children teach volunteers about giving, about customs; it’s a two way street.”

Of course the project is not without challenges encountered in all kinds of contexts, from school rules to time constraints, he points out. The elderliness of the volunteers points at frailty and inconsistency. The work, particularly insofar as the bereavement programme goes, is not easy. It can be overwhelming.

But the pros outweigh the cons every time. The bereavement programme is also an opportunity to become involved in the HIV/Aids epidemic, as well as incurring a sense of mastery in life that loss imposes on them.

“The energy from this project is phenomenal,” adds Wolberg. “The children are fascinated with the texture of ageing hair and skin. They love hugs. There is no black and white: just children and gogos.”

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The Power to Surprise

The ‘Perfect Pitch’ for TA girls

DEVORAH KAY

Torah Academy Girls’ High School recently presented a play “The Perfect Pitch”, a production fun-filled with music, dance and laughter, involving the entire school, except for the matrices. There were four performances at the Johannesburg Theatre.

Abbey Rosenbloom played by

Bracha Singer, a grade 11 learner, portrayed a young woman in New York City to pursue her dream of becoming the next big sensation. After many auditions she gets a job at Titanium, the best record label in the Big Apple.

Abbey is passionate and optimistic, making allies and good friends who support her as she strives for stardom and self-fulfilment. But

first she must overcome some of the concrete jungle’s obstacles. The lessons she learns along the way is that obsession is not healthy and must be channelled in a positive direction. Everything is good in moderation and Hashem is a guiding light. The play highlighted the talent of actors, dancers and singers to an all-woman and girl audience.



Photo: Yail Raichlin

KDVP’s Arts and Culture Festival a resounding success



Photo: Yael Gordon

Hayley Kobrin; Yonatan Raichlin; David Solomon; and Simon Wolfson.

RENOS SPANOUEDES

Inspired by both their attendance at this year’s Grahamstown Festival and performance experiences, King David High School Victory Park’s arts and culture learners returned to their Johannesburg home base to present their very own two weeks of amazing art and culture. The school’s annual Arts & Culture Festival took place last month in venues on the campus as well as at Wits University, The Jo’burg Theatre, The Auto & General Theatre on the Square. The Festival was the biggest ever in the school’s 50-year history. More than 300 learners were involved in a wide variety of activities

and events, ranging from debating to public speaking, workshops on creative writing, directing, presenting, photography, acting, singing, dancing, music, movement, as well as presenting short films, performing one-minute monologues, participating in spelling bees, poetry slams, comedy roasts, one-act play competitions, visual art exhibitions and a language showcase (Hebrew, English, Afrikaans, French and isiZulu). Alumnus Claudine Ullman, director of Jittery Citizens, ran an “improvisation workshop” with her company, in the school’s Black Box Theatre. This was a favourite with the learners as many are planning to follow in her footsteps and make performing arts their career. A resounding success all round.

Moshe leads all the way to Israel



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Israel Quiz ‘Direction’, Aviad Sela, with Israel Quiz 2014 winner Moshe Wolberg.

Moshe Wolberg, a grade 10 learner at Hirsch Lyons Boys High School, won the 2014 Israel Quiz - and a trip to Israel - in an exciting and very dramatic final, this past Sunday. The Israel Quiz is an annual contest run under the auspices of the Israel Centre and the SA Zionist Federation, to foster a deep love for Israel, an understanding of the history of the modern state and also to teach Israel advocacy to South African Jewish youth, Israel Centre said in a media release. The finals, which are always very entertaining, were held at the Edward Nathan Sonnenberg auditorium in Sandton and were extremely well attended, said Rabbi Steven Krawitz. Moshe saw off stiff competition when in the final round the last three contestants used their in-depth knowledge of Israel to answer questions in a true battle of wits and nerves. Yossi Band from King David Victory Park came second and Elie Joffe from Torah Academy third. Fourth place went to Deena Katzen of King David Linksfield and fifth place to Daniel Teeger of Yeshiva College. The learners answered questions on Israeli history, wars, policies, society, culture, defence force, sporting and scientific achievements. Through three elimination rounds to select the top five, the participants conducted themselves with poise and confidence as questions ranging from fair to difficult were directed at them. Judges were Aviad Sela, Bev Goldman and Ori Leizer.

Spring Day Teddy Bears Picnic at KDLPPS

SHEVA MESSIAS

It was lovely to once again welcome King David Linksfield Pre-Primary School’s outreach school, Phutadijaba. How important it is for our children to connect with each other and to give to those less fortunate than themselves. Each of our children gave a teddy bear to a Phutadijaba friend. The children loved playing in our beautiful school garden, remembering friends they had made at their Shavuot visit and participating in creative activities. The children were treated to sandwiches, fruit, popcorn and ice-lollies. A very special morning was had by all.



Photo: Sheva Messias

A little one from Phutadijaba, with Naomi Jankelowitz and Jaimie Price.

Packing for Mars on my bucket list

**JEREMY CROOCK, GRADE 11
KING DAVID VICTORY PARK**

I was privileged to have been one of two South Africans selected to attend The United Space School in July this year. This is an educational programme held in conjunction with NASA in Houston, Texas, centred on the aerospace industry and targeting high school learners from all over the world.

The programme incorporates many intriguing lectures, presentations and outings, with the end goal of having the learners cumulatively planning a manned mission to Mars.

The 48 learners were split into five teams with each team focusing on a specific aspect of the Mars mission: Yellow (Finance and Legislature), Red (Interplanetary Transit), Maroon (Mars Logistics), Green (Crew Well-ness) and Blue (Exploration).

As a Red team member I gained insight into the workings of inter-planetary flight and some of the issues we are currently faced with. As a team we grappled with many complex problems such as finding a suitable engine while maintaining fuel efficiency for the duration of the mission.

We visited interesting facilities such as Ad Astra Rocket Company’s research and development lab (where we met CEO Franklin Chang Diaz, joint world record-holder for greatest



Nicole P Stott (NASA astronaut), 2000 NASA group; Francesco Fusco, executive director of FISE United Space School; Jeremy Croock (KDHSVP); and Gary A Lantz, treasurer of FISE.

number of space shuttle flights and Building 9 at Space Centre Houston, with its full-scale replica of the International Space Station (ISS).

One of the highlights was a presentation by Bas Lansdorp, CEO of Mars One, a not-for-profit organisation planning to establish a permanent colony on Mars. After the lecture I was able to meet him.

Every year the United Space School

awards the top four learners with flags that have been flown over either the state or national capitols. I’m proud to have won one of the four flag awards along with a certificate for outstanding scientific design for my Nanoracks Experimental Design Assignment.

Attending the United Space School has opened my eyes to the viability of a career in the aerospace industry.

Getting in the spirit of Rosh Hashanah

SUE BENJAMIN

We at Sydenham Pre-Primary School are all very busy preparing ourselves during the month of Elul for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The children listen to the sounds of the shofar which reminds us to wake up and listen.

They are encouraged to do teshuvah, tefillah and give tzedekah. The importance of forgiveness and performing mitzvot is emphasised. The various symbols and their significance are discussed, songs and dances are performed and many beautiful crafts are created for this key chag.



Aryeh and Hylton Herring.

Teddy bears give succour to abused kids

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The children at Minnie Ber-sohn Nursery School in Johannesburg celebrated Spring Day by donating teddy bears to the Teddy Bear Clinic. The Teddy Bear Clinic helps children who are abused.

Dalene Bishop, a representative from the Teddy Bear Clinic, came to receive the teddy bears. She was overwhelmed by the generosity of our school.

Pictured are: Back: Olivia Barron; Gabriella Salomon; Dalene Bishop; Matt Fanaroff; Matt Berger; and Samuel Miller. Front: Dylan Zidane; Siara Glasser; Tali Pogir; Shanon Strauss; and Adam Scop.



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When ‘oldies’ cross the techno-threshold



ROBYN SASSEN

Ten - or even five - years ago, it wasn’t an odd thing to hear of an elderly person referring to her overseas grandchildren - or great-grandchildren - as being made of “paper”. She would probably never meet them in person and had only occasional access to photos printed by her family from e-mails.

Given the tremendous surges of technology today, the SAJR investigated how the elderly of our community are embracing technology. Said Bev Pokroy, senior social worker at Our Parents Home in Orchards, who has worked with the elderly for the past 15 years: “A handful of residents have their own computers, and while they all enjoy playing games on them, a couple do Internet banking, which is remarkably brave. Just two of our residents use the resident lounge e-mail facility.

“One resident - in fact one of our dementia unit occupants - uses the Skype facilities at OPH.” She adds that another resident who recently passed away, watched her grandchild-

dren’s wedding on skype. “Remember that some are suffering failing eyesight and hearing, even before technophobia can be addressed.

“There are those who don’t embrace technology at all. They will wait for the phone-calls from their overseas family. They prefer to wait to hear the voice rather than use e-mail.”

Tech guru Arthur Goldstuck, added: “I correspond with a couple of older people, who use technology; once a year I give a talk at Our Parents Home, where I explain technology like the Smart Phone, but also, where I emphasise that it is not essential to have top-of-the-range equipment.”

Sensitive to the realities of the generational divide, Goldstuck knows several older people who are Skype-literate. “It is normally their children who set them up with Skype. Once they start using it, it becomes almost like just another version of the phone, for example. Skype is one of the great gateways to the world of the Internet for many elderly people.

“E-mail is the basic: Most older people, once they have been

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shown the ropes with the equipment they will be using, get to grips with e-mail quite easily and it operates along systems they have used for years.

“It is when you get to things like social media and chat, that there is a high level of technophobia, and also where there’s a great deal of resistance to changing the way they have always done things.

“Rather than changing systems, e-mail is just done on a different type of machine. And you need to know how to use that machine.

“Skype offers so much tangible benefit in being able to communicate with children and grandchildren, that that is enough to help overcome any resistance.”

He has encountered older people buying a computer for the first time in their lives when they retire from a lifetime of work. “What typically happens is that a computer is bought to Skype children overseas and then other benefits are realised, once it has become a part of the furniture.”

Technology

Mobile innovation for education

The Ukufunda Virtual School tool was recently launched. It is designed to address inequalities in the school system, raise education standards and put the power of basic education back into the hands of learners, teachers and parents, reports ARTHUR GOLDSTUCK..



GOLDSTUCK ON GADGETS

Learning and teaching in public schools will be boosted by an innovative tool that will support classroom activities.

Deputy Minister of Basic Education Enver Surty and Gauteng MEC for Education Panyaza Lesufi recently unveiled the Ukufunda Virtual School in partnership with Mxit Reach and Unicef.

Ukufunda, which means “learn” in isiZulu, is a mobile innovation in the South African education system, aiming to promote equitable access to quality learning and teaching, to enable teacher professional development and to support curriculum delivery.

“I express my sincere appreciation to be present at this launch as we are realising our dream of strengthening support to our teachers,” said Surty.

“The Ukufunda Virtual School will directly address inequalities in the school system, raise education standards and put the power of basic education back into the hands of every learner, teacher and parent.”

Founded in 2005, Mxit currently works on over 8 000 devices, from feature phones to smart phones and tablets, meaning most South Africans can access Mxit on their mobile phone.

Many past and current mobile phone-based

education programmes in South Africa are focused on supporting learners directly, but fewer are focused on enabling teacher development and support. Two key components of Ukufunda is the Calendar and Annual National Assessment (ANA) tool:

- The Calendar tool allows the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to populate one central calendar with the annual school terms, exam timetables and beyond, that will be editable at a provincial, district and school level. What makes this calendar so resourceful is that it removes traditional communication barriers such as access and affordability.
- The ANAs are assessments of grade three, six and nine learners’ levels of competency in literacy and numeracy. Conventional assessments can be costly, time-consuming and can take several months for results to be returned. The ANA tool for grade 9 learners on Ukufunda, provides instant feedback and builds a database for the DBE to assess levels of competency quickly and effectively.

“We are excited to be part of such a meaningful project. Ukufunda doesn’t only provide free access to great educational content, but is rather a holistic approach to learner and teacher well-being, focusing on psychosocial support, safety and wellness” said Herve Ludovic de Lys, head of office of Unicef South Africa. “It’s a giant leap forward in improving lines of communication and linking all stakeholders.”

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

We began our visit to Berlin by joining thousands of people on Sunday at the landmark rally at the Brandenburg Gate protesting against “Jew hatred”. This was both inspiring and disconcerting - disconcerting, because we have to ask why we are once again having to confront this kind of vile prejudice, a mere 75 years after the Second World War. Have the horrific lessons of that history still not been learned?

The inspiration came from the impressive line-up of influential German political and religious leaders who expressed outrage and condemnation of anti-Semitism in all its forms. Angela Merkel opened her speech with the reassuring promise: “That people in Germany are threatened and abused because of their Jewish appearance or their support for Israel, is an outrageous scandal that we won’t accept.”

Fighting anti-Semitism, she said, was a “national and civic duty”. Unfortunately, Germany is not the only country experiencing crude anti-Semitism, exacerbated by the Gaza conflict.

The WJC meeting has provided an opportunity for the leadership of world Jewry to discuss this scourge and their plans to combat it. It has

Worry of ‘crude anti-Semitism’

At the time of writing, I am participating in the Governing Board meeting of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Berlin. The intention of hosting the meeting in Berlin was to show solidarity with the local Jewish community, which is experiencing a renewed upsurge of hatred against them.

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The WJC meeting has provided an opportunity for the leadership of world Jewry to discuss this scourge and their plans to combat it. It has

showcased once again the incredible work and projects undertaken by the WJC, of which the SAJBD is an executive member.

One of the most significant initiatives, which is receiving a great deal of justified attention, is the growth of young Jewish political leaders. In this regard, I am thrilled to congratulate Marc Posniac from the SAJBD Gauteng Council, who has been elected chairman of the steering committee of the Jewish Diplomatic Corps.

I was sorry to miss an excellent Gauteng Conference last Sunday, and wish the incoming executive all the best for the coming year. I am looking forward to participating in the Cape Council Conference this weekend.

Need for heightened awareness

The Yamim Tovim are coming up, and in light of the steep rise of anti-Semitic activity in recent months, there is a need for heightened awareness on our part to ensure that proper security arrangements are in place.

The CSO, in close partnership with the police services, is as always pursuing this task with the utmost thoroughness and professionalism.

We all need to be constantly vigilant and report any activity that could be regarded as suspicious, and we also need to co-operate fully with the CSO.

This being the last issue of the SA Jewish Report before Yomtov, I take this opportunity on behalf of the SAJBD to wish our wonderful Jewish community of SA a happy and peaceful New Year and well over the Fast.

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

This column paid for by SA Jewish Board of Deputies

What is Rosh Hashanah?

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, a day of judgment and coronation, the sounding of the shofar...

The festival of Rosh Hashanah - the name means “Head of the Year” - is observed for two days beginning on 1 Tishrei, the first day of the Jewish year.

It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and their first actions toward the realisation of mankind’s role in G-d’s world.

Rosh Hashanah thus emphasises the special relationship between G-d and humanity: our dependence upon G-d as our Creator and sustainer, and G-d’s dependence upon us as the ones who make His presence known and felt in His world.

Each year on Rosh Hashanah, “all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep”, and it is decreed in the heavenly court “who shall live, and who shall die... who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise.” But this is also the day we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe is dependent upon the renewal of the divine desire for a world when we accept G-d’s kingship each year on Rosh Hashanah.

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the shofar, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king. The cry of

the shofar is also a call to repentance, for Rosh Hashanah is also the anniversary of man’s first sin and his repentance thereof, and serves as the first of the “Ten Days of Repentance” which culminate in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atone-ment.

Another significance of the shofar is to recall the Binding of Isaac which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah, in which a ram took Isaac’s place as an offering to G-d; we evoke Abraham’s readiness to sacrifice his son, and plead that the merit of his deed should stand by us as

we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity. Altogether, we listen to 100 shofar blasts over the course of the Rosh Hashanah services.

Additional Rosh Hashanah observances include:

- Eating a piece of apple dipped in honey, to symbolise our desire for a sweet year, and other special foods symbolic of the new year’s blessings.
- Blessing one another with the words “Leshanah tovah tikateiv veteichateim”. “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.”
- Tashlich, a special prayer said near a body of water (an ocean, river, pond, etc), in evocation of the verse, “And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea.” And as with every major Jewish holiday, after candle-lighting and prayers we recite kiddush and make a blessing on the challah.

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Mehadrin Commission

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Working with paradox part #3

Last week, in the second of our 3-part series on paradox, we discussed: Cutting our coats according to our cloth. This time...

Biting the hand that feeds you

This saying conveys the ultimate expression of betrayal and ingratitude. I wonder, as we stand in the days preceding Rosh Hashanah, how often G-d feels that way about us?

What is reassuring is that instead of repaying our lack of appreciation by withdrawing His support, He continues it, offering us instead the opportunity to repent - year after year. We, as a people, are tasked with emulating G-d's behaviour in our own small way.

But on the rare occasion that recipients of Chev assistance - irritated by things not going their way - repay the organisation's generosity by activating lawsuits against us, the temptation to discontinue help is strong.

A recent experience has involved us in literally hundreds of wasted hours delving through countless numbers of records going back numerous years. All this, in order to compile the massive report required for our defence against unjustified charges. To prove, in essence, that our adherence to



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Michael Sieff
Group CEO

protocols and record-keeping is meticulous, as required of us by professional and statutory bodies.

Added to the drain on energy and resources are the astronomical costs we could incur from acquiring legal and specialised representation to defend us.

I'm sure you will agree that it's difficult to feel kindly toward people who do this to the Chev. But at the end of the day it is our duty, as ambassadors of the Jewish community, to make proper and correct use of our offices. We must do what has to be done and reserve judgement (I suppose up to a point) as we aspire to follow G-d's example.

If we are succeeding in overcoming such temptations and nevertheless continuing to assist those who bite the hand that feeds them, then so are you, because we are partners. May we navigate life's paradoxes with strength and dignity!

In the merit of your immense loyalty and generosity, may you and yours be truly blessed with a year of peace, good health, prosperity and joy.

May our partnership continue to thrive!
Feedback@thechev.org.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

A column of WIZO South Africa

WIZO comes to the fore - again

These past three months have probably been one of the most traumatic and difficult in Israel's recent history. We were plunged into war by a ruthless and relentless enemy, who hold both their civilians and us hostage with their terrorist intentions.

WIZO came to the fore, shielding, feeding, accommodating and counselling hundreds of women and children who were evacuated from their homes bordering Gaza. WIZO youth villages opened their doors to entire communities such as Kibbutz Kfar Aza and Kibbutz Mefalsim, WIZO Nahalal and Nir Haemek took in about 300 evacuees and WIZO Hadassim hosted evacuees and a summer camp for 280 children from the south.

A group of intellectually disabled youth found a welcome respite at WIZO Gan Venof, where they were lovingly reassured by the staff, and another 40 women found a safe haven at Beit Heuss. The day care centres also found themselves under enormous pressure, as without extra volunteer staff, they could not move the children to the safety of the shelters in the 90 seconds after the sirens sounded.

The WIZO federations throughout the world have pledged incredible support and I thank all our WIZO supporters in South Africa who answered our emergency appeal. I enclose part of a letter received by WIZO from a mother who was evacuated from the South.

"I do not think it is possible to convey in a letter, or by word of mouth, the fear that we feel at the sound of rockets, or the interceptions. I do not know how to gauge what that



WIZO South Africa
Tamar Lazarus
President

fear is doing to my own girls, and to children in general. My daughters refuse to leave the shelter, due to fear. They are smart, funny, happy and full of love - and fear.

Maybe they will only be fearful in the near future, but perhaps fear will become part of their personality - a function of the ongoing unsettled security situation, which, apparently at the moment, is irreversible.

Eventually, we packed our belongings and headed, along with other members of the community, to WIZO Nahalal.

We were received with open arms and the sense of community grew as we shared our experiences. At the

end of our stay in Nahalal, we were referred to WIZO Hadassim which also provided us with superb accommodation.

Thank you for your solidarity, understanding and friendship during the time when we need it so much. We arrived with emotional depression and you gave us a warm home and took care of our needs. We have become empowered with the recognition that we are not alone. We came to protect our children and our children tasted solidarity, brotherhood, goodwill and generosity."

WIZO is a role model for us and is the standard-bearer when it comes to Zionism and humanity.

The hostilities have ended but the trauma to disrupted lives will take long to heal. We urge every woman to become a member of WIZO and to show solidarity with Israel through this gesture.

I take this opportunity to wish you all Shana Tova, a safe and blessed New Year and Well over the Fast.

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ABCs of Elul

RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS

If you had an important court date scheduled - one that would determine your financial future, or even your very life - you'd be sure to prepare for weeks beforehand.

On Rosh Hashanah, each individual is judged on the merit of his deeds. Whether he will

live out the year or not. Whether he will have financial success or ruin. Whether he will be healthy or ill. All of these are determined on Rosh Hashanah.

Elul begins a period of intensive introspection, of clarifying life's goals, and coming closer to G-d. It is a time for realising purpose in life - rather than going through the motions of living



Wishing you a happy and sweet new year. Go forward into the new year in peace, good health and prosperity.

With best wishes,

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by amassing money and seeking gratification.

We step back and look at ourselves honestly, as Jews have from time immemorial, with the intention of improving. The four Hebrew letters of the word Elul (aleph-lamed-vav-lamed) are the first letters of the four words Ani l'dodi v'dodi lee - "I am to my Beloved and my Beloved is to me" (Song of Songs 6:3), sum up the relationship between G-d and His people.

In other words, the month preceding Rosh Hashanah is a time when G-d reaches out to us, in an effort to create a more spiritually-inspiring atmosphere, one that stimulates teshuva.

Slichot: Beginning on Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah, we recite "Slichot", a special series of prayers that invoke G-d's mercy. If Rosh Hashanah falls at the beginning of the week, then "Slichot" begin on the Saturday night of the previous week. (Sefardim begin saying "Slichot" on Rosh Chodesh Elul.)

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses asked G-d to explain His system for relating with the world. G-d's answer, known as the "13 Attributes of Mercy", forms the essence of the "Slichot" prayers.

The "13 Attributes" speak of "G-d's patience." The same G-d Who created us with a clean slate and a world of opportunity, gives us another opportunity if we've misused the first one.

"Slichot" should be said with a minyan. If this is not possible, then "Slichot" should still be said alone, omitting the parts in Aramaic and the "13 Attributes of Mercy".

Finally, the most important aspect of Elul is to make a plan for your life. Because when the Big Day comes, and each individual stands before the A-mighty to ask for another year, we'll want to know what we're asking for!

Additions to the services: Beginning the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, it is the Ashkenazi custom to blow the shofar every morning after prayers, in order to awaken us for the coming Day of Judgement. The shofar's wailing sound inspires us to use the opportunity of Elul to its fullest.

Also beginning in Elul, we say Psalm 27 in the morning and evening services. In this Psalm, King David exclaims: "One thing I ask... is to dwell in the house of G-d all the days of my life." we focus on the unifying force of G-d in our lives, and strive to increase our connection to the infinite transcendent dimension.

40-day period: Rewind 3 000 years to the Sinai Desert. G-d has spoken the Ten Commandments, and the Jews have built the Golden Calf. Moses desperately pleads with G-d to spare the nation.

On the first day of Elul, Moses ascends Mount Sinai, and 40 days later - on the seminal Yom Kippur - he returned to the people, with a new, second set of stone tablets in hand.

For us as well, the month of Elul begins a 40-day period that culminates in the year's holiest day, Yom Kippur.

Why 40? Forty is a number of cleansing and purification. Noah's Flood rains lasted 40 days, and the mikvah - the ritual purification bath - contains 40 measures of water.

Elul is an enormous opportunity. During this time, many people increase their study of Torah and performance of good deeds. And many also do a daily cheshbon - an accounting of spiritual profit and loss.

Events of the year 2448: Many of the Jewish holidays are based on the events of one crucial year in Jewish history -- 2448, or 1312 BCE.

About 3 300 years ago, in the Jewish year 2448, the Jewish people were freed from slavery in Egypt, following the plague of the First Born. The date was the 15th of Nissan, the first Passover celebration. One week later, with the Egyptian troops in full chase, the Red Sea split - and the Jewish people walked through on dry land. This occurred on the seventh and final day of the Passover holiday.

Ten Commandments and Mount Sinai - Fifty days later, on the holiday of Shavuot, G-d gave the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai. At Sinai, the Jews regained the immortal level of Adam and Eve.

Moses' first ascent - Following the revelation, Moses went up Mount Sinai to learn more details of the Torah directly from G-d. At the end of 40 days, G-d handed Moses two sapphire tablets of identical shape and size, upon which the Ten Commandments were engraved.

The Golden Calf - On the 16th of Tammuz, when Moses had not yet returned from the mountain, the Jewish people began to panic. They sought a new "leader" and built the Golden Calf. Immediately, the Clouds of Glory, the divine protection of G-d departed.

The Jews had relinquished their spiritual greatness and become mortal again. On the 17th of Tammuz, Moses came down from the mountain, smashed the Tablets, destroyed the Calf, and punished the transgressors.

Moses' second ascent - On the 19th of Tammuz, Moses ascended Mount Sinai again to plead for the lives of the Jewish people. He prayed with great intensity, and after 40 days, G-d agreed to spare the Jewish people in the merit of their forefathers. On the last day of Av, Moses returned to the people. Their lives were spared, but the sin was not yet forgiven.

Moses' third and final ascent - he ascended Mount Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Elul and stayed in the heavenly camp for 40 days (bringing the total number of days spent there to 120).

Henceforth, the month of Elul became a special time for drawing close to G-d. At the end of the 40 days, on the 10th of Tishrei, G-d agreed to mete out the punishment for the Golden Calf over many generations. He then gave Moses a new, second set of Tablets.

Moses came down from the mountain with good news for the people: The reunification was complete, and the relationship restored. Thereafter, the 10th of Tishrei was designated as a day of forgiveness for all future generations: Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Midrashic Sources: Exodus Rabba 32:7, 51:8; Tanchuma - Ki Tisa 35

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What's On

SA JEWISH REPORT 39

Today, Friday (September 19)

- UZLC hosts John Cranko on “A Violin Recital”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.
- Chabad’s Goodness and Kindness Centre has a “Grand Raffle” with fabulous prizes to help raise funds for the Torah. Prizes include a Diamond Ring valued R28 000, silver candl sticks valued R8 000, a weekend away for two at Bhubaneswar Lodge valued at R4 000 and more. Cost: tickets at R200 per entry. Draw will take place in late October. Contact: 079-434-1293.

Friday (September 19)

- Chabad’s Goodness and Kindness Centre has a daily Mincha/Maariv at the centre in Sandton. Time: 17:30. Learn with a rabbi between 17:00 and 19:00. Information: Rabbi Ari Kievman 079-434-1293 orrak@chabad.org.za

Sunday (September 21)

- The Majestic Film Society screens “Roman Polanski - a Film Memoir” introduced by film commentator Selwyn Klass. Venue: The Ditsong Museum of Military History. Time 18:00. The film will be followed by an English style tea with light refreshments. Bookings: majestic@telkomsa.net or (011) 486-3648.
- Johannesburg Light Music Society features presenter Mike Kimmelman on “A Tribute to Frankie Laine” who passed away in 2013 and the second presenter Tricia Gallagher presents “A Couple of Song and Dance Men”. After interval a movie will be screened. Venue: Roosevelt Park Recreation Centre. Time: 14:00 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn, 072-243-7436 or Jack, 082-450-7622.

World Alzheimer’s Day. Enerjoy is launching a free introductory seminar, “Family Skills Training (supported by LifeLine)”, for families of people with Alzheimer’s and dementia. Venue: LifeLine Conference Centre, 2 The Avenue, Norwood. Time: 14:30 - 17:30.RSVP: (by Wednesday September 17) to Diana Hughes (011) 447-0128; Shem Bolel 082-465-5242 or Tessa O’Grady: tessa@enerjoy.co.za

• SAZF Joe Green Audiovisual Library will

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

be screening the movie “The Garden of the Finzi Contini”(with English subtitles). Venue: Beyachad Auditorium. Time: 14:30. Donation: R35. Bookings: library@beyachad.co.za, tel (011) 645-2567 or (011) 645-2557.

• Second Innings hosts Shani Krebs on “Dragons and Butterflies - Sentenced to Die, Choosing to Live”. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Hylton Marks, (011) 532-9616.

Monday (September 22)

- UJW hosts Janet Smith, executive editor of “The Star”, on: “How Safe is a Free Media in South Africa today?” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: UJW office, (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (September 24)


- Chabad’s Goodness and Kindness Centre has free Rosh Hashanah services in central Sandton. No membership, background or affiliation necessary, English/Hebrew prayer books. Also children’s programmes and brochas after shul, Evenings 17:45, mornings 09:30. Information: 079-434-1293or rak@chabad.org.z www.SandtonCentral.org.za

Thursday (September 25)

- Chabad’s Goodness and Kindness Centre hosts “Tashlich & Shofar” ceremony in Mushroom Park, Sandton at 17:00. Gather in the park for a moment of noise and reflection. Information: 079-434-1293 or rak@chabad.org.z www.SandtonCentral.org.za

Wednesday (October 1)

- JWBS’s book sale at Benmore Gardens Shopping Centre. Information: Gloria, tel and fax (011) 485-5232.



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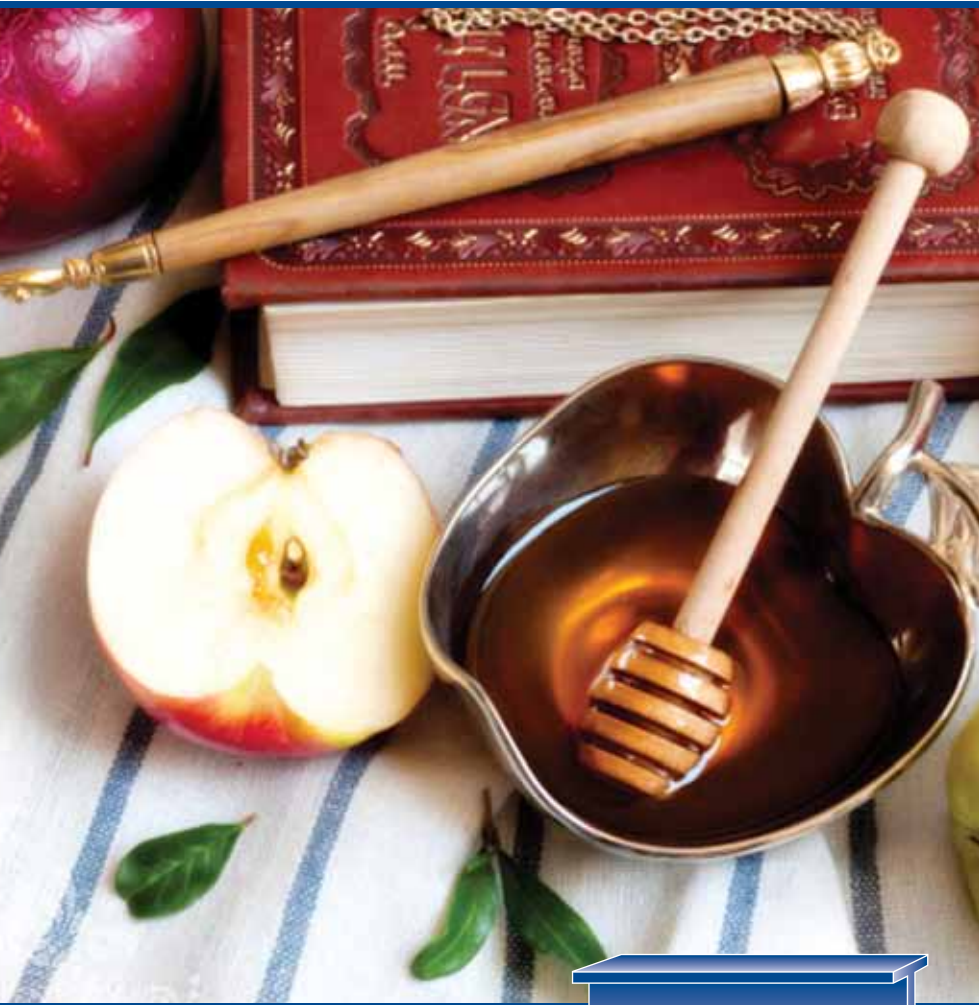
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Speechly looking to end welterweight curse

A movie that came out in 1980, in South Africa called *Flying High*, but *Airplane* everywhere else, has a scene in which a nervous passenger asks the stewardess for some light reading. She brings him a pamphlet titled “Famous Jewish Sports Legends”.

L'Shanah Tovah

Wishing you health, happiness and success in the New Year!



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JACK MILNER

How times have changed! So many years later there is suddenly a plethora of top Jewish athletes in so many sports. Many Jews have played a role in the administration of sports or owned some of the clubs. In fact, Sigmund Freud once remarked that the Jewish community did not prioritise “harmonious development of spiritual and bodily activity”.

In the late 1990s in South Africa, as people like Mandy Yachad and Lawrence Seeff were reaching the end of their playing careers, not too many Jewish sportsmen entered the professional ranks. A lot had to do with the change in South Africa where many experts believed there was no longer space for a white sportsman, let alone a Jewish one.

In Israel and the US, the redistribution of people from the former Soviet Union played a major part in raising the level of Jewish sportsmen and women. Jewish boxers such as Dmitri Salita and Yuri Foreman made an impact on the international scene.

But one area in South African that has attracted Jewish interest, is Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and Adam Speechly has to be one the best exponents of this sport in the country.

Nicknamed “the Prodigy”, the 25-year-old is the current and two-time Extreme Fighting Championship (EFC) welterweight champion, a title he won last month when he defeated the holder, Nigerian-born, Ireland-based Henry “Herculeez” Fadipe, in a unanimous points decision.

Adam, who weighs in at 170 pounds and fights in the welterweight division, has now had 11 EFC fights of which he has won seven and lost four.

Fadipe went into last month’s bout as the bookies’ favourite with a string of devastating finishes behind him. Popular sentiment was that he was unbeatable, but Adam believed that was not true.

Adam, who was EFC’s first-ever welterweight champion, came in with a strategy of dominant grappling and executed it to perfection - nullifying Fadipe’s dangerous finishing capabilities.



Adam Speechly will be looking to become the first man ever to successfully defend the EFC welterweight title when he comes up against David Buirski at the Coca Cola Dome on December 11.

The “Prodigy” survived a series of powerful submission attempts from the champion and weathered an armbar that nearly hyper-extended his elbow, to grind “Herculeez” out of the fight by unanimous decision.

In so doing, Adam continued the fabled welterweight curse, a pattern he began by losing the very same belt on his first title defence over three years ago. The welterweight belt has still never been successfully defended. It now falls to Adam to end what he started.

That fight will be coming up on December 11, live from the Coca Cola Dome in Johannesburg - the last event of the year. Adam has signed to face World of Warriors’ David Buirski, the oldest and most experienced of the Buirski brothers, and the No 1 welterweight contender.

Fight fans from around the world will be waiting to see whether the new year will usher in a new champion and whether Adam will finally be able to break the welterweight curse.



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