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Photo: Paul Fisher

Mobilising for change

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, flanked by Sipho Pityana, leader of Save SA
and Mosiuoa Lekota, leader of COPE, leading the march to Parliament.

SA trying to derail Africa-Israel summit

RAPHAEL AHREN

Israel this week played down pro-Palestinian efforts to obstruct an upcoming Africa-Israel summit in Togo, with officials expressing confidence that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet with many African leaders keen on promoting political and economic ties with the Jewish state there.

Togo is set to invite all 54 countries on the continent to the event, which is scheduled for October 23-27 in the capital Lome. But the Palestinians, Morocco and South Africa, are actively seeking to derail the gathering, African and Israeli sources said.

“This is not taking place without contrary pressure,” Netanyahu said during last Sunday’s weekly Cabinet meeting, referring to the Africa-Israel Summit. “Various pressures have been placed on the Togolese president to cancel the conference. These pressures are the best testimony to the success of our policy, of Israel’s presence in Africa.”

South Africa, like Morocco, appears eager to derail the summit. The country’s ruling party, the African National Congress, last month issued a “discussion document” calling for efforts to sabotage Israel’s rapprochement with African

states in general and the planned meeting in Lome in particular. “[W]e have remained consistent with our solidarity with the people of Palestine in their cause to realise the Palestinian Statehood. We cannot turn a blind eye on Israeli efforts to galvanise support from Africa and elsewhere with a view to undermine the Palestinian cause,” the document states.

Noting that Netanyahu has visited

“The efforts by the Palestinians, the Moroccans, and the South Africans to sabotage the planned summit in Togo are doomed to fail,” a senior diplomatic official in Jerusalem said on Monday.

several African countries in recent months “to garner support for its foreign policy towards Palestine,” the party should “engage progressive forces on the continent on the need to develop a common position and posture in preparation for the upcoming Israeli-Africa Summit scheduled for October 2017 in Togo.”

But Israel this week showed no signs of panic.

“The efforts by the Palestinians, the Moroccans, and the South Africans to sabotage the planned summit in Togo are doomed to fail,” a senior diplomatic official in Jerusalem said on Monday. “We expect the prime minister to meet many African leaders there and to significantly advance his goal of fostering a stronger Africa-Israel alliance.”

Netanyahu is expected to be the only non-African leader to take a central role in the conference. The schedule for the gathering has not been finalised, but the prime minister is likely to address the entire gathering and hold one-on-one meetings with leaders.

Netanyahu is due to host Togo’s President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe in Jerusalem on Monday.

Between 20 and 25 African heads of state and government, plus dozens of ministers with various portfolios, are expected at the four-day conference, according to Bruno Finel, the event’s organiser.

“Preparations are going very well. You will have approximately 150 Israeli companies attending the summit, about a dozen from West Africa and also many from Central and East Africa,” he said.

There is a “strong possibility” that even senior officials from countries with which Israel has no diplomatic ties will attend, Finel added. “On one side, it’s about politics and diplomacy, and on the other side it’s business. We want to promote a partnership between Africa and Israel.”

Before the politicians and businessmen gather, some 100 African students will meet with 30 Israeli students for the first-ever African-Israeli youth summit, he said.

Under the motto “Israel is coming back to Africa and Africa is coming back to Israel”, Netanyahu has declared diplomatic outreach to Africa as one of his key foreign policy objectives.

Offering African states development aid, economic co-operation, and anti-terrorism know-how, Netanyahu aims to use support from the continent to break the traditional anti-Israel majority in international organisations like the UN.

Last week, Cape Verde announced it will no longer vote against Israel at the UN. On Tuesday, Senegal and Guinea - two Muslim-majority countries in West Africa - sent their first-ever non-resident ambassadors to Israel.

Naturally, Ramallah is dismayed about the prospects of Israel strengthening ties with countries that have traditionally been staunch supporters of the Palestinian cause.

Morocco is leading the opposition to the planned Africa-Israeli conference. Rabat, like Jerusalem, has identified Africa’s economic potential and is now worried about competition from Israel, according to two sources.

“Morocco wants to become a superpower, and they understand that Africa is a major market for them,” an African source said, asking to remain unnamed due to the sensitive nature of the issue.

Parshat Eikev

Dynamite comes in small packages

We are all familiar with the overused cliché about the power of what one small deed can achieve.

Paradoxically, because this cliché is so overused, one can become desensitised as to the true power and infinite value of a so-called “trivial and minor deed”.

Thus, the question needs to be asked: Does a regular person’s deeds which are small in scale and are known to very few, have any real lasting impact, or is it only enormous and immense activities by famous people that transform our world?

In the first verse of this week’s parsha, Moses speaks to the Jewish People, inspiring them to greater levels of faith and trust in Hashem. He elaborates on the bountiful blessings that will accrue to them if they follow this path.

“And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances, and your observing and performing them; then Hashem your G-d will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers” (Devarim Chapter 7 verse 12).

The second word in this particular verse is “Eikev”. Many commentaries point out that we would have expected the verse to say: “And it will be if you listen to these ordinances...” (“im” in Hebrew).

Nevertheless, Rashi explains according to the Midrash that the word “Eikev” is used instead of “im” to teach us a deep and transformative lesson.

The word “Eikev” has the same grammatical root as the word heel in Hebrew. When Jacob and Esau were being born, the verse says concerning Jacob: “After that, his brother emerged with his hand grasping onto the heel (Ba-eikev) of Esau (Genesis Chapter 25 verse 26).

Rashi explains that by using the word “Eikev” which also means heel, the Torah is alluding to commandments that people may regard as relatively unimportant in their worldview and they figuratively trample on them with their heels.

However, it is precisely by observing these seemingly “insignificant and unnoticeable” commandments that guarantees a future full of blessing and success, which the parsha goes on to detail.

Nobody makes the front-page news by being friendly and wishing the cashier a hearty “Good morning” at the supermarket. There are no headlines for the person who knows his best friend is in crushing financial debt and quietly ensures his friend has money so that the family can enjoy a Shabbos or Yomtov meal.

Yet each one of us intuitively knows and understands that performing deeds such as these bring unlimited blessing and goodness into the world. We should be justifiably proud at how we are affecting ourselves, our families and our community in such a positive way by performing “small” acts of goodness such as these.

The parsha this week is educating us that “trivial” acts of goodness seem insignificant, but nothing could be further from the truth. Although there is no fame or expensive plaques to testify to the greatness of these so-called “small” acts, Hashem, who is Almighty and Eternal, is watching and taking note of what we do.

As a result of our actions, He rewards us in ways that we cannot even begin to fathom.

Dynamite really does come in small packages. Realise that when you do a “minor” and “insignificant” deed, you are revolutionising the world in the most profound way and are actively bringing it to its absolute perfection. There is no greater accomplishment than that.



Rabbi Shmuel Bloch

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17:11	18.03	Durban
17:31	18:23	Bloemfontein
17:27	18:20	Port Elizabeth
17:19	18:12	East London

South African

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Viva Chief Rabbi, viva!

NICOLA MILTZ

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein was one of the first speakers to take to the podium outside Parliament on Tuesday in front of thousands of people supporting the vote of no confidence in President Jacob Zuma.

Despite enormous disappointment in the aftermath of the unsuccessful vote to dismantle the president from power, Rabbi Goldstein told the crowds in the hours leading up to it, that he was hopeful of South Africa’s future.

“Friends I have got hope that we will build a great country together. I have got hope in the future of our beloved South Africa. I will tell you why I have got hope. Look around you. Look at the great people of this country.

“We are a nation of heroes, G-d-fearing, ethical, good people of courage and boldness and tenacity,” he shouted.

To rapturous applause he roused the crowd with words of hope and encouragement for the nation.

It was an eventful day of high drama and debate between the political parties in Parliament culminating in National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete announcing with apparent relief: “That concludes the business of the day.” Parliament voted 177 (yes) to 198 (no) with nine abstentions to keep the president in power, despite growing and rampant corruption and unprecedented levels of unhappiness in his leadership.

The outcome of the vote was almost secondary to the spirit of unity and positivity generated by thousands of anti-Zuma supporters countrywide who had gathered together to watch MPs debate a motion of no confidence in the leadership of Zuma ahead of the secret ballot.

Thousands of people from across the political spectrum, including members of civil society and all faith groups, came together in solidarity as one nation united behind the call for the country’s captured president to step down.

Said Rabbi Goldstein: “South



The Chief Rabbi addressing thousands of people outside Parliament on Tuesday.

Africans are good people and we deserve a better president than we have... We deserve an ethical president and that’s why I’m quite confident in the future of this country because we are good people created in the image of G-d and we can do great things together because South Africans are great!”

Explaining why he was hopeful for the future, the rabbi said: “We’ve got the greatest gift that G-d can give a human being... We have

the gift of freedom! We have the gift of freedom that we can come in the streets and stand next to the Parliament building and we can tell the president to go, and we can tell the members of parliament to vote with their conscience and we can come together as South Africans in freedom, and the police are protecting us because we are South African citizens and we deserve freedom!”

He ended loudly emphasising:

“When you have freedom and you have great people, you can accomplish anything. And so, we have a great and glorious future ahead of us and we know that G-d will bless us. That our Father in heaven will look down upon us with mercy and will bless us because we deserve the blessing and will bless us because we are a great nation.”

The crowds chanted Viva Chief Rabbi, viva!

Australian synagogue construction halted on terror grounds

JTA AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

A municipal council in a suburb of Australia’s largest city, said it was not to blame for a decision to ban the construction of a synagogue, because it could become the target of a terrorist attack.

In a recent statement, the Waverley Council asserted that the decision to reject the synagogue was made by a local land use court, which said the congregation had not addressed the security concerns raised by the congregation in its development application. “Waverley Council did not refuse this development application,” the council said. “It was a decision of the Land and Environment Court and confirms that a synagogue is a permitted use at this location.”

The Chabad congregation, known as Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe (FREE) sought to build a synagogue near the popular Bondi Beach in suburban Sydney. It called the application’s rejection, on the grounds that it posed a “potential risk to users and other members of the general public”, a reward for terrorism.

According to the council, FREE submitted a risk analysis report prepared by a

counterterrorism consultant as part of its development application. The report described a number of potential risks and threats to the synagogue. The council noted that FREE sought a ruling from the Land and Environment Court, which ruled that the potential risks were not sufficiently addressed.

“The Waverley community is enriched by our diverse faiths and places of worship, including our synagogues,” the council said in its statement. “Waverley Council has a strong history of partnerships with the Jewish community and will continue to work closely with the Jewish community and Jewish organisations.”

One of Waverley’s three Jewish councillors, Leon Goltsman, told JTA: “The record shows exactly how much this council actually does for the Jewish community, and it’s distressing the way mainstream media is so quick to jump onto a story without first researching the facts.”

Community leaders were nevertheless shocked by the decision, with a FREE spokesman calling it “unprecedented.

“Its implications are enormous,” the spokesman, Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, told news.com.au. “It basically implies that no Jewish organisation should be allowed to exist

“This issue will not end here, given the way it appears to fly in the face of religious freedom, human rights and common sense,” he said.

in residential areas. It stands to stifle Jewish existence and activity in Sydney and indeed, by creating a precedent, the whole of Australia, and by extension rewarding terrorism.”

Other Jewish leaders echoed the alarm, calling the decision unacceptable and disturbing.

Peter Wertheim, the executive director of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, told the Times of Israel the decision was “perplexing as it is concerning.

“The threat of Islamist terrorism is directed at everyone, not only the Jewish community. Are we going to stop building churches and Hindu temples in our suburbs, simply because they might become the targets of Islamist terrorists? Are we going to stop building mosques simply because they might become the targets of anti-Muslim extremists?” he said.

Wertheim suggested that “the correct way to deal with threats from terrorists is to take sensible security precautions, but otherwise maintain our way of life” and predicted that “the owners of the site will not give up, and will use every legal means available to pursue the project”.

Jeremy Jones, the director of International and of Community Affairs for the Australia/ Israel & Jewish Affairs Council, said it was “a despicable way to address serious issues of terrorism and anti-Semitism.

“This issue will not end here, given the way it appears to fly in the face of religious freedom, human rights and common sense,” he said.

Vic Alhadeff of the local regional Jewish organisation, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, echoed those feelings when he said: “It’s a very sad day for Australia if an established community, which needs a house of worship, is refused permission to build it because of fear that others may pose a threat.

“In today’s climate, many communities are required to take security precautions, as are public institutions such as police, emergency departments, government buildings and a range of other facilities,” Alhadeff said. “The ruling sets a very dangerous precedent.”

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‘For Judaism to survive, it has to get out of the shtetl’

NICOLA MILTZ

Love him or shun him, Modern Orthodox Rabbi Dr Shmuly Yanklowitz is an extraordinary human being whose controversial views are a spiritual thorn in the establishment’s side.

He is a vegan, a kidney organ donor, a thrice-ordained Orthodox rabbi, a Masters graduate of Harvard University with a doctorate from Colombia University, an author of at least nine books and an animal rights activist.

Suffice to say, Yanklowitz is not your average Orthodox rabbi. He is one of America’s most influential rabbis with a potent message for global social justice and a burning yearning for social reform.

And he’s in South Africa to speak, inspire and to teach. But only to those who are brave enough to stomach it and broadminded enough to digest it.

Rabbi Yanklowitz is not a conformist. He is a “freethinker” and his open support of gay marriage has landed him in hot water with traditional Orthodoxy.

So much so, he is often maligned. But this does not stop him from airing his views. He is a man on a spiritual mission and believes strongly that no matter what the outcome, “I need to say what I need to say”.

He openly advocates for inclusivity at every level. Speaking from his Johannesburg host family in Linksfield this week, he told the SA Jewish Report: “The Torah can only survive in the 21st century if we not only keep our Judaism rooted but also enable it to progress.

“We need to come out of the shtetl and embrace others and be more inclusive. Only by opening our minds and hearts to new opportunities can Judaism truly survive. If we remain closed we will alienate the next generation of Jews and will make it impossible to bring about the redemption of the world.”

The dynamic and good-looking Rabbi Yanklowitz, 36, believes that the Orthodox establishment is governed by fear.

“The Orthodox places enormous

emphasis on taking care of fellow Jews, which is beautiful, but it’s to the exclusion of other members of society. We look after ourselves but we have a lot to learn from other communities of Jews and gentiles.

“The Orthodox today needs to transition from a fear-based mentality. We need not be afraid of other types of Jews or secular wisdom, but rather see that we have a lot to learn from modernity and a lot to contribute. To foster a just society, we need to view Torah as a vehicle not only to connect with G-d and build Jewish communities, but also to repair society.

The way to overcome this fear is through trust and relationship building, he says.

“Through our relationships with other types of Jews and gentiles and modern society at large, we will come to realise that the Torah can only be actualised by transcending fear into love.”

He said everyone he has met in South Africa has been “incredibly welcoming and keen to collaborate”.

“The Orthodox community here is eager to learn more about the type of Modern Orthodoxy that I’m involved with,” however, he said “the establishment” has “not engaged” with him.

At the time of going to press he said: “I have emailed the Chief Rabbi but have had no response.”

“The Orthodox community here is eager to learn more about the type of Modern Orthodoxy that I’m involved with,” however, he said “the establishment” has “not engaged” with him.

“It is important that Orthodox rabbis go to places like Limmud and not be afraid to learn and ponder with other groups and initiatives. Rabbis should not be afraid of leading in their own way, should not submit to conformity but rather they should

Rabbi dr Shmuly Yanklowitz



courageously bring their Torah that they’ve learnt to the Jewish community and lead in their own unique way.”

He said the South African Jewish community was “spiritually hungry for a more open, and inclusive Jewish culture”.

This week he has wowed small intimate audiences with his talks on a wide range of topics including: organ donation from an ethical, spiritual, and medical point of view. He spoke on “ethical consumption” exploring the relationship between ethics and kashrut. And he spoke about Jewish social ethics in our time.

Rabbi Shmuly is the founder and president of Uri L’Tzedek, a Jewish organisation focused on combating

social injustice through education, leadership development, and activism. The organisation covers so many issues from gun control, human trafficking, conflict-free diamonds to immigration.

He is also the founder and director of Shamayim V’Aretz, a Jewish animal welfare organisation focused on animal rights that leads campaigns and educates leaders within the Jewish community about veganism and the way it correlates to Jewish morals and values.

He believes being vegan does not conflict with being religious, it “brings into practice religious ideals of compassion” he says. He went fully vegan with his wife, Shoshana, on their wedding day. Since then,

they have been working to help educate others about the realities of the various exploitive industries, the suffering animals endure within these industries, and the various alternatives people can follow in order to avoid supporting atrocities inflicted on animals.

“The animal kingdom is the most abused of all sentient beings. By protecting the most vulnerable creatures on earth, we return the holiness to our world by bringing Shamayim back down to the Aretz, by bringing heaven back down to earth,” he says.

Rabbi Shmuly, his wife Shoshana and their three children and foster child, live in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Fridjhon’s stroke stops ‘My Name is Asher Lev’

PETER FELDMAN

The highly acclaimed theatrical production of My Name is Asher Lev, was brought to an abrupt halt in Johannesburg when lead actor Robert Fridjhon suffered a stroke.

Well-known actor Fridjhon (48), who was playing the title role in the Chaim Potok play, collapsed with a stroke while driving in Johannesburg last week. All performances of the highly acclaimed production at Pieter Toerien’s Montecasino Theatre had to be cancelled.

Anthony, Robert’s father, who is also a celebrated actor and voice-over artist, told SA Jewish Report that just before lunchtime last Wednesday, Robert was driving and stopped at the corner of Kingfisher Drive and Witkoppen Road in Fourways because he felt dizzy.

He opened the car door and fell out into the

road where a couple, who were driving behind him, got out of their vehicle to see what was wrong.

As they were helping him, according to Anthony, a nurse also stopped, took one look at him, and said that he had had a stroke.

An ambulance was immediately summoned and he was taken to Olivedale Hospital, where he was admitted. He spent two days in ICU and is slowly recovering in High Care.

Anthony praised the complete strangers who came to his son’s rescue. “There are still good people in the world,” he said. He also lavished praise on the hospital’s doctors and staff whom he said were “outstanding”.

Said Anthony: “The stroke had occurred in the right side of the brain so his left arm and leg are affected, although luckily not his face. He does have a slight speech impediment, though. He is still being sedated and sleeping a

Robert Fridjhon



lot, which is good.”

Anthony said that at this stage they are asking that only family visit him and they will keep everyone informed of his progress via Facebook.

Anthony’s Facebook page went crazy after he announced what had befallen his son, and messages of support and offers of help came pouring in from all over the country.

Mark Sage, manager of Pieter Toerien’s Montecasino Theatre, said the Johannesburg performances of the play had been cancelled and was unlikely to be rescheduled.

My Name is Asher Lev, about a New York artist who is conflicted between his passion for art and his religion, also featured Alan Swerdlow and Louise Saint-Claire.

Sage added that the play is scheduled for Cape Town in September and it will be necessary to recast the lead role.

Bertie Lubner vindicated by former president

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Bertie Lubner never gave money to further the apartheid dream, it was all for abolishing the apartheid system, according to former President FW de Klerk.

Responding to media reports based on the book “Apartheid Guns and Money: A Tale of Profit” written by Hennie van Vuuren, that Lubner had contributed to the National Party, De Klerk told the SA Jewish Report this week that Bertie and others who had given in the 80s had done so “because they supported fundamental and far-reaching reform. They did not support apartheid, they supported the abolition of apartheid.

“They supported a new constitutional dispensation on which the National Party had embarked under PW Botha. I was part of the team and after PW Botha, under me.”

In a personal letter to Bertie Lubner’s son Marc dated August 7, he wrote: “I regard the attack on your father’s integrity as an undeserved smear of a man who at all times stood for a better

life for all the people of South Africa.

“In general, and in particular with regard to your father, it is simply not true that he and the other people mentioned in the article supported apartheid.”

De Klerk – who knew Lubner well – said his impression of his political stance over the years was that “he always stood for the best interests of all South Africans and for a more open society and he was supporting the initiatives which the National Party was taking towards that and not the maintenance of the old system.”

Lubner was reported, along with his brother Ronnie and associate Lucien Levy, to have had dinner with PW Botha in June, 1982 and later to have written him a letter of thanks for “a very wonderful evening”. While De Klerk has no knowledge of that event, he cautioned against rushing to judgement but rather to view events in the context of the times.

“One must acknowledge that in ‘82 – that was at the time of the split of the National Party when the right-wing broke away because PW Botha was embarking on far-reaching

fundamental reform which resulted in the three-chamber parliament and the appointment of the President’s Council, which had to deal with the future of black political rights.

“Bertie was supporting that,” he stressed, “and not the maintenance of the old suppressive system which was wrong and for which I and many others have apologised.”

De Klerk confirmed what Lubner had related to the book’s author in January 2016 when asked about his support for the then ruling party – the fact that he had made it clear to several government ministers, including De Klerk, when asked to join the National Party, that as a Jew he could not do so.

Would De Klerk say that rather than supporting apartheid, Lubner constructively engaged with government to encourage the reform process? “Absolutely!” was his unequivocal reply.



The Bobroffs frustrate court proceedings

ANT KATZ

It used to be when you heard the name Bobroff, you thought of personal injury lawyers, but today when people hear the surname they think of scandal and long court cases.

“Despite repeated admonitions from several judges, (they) persisted in using every possible avenue to delay, frustrate and avoid facing up to the serious charges of a practice-wide conduct of (overcharging) clients, contravening the Contingency Fees Act... and other unprofessional, dishonourable and even fraudulent conduct,” said Judge Natvarlal Ranchod in the Pretoria High Court last month.

The judge was spelling out the reasons for the decision to strike the names of father-and-son personal injury lawyers Ronald and Darren Bobroff, off the role of attorneys.

“In so far as the Bobroffs are concerned,” Ranchod said, “the only appropriate sanction was to strike their names...”

His judgment listed a litany of professional misdemeanours by the Bobroffs and holds them accountable for most of the costs.

While he acknowledged that the Bobroffs’ “unethical conduct warranted them to pay the bulk of the legal costs”, it said the Law Society should also “feel the brunt of its omission to act sooner”.

in paperwork.

The pair, who have been provisionally sequestered, are hampering the case by filing an ever-growing pile of papers, says Millar. They have filed another 174 pages of evidence which required applicants to file another 94-page affidavit in reply.

Millar, a former president of the Law Society, issued a scathing attack, accusing the Bobroffs of having “a stratagem to overwhelm not only the applicants, but also this Honourable Court with papers so as to obfuscate the issues and frustrate the legal process”.

They are “not content for the matter to be adjudicated on the papers that have been already filed”, he says, but rather “persist in filing further affidavits” and introducing new matters.

Millar “question(s) the bona fides” of the Bobroffs and says that “three points emerge clearly from the Bobroffs’ further affidavits”: the whereabouts of Darren Bobroff and concealment of assets; the refusal to properly respond to a notice served in June; and the role of Ronald’s wife, Elaine.

Millar says he believes the Bobroffs are “living off the

proceeds of monies sent from South Africa to Australia” and “all the assets that the (Bobroffs) have in Australia, originate from South Africa” and should form part of the insolvent estates in this country.

Apart from the painstakingly slow final sequestration process, the Bobroffs are also integral to several other legal matters before the courts, including:

- Forensic consultant Paul O’Sullivan and Melissa Naidu’s kidnap and extortion trial in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court, which began in March. Their alleged victim was Bobroff employee and whistle-blower, Cora van der Merwe. This trial resumes on September 14; and
- The Bobroffs are also being sued for millions of rand by attorneys and reporters who accuse them of slander.

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Jewish Report

The true meaning of community



What is it that makes us a community? We have so many different strands, political and religious opinions, perspectives and histories. We are a diverse bunch of people who share particular aspects of our identity and belief systems. So much the same and yet so much is different!

Last weekend I witnessed us as a true community. I went to my first Limmud weekend and in the space of two and a half days, I saw what was possible for us. I saw the best in us. I saw the potential for our future...

I witnessed Jews from all walks of life, political persuasions, along the irreligious to frum-frum sliding scale, Orthodox, Chabad, Ohr Somayach, Progressive and even those who call themselves Jubus (Jews who are into Buddhism) at Limmud.

Over 860 people descended on the Indaba Hotel in Fourways over the weekend to learn together.

There we all were ready to be sponges and share our ideas and understanding with others. If anyone ever says it is not possible to get Progressive Jews and frum Orthodox Jews together in a room, they are wrong. At the same time, there were people who call the “disputed” areas in Israel, Judea and Samaria, and believe there is no possible two-state solution, sitting, next to those who call the same area, the “occupied territories” and the “West Bank”.

We all got together, learnt a whole lot, heard inspiring, thought-provoking talks that we discussed and debated.

I saw it with my own eyes. And everyone was respectful, kind and participatory.

I am aware that this was a microcosm of the macrocosm, but there were representatives of every kind of Jew present.

How did this happen? Would the same people at any other time be judging those around them?

I may be an idealist and believe in the good in everyone, but I don’t believe any of us are that different. I believe that Jewish people across the board want to better themselves and improve on their knowledge.

Everyone at Limmud was there for personal growth and to be a part of this incredible communal experience.

It didn’t matter what our differences were, because we are all Jewish and, in fact, our differences of opinion added to the debates and discussions after the talks.

I take my hat off to the organisers because they managed to bring together an incredible array of speakers. Some were imported, but even those local ones were outstanding.

Where else would I get to hear Max Price talking about the decisions he has to make as vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town – from a Jewish perspective? How often do you hear Deputy Israeli Ambassador, Ayellet Black speak about her childhood in Israel?

They even brought the inimitable ANC veteran and former minister Jay Naidoo to speak to us about “spiritual activism”. We don’t often have access to him, especially just before hearing Zohar Raviv, an internationally renowned Jewish educator and then Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz, rated one of America’s top 50 rabbis.

Hearing debates about the Israeli situation from true experts across the political spectrum on one platform, was phenomenal. So too was learning about the national minimum wage debate and the Jewish way of looking at organ donation.

One of my favourite moments was in the Limmud Shark Tank, when business mavens Gil Oved and Gil Sperling promised to hand over a combined R2 million to a young smart and determined start-up quartet after a few minutes.

Sure, they were getting their pound’s worth, but making such snap decisions over so much money, made me decidedly nervous. The session was fascinating and quite nail-biting.

The most frustrating thing about the weekend was being spoilt for choice and not being able to take a break because of severe FOMO (fear of missing out).

I had a familiar sense while being at Limmud of being back at a Jewish youth movement camp, where we all get together to eat, pray, sing, learn and just have fun.

Would that we could always embrace our differences, especially when we are about to lay into another for their opposing opinions or beliefs.

Okay, I know you may be thinking I am about to burst into singing “Kumbaya” or John Lennon’s “Give Peace a Chance”, but let’s try and work together for the benefit of our community!

See you at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards on Sunday!

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Dateline: Middle East

The impact of closing Al Jazeera to democracy

PAULA SLIER

When the Doha-based Al Jazeera network first launched in 1996, it shook up the media landscape in the Middle East. Not only did it air criticisms against governments and regimes in the region, it was also the first Arabic channel to host Israeli politicians and commentators on air. No surprise then that it was seen by many Arab audiences as a channel created by Israelis to push their agenda.

It is ironic therefore that two decades on, it is now the Israeli government who is making moves to shut it down.

This week the country’s Communications Minister Ayoub Kara, who belongs to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party, announced plans to close the Al Jazeera offices in Jerusalem, revoke the credentials of its journalists and continue to lobby cable providers to block transmissions.

Naturally Netanyahu welcomed the move. He has been threatening to close down Al Jazeera for months, accusing it of inciting violence against Israel, particularly in recent days over its coverage of the Temple Mount crisis.

But it is not clear whether they’ll succeed.

I’m often asked why Israel gets such bad press. It’s a complex question that requires a multifaceted answer, part of which is that the country’s democracy allows for a myriad opinions to be expressed.

Some of the most critical anti-Israel arguments originate within the Israeli media. Countries like Sudan and China clamp down on media plurality at source and so anti-government sentiments are less likely to surface in the first place.

It is this democracy that Israel should be most proud of. Israeli politicians often evoke the claim that the country is “the only democracy in the Middle East” – if so, then shutting down a major news network flies in the face of that.

The “Committee to Protect Journalists”, a non-profit organisation promoting press freedom globally, issued a statement warning that the shutting down of Al Jazeera would not bring stability to the Middle East but “put Israel firmly in the camp of some of the region’s worst enemies of press freedom”.

But the Israeli moves don’t come out of nowhere. Al Jazeera, which is funded by the Qatari government, has been targeted by Sunni Arab nations in a months-long political dispute over Doha’s politics and alleged support for extremists.

In recent months, Saudi Arabia and Jordan both shut down Al Jazeera bureaux and the network’s signal has been blocked in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain.

In a press conference announcing Israel’s decision to act against the network, the Communications Minister said it was “delusional” that Arab states would ban Al Jazeera but Israel wouldn’t.

This, I would argue is a poor excuse. Egypt ranks 161 out of 180 on the World Press Freedom Index, an annual ranking published by the NGO “Reporters Without Borders” in its assessment of countries’ press freedom records. Saudi Arabia ranks 168 out of 180; the UAE 119. This is hardly illustrious company for Israel to share. Jerusalem currently ranks – although not excellent but still better – at 91.

There are those who argue that Israel is currying favour with the Sunni world, or at least taking advantage of the momentum building against Al Jazeera. But it’s a dangerous path to follow and will



leave the country red-faced next time her leaders charge “the only democracy in the Middle East” argument.

The question whether this move is really about free independent media or rather about power politics in the region, becomes a legitimate one.

Communications Minister Kara accused the channel of inciting terrorism, which I would agree is a fair argument in the curtailment of freedom of speech and expression.

Israeli academics back up the charge, complaining that Al Jazeera has given a platform for groups like Al Qaeda and Hezbollah; and not least of all, the network’s funders support Hamas. But let’s not employ double standards. Saudi Arabia, who is leading the boycott against Qatar and who Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been cozying up to, is a huge sponsor of terror.

Of the 61 groups that the United States designates as terrorist organisations, the overwhelming majority are Saudi-funded. Netanyahu should not complain about the terror Al Jazeera purportedly gives a platform to, while turning a blind eye to that supported by Riyadh.

It’s also a fine line between inciting violence on the one hand and promoting freedom of thought on the other.

It can just as easily be argued that Al Jazeera provides a platform for a more pluralistic and democratic political discourse. Audiences are anyway exposed to inciteful arguments online – at least here context is given.

What’s more, instead of diminishing incitement by closing down the network, the actual act of shutting it down, points to aggression on Israel’s side.

Islamists are part of the general Arab society and by shutting them out, you don’t deny their existence. I recently attended a Unesco “Press Freedom” conference in Indonesia where a very telling comment was made by the editor of a local Indonesian television station: “Don’t over-estimate the power of the media to incite people to join terrorist organisations,” he said.

“Most people here are illiterate and that incitement comes from the mosques, not from the Internet or TV”.

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world – home to more than two million Muslims – and most of the population subscribe to moderate Islam. To be fair, though, there are no Israeli media organisations based in Qatar and Al Jazeera can, and no doubt will, challenge the Israeli move in an Israeli court.

It is not so easy to revoke press credentials in Israel and the bodies in charge of doing so have given no indication they will comply. When it comes to talking about democracy, this is what the country should be most proud of.

• Paula Slier is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

‘We must welcome them with open arms – we’re one family’

NICOLA MILTZ

Imagine walking into a new shul and feeling like you may as well be a unicorn or a pink elephant. That’s how some converts of colour describe how they feel in South Africa – or worse, a terrorist.

It is not a walk in the park if you happen to be black and Jewish – a minority within a minority - in a country with such a racially fractured past with worldwide anti-Semitism on the rise.

“I get that people are naturally curious, but it’s rude to gawk,” says one black South African woman who converted to Orthodox several years ago. She prefers to remain anonymous so as not to “insult or offend” members of her small community who have warmly welcomed her into the fold.

“When I go to KosherWorld before Shabbos I can literally feel the eyes on my back. Sometimes I’ve even been asked to point things out on the shelf as if I’m an employee.”

Her friend, also an Orthodox convert of colour, refuses to even be interviewed for fear of “a backlash”.

“Our own small communities accept us but if we air our dirty laundry in public about the community at large, we may offend the very people who have opened their hearts and homes to us and welcomed us.”

When they attend a simcha in a neighbouring suburb or a shiur in a different community, they are often “interrogated” by members of the Commuity Security Organisation (CSO) which makes them feel uncomfortable, they say.

She says she’d rather stay away from events like Sinai Indaba and challah baking get-togethers, because it’s “humiliating” having to explain herself every time she faces a member of the CSO.

“You are not supposed to remind someone they are a convert or to shame them in public.”

Such sentiments prompted Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein to hold a meeting with several converts of colour recently, to hear of their “pain” due to the “racist attitudes” from fellow congregants.

“As a community, we need to confront the problem of racism,” he said following the “heart-breaking” meeting.

“Our rejection of racism must also reflect in how we engage with South Africans from all races who have converted to Judaism and have joined our community. We must welcome them with open arms; we are one family.”

He asked the community to implement practical steps by “inviting them for Shabbos and Yomtov, engaging warmly at shul, and sharing school lifts”.

“We must appreciate their incredible sacrifices and devotion to the Torah that has brought them to voluntarily choose our way of life.”

Rabbi Goldstein has raised this issue with community rabbis and the CSO.

Some converts of colour were outraged when a suggestion was put forward to carry “conversion cards” to show the CSO in a bid to “prove” their Jewishness.

Said CSO director of Operations for Gauteng, Jevon Greenblatt: “Due to the fact that many of the new converts, irrespective of colour, were largely unknown to the community, a suggestion was made to issue a card confirming their participation on the conversion programme. As some felt uncomfortable with this system, it was immediately stopped.”

He said the CSO was “deeply committed” to addressing this issue and that it had met with some of the converts who had had bad experiences.

“We will be instituting new systems to address these real concerns and to find ways to make all our converts feel more welcome at our



installations.

The CSO recently held a training seminar attended by over 120 CSO protectors and community marshals. Rabbi Ron Hendler, Registrar for Conversions at the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa also attended and offered advice on how best to approach and question people “in an effective, respectful and dignified manner”. More seminars will be held in the future, he said.

“The CSO’s mandate is to protect Jewish life and the Jewish way of life. This is a very serious and onerous responsibility. Anyone who is not known to a security official, should be vetted and if necessary, questioned. The reason for this is to establish if they belong and is not intended to cause offence. Belonging is not determined by race, gender, age or religion, but rather whether their intentions are nefarious or not.”

Chava Shervington, an African-American Orthodox Jew, says that for Jews of colour it is possible to be an integrated member of the community but it requires “an abundance of self-confidence, tact and tenacity”.

It takes confidence, she explains, to keep going to synagogues when every time you show up at a different shul you get questioned and “interrogated”.

“It takes tact to politely rebuff yet another inquiry about your journey to Judaism or why ‘you read Hebrew so well’.

“It takes tenacity to keep going to kosher restaurants and Orthodox-run stores when all eyes gravitate toward you the moment you walk through the door.

Soweto-born Mike Sadike and his Xhosa-speaking wife, Pnina Sadike, say they have never experienced overt racism and that the community has always been “accepting and welcoming”.

The couple who formally tied the knot earlier this year under a chuppah after years of Torah study, describe the South African Jewish community as “loving and warm”.

“People have been lovely,” insists Pnina who has only positive things to say.

“I guess it’s about attitudes. We choose to understand people’s natural curiosity and don’t take offence to the questioning. When I’m at a restaurant, many of the waiters are black, so I explain to them why I need a benching card. I politely tell them, it doesn’t bother me.”

At present there are about 30 to 40 converts of colour in South Africa.

According to Ron Hendler registrar for conversions at the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa, there is a steady interest in people from different backgrounds

choosing a Jewish way of life.

“We are very excited to welcome sincere converts from whatever race or background and we are seeing an increase in applications from many different population groups. It must be emphasised that the path of conversion to Orthodox Judaism is extremely challenging and people, regardless of their background, struggle.”

He said that it could take “anywhere between

two years and forever” to convert, depending on individual circumstances.

Candidates are required to learn about Judaism, Jewish history and practical Jewish law and to integrate it into their daily lives, until they are living a committed Jewish life.

They are required to live in a Jewish community, keep kosher, Shabbat, family purity and their children must attend a Jewish school.

“Obviously they are becoming a minority within a very established and tight-knit community. In addition to that they may have different cultural norms. As with all converts, they may also become somewhat less connected to their biological families and friends. This can lead to alienation and loneliness.”

From his experience, Rabbi Hendler assures: “Most South African Jews are interested in the whole concept of conversion and the challenging path that converts have chosen. They are generally welcoming and supportive, especially when they see the sincerity of the conversion candidates.

Said Rabbi Hendler: “The CSO has assured us that their shul security policy is completely non-racial and they are actively participating in sensitisation programmes as part of their general training and in line with similar sensitisation programmes being rolled out across the community as a whole.

“In general, the broader Jewish community has been very warm... in the past, the community was very insular but over the years has become much more open.”

ב"ה

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Nik is a comedian, movie actor and author and has appeared live in Australia, Canada, Holland, the USA and the UK as well as on several comedy shows. He is known as the funniest Jewish Xhosa speaking comedian in Africa.

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Jay Naidoo champions ‘spiritual activism’

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

“Being human means we need to look at what we can learn and what we can teach the world,” ANC stalwart and founding general secretary of Cosatu, Jay Naidoo told a packed audience at Limmud last weekend.

He discussed how self-reflection and working directly with rural communities, has helped him find greater purpose and spiritual awareness.

Having headed up the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in former President Nelson Mandela’s Cabinet at the dawn of democratic South Africa, Naidoo’s focus has always been on correcting social injustices. What’s changed, though, is the way he believes this can be done.

He is now less concerned with the politics of

listen and learn something about myself.

“What we need to understand is that our biggest challenge is changing ourselves and understanding our rights and responsibilities. So, I started examining the question of human consciousness, what we are, where we come from. What gets me is the question of what we’re leaving to the future generations.”

Naidoo once had an enlightening conversation with his daughter who told him that that while he lived his whole life fighting for social justice, everything he stood, for humans were busy killing. She also spoke about how earth itself is under threat, threatening humanity itself through water pollution, disease, lack of food security and so on.

This got him thinking: “Our fundamental problem as humans is that we think we must seek dominion over Mother Earth,” he said.

“So, I started looking at how people lived thousands of years ago, going back to the beginning to gain understanding. Uncertainty and volatility isn’t a new thing; what’s changed is how we deal with it.

“I visited different cultural groups; I sat with Bushmen of the Kalahari, with traditional healers in the Amazon and asked how they look at life. And the common trend was that they see everything as sacred. So, sacredness must be the human relationship with everything, people, the land and so on.”

In adopting this philosophy, Naidoo has also explored different faiths to look at how they suggest we live with kindness and generosity.

“Many religions echo the Jewish concept of tikkun olam, acts of kindness to repair the world – so, why are we killing each other if we come from the same place?”

Naidoo works in villages around the country, talking about change and how we implement it so that farmers and workers can co-create a different way of learning to live with each other.

“I’m interested in working with communities directly – to build the path as we walk it. My role today has changed, to create a safe, sacred space for these conversations and to find a way to shift consciousness from material living to building a life without harm, with kindness and generosity.

“I’m living a life of spiritual activism – the intersection between spirituality and activism – to learn what it means to be human.”

Concluding his talk, Naidoo was asked about President Jacob Zuma and what he terms “the lost moral centre” of the ANC.

“Leaders today have lost balance of mind and heart,” he said. “I’m more interested in how the person who ultimately replaces Zuma acts as opposed to who the person is. We all need to ask how we must change as humans to become beings of light.”



Shira Kline

Limmud photos: Howard Sackstein

Adam and Eve: A study of a broken marriage

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

What can the first people on earth teach us about loneliness and what mistakes to avoid in marriage? Plenty said American Rabbi Marc Katz, the author of *The Heart of Loneliness: How Jewish Wisdom Can Help You Cope and Find Comfort*.

While there’s not very much in the bible that speaks to the relationship between Adam and Eve, and there’s certainly no mention of love, there’s much one can learn from the nature of their marriage, said Rabbi Katz using their relationship and rabbis’ interpretations of it to reflect on contemporary broken relationships and marriages. “Adam and Eve’s marriage is a broken relationship that has incredible pathological elements to it,” he said.

In researching his book on loneliness, Rabbi Katz has found that Eve is emblematic of loneliness within a marriage – Adam’s relationship with G-d often leaves Eve out of the circle.

“Finding someone is only the first step, the truth is it’s possible to be married to someone and feel invisible,” he said.

There are many things in modern life that leave one partner feeling this way. Your partner could be married to their work or hobbies, communication could break down or one of you could change while the other is left behind.

In this case, it’s important to learn to change and grow with your partner and to truly accept them. Even the most wonderful marriages come with challenges, said Rabbi Katz. “They say, you don’t have one marriage you have multiple marriages in your life [with the same person], so how do you deal with each one? Eve and Adam’s marriage is a model for this.”

Firstly, there’s the issue of baggage. According to a well-known Midrash, Eve was not the first woman. G-d initially created. A woman from the earth, Lilith, would not submit to Adam in the

bedroom and so the two fought until Lilith left Adam.

It was only later when Adam asked G-d for his “pair” that Eve was created from Adam’s rib – he needed to want marriage so G-d waited for him to ask for a partner. Yet having been married before, Adam came into the relationship with the baggage of a “divorce”.

What’s more, Adam didn’t work on himself after the breakdown of the marriage, adding to his emotional baggage. “Baggage is the challenge you have coming into any relationship. The person who you end up with isn’t responsible for this baggage but has to deal with it if they love you,” explained Katz.

The serpent and the apple is a major turning point for Adam and Eve. Adam blames Eve and even G-d for his transgression in eating the apple.

So, he turns against Eve and refuses to procreate with her, fearing that all their descendants will be consigned to Gehenna (Jewish hell) until he’s shown that Israel will eventually accept the Torah.

So, Adam and Eve conceive Cain and Abel – this points to the fallacy of fixing marriages through children. Indeed, this is a temporary fix to their marriage as Cain kills Abel and Adam leaves Eve for 130 years but eventually returns once his people point out his duty in begetting children.

And so they reconcile and bear more children as Adam’s desire for Eve grows for the first time. This reveals that reconciliation is possible and shows the importance of working on your marriage, said Rabbi Katz.

Ultimately, in marriage we need to deal with conflict head on, concluded Rabbi Katz. Be honest and resolve disagreements in a healthy way. Fighting is healthy as long as it’s productive. “All that matters is that you love one another in the end.”



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Have Jews lost their safe space on the left?

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Are Jews in Western countries turning right on the political causeway? Should they be? “Yes and yes,” argued British writer, editor and policy adviser Simon Gordon in one of his many enlightening Limmud talks.

Gordon has served as speechwriter to both Israeli Ambassador Daniel Taub and British parliamentarian Douglas Carswell, and as assistant editor of Mosaic Magazine in New York. In his talk, the young but erudite speaker discussed why Jews have always naturally leaned left and why the tides are changing.

Providing a broad overview of left- and right-wing politics, Gordon explained that left-wing parties are generally associated with ideas surrounding equality, redistribution of wealth, whereas right-wing parties are associated with an element of traditionalism and the belief that certain levels of inequality are inevitable.

Tackling Jewish voting trends in Western countries with significant Jewish populations – namely the UK, US, France, Canada and Australia, Gordon argued that the left, once the natural playing field of the Jews, is now becoming an increasingly hostile space.

“In the West, Jews have traditionally voted for left-wing parties,” he said. The reasons for Jews’ left leaning tendencies are numerous.

“When compared to the right, the left has been traditionally more hospitable to Jews, who identified as an immigrant group and often faced anti-Semitism on the right,” said Gordon.

“Left wing parties also tended to be more pro-Israel. There’s also the question of conviction – the idea of tikkun olam that the left echoes – the Jews’ sense of social justice.

“As a group who faced persecution at the hands of the majority, they would naturally side with similar groups. Jews were also suspicious of the right-wing who were historically seen as more related to the interests of the ruling class than to widening prosperity for everyone.”

Yet, he argued, from the last decades of the 20th century



Understanding Jewish social justice in our time

JOCELYN ROME

Those privileged to attend Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz’s session on Jewish social justice in our time last Friday night at Limmud, experienced no post-dinner drowsiness. Instead, they were treated to energising insights about the interconnectedness of spiritual growth and social activism.

Yanklowitz is an Open Orthodox rabbi who founded and leads the Uri L’Tzedek Orthodox social justice movement and he is the dean of Valley Beit Midrash in Scottsdale, Arizona. Newsweek (2012) listed him as one of the 50 most influential rabbis in the United States and The Forward (a Jewish American magazine) named him as one of the 50 most influential Jews of 2016.

Yanklowitz commenced his talk with a Chassidic mantra of the Ba’al Shem Tov that all spiritual growth is preconditioned on interpersonal ethics.

By so doing, he took his audience on a journey towards the actualisation of individual potential to do good for the vulnerable members among and around us. This journey synthesised Jewish sources ranging from Rav Avraham Kook, the founders of the Mussar ethical moral movement, and more modern thinkers like Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

He then brought in a surprising sprinkling of decidedly un-Jewish sources and anecdotes from the likes of CS Lewis, William Blake, and Mother Teresa.

Yanklowitz offered fresh understandings of the teaching

up to present day, there’s been a shift to the right in Jewish voting patterns in many Western countries, as the right has gradually become friendlier to the Jews.

The main exception here is the US where the Democratic Party retains an overwhelming percentage of the Jewish vote. “Yet Jews, seen as more right-wing on the religious spectrum, were certainly more likely to vote for the Republican Party under Trump,” said Gordon.

Generally speaking, the reason for the shift to the right is because post-modern left-wing ideology is filtering upwards into left-wing politics, which is becoming increasingly inhospitable to Jews. While some may think this is a phase, like in the case of the undeniably anti-Jewish UK Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, they’re wrong, says Gordon, as there’s a mass movement that underlies Corbyn’s ideologies.

Political ideologies and climates in the West are often bred on university campuses where the idea of privilege is hotly debated.

“They fight against the system of dominance that keeps certain people in charge. The core ideology of the left has become very black and white; it’s the oppressed versus the oppressors,” argues Gordon.

“Intersectionality has become a buzzword, the idea that all oppressions worldwide are linked, as are all oppressors.”

In such a climate, the left increasingly sees the Jews as the oppressors, mainly because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“The left popularly views Muslims as the victims because the general ideology holds that the West is always in the wrong,” says Gordon.

Jews are now seen as bourgeois – and are associated with all the negative traits that the West represents – so they no longer qualify for special treatment in the eyes of the left.

“They’ve adapted to their surroundings better than other minority groups, despite their history of oppression,” he explains.

As Jews, we should be conscious of these considerations – the West is becoming a less comfortable place for us. Jews may need to become more politically active to defend their place in the West, he concluded.



of the Mussar ethical school, by emphasising the imperative that before one can change the world one first has to change oneself.

This requires the simultaneous goal of realising one’s own power and ability to effect change. Cynicism about the world and the individual’s inability to change anything about it, creates a barrier to activism and helping others. The recognition that helping others provides a ladder for one’s own growth, was a key insight.

Of particular resonance was the explanation from the famous story of Moshe looking both ways before striking the Egyptian overseer, but not seeing the “invisible” Jewish slaves. This reminded many in the audience of the imperative not to blot out the vulnerable and those who make us uncomfortable in our communities and society by making them invisible.

Answering questions about the chosen-ness of the Jewish people, Yanklowitz emphasised that being chosen is a call to effect purposeful change, and that everyone should feel privileged to feel chosen to do this.

Debunking the notion that ritual observance is a prerequisite of ethical behaviour, he reminded that ritual, specifically Jewish tradition, is both a platform and a vehicle for personal growth through social activism.

It serves as a constant reminder of the necessary habits that will make the invisible visible.



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Finding the body positive

ELIANA CLINE

Tim Noakes, banting, paleo, Atkins, low-fat, low carbs, no carbs. It’s impossible to keep up with every new diet and health fad. Social media and general media inundate us daily with diets and fitness programmes that guarantee the perfect body and, with it, the perfect life.

Yet, despite the developed world’s obsession with weight and health, our world has never been less healthy. Obesity rates have skyrocketed and along with it, lifestyle associated diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

More alarming is the ramifications of this image and weight-obsessed society on both a psychological and physical level. The price of this diet culture is dangerously high: Eating disorders and disordered eating are becoming more prevalent. Negative body image is damaging the self-esteem and long-term health of many – particularly teenagers and young women.

Justine Friedman, a Johannesburg based registered dietician, says she sees many women and girls who are constantly comparing themselves to the images portrayed in the media and feeling inferior as a result.

“Girls and women end up obsessing over food choices and so many areas of their appearance which can lead to disordered eating and eating disorders,” she says. “Not only does this cause depression and anxiety, but it can lead to using over-the-counter ‘natural’ products advertised as appetite suppressants.

“Using these products, or having injections or diet meal replacement drinks, can have a huge impact on a host of long-term health problems that lead to thyroid problems, insulin resistance, elevated blood pressure, and sleeplessness, which in turn elevates the bodies’ stress response, which ultimately causes weight gain.”

Fortunately, there is a promising movement named “Body Positivity” which is gaining momentum globally. The term was coined in 1996 and as more people realise the limitations and risks of the widespread diet culture, the movement is spreading into many areas. Its philosophy is being adopted by individuals, dieticians, mental health workers and educators, as a vehicle to attain authentic holistic health.

This movement promotes the belief that the body is one aspect of a person’s being; and

that each is unique and worthy no matter how it looks. Everyone’s body is different; with different genes, tendencies and composition.

It focuses on accepting the body you have, as well as the changes in shape, size, and ability it may undergo due to nature, age, or your own personal choices throughout your lifetime. It’s the understanding that your worth and what’s going on with you physically are two separate entities – that no matter what’s happening inside, outside, or to your body, you’re still just as worthwhile as the person next to you.

Body Positivity does not stop at self-acceptance. Once a person has a positive relationship with their body, a Body Positive person can then make choices of how to nurture and nourish one’s body.

It entails understanding what your body does, what makes your body feel good, how it does it and how to make choices which serve your life goals – physical, emotional, and spiritual. The primary mind-set is that you can live comfortably in your body, as it is right now, or work on treating it right through nourishment and joyful movement and self-care without punishing yourself for looking the way you do.

“For many people, having a positive body image is challenging as so much emotion is caught up in this area of our lives. So often we feel that if we look or feel a certain way, only then will we be happy with who we are and what

“Girls and women end up obsessing over food choices and so many areas of their appearance which can lead to disordered eating and eating disorders.”

we look like,” says Friedman.

“Being Body Positive goes above this and is learning to love yourself and your physical body exactly as it is first, and then taking steps to nurture and nourish your body to improve its functioning and to assist with improved energy levels, decreased disease and to enable one to live with increasing vitality.”

For parents of both genders, consciously fostering body positivity is crucial to raising emotionally and physically healthy adults. It means that parents have to first and foremost



accept that their child’s body is unique and may or may not turn out in line with societal and personal expectations.

Parents need to provide a healthy role-model to counteract the negative views our children are flooded with on a daily basis; from peers and social media and family members. Girls and teenagers are especially vulnerable to poor body image, which can lead to low self-esteem, disordered eating and eating disorders.

“The best example one can set as a parent is developing our own sense of feeling Body Positive,” says Friedman. “Children and teens pick up on our actions and words that we use to speak about ourselves and how we look at ourselves or how we dress.

“If we are constantly saying how fat we feel or how terrible we look, a child or teen will model their own behaviour on this and will integrate the terminology we use and behaviours we display.

“The same applies to our criticism of others as well as of our children. If they are exposed to our negative opinions about others based on how they look or on their weight, it will also add to a concept for them that only desirable looks are guarantees of praise and love,” says Friedman.

“If children or teens feel inadequate about their own body image, it is important to build their self-esteem by helping them focus on their own individual strengths and helping to find their own self-worth outside of how they look. Building a positive self-esteem is critical for every person and it comes from valuing what we see as unique and special about ourselves.

“It is imperative that if a child or teen is feeling uncomfortable with their body, that they are guided to see someone who will focus on their positive attributes and at the same time help to guide them with making mindful lifestyle choices,” says Friedman.

Cycling to transcend race, religion culture and creed

SUZANNE BELLING

It was a brainstorming session among grade 11 learners of Torah Academy Boys’ High School in Johannesburg in 1998, during South Africa’s young democracy, when the idea of an annual 750 km relay cycle ride to Durban with pupils from all cultures, was born. And on Thursday this week the 20th CycAlive was completed.

The cycle tour – which takes four days, with stopovers to sleep and visits to hospitals and disadvantaged schools – has snowballed. It first included Torah Academy Boys’ High, Pace Commercial Secondary School and Moletsane High School in Soweto, and now incorporates riders from an Afrika Tikkun Orange Farm education project and Israeli visitors, brought out by Johannesburg’s Madeleine Fane’s Partnership2Gether.

This year there were 35 cyclists in all, with the majority from Torah Academy, Pace and Moletsane.

The riders left from the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory in Houghton, as CycAlive was the first project to be endorsed by the Nelson Mandela Foundation after Tokyo Sexwale and Sello Hatang, of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, adopted the project.

They loved the project because it transcended race, religion, culture and creed, and forged friendships and the learners learned from one another. They saw the Jewish boys daven, the Christian boys worship and learned songs in Hebrew and the vernacular along the way.

The friendships among the boys involved, are ongoing and they meet regularly to distribute stationery and fund computers, classrooms and other essentials to underprivileged schools.

“From a small discussion in a classroom, we set about creating ubuntu, dreaming big, thinking about changing the world, our surroundings, and our country. It was creating ubuntu and having the ability to change South Africa,” Rabbi Reuven Finkelstein, one of the Torah Academy teachers, said.

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy and initiator of the project, said at the birth of CycAlive it “was the dawn of a brave new country. We wanted to do something that would mesmerise.” The cyclists were given a ceremonial send-off on Sunday by the Springs Field Band and motorbike riders from Steelwings and Rolling Thunder, who escorted the riders out of Gauteng, while police directed the traffic and blocked off the road.

A spirit of excitement permeated the learners,



many of whom had never visited the seaside. Sthembiso Mabizela, a learner at the Mphethi Mhlatsi Secondary School in Orange Farm, has never seen the sea and was awed at the prospect.

“I learnt to ride a bicycle at the Afrika Tikkun Centre in Orange Farm. I am looking forward to the ride and what the experience is all about,” he said.

Saying a prayer for the safety of the cyclists, Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, principal of Torah Academy

Boys’ High School, prayed to Hashem to “put into the hearts of all South Africans a spirit of wisdom and understanding that we may recognise that nation building is founded on love and concern for each individual citizen – regardless of race, religion, culture or language – and on mutual respect for the rights of each individual community and religion to express itself freely and (be) uninhibited to thereby contribute to the uniqueness and betterment of our country.”



THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Abbas issues new demands; still arresting terror suspects



Members of the Palestinian Authority security forces take part in a graduation ceremony for a Palestinian youth training camp in the West Bank.

AVI ISSACHAROFF

Despite the Palestinian Authority’s formal insistence that security co-ordination with Israel remains frozen, PA forces earlier this week arrested two relatives of an assailant who attempted to stab IDF soldiers and was shot dead.

The uncle and cousin of Abdullah Takaatka were detained outside Bethlehem in the aftermath of his July 28 attack at the Gush Etzion Junction, Palestinian sources said.

PA security forces have also recently arrested several Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists, according to reports on Palestinian social media.

This activity is taking place despite the formal position set out by PA officials that its security co-ordination with Israel remains on hold in the wake of the Temple Mount tensions last month. PA President Mahmoud Abbas announced a freeze in all contacts with Israel on July 21.

Abbas’s adviser Mahmoud al-Habash, said in an interview last Thursday with the Palestinian Ma’an news agency that the PA had a number of conditions Israel needed to meet in order for the security co-ordination to resume.

Among these demands, al-Habash said, are that Israel cease all activity in the PA-controlled Area A of the West Bank, that free movement of Palestinian civilians be without restrictions, and that PA sovereignty at border crossings be respected.

In the context of that last demand, the PA is demanding that its forces be present at the Allenby Bridge border crossing between the West Bank and Jordan, as it says was agreed in accords with Israel.

Abbas suspended the co-ordination to protest the installation of metal

detectors at entrances to the Temple Mount, which were placed after three Israeli Arab gunmen killed two police officers outside the compound on July 14 with guns they had smuggled into the site.

The new security measures sparked mass protests by Muslim worshippers, who boycotted the compound for 12 days until Israel removed the measures on July 25.

Speaking with The Times of Israel on July 29, a senior Palestinian official praised the Israeli government’s decision to remove the security measures and said that the co-ordination would gradually increase as long as Muslim access to the Temple Mount remained unrestricted.

Also, on the same day, The Times of Israel learned the PA has continued to make arrests of Hamas members in the West Bank.

A Fatah official confirmed that arrests of Hamas members were ongoing, but said apart from “critical matters”, security co-ordination with Israel had not yet resumed.

The PA’s head of preventative security in the West Bank, Ziyad Hab al-Rih, also confirmed the arrests, saying the Hamas operatives were planning attacks in an effort to escalate tensions between Israel and Palestinians.

Rih said a number of Hamas activists were arrested that week in Qalqilya, Tulkarem, Ramallah and at Hebron’s Polytechnic University.

The security co-operation between Israel and the PA, in place for years despite near-frozen diplomatic ties, is seen as critical for both Israel and Abbas’ Fatah faction to keep a lid on violence in the West Bank, particularly from the Hamas terror group.

Israel, Iran take centre stage in latest White House power struggle

JONATHAN LEMIRE & BRADLEY KLAPPER
WASHINGTON

A long-simmering dispute between two top White House aides has boiled into a public battle over the direction of US President Donald Trump’s foreign policy, with a cadre of conservative groups pushing for the ouster of national security adviser HR McMaster.

In recent days, conservative groups and a website tied to Trump adviser Steve Bannon, have targeted McMaster as insufficiently supportive of Israel and insufficiently tough toward Iran.

They’ve expressed outrage about the firings of several aides regarded as sympathetic to their views. An online campaign – under the hashtag #FireMcMaster – prompted Trump to declare his support for his adviser.

In a volley of attacks from right-wing media, McMaster has been accused of being anti-Israel, having a short temper and collaborating with Obama-era officials.

The dispute reflects the tensions at the heart of Trump’s foreign policy coalition. McMaster is one of several powerful generals in Trump’s orbit who hail from the Republican foreign policy establishment. But Trump is equally sympathetic to the views of firebrands like Bannon, who are trying to push the party in a new, isolationist direction emboldened by his “America First” doctrine.

McMaster and Bannon have clashed loudly and repeatedly during recent White House discussions over Afghanistan war strategy, according to four administration officials and outside advisers.

Afghanistan, however, represents only the latest dispute between McMaster and Bannon, who’ve also fought over White House personnel.

McMaster, an Army general, recently purged three National Security Council officials who were viewed as close to Bannon or to Michael Flynn, Trump’s ousted national security adviser who was replaced by McMaster.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, centre arrives to a Likud faction meeting at the Knesset, trailed by aide Ari Harow, far left.

DNA MATCH LEADS TO ARREST IN 5-YEAR-OLD ATTEMPTED RAPE CASE

A DNA match helped authorities catch the suspect in the five-year-old attempted rape of a Holon woman, police said on Monday.

Police on Sunday arrested a 37-year old man with Nigerian citizenship, whose DNA matched a sample taken from a woman he attempted to assault in 2012.

The woman, who successfully fought off her attacker, scratched his face during the struggle. Police collected the skin and blood cells from underneath the victim’s fingernails in an effort to identify her rapist, but the sample turned up no matches in law enforcement databases.

After the suspect was briefly arrested in connection with a separate crime several months ago, police collected a sample of his DNA. His sample was later run through the DNA database He was rearrested on Sunday, and was brought before a judge for a remand hearing later on Monday.

Police did not say what the man’s visa status in Israel is.



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AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN
AND AGENCIES

A Holocaust survivor who shocked the world by embracing the former Nazi SS guard known as the “Bookkeeper of Auschwitz”, decried a German court decision last Wednesday which found the 96-year-old is fit to serve out his four-year sentence for accessory to murder of some 300 000 people at the camp.

Groening worked as an accountant at Auschwitz, sorting and counting the money taken from those killed or used as slave labour, and shipping it back to his Nazi superiors in Berlin, according to AFP.

Auschwitz survivor Eva Kor, 83, the founder of the Indiana-based Holocaust museum CANDLES, made headlines in April 2015 for a kiss delivered by former SS Sgt Oskar Groening on her cheek as she interacted with him at his trial. While she testified against him and verified his crimes, she drew criticism for making a public appeal to have his sentence commuted to community

Survivor who embraced ex-Nazi
guard decries jail term for 96-year-old

service.

Romanian-born Kor was cruelly experimented upon as a child at Auschwitz by Nazi doctor “Angel of Death” Josef Mengele, alongside her identical twin sister Miriam. Their parents and two sisters, as well as most other family members, were murdered there.

Kor recalled

her impressions of the extermination camp: “The first time I went to use the latrine located at the end of the children’s barrack, I was greeted by the scattered corpses of several children lying on the ground. I think that image will stay with me forever.

“It was there that I made a silent pledge – a vow to make sure that Miriam and I didn’t end up on that filthy floor.”

Nevertheless, Kor reiterated her position against Groening’s incarceration in an e-mail to The Times of Israel last Wednesday, stating that while she is glad Groening is considered physically fit, she questioned the court’s motivations for upholding the sentence.

“My question to the German Court is: ‘Does it make you feel mighty and right to put a 96-year-old Nazi in prison?’ I would agree with you if that happened when he was 36, 46, 56, even 76. He lived most of his life as a free man,” Kor wrote to The Times of Israel.

Following last Wednesday’s hearing, court spokesman Kathrin Soefker



Holocaust survivor and one of the Mengele twins, Eva Mozes Kor

told AFP: “The prosecutor has rejected the application from the defence for a sentence suspension.”

No date has yet been announced for Groening’s incarceration. A court doctor determined that he is able to serve his sentence, on condition he is given appropriate nursing and medical care while in detention, said Soefker.

“Yes, he is guilty, but instead of prison I would prefer to see him lecture in schools via Skype and record such lectures to convince the neo-Nazis that it [the Holocaust] happened and it was terrible,” wrote Kor.

Forgiving is not forgetting

In an in-depth interview with The Times of Israel in November last year, Kor explained her personal approach of “forgiving” the Nazis in order to neutralise their continued power and influence over her life.

In 1995, Kor controversially read out a proclamation

declaring her across-the-board forgiveness of the Nazis while commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz with Nazi physician Dr Hans Munch who gave filmed testimony of crimes against humanity.

“I knew right away that he would find it [the declaration of forgiveness] an important and meaningful gift. But what I discovered for myself was life-changing. I discovered that I had the power to forgive. That no-one could give me that power, and no-one could take it away,” said Kor.

At Groening’s trial in 2015, Kor approached the former Nazi twice. On their first encounter, he fainted. The second time, Kor had desired to have her picture taken with the former Auschwitz guard. Asked by The Times of Israel about her motivations, Kor said: “I found it to be an interesting experience to have a Nazi validate my experiences in the camp.

Olmert’s son lashes Bibi’s son for ‘racist, homophobic’ Facebook post

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

The son of former prime minister Ehud Olmert hit back at fellow son of a prime minister Yair Netanyahu and threatened to take him to court for slander in a Facebook tirade.

In the Facebook post responding to Netanyahu, who last Tuesday asked why other sons of prime ministers weren’t scrutinised, Ariel Olmert criticised Netanyahu for his lavish lifestyle and threatened to sue him for “disseminating false, racist and homophobic slurs”.

“I’ve never lived at the prime minister’s residence, I don’t have a driver or guards paid for by the state, I also don’t hang out with billionaires,” Olmert wrote. “I actually have to work for a living and I pick up my dog’s poop,” he added, referencing an incident last week in which the prime minister’s son reportedly refused to clean up after his dog.

The diatribe comes in response to a Facebook post Netanyahu wrote last Monday in which he slammed his critics, complaining that other children of Israeli leaders were not subject to the same scrutiny.

In the post, Netanyahu took aim at several sons of other

prime ministers, and said Olmert had “an interesting relationship with a Palestinian, that could have had national security implications”, apparently referring to rumours that Olmert had an illicit relationship with an East Jerusalem man. The post by Netanyahu, son of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, came after a campaign called Sixty One published a post questioning why Netanyahu, 25, was living with his parents on the state’s dime.

Under the headline “5 facts about Yair Netanyahu, our national son”, the campaign, run by the dovish Molad NGO, also castigated the premier’s son for taking lavish vacations, seeking to influence his father, and encouraging the boycott of Arab-owned businesses.

Netanyahu accused the group of serving a radical left-wing agenda.

He accused Sixty One of being a “radical, anti-Zionist organisation funded by the Foundation for the Destruction of Israel [a reference to the New Israel Fund, in a Hebrew play on words] and the European Union.”

Sixty One swiftly issued a response to Netanyahu’s post, calling on him to apologise and remove the post, or face a libel lawsuit.



News and views from the Fed
Diller Teen Fellows
2017 – journey
of leadership,
Jewish identity and
connection to Israel

GEVA PERETZ

My name is Geva Peretz. I am an 18-year-old Israeli who is spending my gap year volunteering in South Africa, working with teens at the King David Schools. I wanted to use my time abroad connecting to people in the community and sharing my positive message about my beloved Israel.

I am also a Diller Fellowship alumni and had the privilege of assisting the Johannesburg Diller group programme. The Diller programme changed my life as a teen and I have observed how it has enriched the lives of the young teens who have attended this year.

So, what is the Diller Fellowship about? Each year a group of 20 Jewish teens are selected based on certain criteria, to participate in this exclusive leadership programme. Diller operates in 32 countries globally, including Argentina, Australia, UK and Canada.

During the first nine months, we embarked on a process of self-discovery, with a focus on personal identity as Jewish people and as leaders. The teens attended workshops and learnt about their Jewish identity and their potential role as the future leaders of their community.

The experience culminated in a trip to Israel where all the groups gathered for a three-week Diller experience.

The highlight of this trip was the International Shabbaton in Jerusalem, where each group was able to present their projects. This was where we began to understand the power and unity of the Jewish world.

After Shabbaton, we visited our partner region of Beit Shemesh (and Mateh Yehuda) for our community week, to connect with the Israeli teens who visited South Africa earlier in the year.

The Diller teens were fully responsible for planning this part of the trip and it was amazing to see how they used the tools given to them to plan the programme.

What a life-changing experience! We were able to discover Israel and learn about our roots as the Jewish people. We delved into the nuances of Israeli lifestyle and its complexity. We realised the importance of leadership within and outside of South Africa.

We returned to South Africa empowered and inspired, ready to put into practice everything we had learnt. It has been an extremely enriching experience for me as a madrich and I would encourage parents and teens to apply for this incredible programme. I would also like to thank the Diller Foundation, SAZF, SAJBE and Israel Centre, who sponsor such an important initiative.

“I never dreamed that I would have the privilege of being part of this initiative. I have learnt so much about myself and the potential I have to create change in the world. It was one of the best experiences in my life, one I will never forget.” Ariel Raz (Diller Teen Fellow).

• To find out more about the Diller programme, please contact: Gil Spitalnik dillerteensa@gmail.com 072-857-084



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Bibi’s wife seen close to being charged over expense scandals

RAOUL WOOTLIFF

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit is reportedly close to indicting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s wife Sara Netanyahu, for diverting public money for her private housekeeping expenses, according to an Israeli television report on Monday.

Sara Netanyahu was interrogated at National Fraud Squad headquarters near Tel Aviv last week over allegations that she used public money for personal housekeeping expenses at the couple’s official and private residences.

According to Channel 2 news, Sara Netanyahu is facing charges on four separate cases, with her husband facing deepening legal woes in unrelated criminal investigations. Mandelblit is expected to announce the charges in coming days, according to the report.

She is suspected of improper behaviour and misuse of state funds relating to the Prime Minister’s residence, including receiving goods under false pretences, falsifying documents, and breach of trust.

There was no immediate confirmation from the attorney general’s office, which was unreachable.

The Justice Ministry said in a statement that the report was premature.

“We want to clarify that at this stage the attorney general has not yet made a decision on the case,” the statement read. “When a decision is made, after the end of the investigation that was ordered by the attorney general, a public statement will be made, as is the accepted practice.”

According to Channel 2, the first charge involves the hiring of electrician Avi Fahima, a Likud Central Committee member. A committee charged with overseeing residence expenditure – which included the Prime Minister’s Office legal adviser – ruled against the hiring of Fahima, but he was employed nonetheless.

Further allegations relate to the use of state funds for purchasing furniture designated for the Caesarea home. The furniture was apparently purchased for the official residence in Jerusalem and then moved to the Netanyahu home, while their older furniture was taken to the Prime Minister’s residence to replace it.

The Prime Minister’s wife is also suspected of improper use of state funds for medical care for her late father, Shmuel Ben-Artzi. And she is also suspected of routinely making false reports that the family was entertaining guests, or exaggerated the number of guests, at the prime minister’s residence in order to receive catering services at the expense of the state.

The cost to the state is estimated at hundreds of thousands of shekels over a period of many years.

Police recommended an indictment in May 2016.

The decision to launch the investigation came in light of the state prosecutor’s recommendation, after allegations were raised in a report in February 2015 by State Comptroller

Photo: Moti Kimchi/Pool



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara arrive at the Magistrates Court in Tel Aviv to a court hearing against journalist Igal Sarna on March 14, this year.

Yosef Shapira that detailed lavish spending by Netanyahu and his wife at their official residence in Jerusalem, as well as at their private home in Caesarea.

Sara Netanyahu’s lawyer Yossi Cohen called the allegations “ridiculous”. “How far will the persecution of the Netanyahu family go? As far as the cup of tea that an employee of

the residence gave Mrs Netanyahu’s 97-year old father on his death bed while he lived in their home,” he said in a statement aired by Channel 2 in response to the report.

Netanyahu has consistently denied any wrongdoing and has claimed in the past that she is a victim of a plot to topple the Prime Minister and that former employees have been paid to testify against her.

Poll: 66 per cent of Israelis say Netanyahu should quit if indicted

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Two thirds (66 per cent) of Israelis believe Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should resign if indicted for corruption, and just over half (51 per cent) say they don’t believe his protestations of innocence, according to a poll published last Sunday.

According to a Channel 10 news survey of 751 respondents, the governing Likud would come out ahead of the other political parties in a general election – with or without Netanyahu at the helm.

Former Likud minister, Gideon Sa’ar, was best poised to be elected to the premiership if Netanyahu was out of the running, the poll said.

According to the poll, 66 per cent say Netanyahu should step down if indicted, while 21 per cent say he shouldn’t quit, and 13 per cent are undecided. Asked if they believed the prime minister’s assertion that he is innocent of all the allegations against him, 51 per cent said no, 27 per cent said yes, and 22 per cent said they didn’t know.

The survey came two days after Ari Harow, a former key associate of the prime minister, signed a deal to turn state’s witness, and a day after police explicitly said for the first time that the investigations of Netanyahu revolve around suspicions of “bribery, fraud and breach of trust”.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked has said the law does not require a prime minister to step down unless convicted of a crime carrying moral turpitude. Ministers have to step down if indicted, but not prime ministers, she said – an opinion not universally accepted by legal experts.

The poll saw the Likud party retaining its lead, even gaining without Netanyahu as its leader. With Netanyahu at the helm, the party was projected to receive 27 seats, followed by 22 for the Zionist Union, 18 for Yesh Atid, 11 for the Joint (Arab) List, 9 for Jewish Home, 8 for Yisrael Beytenu, 7 for Kulanu and United Torah Judaism, 6 for Shas, and 5 for Meretz.

Without Netanyahu, however, the poll found that Likud would swell to 31 seats, while the Zionist Union and Yesh Atid parties would each lose two seats as compared to the previous spread, with 20 and 16 seats, respectively.

With Netanyahu out, the poll also predicted that Sa’ar, who recently rejoined the Likud party, would be most likely to lead Israel’s right with 23 per cent. Behind him, Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett received 11 per cent, followed by Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Lieberman with 9 per cent.

The poll was conducted last Sunday among 751 respondents – 600 Jewish Israelis and 151 Arab Israelis. The margin of error was 3,6 per cent.

Last Friday, Hebrew media reported that police would recommend filing indictments against Netanyahu in two cases – Case 1000 and Case 2000 – as the investigations appear to be



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, and his then-chief of staff Ari Harow, arrive at a Likud faction meeting in the Knesset, on November 24, 2014.

strengthened by “significant material” provided by Harow, his former chief of staff.

A police recommendation does not carry legal weight; it is for state prosecutors to decide whether to press charges.

In Case 1000, Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, are suspected of receiving illicit gifts from billionaire benefactors, most notably hundreds of thousands of shekels’ worth of cigars and champagne from the Israeli-born Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan.

Case 2000 involves a suspected illicit quid pro quo deal between Netanyahu and Yedioth Ahronoth publisher Arnon Mozes that would have seen the prime minister hobble a rival daily, the Sheldon Adelson-backed Israel Hayom, in return for more favourable coverage from Yedioth.

Netanyahu denies any wrongdoing.

Berlin: Two Chinese tourists detained for Nazi salutes

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BERLIN

Police in Berlin say two Chinese tourists were detained last Saturday for performing banned Nazi salutes in front of the German parliament.

Officers saw the two men, aged 36 and 49, taking photos of each other making the gesture in front of the Reichstag.

Police said in a statement that the men were questioned at a nearby precinct but later released after leaving a security deposit of 500 euros (\$593) each.

They face a criminal investigation for using symbols associated with organisations that are considered to be in breach of Germany’s constitution. Convictions can incur a fine or a prison sentence of up to three years.

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CATHRYN J PRINCE
NEW YORK

For two years Alexandra Silber played Hodel in a London production of “Fiddler on the Roof”. But with the last performance, the last curtain call and the last round of applause, it was time for Silber to bid adieu to the character with whom she identified for so long.

As it turned out, saying goodbye was hard. Really hard. Silber kept wondering what happened to Hodel after she boarded a train bound for Siberia to join her fiancé Perchik. What was next in the life of this bold, smart and resolute young woman?

“I had a lot of unfinished business with Hodel. I [lost my father at] the same age as Hodel when she lost hers, when she got on that train. I was robbed of what I felt was a proper goodbye to my father.”

And so, her debut novel “After Anatevka: A Novel Inspired by Fiddler on the Roof” was born. With its publication the 34-year-old actress, singer, teacher and blogger, can now list author to her list.

A serious and poignant historical fiction, the book opens where the musical ends.

On the first page readers find Hodel languishing in a filthy Siberian prison cell, determined to rejoin her earnest Russian intellectual fiancé. As she waits to learn her fate, she reflects about the

Iran condemns its soccer players for match with Israeli team

Iran’s soccer federation condemned two Iranians who play for a Greek team last week Friday for participating in a match against an Israeli team, Iranian media reported.

The federation “strongly condemns” the participation of Masoud Shojaei and Ehsan Hajsafi in a match for Greece’s Panionios against Israel’s Maccabi Tel Aviv a day earlier in Greece, it said in a statement reported by the semi-official Fars news agency.

On its Farsi-language Twitter account, Israel’s Foreign Ministry praised the players for ignoring what is considered a taboo in Iran by playing against the Israelis. Maccabi won the UEFA Europa League match 1-0.

Israel and Iran are bitter adversaries and traditionally, Iranian athletes refrain from playing Israelis. Iran’s government usually rewards such behaviour.

The federation said it is reviewing the case and will make a final decision after speaking with both players who in the past have also played for the national soccer team. Fars reported that the two may now be banned from playing on that team again.

At a previous match against Maccabi in Tel Aviv, both refused to play.



Candle-lighting for Shabbat in the most recent Broadway production of “Fiddler on the Roof”. Alexandra Silber (far left) played Tzeitel.

shtetl life she left behind – her older sister Tzeitel and her younger sisters Chava and Bialyeke, as well as her mother Golde (whom Silber happened to play in high school).

Through these flashbacks readers come to understand how Hodel and Perchik ended up living on the edge of the frozen, colourless world that is the Siberian labour camp Nerchinsk.

“There is no singing with mops in this book. That would be to water down the story and rob it of her strength and authenticity,” Silber said.

It was about four months into the London production that Silber said she felt the need for another creative outlet. So, she started blogging. She wrote about what it was like to be an American living in London.

A literary agent approached Silber and asked her if she’d ever considered writing a novel. The seed was planted and Silber went to work. She wrote between scenes, she wrote at night.

There were times Silber wasn’t sure if anyone would ever read the book, or if she even wanted anyone to. Still, it felt good to give life to Hodel in this way, she said.

Then last year she was back on Broadway, playing Tzeitel in Bartlett Sher’s Broadway revival of “Fiddler on the Roof”.

And she thought perhaps it was time to bring the book into the world. She found a different agent and signed a two-book deal with Pegasus Publishing.

After brewing Scottish Breakfast Tea in “the cutest, most adorable tea pot”, she set to work. Usually, her five-year-old rescue cat Tatiana Angela Lansbury Romanov sat on her lap.

Her second book, “White Hot Grief Parade”, will be published around Father’s Day 2018. It’s a memoir about losing her father Michael Silber to cancer.

“Eighteen is a particularly complicated age to lose a parent. You are self-aware, you are making yourself, but you are also not done with being raised,” she said.

In “After Anatevka,” Silber’s father rises from the pages as Perchik.

A civil rights activist and attorney, her father was a great believer in equality, she said. And, like Perchik, he too was deeply misunderstood by his father. Indeed, Silber said she painted her grandfather into the character of Gershon, Perchik’s uncle and guardian.

“The book was my chance to create a fictionalised person of my father,” she said.

Born in Los Angeles, the Grammy-nominated performer grew up outside Detroit. At age 21 she made her West End debut as Laura Fairlie in Andrew Lloyd Weber’s “The Woman in White”, and made her Broadway debut in 2011 playing Sophie DePalma in Terrence McNally’s “Master Class” opposite Tyne Daly.

In 2013 came her Carnegie hall debut – she sang the role of Nina in “Song of Norway”, an operetta.

Silber also identified with the way Hodel felt about Judaism.

“She is a person of faith, but not a follower of tradition. And as someone who grew up in a secular home I connected with that,” she said. “Judaism is unique in that it can enrich you culturally without ever introducing the concept of G-d.”

Having immersed herself in Chassidic life and shtetl life, Silber felt prepared to write about Hodel’s daily life in Anatevka and Perchik’s life in yeshiva.

‘I came to my relationship with Judaism as an adult. It was a very chosen thing.’

But the majority of the book takes place in Siberia – and Silber soon realised trying to describe Siberia without having seen it, was akin to describing life in Michigan to her London friends.

“The only thing that can capture the essence of a place is to be in the place. Like Hodel sings, ‘I must go, I must go’,” said Silber, whose ancestors were Russian shtetl Jews.

She and a friend spent three months in Russia, visiting Moscow, St Petersburg and former gulag towns in and around the Lake Baikal region.

While many of these towns have grim histories, Silber said she saw them as places of hope. She saw them as places where people blow out candles over birthday cake, gather for dinner and watch the sun set.

There was, she said, something of Hodel in this land of extremes.

Israeli woman completes Channel swim

An Israeli swimmer crossed the English Channel this week, becoming Israel’s first woman to ever complete the endurance feat. Starting in the British town of Dover on Tuesday, Avishag Turk swam over 13 hours before reaching the French city of Calais.

“This is the top of the top,” Turk told the Haaretz daily. “The English Channel is the Everest of the open waters.”

Prior to Turk, the only Israeli to swim the entirety of the English Channel was Eitan Friedman, a physician who completed the achievement in 1993.

While the distance between Dover and Calais is 34 kilometres, Turk swam some 45 kilometres as a result of the strong currents, according Haaretz.

During her journey across the channel, Turk had to contend with jellyfish and cold waters, but also enjoyed the company of dolphins for part of the trek.

Turk said that despite the tough conditions, she never considered giving up.

“I never thought of quitting, I am not a person who ever thinks about quitting,” she said.

In addition to her latest swimming accomplishment, Turk has also swum the 16 kilometres from one end of the Dead Sea to the other, and 42 kilometres in the Mediterranean Sea over a period of 16 hours, according to Haaretz.



Israeli swimmer Avishag Turk swims across the English Channel, last Tuesday.

Being Jewish, a mother and a careerwoman means juggling

DAWN NATHAN-JONES

I have been generously blessed to have had the most rewarding and exciting career, spanning over three decades in the car rental, travel and tourism industry. Although I was never a straight A student in high school, I used my natural networking flair, my competitive and assertive nature and above all, I worked extremely hard to get to the top of my career as CEO of Imperial’s Car Rental Division.

After a successful and fulfilling career, I stepped down in 2015 to take some time out to spread my wings and embark on a new chapter in my life. More recently, I got involved in M-Net TV show, Shark Tank South Africa, where entrepreneurs convince five hungry “Sharks” to invest in their business.

As an investor, I now spend my time imparting my knowledge and experience of building efficient, scalable and profitable business with others. My passion is to develop and nurture young talent into successful entrepreneurs and help them grow their business.

Hard work

I never dreamed of success; I worked for it. This meant that hard work, determination, and surrounding myself with good people have been the key to my work ethic and the foundation to my success.

However, this comes at a price and means that you make sacrifices and sometimes give up the things you love.

There is no substitute for putting in the time; it came down to making sacrifices. Success is difficult to achieve without grit and hard work.

For me, it often meant I was not able to be at important family gatherings and, at an early age when my friends were out having a good time, I was pounding the pavements, knocking on doors and working 16 hours a day to build a business.

Love what you do

It’s important to find what you love to do because work fills a large part of your life and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is right for you. Also, you need to be the best you can, but most importantly you must love what you do and do what you love.

Passion has given me meaning and has been the driving force that pushed me to achieve no matter what challenges I’ve faced.

Fortunately, I had the courage to follow my heart and intuition and didn’t let stereotype thinking influence me in any way.

In the early 80s few females had made it to the top of corporate business; I was privileged to have a great mentor in Carol Scott who believed that we could take on the global car rental giants in a highly competitive market.

Emotional intelligence

To be successful I’ve had to be assertive and act rationally which is not always easy. I’ve learnt that being emotional can be an ineffective way of leading and solving problems.

Being able to listen and to understand the feelings of others has been the most valuable lesson for me as a woman in a very male-dominated environment. Being understanding that is, without allowing sentimental issues to throw me off course.

Throw away the guilt

As a single mom of an 11-year-old son Daniel, and a business woman, I’ve had to learn to juggle many balls at once. Sometimes it feels more like throwing hand grenades in the air, and hoping they don’t explode in your face!



I’ve always tried to expel the feeling of guilt. The essence of being a Jewish mother is almost synonymous with the feeling of guilt.

In the work environment, I sometimes felt that I wasn’t spending enough time watching my son at his extramurals, or school concerts and always had that perpetual feeling of not giving 110 per cent at work.

Guilt is counterproductive and I’ve had to make sure that I have a good work-life balance, if such a thing exists. Instead of channelling

my energy into feeling guilty, I focus on the quality of time I spend with my son and attending to my business commitments.

Letting go of the idea of being 100 per cent at all times, is fundamental to achieving the so-called balance.

For me, the work-life debate has never been one or the other, it’s about how to be both, and to be present wherever I am or whatever I’m doing.

Finding me-time

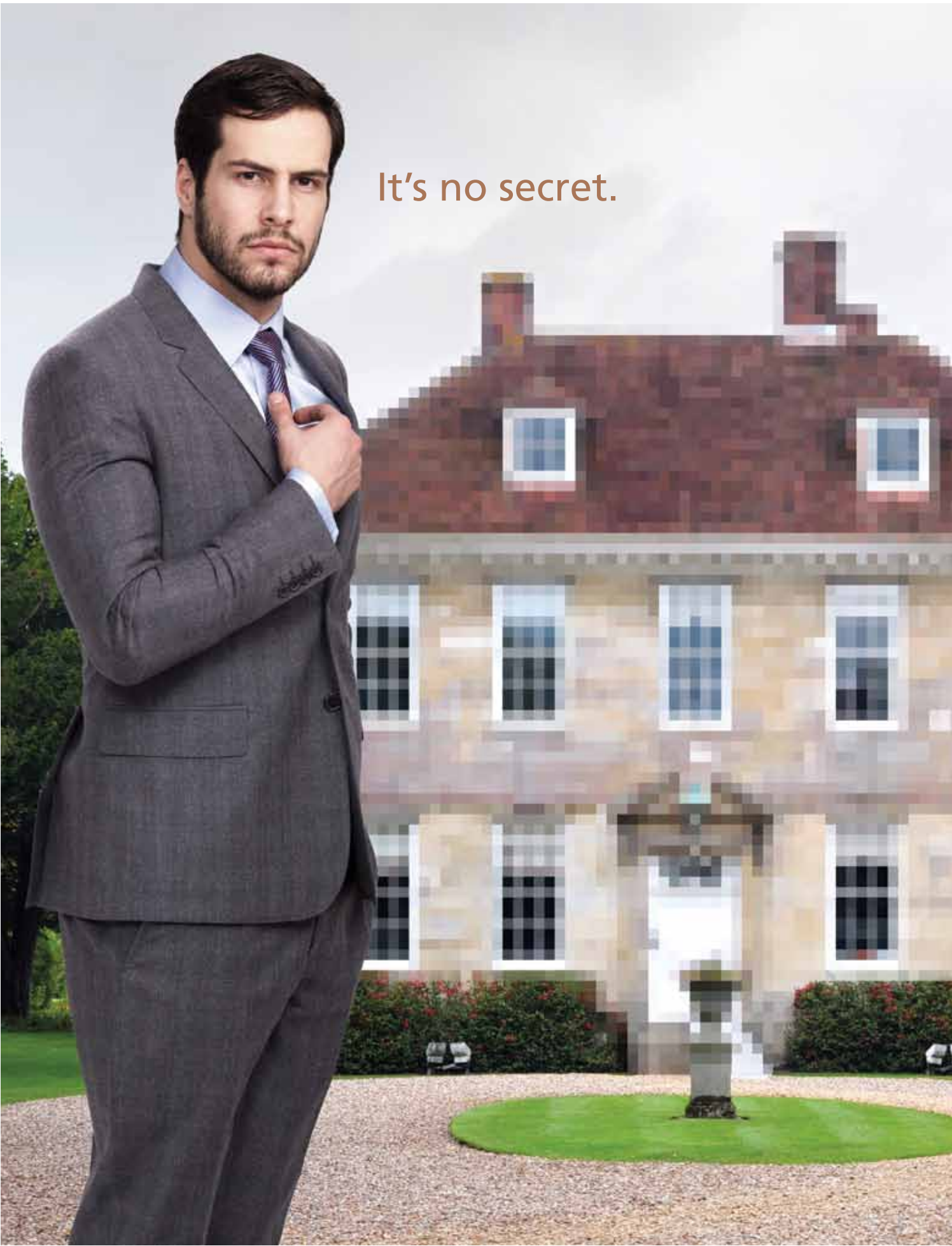
Soul time for me is vitally important and necessary for inner balance and nourishing the body and mind. Soul time connects me with

reality and puts my life into perspective.

I make sure I indulge and treat myself to activities I enjoy and, when possible, I spend quality me-time on full body massages, regular walks on my own, a good work-out at the gym, meditation, pampering at the spa. Sometime, I just need to sit in silence, thinking and reflecting. These are all ways I deal with stress.

As a Jewish woman, we always make time for our family, our community and our friends, making time for everyone else often means that we feel guilty about making time for ourselves.

Me-time is something you should not feel guilty about.



SARS Communication

If you have any offshore assets that you haven’t disclosed, we’re going to find out about it. Now’s your chance to stay out of trouble by making use of the SARS Special Voluntary Disclosure Programme. You only have until 31 August 2017 to take advantage of this opportunity or you might find yourself facing some very harsh consequences including fines and imprisonment. For information visit sars.gov.za.



Women leading the way

TALI FEINBERG

As South Africa finds itself in a leadership vacuum and the United States’ president continues to show the worst side of power, it is easy to become despondent about leadership today. However, women in our own community are a source of inspiration, and are showing the way forward this Women’s Day.

Politics and law

The most pressing need for leadership, courage and wisdom is in politics, and we can be proud of the women who have blazed a trail in this arena. If we see the future by standing on the shoulders of giants, then women like Helen Suzman, Ruth First and Helen Joseph can motivate to fight for what is right. Leading the opposition at the height of apartheid, Suzman became known for her strong public criticism of the governing National Party’s policies, capital punishment, the banning of the Communist Party, and gender discrimination. She visited Robben Island to inspect prisoners’ living conditions and was a Member of Parliament for 36 years.

Ruth First was a journalist, academic and activist who paid with her life – killed by a letter bomb sent to her in exile by the South African Secret Police. She had also been held in solitary confinement for over 100 days and was one of the 156 activists who were arrested and charged alongside Nelson Mandela in the Treason Trial. Her extensive career as a journalist, author, academic and activist leaves a powerful legacy.

Helen Joseph was a founder member of the Congress of Democrats (COD and national secretary of Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). She was also one of the main organisers of the Women’s March on August 9, 1956. Arrested on a charge of high treason in December 1956, she survived several assassination attempts, including bullets shot through her bedroom window late at night and a bomb wired to her front gate.

Glynnis Breytenbach resisted the National Prosecuting Authority over the withdrawal of charges against Richard Mdluli, and was taken to court for it. She is currently a Member of Parliament for the Democratic Alliance.

Gill Marcus joined the ANC in London, returning to South Africa in 1990 to

become deputy finance minister in the first democratic government. She was appointed as deputy governor and then governor of the Reserve Bank.

It is also heartening to see young politicians making waves overseas, like Elizabeth Jaff, who played an integral role in the Obama administration and recently stood for election as the Democratic National Convention chairperson.



Helen Suzman

Leading the opposition at the height of apartheid, Suzman became known for her strong public criticism of the governing National Party’s policies, capital punishment, the banning of the Communist Party, and gender discrimination.

High Court Judge Sharise Weiner was a founding member of Lawyers for Human Rights and a shortlisted candidate for the post of public protector, following Thuli Madonsela.

Humanitarian

South African Jewish women are leaders in humanitarian work, quietly and conscientiously improving the lives of their fellow South Africans. Helen Liebermann was recently awarded the highest award that France can bestow on a foreign citizen in recognition of her lifelong commitment to the eradication of poverty, injustice and human misery through her organisation Ikamva Labantu. She says that her work “is part of who I am as a Jewish woman - it is an expression of my Judaism. Rather than prayer, I’d like to live it.”

Many others have followed in her footsteps. Physiotherapist Marilyn Bassin has volunteered with poverty-stricken terminally ill children for the last 20 years, aiming at alleviate suffering and bring dignity to the dying.

Diminutive and feisty, Ina Perlman was the founder of Operation Hunger, a non-profit organisation aiming to eradicate hunger in South African rural areas in the 1980s. Perlman would beg for leftovers at large grocery stores, pack the goods into her Volkswagen Kombi van and travel all over the country.

By 1991, the organisation was providing food to about 1,8 million people and engaging an additional 200 000 people in income-generating projects.

Now, the younger generation are picking up the mantle, including Gina Flash, founder of the Mensch Network, which brings together “Jewish change-makers” and offers support for those making a difference.

One member is Lauren Gillis, who founded Relate, a 100 per cent not-for-profit social enterprise that sells handmade bracelets to raise funds for health, education, social upliftment and environmental conservation and creates earning opportunities.

Another is Marlene Silbert, who founded the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative, which brings together teenagers from different backgrounds for intensive workshops, tutoring programmes and community service projects.

We see many Jewish women in the NGO sector, such as Nikki Stein, an attorney at SECTION27, who is currently working on the right to basic education and the obligations of the government arising from that right; and Marilyn May, who started Atlantic Hope in her own home, creating a place of safety for orphaned babies.

Andy Bolnick is the founder of Ikhayalami, which focuses on the development and implementation of affordable technical solutions for informal settlement upgrading, and Kira Schlesinger started the Teacher Development Initiative, which works with English teachers in under-resourced schools to improve their skills.



Marlene Bethlehem

Healthcare

With doctors sometimes giving up on South Africa, those who choose to stay and succeed, remain an inspiration, like Dr Candice Sher Locketz, who recently qualified as a specialist anatomical pathologist; and Dr Rebecca Hodes, who is the new director of the Aids and Society Research Unit (ASRU) at UCT. She is also the principal investigator of the Mzantsi Wakho study, focusing on the lived experiences of HIV-positive teenagers.

They can draw inspiration from Professor

Now, the younger generation are picking up the mantle, including Gina Flash, founder of the Mensch Network, which brings together “Jewish change-makers” and offers support for those making a difference.

Selma Browde, a senior radiation oncologist at the University of the Witwatersrand and an anti-apartheid activist; and Dr Mary Gordon, who for many years was South Africa’s best-known female doctor. In the final phase of her life she worked as a doctor at Baragwanath Hospital and at the age of 70 she registered as a specialist in physical medicine and took up a post at Tara Hospital. She continued practising medicine until her death at the age of 80.

Arts

Irma Stern put South Africa on the map for sought-after works depicting Africa’s places and people; while Nadine Gordimer conveyed the injustice of apartheid through literature, winning a Nobel Prize.

Galia Gluckman produces large-scale multi-faceted artworks and in 2016, her work was purchased for the presidential residence in Cape Town. Other successful artists include Francine Greenblatt, Aileen Lipkin, Orly Rabinowitz, Claire Greenspan, Janice Rabie and Claudia Gurwitz.

In literature, novelist Rose Zwi and poets Helen Segal and Riva Rubin, made their mark, while Joanne Fedler is a bestselling author who has just launched her own publishing house.

Stage

On the stage, prima ballerina Phyllis Spira danced for the Royal Ballet in Britain before returning to South Africa and spending 28 years as prima ballerina. In 1984 she was named the first (and currently only) South African Prima Ballerina Assoluta. In 2003, she was named a member of the Order of the Disa for her contribution to ballet and the development of ballet in disadvantaged communities.

Aviva Pelham’s musical career has spanned over 40 years with performances



Jane Raphaely



Nadine Gordimer



Ruth First

in opera, operetta, musicals, concert and cabaret. She is the director of numerous shows for fundraising and the arts, and has sung for Queen Elizabeth and Nelson Mandela.

She teaches talented youngsters from previously disadvantaged communities, sharing a platform to give them experience and to launch their careers. Beverley Chiat is a respected opera performer, and Fay Singer is known for her work in Klezmer music.

Actress, playwright, artist and director Sue Pam-Grant is one of South Africa’s most loved faces, after achieving fame on the South African TV series Suburban Bliss and writing the smash-hit production Curl Up and Dye. She is currently a multi-media artist who has had numerous successful exhibitions.

Actress and singer Caely-Jo Levy is bringing Yiddish music and performance to audiences both locally and internationally, especially the younger generation. When Levy was invited to sing at the Cape Town Yiddish Song Festival, she noticed there was no-one her age in the audience.

“Since then I have felt a deep need and a sense of responsibility as a young Jewish artist to help conserve these songs and share some of the history and culture that goes with this exquisite language, with my generation,” she says.

Mila De Biaggi is a singer, dancer and actress who graduated from the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company and has performed in international and local productions of Singing in the Rain, Cats, Dirty Dancing and Sunset Boulevard.

Media

Doyenne of the magazine industry Jane Raphaely had a difficult childhood and after moving from the UK to South Africa, she became the founding editor of Fair Lady,

launched her own company Associated Media Publishing and went on to shape the women’s magazine industry in this country. Going full circle, the young Cara-Lee Herr is the current fashion editor of Fair Lady.

Nadia Bilchik is president of Greater Impact Communication and an internationally renowned television personality, communication and professional development training expert, author and keynote speaker. She is currently the editorial producer for CNN’s Weekend Morning programme.

In the Middle East, television, radio and print journalist and war correspondent Paula Slier, heads up her own company, Newshound, and she is often first on the scene in Israel and surrounds.

Award-winning reporter and author Mandy Wiener specialises in investigative reporting and legal matters, covering both the corruption trial of former national police commissioner Jackie Selebi and the Brett Kebble murder trial. Her book “Killing Kebble” was a local publishing phenomenon, selling in excess of 100 000 copies.

Actress, playwright, artist and director Sue Pam-Grant is one of South Africa’s most loved faces, after achieving fame on the South African TV series Suburban Bliss and writing the smash-hit production Curl Up and Dye.

Business

Joan Joffe is South Africa’s “first lady of ICT”, blazing a trail in the IT and telecoms industry in this country. In 1977 she launched Joffe Associates, the first company in South Africa to import, sell and service the IBM PC.

She took the company national, and sold it 10 years later. She is a founding member of broad-based women’s empowerment group, Nozala Investments, and has served on the boards of several other organisations.

Reeva Forman single-handedly developed a leading cosmetics empire and was the first women president of the Johannesburg Junior Chamber of Commerce. She is a well-known speaker on management, marketing, motivation, self-development, human relations and success, and has lead over 20 tours to Israel.

Sport

Champion golfer Rita Easton won the South African Women’s Golf title seven times and was inducted into the Southern Africa Golf Hall of Fame in 2009.

Marlene Bethlehem played tennis at Wimbledon and the French Championships from 1959 to 1962. In 1961 she reached the quarterfinals of the women’s doubles. In 1962 she won the Wimbledon Plate as well as the Dutch Open doubles.

Sarah Poewe, whose mother is Jewish, has competed internationally for both South Africa and Germany as a breaststroke swimmer. At the age of 14, she made her international debut at the 1997 Pan Pacific Championships and at 17 she competed for the South African swimming team at the 2000 Olympic Games, and finished in fourth place in the women’s 100 m breaststroke.

These women are just an example of the many who are succeeding in their fields, making a difference and leading the way forward, both in South Africa and internationally. There are certainly many more!



Marilyn Bassin



Joan Joffe



Phyllis Spira

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SAJBD

South African Jewish Board of Deputies

South African Jewish women of valour

SUZANNE BELLING

*“A woman of valour, who can find?
Her worth is far beyond pearls.”
“She gives generously to the poor;
her hands are stretched out to the needy.”
“Her mouth is full of wisdom: her
tongue with kindly teaching...”*

These verses from Proverbs 31 extol the many virtues of a woman, but they hardly touch the surface of what women have achieved today.

Just in the area of giving back to community, South African Jewish women have excelled.

Ann Harris has demonstrated throughout her life how a woman can remain an observant Jewess, while retaining a modern outlook and independence. Originally from Manchester, UK, she married Cyril Harris, who became Chief Rabbi of South Africa.

She practised as a solicitor before coming to South Africa. She took the community by storm with her outspoken addresses and actions in championing human rights and fighting for social justice.

She was part of a team running the Wits Law Clinic for 10 years from 1989, the last three as acting director. She became chairman of OSSAC (Oxford Synagogue Skills For Adults Centre), which teaches a variety of skills – from literacy to computers.

Ann caused a stir in 1990 when she visited Lusaka at the invitation of the Five Freedoms Forum to meet with the ANC.

She lives in Cape Town and is currently president of the African Jewish Congress, a founding board member of Afrika Tikkun, a trustee of the SA Holocaust and Genocide Foundation and chairman of

the board of trustees of the Chief Rabbi CK Harris Memorial Foundation.

Achiever par excellence, Marlene Bethlehem, says: “Helen Suzman was my inspiration.”

Marlene has had three overlapping public careers – sportswoman, Jewish communal leadership and South African national involvement.

Her local Jewish communal career spans several organisations, all in leadership capacities and she was the first-ever national chairman and president of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

She joined the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society in 1964, becoming chairman of the national executive, later president and is now honorary life vice-president.

On a national level, she was a peace monitor during the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. She was also an observer to the 2006 Palestinian elections.

In 2003 President Thabo Mbeki appointed her as deputy chairman of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and



Myra Osrin

Linguistic Communities, a post she held for 10 years.

Between 1959 and 1962 she played on the overseas professional tennis circuit. In 1961, she reached the quarter-finals of the women’s doubles at Wimbledon and followed this up a year later by winning the Wimbledon Plate in the ladies’ singles.

Marlene’s most recent honour was being chosen as president of the New York-based Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and spoke in Hannover, Germany on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day earlier this year.

Although she started her career as a top model, Reeva Forman became a formidable business leader and entrepreneur.

In 1994 she was chairman of Temple Israel in Hillbrow. She was instrumental in saving the premises as a place of worship.

It is today a heritage site, as well as an outreach centre in the area to Jews still living there and, with Afrika Tikkun, for the disadvantaged. Reeva became one of the founding members of Afrika Tikkun.

An honorary life vice-president of the SA Zionist Federation, she is well known in the community for initiating the Israel Now tours to help South African opinion-makers understand the reality on the ground in that country.

She joined the SA Jewish Board of Deputies in 1998 and in 2002 began her ongoing Zionist activism.

She won the SA Businesswoman of the Year award in 1983 and was the first woman in South Africa to be invited to join the Young Presidents Organisation.

Marcia Parness has devoted herself to Zionist activities since

her youth, focusing primarily on education and outreach. She is now honorary life president of the SA Zionist Federation and of the Women’s Zionist Organisation of SA and an honorary life member of the World WIZO Organisation in Israel.

She was the first woman chairman of the Student Zionist Association at Wits. She has been active in various aspects of SAZF and WIZO work ever since, holding many offices.

Marcia’s compassion is illustrated by her being a founder member of the Shalom Bayit Committee, established to educate Jewish women to identify family abuse, and ways in which to prevent it.

Apart from their manifold other activities, three women have distinguished themselves in commemorating the Holocaust and bringing its lessons to many South Africans.

All three were founders of different centres – Myra Osrin, former director of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, the first in the country, Tali Nates, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) and Mary Kluk, director, Durban Holocaust Centre.

Myra was previously chairman of the then Western Province Zionist Council and Bnoth Zion. She was also a previous joint winner of the SA Jewish Report Lifetime Achiever Award in 2001, with her late husband, Eliot.

Mary Kluk, who followed Marlene Bethlehem after a few years as the second woman chairman (and now president) of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, has lived her entire life in Durban.

She was previously chairman of



Ann Harris

the KwaZulu-Natal branch of the Board of Deputies.

She is a member of the executive committee of the World Jewish Congress

She has always been actively involved in fund-raising projects both in the Jewish and broader communities including the Highway Hospice.

Avital (Tali) Nates – also a former Jewish Achievers winner, was born in Israel, where she met and married South African Clive Nates in 1985 and they returned to this country.

Her father, Moses Turner, and uncle, Henryk Turner, were spared during the Holocaust as their names appeared on the famous list of Oskar Schindler – the rest of the family perished.

The JHGC seeks to raise awareness of the evils of genocide, focusing on the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

The South African national curriculum for grades 9 and 11 includes Nazi Germany and the Holocaust and a suggested theme on Genocide: a case study of Rwanda.

The JHGC assists provincial education departments, schools and educators with its human rights curriculum.

Letters		
<p>ARTICLE ON RITALIN ‘JOURNALISTIC SENSATIONALISM’</p> <p>I wish to refer to the article in SA Jewish Report of July 7, titled “What is the truth about Ritalin in our schools?”</p> <p>I am sure I speak for everyone of your readers, that articles must be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.</p> <p>Unfortunately, for whatever reason, the article is nothing near the truth and contains much misinformation.</p> <p>Readers will be totally misinformed about this very important situation concerning the use of Ritalin. This is journalistic sensationalism at its very worst. Who in heaven’s name gave you this misinformation?</p> <p>I have 50 years’ experience to feel really concerned. Obviously, you are entitled to ask me if I am an expert in the use of Ritalin, or just shooting my mouth off. Hopefully I have documented scientific proof of what I am saying.</p> <p>Would you dare publish my letter?</p> <p>Dr Billy Levin Johannesburg</p> <p><i>We stand by our story and believe we went to highly respected doctors and specialists who are experts in this field for their learned opinions. We have since got other opinions that confirm our story was balanced, fair and accurate – Editor.</i></p>	<p>JEWS MUST STOP BEING AFRAID TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN LAND</p> <p>“Influential South African Jews call for an urgent end to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank to secure peace”.</p> <p>This headline appeared in your issue last week, and with all due respect to these (and, I’m sure many more) “knowledgeable” peace experts, I strongly submit that they have the issue of occupation “back to front”.</p> <p>While everyone agrees that the 50-year occupation since the Six Day War must end, there is just one change that needs to be made. Instead of Jews occupying Arab land, there must be an immediate end to Arabs occupying Jewish land. No more must Jews fear to live in the biblical heartland of Eretz Yisrael.</p> <p>The time has come for Jews to stop being afraid to live in their own land and this can only be done by ending the occupation... the occupation of Arabs on Jewish land!</p> <p>Our Father in Heaven restored His gift of all of Israel 50 years ago. The city of Jerusalem was united. All lands west of the Jordan – which contains 93 per cent of the places mentioned in the Bible – were liberated. Syria was defeated and the Golan was returned.</p> <p>What Israel needed to do at that exact moment was to establish full Israeli law over every inch of those holy lands. Instead, we let the Arabs grow and prosper and occupy more</p>	<p>THESE ARMCHAIR CRITICS SHOULD OFFER THEIR SERVICES IN ISRAEL</p> <p>In reference to “SA Jews calling for peace in Israel”, I wish to remind these grand learned persons that from 1917, The Balfour Declaration and other League of Nations/United Nations decisions clearly defined the outlines the future territory of Israel!</p> <p>The so-called Palestinians are the squatters NOT the Israelis! They are obliged to make peace approaches NOT Israel.</p> <p>Israel has attempted from 1948, numerous times to come with peace offers, even territorial offers. Each time they have been rejected!</p> <p>The “Concerned Signatories” do not represent the Jewish majority in South Africa.</p> <p>If the “Concerned Signatories” are so concerned, why do they not go to Israel to offer their services to help solve the peace problem? It is always easy to sit in one’s ivory tower. Let them get off their high horses and do something!</p> <p>Maurice Skikne Johannesburg</p>



A green light for new olim...

One can never underestimate the importance of the all too crucial to-do list. No self-respecting mother of two – cum journalist, cum life coach, cum olah chadasha – could possibly cope without it.

There are many who make use of their cell phones and laptops to send them daily reminders. I have always opted for the more old-fashioned, yet highly effective pen and paper method.

World News in Brief

Israeli court revokes citizenship of Arab-Israeli man over terrorism conviction

JERUSALEM – An Israeli court has revoked the citizenship of an Arab-Israeli man over his terrorism conviction – reportedly for the first time – in a stabbing and car-ramming attack.

The Haifa District Court last Sunday agreed to the request of Interior Minister Arye Deri in the case of Alaa Ziad of Umm al-Fahm. Ziad seriously injured three Jewish Israelis in the October 2015 attack at the start of what has been called the “stabbing intifada”.

Reports said it was the first time that an Arab Israeli has lost his citizenship over a terrorism conviction. Ziad’s mother is an Israeli citizen but his Palestinian father is not. Deri has also said he would revoke the Israeli residency permit for Ziad’s father.

Ziad can appeal the ruling while remaining in the country as a temporary resident, at least until October, Ynet reported.

“Revoking Ziad’s citizenship constitutes a proper and proportionate measure,” Judge

Avraham Elyakim wrote in his decision, Ynet reported.

The Adalah Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights and The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, said that a decision to revoke Ziad’s citizenship “deviates from precedent as well as international law”. They noted that the Supreme Court in Israel decided not to revoke the citizenship of Yigal Amir after he assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

Ziad drove his car into a group of people waiting at a bus stop near Kibbutz Gan Shmuel in northern Israel, near Hadera. He then exited his car and began stabbing people, injuring four, including a soldier seriously. One of the victims was a 15-year-old girl.

Ziad was found guilty of four counts of attempted murder last year and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

It is not known to where Ziad would be deported. (JTA)



Sunday (August 13)

• Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium, 38 Oxford Road, Parktown. Programme is compiled by Jack Mink – a short audio on Ambrose and his Orchestra, followed by a DVD – The Dolly Sisters. Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.

• Ongoing Nechama Growth From Grief Support Group. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Golden Acres. Men and Women welcome. Time: Tea from 09:30, group starts promptly at 10:00 – 11:30. No need to book. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (August 14)

• UJW hosts Elaine Gavshon on “From Aged Cars to Fresh Cigars – a Personal View of Cuba Today. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40.

Tuesday (August 15)

• WIZO Etgar hosts its annual golf day at Killarney Country Club. R3 600 per Four-ball (R900 per player). Cost to sponsor a hole: R3 000. Includes: green fees, kosher halfway-house lunch and finger supper. Contact: Lee Joffe 082-441-2953; Zee Bergman 083-377-5644.

Wednesday (August 16)

• ORT SA’s ORT2TALK series presents character actor Anthony Fridijhon, taking an amble through the entertainment industry over the last 50 years. Time 18:30. Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, Houghton. Booking: nelly@ortsa.org.za / (011) 728-7154.

WHAT'S NEW

Contact: UJW office (011) 648-1053.

After just six months living in a new country, with a new language, a new culture and new rules, there were three highlighted items on that list that had been there for a couple of months, without being scratched off.

Book date for driving test.
Book eye test ahead of driving test.
Book lessons for driving test.

Yes, after spending more than two decades comfortably behind the wheel in South Africa, my husband and I were required to take a driving test yet again. Driving lessons ahead of said test were compulsory.

In fairness, we were now driving on the other side of the road, and we had a full year in which to take that “practical exam”. But much like the cliché of getting back on the bicycle, the obstacle of driving on the right side of the road, was something one gets used to surprisingly quickly. And with time, one even gets used to the hooting from vehicles in all directions – often in unison – usually for taking just a little too long to accelerate as a traffic light turns green.

There are many reasons why the “driving test requirements” might still be waiting patiently on the to-do list. There are a range of more pressing items on the list, including: Order new textbooks for school, call air-conditioner repairman, buy more washing powder and replenish stock of ridiculously delicious “kubakim” coated nuts.

One wouldn’t need to be a Freudian scholar to understand why an adult might keep finding reasons not to book a driving test.

It could simply be that it feels unnecessary at this age and stage in life. It could be that it takes one back to one’s uncertain teenage years when passing your driver’s test was more important to many than getting into university.

It might also be that forking out around 1 500 shekels (around R6 000 each) for the entire process – including eye test, lessons and

New word of the week – “Me-nu-mas” – polite – overheard being used to describe South Africans waiting patiently in queues!

New idea of the week – seeing a book shelf filled with a range of books and magazines at a bus stop. Apparently, you can take any book and return it to a shelf at another stop when you are finished.

Smile of the week – nine-year old daughter asks: “Why do people keep saying we are ‘fresh off the boat’, when we’ve already been here for six months. Isn’t that a long time?”

driving test – is not something one has planned for soon after arriving in a new country.

It could also be the prospect of failing the test and having to go through the entire process and expense again. Maybe people simply don’t have enough free time? Or it could be the heat – after all, who has the energy to take a driving lesson when it’s 33 degrees?

Whatever the reason for the procrastination, you can only imagine the excitement and relief we felt, when we heard that a decision had been taken by the Transport Ministry to drop the driving licence test for new olim.

Was it fake news? A cruel joke? No, it’s manna from heaven thanks to the hard work of a fabulous organisation called “KeepOlim” – a new post-aliya non-profit for all olim. Now, new immigrants and returning residents with valid driving licences for five years will now no longer need to take new tests.

Details about the change are expected soon, but for now there is a collective sigh of relief from those of us who had yet to scratch off the words “driving test” from their to-do lists.

A green light that will help make the aliya road ahead, that much easier...

The SA Jewish Report is looking to fill the newly-created position of CEO

The role of the CEO will be to future-proof the SA Jewish Report and transform it for the modern era of digital and social media publishing

The CEO will be responsible for:

- Digital strategy
- Social media strategy
- IT strategy
- Print and distribution strategy
- Company ops and office management
- Staff development and human resources
- Financial management, reporting and stakeholder management
- Operationalising the Jewish Achiever Awards and Fundraising
- The development of a high-performance sales team

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Please e-mail admin@sajewishreport.co.za for a full copy of the job description or to send your CV

The Golem still lurks in our Brave New World



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

What do religions say about the technological tsunami flooding our lives today? Is the increasingly rapid “disruptive innovation” an angel or devil? Leading Johannesburg techno-expert Arthur Goldstuck raised some ancient but supremely relevant Jewish perspectives at Limmud in Johannesburg last weekend.

Sketching technological changes from 100 years ago to the present, he left the audience fascinated, but also unnerved. A century ago, individual innovations appeared occasionally which we take for granted today, such as the portable electric drill; colourful gift-wrap created by Hallmark, which replaced brown paper wrapping; Converse All Stars athletic shoes; and others.

In 2017, however, every device and industry is being technologically disrupted – or re-innovated – at increasingly speedy rates, with everything being connected via the Internet and other means, and building on each other.

We can hardly keep up.

Facebook, for example, connects almost the entire world, except China where it is not allowed; in this era of instant innovation, new products and information reach millions within seconds. Some two billion people – one in five of the world’s population – and 17 million South Africans are on Facebook.

The next major innovative platform, predicts Goldstuck, will be Virtual Reality devices, allowing one to experience events taking place around the corner or a world away.

Soon, unmanned robots will proliferate as waiters in restaurants, as bank clerks, teachers and so on; they will be caregivers in hospitals and homes which will sense minute amounts of germs and report them to medical staff – Japan, with its elderly population, already uses 20 000 robots as caregivers.

By 2019, artificial intelligence devices should be pervasive. These would include, for example, devices fixed to peoples’ brains doing routine ECGs and electronically sending results to each individual’s doctor.

Autonomous, self-driving cars already exist. By 2022, farmers will insert chips into livestock – such as dairy cows – in the field,

to monitor temperature and other aspects, transmitting them to the farmer’s house to inform him which cows are ready for milking.

These devices do not only perform jobs previously done by humans, but accumulate masses of information about people’s movements, likes, dislikes and behaviour.

Despite the benefits, this is potentially dangerous and invasive: Where is it stored; how is it used? It could be employed for nefarious purposes. For example, someone could hold you to ransom with such information.

Hospitals’ patient records could be captured and only released for a payoff – this already happened recently in UK hospitals.

Could such technologies become an existential threat to humankind, outsmarting people? What if “intelligent” devices behave negatively rather than positively? Such a technological scenario was predicted decades ago in Aldous Huxley’s science fiction classic, “Brave New World” in 1932.

Drawing on Jewish sources, Goldstuck referred to a man-shaped creature made of mud created by the Maharal in the 1500s – the notorious Golem of Prague which has

entered popular language as a saboteur of the foundations of a good society.

Legend held that the Golem was given “life” when a parchment containing holy words was placed under its tongue; if the creature became dangerously destructive, it could be “switched off” by removing the parchment.

Could the Golem be an archetype for modern artificial intelligence? How would one switch it off?

Goldstuck quotes other Jewish sages who approved of technology and innovation, seeing them as part of human creativity, but says the privacy of a person’s inner life is sacrosanct – meaning that Facebook’s collecting and using of such private information may cross a forbidden red line, according to Judaism. With personal privacy being so crucial, trust in technology is lacking.

Jewish sages foresaw the potential dangers of this techno-Golem centuries ago, as seductive as it is. We would do well to heed their warning.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Answering the call, again



Imagine a wife and mother who has endured an abusive husband for a decade. Her situation is intolerable and getting worse as the abuse inevitably escalates with the passage of time.

But she is terrified to leave, knowing that the move would likely unleash an unprecedented level of rage and retaliation. Finally out of options, she dredges up the courage to get out only to find the road ahead littered with problems as daunting as those she has lived with – safe houses, protection orders, legal and other expenses, maintenance agreements and child sharing.

This scenario is all too common and is why the Chev has expanded its Abuse Services to offer a Volunteer Court Support Programme.

Our first group of volunteers has undergone almost 20 hours of training in the Domestic Violence Act; understanding abuse, safety plans and places of safety; learning about empathy, empowerment and appropriate responses and how to apply for protection orders and maintenance.

They even paid a visit to the Magistrates Court where they were taken on a tour to familiarise themselves with the layout and procedures. That is where they are likely to spend a lot of time accompanying women who have approached the Chev for help in cases of abuse.

Our volunteers are now able to help with the completion of forms for protection orders and maintenance and to stay with applicants at court during extended waiting periods to provide company and reassurance.

Besides not being alone, victims are often forced to sit alongside their abusive ex-partners for many hours in a court room which can be an intimidating experience. Having someone at their side offers relief and provides much-needed support.

An intake process is in place for both existing Chev clients and for new clients. Our social workers will consult with other experts regarding the exact nature of the help required.

Mediation is a service already on offer at Chev Social Services but if abuse is a factor, there may be a need for urgent relocation to our safe house and for legal assistance. Once immediate safety is assured, our social workers will pair the client with a court support volunteer.

The need for this service becomes increasingly important for people trapped in unhealthy relationships. As always, the Chev responds to the call of the community. People in need of this assistance should contact Tova Goldstein on tovag@jhbchev.co.za or (011) 532-9616.

May our partnership continue to thrive.

feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Board looks back on a proud 114-year record of achievement

The focus of the Board continues to be on finalising arrangements for its biennial national conference, to take place in the Sandton Shul hall on Sunday, August 20 at 15:00. That this will be the 49th such SAJBD gathering is indicative of how long the organisation has been carrying out its role as the recognised spokesbody and civil rights lobby of the Jewish community.

The origins of the Board go back to 1903, when a representative body for Jews in the then Transvaal and Natal, was established. This makes the SAJBD one of the country’s oldest communal representative bodies, and we are proud of what it has achieved, and continues to achieve 114 years later, in promoting our community’s safety and well-being.

The Board’s work is multifaceted, comprising a range of cultural-educational, public relations, informational and outreach functions. However, its core mandate is to protect Jewish civil liberties, including combating anti-Semitism.

Since our last conference, we have successfully prosecuted a number of individuals guilty of defaming and/or threatening our community, whether through the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Equality Courts, media regulatory bodies and in other appropriate forums.

Most recently, we had the satisfaction of the South Gauteng High Court upholding the SAHRC’s ruling against Cosatu International Relations Spokesperson Bongani Masuku, who was found to have made threatening and highly abusive comments against members of our community who expressed support for Israel.

Related to our right to identify as a Zionist community, has been our efforts, together with other Jewish and non-Jewish organisations, to counteract attempts, under the broad banner of “BDS”, to undermine the SA-Israel relationship.

This is a perennial battle, one fought out on university campuses, the media, at political

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

level and in various other areas. Here too we have seen remarkable progress.

We have helped to ensure that vigorous attempts to impose academic boycotts against Israeli academics have come to nothing, while also developing increasingly effective counter-campaigns in response to the annual “Israel Apartheid Week” hate fest particularly at universities where there is a significant Jewish presence.

In the diplomatic arena, the successful visit in March 2016 of Israeli Foreign Ministry Director General Ambassador Dore Gold, was a clear indication of the success of these efforts.

In common with the rest of the Diaspora, South African Jewry must deal with the very real challenges posed by local and international terror threats.

We have established a close working relationship with the authorities, who have to date been extremely effective in recognising and dealing with this problem. We are

further fortunate to be served by a dedicated, well-trained Community Security Organisation, whose professional staff and volunteer teams, continue to excel in fulfilling their mission to “protect Jewish life and the Jewish way of life in South Africa”.

The two years since our last conference have seen a continued deterioration in the local political and socio-economic climate. That being said, we have also seen the resilience of our democratic institutions, including the judiciary, media, Reserve Bank and an array of political opposition, in the face of these challenges.

Civil society is likewise playing an important role in helping South Africa to regain its moral compass and we strongly encourage members of our community to involve themselves in these efforts.

Finally, I believe that if we all wish to live in a society predicated on the fundamental values of honesty and integrity, the very least we can do is to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in our own day-to-day dealings.

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

World News in Brief

Vandalized St Louis Jewish cemetery rededicated with help from Muslim donors

ST LOUIS - A St Louis-area Jewish cemetery was rededicated nearly six months after more than 150 headstones were toppled and damaged by vandals.

Dozens of members of the St Louis Jewish community and its supporters gathered last Sunday at the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in University City, Missouri, to acknowledge the community support while honouring those who are buried there, the local media reported.

“While G-d could not guard this sacred place from harm, G-d did send so many to repair, reclaim and rededicate,” Rabbi Roxane Shapiro of the St Louis Rabbinical Association said at the ceremony. “Our help had no barriers and no hate, simply care, compassion and hope.”

Among those in attendance at the rededication was Tarek El-Messidi, founder of the Muslim organisation Celebrate Mercy. The group, with the support of other Muslim leaders, including pro-Palestinian activist Linda Sarsour, set up a crowdfunding campaign that raised \$162 000 from nearly 5 000 donors, exceeding its \$20 000 goal in the first few hours. In the wake of the attack, hundreds of community volunteers came to the cemetery to help with the clean-up and repairs, including Vice President Mike Pence and Missouri Governor Eric Greitens, who is Jewish and had invited Pence.

No suspects have been identified in the vandalism. The Anti-Defamation League has offered a \$10 000 reward for tips that lead to an arrest. (JTA)

These are some of the nominees for the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2017 for the Humanitarian Award in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris



Addi Lang



Basil Kransdorff



David Lewis



Deborah Zelezniak



Dr Linda Greenwall



Gina Flash



Glynne Wolman



Ian Levitt



James Urdang



Lynette Saltzman



Marilyn Bassin



Marilyn May



Martin Moshal



Mcebisi Jonas



Mervyn Serebro



Michelle Goodman



Maurice Creswick



Suzanne Ackerman Berman



Pravin Gordhan



Perry Feldman
and Terry Markman



Rev Canon Mpho Tutu
van Furth



Stanley Seeff



Raelene Tradonsky



To find out who wins, please book a table for the
Absa Jewish Achiever Awards Gala Banquet
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Tables R36 000 (plus VAT) Seats R4 000 (plus VAT)

Please note that the nominees listed above have been nominated by members of the public. The publishing of names in no way constitutes acceptance of the nomination by the individual or entity. Please also note that nominations for this category are reviewed by the Board of the South African Jewish Report, who are responsible for selecting the winner based on various criteria. Only the winner is notified. All nominees in the business categories are notified of their nominations. Nominations for all business awards are reviewed by various judging panels, who interview each nominee and assess submissions in order to select the winners.

Sydenham Shul celebrates its new Torah in style

A brand-new Sefer Torah was presented to the Sydenham Shul by Steven and Hayley Herring and family, in loving memory of the late Rose Herring.

The Siyum – the completion and dedication – took place on Sunday, and it was a rousing, lively, and beautiful event marking this extraordinary occasion.

It had been many, many years since the last time such an event took place at Sydenham Shul and the community came out in force. There was a parade with live music and dancing down Joseph Street to the Shul, accompanied by a police escort.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman, senior rabbi of Sydenham, brought the Torah, which is of the highest standard, from Israel some weeks ago. There was also a full day of educational and entertaining programming for children.



Silver lining to SA politics, says Malala

The Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society (JWBS) recently held a Business Breakfast featuring guest speaker Justice Malala, renowned political analyst and TV host. Linda Shneier, honorary life vice president welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support which enables the JWBS to continue its work assisting the indigent of our community.

Howard Sackstein was the engaging MC and imparted some very interesting information and statistics about the political situation in South Africa, before introducing the keynote speaker.

Justice Malala in an eloquent manner, managed to portray a picture of what he thinks the political landscape has in store for the foreseeable future. Although pulling no punches, he also said there is a silver lining if civil society mobilises and finds its voice safeguarding our democracy.



Cooking up a storm at UJW fundraiser



Photo: Tana Guinsberg

Liz Alpern; Bev Cohen; and Caron Melamed.

The Union of Jewish Women Johannesburg hosted more than 100 women at a cooking demonstration by famed New York chef and author of “The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Foods”, Liz Alpern.

Alpern was in South Africa at the invitation of Limmud South Africa, to share her culinary expertise, skills and passion for Ashkenazi cuisine. Johannesburg’s own kitchen star, Caron Melamed, assisted Alpern throughout the presentation.

Alpern created recipes from her recipe book, including pickles, latkes and sauce, and guests were treated to a delicious taste of what she was cooking.

The event was in aid of the Jewish Community Fund launch for 2017-2019. Proceeds of the event go towards assisting many beneficiaries in our own community, including panic buttons for some of Kosher Mobile Meal recipients, our Brain Boost stimulation group and contributions to a variety of Jewish organisations, including Hatzolah, CSO, DL Link, Malka Ella Foundation, Ohr Natanel and the Friendship Circle.

Renowned Rabbi coming to Johannesburg

RABBI MARK FRIEDMAN

Soul, the division that oversees Jewish education and Jewish life at King David Schools, will be bringing Rabbi Doron Kornbluth from Israel to Johannesburg from August 16 to 23.

Rabbi Kornbluth is an extremely sought-after international speaker and educator. He is also the author of five best-selling books. His particular expertise is in the subject of intermarriage and assimilation.

Rabbi Kornbluth will be speaking extensively to learners at King David Linksfield and Victory Park High Schools, as well as spending time with the learners at both grade 11 Encounter programmes.

In addition, he will be consulting with leadership and facilitating staff development sessions at the schools. Rabbi Kornbluth will also be speaking at select venues across Johannesburg during his visit to South Africa.



Sydenham tots turn into budding artists

JENNY MILLER

The teachers and children of Sydenham Pre-Primary School have worked tirelessly to create the most beautiful works of art for their show this week at Norwood Mall.

Famous artists’ paintings were recreated in a creative and artistic manner, using a variety of different and interesting techniques. The children are able to recognise the different styles of the various artists, ranging from Jim Dine’s Hearts to Monet’s Water Lilies to Joan Miro’s characters and more.

Victory Park pupils commemorate Tu B’Av

HANNA BEN MOSHE

King David High School Victory Park celebrated Tu B’Av, an ancient festival when traditionally unmarried women used to go to the fields dressed in white to meet with unmarried men. Learners dressed in white civvies to mark this occasion.



JJ is number one in the swimming pool

Jordan-Jenna, a 16-year-old grade 10 learner at Crawford College, Sandton, is currently ranked number 1 in South Africa, in her age group for the 400, 800 and 1 500 freestyle.

“I seldom take note of my rankings as I am constantly moving my goal-posts,” she says. “It is important in a sport like swimming, to never get complacent.”

She has been swimming for 11 years, seven of which she has been competing.

From early on, her exceptional freestyle kick became her hallmark. JJ, as she is known by her teammates, enjoys freestyle and butterfly. The mid to long distance events are her forte, namely the 200 free, 400 free, 800 free and 1 500 free.

JJ is a determined young woman who is not afraid of hard work. She fully embraces the long hours and sacrifices necessary for success in the pool.

“Sometimes demanding school work and long training sets can take their toll, but I know that my school and my teachers are behind me 100 per cent and I always manage to juggle my school work, swimming and social life,” she says.

JJ welcomes the toughest of sets, but her love for swimming is enhanced by her teammates and coaches. “My teammates are second family to me; we push and encourage each other – the pool is my second home.”

JJ aims to continue working hard with her coaches while keeping her eye on the 2020 Olympics.

Her motto is: “Don’t wish for it – work for it.”



Travelling Camp Gan Yisrael counsellors

A group of 20 young women from America, England, Israel and South Africa recently completed a four-week travelling camp experience in this country. In addition to taking in some of the most beautiful sights in the world, the girls benefited from visiting and learning from numerous shlichim along the way, as well as teaching and influencing others as counsellors in Johannesburg’s Camp Gan Yisrael day camp.

“In between trips, we were inspired by the mesiras nefesh, farbrengens and stories of local shluchim,” said head counsellor, Chava Davidoff,

who led the camp along with Chavele Tiefenbrun, Chaya Junik and Esther Rimler.

The girl’s turned their inspiration to action during camp, by serving as counsellors in Camp Gan Yisrael, a day camp for the Johannesburg Jewish community, which attracts children of all backgrounds and affiliations. “It felt great to give back to the community which had welcomed us so warmly,” said Tzivie Rabin.

The South Africa Travelling Camp is directed by Rabbi Pini and Rochie Pink under the auspices of Chabad House of Johannesburg.



Having fun using a marbling technique are Shaela Kissimon; Jaron Reisnik; Liat Starkowitz; and Anna Rubin.

Mina Lopato kids sing along with Shira

Mina Lopato Nursery School learners, parents and staff were entertained by outrageously hip Jewish kids rockstar, Shira Kline.

Shira took everyone along on a beautiful Shabbat singalong. Her energy and enthusiasm had everyone singing, dancing and clapping as the kids learned new songs and sang along to old favourites.





Israel Encounter 2017 / 2018

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- Cape Town group
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For further info contact Israel Centre:
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CT: encounterct2018@gmail.com

Berger puts a Sock in it

JACK MILNER

Very few people realise how good a tennis player American Jay Berger was in his day. He

was a top junior and ranked as high as No 7 in the world in 1990. He had even beaten Jimmy Connors, Pete Sampras, Mats Wilander, Stefan Edberg and Boris Becker.



Jay Berger (right), pictured with José Higuera.

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He played at the Maccabiah in his junior days and was inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame. His professional tennis career ended in 1991 due to chronic knee injuries and other physical issues. When he retired, Berger became coach at Miami University before joining the US Tennis Association (USTA) as head of player development in 2008.

In March, now aged 50, Berger announced he would step down from his role in June.

Since Berger took over the role, men's tennis in the US blossomed. There were two American men aged 21 or younger in the top 200 that year, compared to eight US men ranked in the world's top 200 today.

Moreover, the US led all nations with 14 men entered in the Australian Open main draw this January.

Berger was also the head coach of the US men's Olympic tennis teams at the London Games in 2012, when Bob and Mike Bryan won gold in doubles. He also took the US men to the Olympics in Rio in 2016, when Jack Sock and Steve Johnson took home the men's doubles bronze medal and Sock won gold and Rajeev Ram captured silver in mixed doubles.

Berger also coached the US Davis Cup team for 12 years under captains Patrick McEnroe and Jim Courier.

Last week at the ATP tournament in Washington world No 19 Jack Sock announced he was now working with Berger. "He's been in my corner for so many years now, and I just really like his energy," Sock said.

Sock was previously coached by Troy Hahn, but he recently had a child and wanted to spend more time at home. Berger wants to build on Sock's offensive game and his variety on court.

"I think that he has some of the best weapons in the game in his serve, speed and forehand.

We want to continue to work on his strengths and just add little parts to his game slowly," Berger said.

The 24-year-old had a good run to start the season, but is coming off a knee injury during the grass court events.

Unfortunately for Sock he was beaten in last Saturday's semi-final by South African Kevin Anderson in straight sets, just a day after the American had taken out second seed and world No 7 Milos Raonic of Canada. So, that leaves Berger with quite a lot of work to do ahead of the American hard court season.

Berger's son Daniel was a decent tennis player and it was assumed he would follow in his father's footsteps but that all changed one day. Daniel's sister was taking golf lessons, but there were times she couldn't make it so Daniel would take her spot. "Then I spent one summer and did a golf camp down in Miami and decided this is what I want to do," Daniel said. "Ever since then, this has been my whole plan."

Still, he wanted to get the blessing from his dad. So, one afternoon, having watched his father pound tennis balls in practice, Daniel got up the courage to say, "Dad, I want to be a golfer."

Then he asked: "How many hours do you practise a day?"

Jay replied: "Five hours a day in the summer."

Daniel responded: "I'm going to practise eight." And he did.

There was never a word of disappointment about Daniel not going into the family business. "He has never put any pressure on me to play golf," Daniel said of Jay. "He just wanted to make sure I enjoy it."

Daniel, now 24 years old, is currently rated No 19 in the world on the PGA rankings.

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