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■ Volume 21 – Number 34 ■ September 29 2017 ■

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Against all odds

Karate instructor Jonathan
Judin with his brave trainee,
Hannah Katz, who is
fighting cancer

See page 4



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AUTO AFRICA

Convicted sex offender rabbi approved to make trip abroad

TOI STAFF
JERUSALEM

The Israel Prison Parole Board gave its approval for a convicted sex offender rabbi, who is under house arrest, to make a pilgrimage to Uman in Ukraine in the coming days, Hebrew media reported last Sunday.

Eliezer Berland, 80, was sentenced to 18 months in jail in November 2016 after being convicted on two counts of indecent acts and one case of assault.

The rabbi was authorised to travel to Uman for Rosh Hashanah. Each year tens of thousands of Jews converge on the Ukrainian city, which is the final resting place of the Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, an 18th-century luminary who founded the Bratslav Chasidic sect

He was released earlier this year after serving five months behind bars, in part due to suffering from cancer. He was given permission to move to a hotel next to Jerusalem’s Hadassah Medical Centre on Mount Scopus, where he was to be under constant surveillance until October, when his sentence will end.

Long considered a cult-like leader to thousands of his followers from the Bratslav sect, Berland fled Israel in 2013 amid allegations that he molested two female followers, one of them a minor.

According to the indictment, Berland would often receive people in his homes in Jerusalem and in Beitar Illit and held private meetings intended for spiritual guidance, counselling or benedictions. The rabbi



Rabbi Eliezer Berland under police escort

would sometimes take advantage of the meetings and of his position in the community to engage in sexual acts with women, including minors, according to the charges against him.

He was on the run from authorities until 2016, eluding several Israeli attempts to extradite him. He moved between Zimbabwe, Switzerland, the Netherlands and South Africa, accompanied by a group of devout followers numbering around 40 families.

Following a plea bargain, the Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court convicted and sentenced him in November 2016, though some seven months that he spent in jails in South Africa and the US were counted as time served.

In April, Health Minister Yaakov Litzman was criticised for visiting Berland in the hotel. Litzman explained after the visit that it was part of his “ethical duty” to care for all sick people, regardless of their background.

Parshat Yom Kippur

Three on the Jewish concept of time

Judaism strives to releases us from tyranny of time. We are mortal, for sure, but our passing days have been elevated from mere flow. These are a conscious doing, defined by our deeds. The current of time becomes our mission, even our commission, to be shaped in accordance with our will, so that our days will acquire meaning, dignity and congruence.

Our faith triumphs over time by unifying it into a meaning, which is stronger than a blind destiny, predicted and unstoppable. Our faith triumphs over time as we align ourselves with eternal moments and are sanctified by them, as the blessing states: “G-d who sanctifies the times”.

Although a week separates Rosh Hashanah from Yom Kippur, they are one entity, standing for the idea that our time on earth can be and should be, our story. It is the narrative of our precious freedom to create who we are.

Rosh Hashanah is the day when we humans were created. Nothing changes in visible reality. From the perspective of the heavens and the earth, it is just another day dawning. But Rosh Hashanah does not stand for what already exists, but for a potential yet to be.

We mortals are invited to be recreated, rejuvenated, regenerated. It is we who are considered, not the heavens and the earth. It is we who are called to take a decision, to write in the Book of Creation, the chapter that only we can write.

The second half of this wholeness is Yom Kippur. Time always rushes forward, from yesterday through today into tomorrow. We can’t reverse our deeds or our destiny, but we can – and this is the great victorious paradox the faith suggests to us – turn back, return, within our lives.

We are commanded and required to step aside from the flow of time to reflect on our lives. We are elevated towards G-d – elevated above the predictability of time. Just as Rosh Hashanah invites us to decide instead of simply being subjugated by time, so on Yom Kippur we are called to return to the source instead of surrendering to the inevitable.

What had passed cannot be changed, but Teshuva – returning, contemplating, engaging in thoughtful introspection – brings Kapara – repentance, atonement, consolidation, inner-reconciliation.

We have been put into the world, but we are not just passive elements in it. Our gratitude for the privilege of being alive, is much stronger than time. It overcomes forgetting, it makes what has been lasting and precious. There is goodness and love, worthwhile to be endorsed.

Our true joy comes from gratitude and the desire to share our joy with others. This is the case with the festivity of Sukkot, which is so soon to come. Our harvest has been collected, the solemn moment is over and we are rejoicing as G-d has commanded us.

Our whole community is delighting, manifesting its concord, its harmony and its diversity.



Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked,
Beit Emanuel
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Synagogue

Shabbat and Yomtov times

C/1 – Candle-lighting
S/e – Shabbat ends

Sept 29/9 Tishrei Sept 30/10 Tishrei


Starts	Ends			
17:48	18:38	Jhb		
18:15	19:22	CT		
17:38	18:29	Dbn		
18:01	18:53	PE		
Oct 4 C/1	Oct 5 C/1	Oct 6 C/1	Oct 7 S/e	
17:51	18:41	17:52	18:42	Jhb
18:15	19:26	18:15	19:27	CT
17:41	18:32	17:42	18:33	Dbn
18:04	18:57	18:06	18:59	PE
Oct 11 C/1	Oct 12 C/1	Oct 13 C/1	Oct 14 S/e	
17:54	18:44	17:55	18:45	Jhb
18:15	19:31	18:15	19:33	CT
17:45	18:36	17:46	18:38	Dbn
18:10	19:03	18:11	19:04	PE

South African

Jewish Report

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A headstone for a poet who moved to a different beat

NICOLA MILTZ

Plot AE49 looks like any ordinary unmarked grave in the Jewish section at West Park Cemetery. Gravelly, patchy and bereft. But this is the place where the enigmatic Beat poet Sinclair Beiles rests.

The once prolific yet totally unsung and overlooked poet, died 17 years ago and to this day no one has honoured him with a tombstone befitting a man who lived a less than ordinary life.

Sinclair Simon Maurice Beiles was arguably South Africa’s best Beat Generation poet. He was once described by the legendary beloved Jewish singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen as “one of the best poets of the century”.

Beiles was schooled at King Edward VII School and later at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was born in Uganda to Jewish parents in 1930.

He counted among his friends some of the most famous artists, poets and writers of our time including the acclaimed American Beat poets William Burroughs, Gregory Corso and Brion Gysin.

They all lived in Paris at the infamous Beat Hotel in the late fifties – and collectively wrote the highly experimental “cut-up” book Minutes to Go, together.

Beiles, hobnobbed with other famous Beat poets such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. He namedropped friends like Leonard Cohen, TS Elliot, Dylan Thomas – these were his people, so he claimed.

And now a Cape Town man, himself a poet, wants to see Beiles remembered, and honoured for his flashes of brilliance and indelible, although unrecognised, contribution to the archives of Beat poetry.

Mark Hurlin Shelton who met the eccentric Beiles almost two decades ago, recently stumbled on a random Facebook photograph, one taken several years ago of Beiles’ sandy grave. This jolted him back in time to his heady, arty days in Yeoville in Johannesburg when he befriended the whimsical, quirky writer and interviewed him at the

Times Square Cafe on Rockey Street in 1999 – possibly the last interview before he died a year later aged 70.

“I was immensely saddened to learn that he was buried in an unmarked grave without a tombstone and I wish to make the South African Jewish community aware, so that he might be remembered and honoured properly,” said Shelton who works as a Cape Town-based children’s entertainer.

He transcribed his interview with Beiles, intending to publish it, but never got around to doing so, and gave it the title “A cup of coffee with the poet, Sinclair Beiles”.

In it he quotes Beiles describing his early writing days: “I wrote my first poem when I was 17 years old. I traced it with my finger on the sands of Clifton beach. It was titled ‘Her eyes were red as Fireflies’, it was for an ex-girlfriend. I sat and watched as the sea came in and washed it away.”

“An article about him in the Mail & Guardian at the time referred to him as ‘The Wandering Poet of Paris and Yeoville’... Sometimes it is difficult to separate the myth from the facts about him.”

Their interview took place over several hours during a rainy afternoon. Beiles chatted about his associations with many famous poets and writers including Ernest Hemingway, TS Elliot, Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder.

Of Allen Ginsberg, Beiles had said: “I met Ginsberg in Tangiers with Burroughs. We would go together to the Cafe de Paris to smoke hashish... drink mint tea... Ginsberg was neurotic and quite mad in many respects... I liked him a lot. He was extremely emotional and he could get carried away on some or other wave of sincere feeling.”

Of Dylan Thomas, he told Shelton: “We used to meet down at the old French pub in Soho,



London. He was a lovely man, but he was too often drunk. He lived in a world entirely made of words.”

When Shelton asked Beiles how the expression Beat Generation came about, the poet answered: “We were sitting together with Burroughs and Corso at the French Senate in Paris... Although the writers in our circle all wrote very differently, our work was rather complementary and we worked together and co-existed quite well.

“So, we were discussing what it was that set us apart from other contemporary poets. Gregory said that we wrote with a certain honesty of feeling that we shared a certain vision of holiness or Beatitude. A journalist... overheard this and the following day in the New York Herald Times the first mention of the Beat Generation was made.”

Beiles was often misunderstood and criticised by the media, and told Shelton that day: “I feel that the press find my poetry and my interpretations of life odious and irrelevant. They think I am overly euphoric. They see me as a fiddler-on-the-roof Jew, fiddling with words.”

A book published in 2009 by Dye Hard Press, titled “Who was Sinclair Beiles?” and co-authored by Gary Cummiskey and Ava Kowalska, contains essays and interviews that

paint a portrait of Beiles the writer who once worked for Olympia Press and helped edit the Naked Lunch.

Cummiskey said of Beiles: “Sinclair was in fact a prolific writer, churning out masses of poems and plays in frantic bursts of activity. He was also, a woman informed me, ‘not well in the head’. He roamed the streets of Yeoville – where he lived – in a similar fashion to how he had roamed the streets of Paris.

“An article about him in the Mail & Guardian at the time referred to him as ‘The Wandering Poet of Paris and Yeoville’... Sometimes it is difficult to separate the myth from the facts about him.”

After Beiles’ crazy experimental fifties, he moved to Greece where he mingled with people like Allen Anson and Leonard Cohen. In the late seventies he returned to South Africa where he married poet and landscape artist Marta Proctor and they settled into the bohemian Yeoville scene.

According to Dutch freelance writer, Fred de Vries, Beiles died “sick and depressed”.

“He left a large number of poetry collections and piles of letters. Although his debut collection Ashes of Experience won the Ingrid Jonker Memorial Prize for poetry in 1970, his work is now out of print, and few people recognise his name or importance,” said De Vries.

Allen Ginsberg who knew Beiles well once said: “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving, hysterical naked,” perhaps he was referring to Beiles when he uttered these words.

Cummiskey has in the past made enquiries at the cemetery regarding graveside services. “I am one of Beiles’ biggest fans. That is why I wrote my book on him. I feel his legacy to South African literature does not deserve to be forgotten and disappear into oblivion.”

He admitted that Beiles had mental health issues and “could be difficult at times” but many have “very warm and wonderful memories of him and to dismiss him, as some have, as a mad hatter, would be insensitive and cruel”.

It is believed that inquiries have been made regarding a headstone by a biographer, an art dealer and Beiles’ widow Marta Proctor.

The photograph at his graveside, taken by Cummiskey about three years ago, shows a sagging bunch of yellow flowers – evidence that someone close to him had been there. But now all that’s left in this world of Sinclair Beiles is lonely volumes of poetry, books and play scripts which like the poet himself have been reduced to dust.

Beiles is survived by his widow Marta Proctor who could not be reached at the time of going to press.

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KD old boys make little girl’s life-saving cancer treatment in US possible

HELEN GRANGE

Just weeks ago, in mid-July, the Katz family was like any other ordinary Johannesburg family. Julian is an architect working from home, and his wife Hayley has her own psychotherapy practice. Their children Hannah, 11, and Jonah, 8, were doing well at King David Linksfield, and life was good.

Then, in a blink of an eye, their lives changed irreversibly. Hannah had been complaining about “bad headaches” located behind her right eye, and then she said she felt numb on the right side of her face.

Within hours of telling her parents this, her father took her to hospital, where she underwent an MRI scan. Then came the earth-shattering diagnoses: Hannah had a life-threatening tumour near her brain – in medical terms, Group4 Stage4 embryonal parameningeal rhabdomyosarcoma.

“From symptoms to diagnosis to full-blown chemotherapy, took 11 days,” says Julian. “In that time, our lives changed completely,” he says, describing their new reality as a “parallel universe”, with all their resources focused on fighting a battle they never saw coming, but that they believe, wholeheartedly, they’ll win.

In-between her regular week-long stays in hospital receiving chemotherapy (one week out of every three), Hannah is at home in a meticulously monitored sterile environment. Hayley has given up her practice, and between her and Julian, they are on 24/7 duty, ensuring that nothing compromises Hannah’s extremely weakened immunity due to the chemo.

“Hannah can’t eat food that’s been sitting too long, for instance, because her white blood cells are very low, especially following chemo, and she’s in serious danger of picking up an infection,” says Julian.

But more than this, Julian and Hayley have become fast-tracked lay experts in Hannah’s type of cancer. It is inoperable, as the tumour is wedged underneath bone at the base of her skull, involving the right sphenoid sinus and carotid artery, and protruding into her brain cavity.

“We have learnt that this soft deadly mass, more than an inch wide, has been silently growing inside her, next to her brain, without symptom or warning,” says Julian.

Her only hope is a revolutionary intervention called Pencil Beam Proton radiation therapy, which is only available in the US, and Julian has learnt enough about it to speak with impressive authority.

Proton radiation therapy targets the tumour very precisely, so it’s able to spare the surrounding healthy tissues and minimises the side effects. “The proton beam goes in and only blooms to full power as it reaches the tumour. The procedure has been refined by pencil beam scanning technology, which makes it even more precise,” explains Julian.

The problem is that this lifeline of hope is extremely expensive. It is estimated to cost upwards of



Hannah Katz

\$500 000 for approximately 33 treatments and concurrent chemotherapy with the necessary hospitalisation and imaging scans over roughly 18 months.

It was a shock to learn this, but for the Katz family, there was no question. Their battle had reached a whole new level, so their game plan was tailored to match.

“Our beautiful, innocent 11-year-old has cancer. Medical science has made great progress and Hannah can benefit from these advances. So, yes, we are in the biggest battle of our lives, but our reality is simple: We are going to America, to get Hannah well again,” says Julian.

Enter the Jewish community. The first thing Julian did was reach out to a 200-strong group he was in matric with at King David, in 1976. Many of his old schoolmates are doctors, and they’re scattered all over the world. They immediately responded, forming a “committee”, and within days, had put Julian in touch with the top professors at the top hospitals worldwide.

One old friend, Connecticut-based David Greenstein, set up a GoFundMe crowdfunding campaign for Hannah, and the donations have poured in, mainly from the Jewish community. Created on August 27, it has already raised \$125 880 of the \$500 000 requested, and the page has been shared 1 600 times.

“In the space of 40 minutes, one friend sent me 60 abstracts by doctors I was researching. The support is just so humbling. The mothers of my daughter’s friends at King David have also pitched in, and we’ve been offered every kind of assistance thinkable once we’re in the US, from accommodation to transport to tips on how to open a bank account,” says Julian.

It’s all systems go now for the family’s indefinite relocation to America in four to six weeks, but again, it won’t be easy.

“We are taking Jonah out of school (he’s also at King David), because this is a family journey. I don’t know when we’ll be back, but the kids are young and bright enough to catch up,” says Julian, who is busy establishing which hospital Hannah will go to, and

where the family will stay. “The biggest consideration is protecting Hannah’s immunity, so our choice of accommodation is entirely determined by that. I’m now looking into the flight logistics, and whether we can get her onto a private corporate jet,” he says.

The strongest fighter in all this, however, is Hannah herself.

The chemo sessions make her nauseous and exhausted, and she has lost her hair. Yet she has an indomitable spirit and a fierce determination that saw her achieve her dream of winning SA karate colours a second year running in 2017.

A karate kid since nursery school, Hannah is a star pupil at the Mark Wainman Karate Centre in Sandringham, and in the flush of her health last year, won gold medals in the dojo competition.

She was intent on winning a second time on September 10, her

cancer notwithstanding. Before the competition started, however, Hannah suffered a setback and spent five days in hospital fighting an infection, with the help of a blood transfusion and relentless nursing.

“It was touch and go. On Saturday the 9th, her blood cell count was far too low, but at 4am on Sunday, a blood test showed borderline results, so the amazing Dr Kate Bennett, our oncologist, allowed her to go.

“It was like a military operation, getting her to the centre, then back again so she could be hooked back up to the drip,” says Julian.

“Hannah has shown strength none of us knew she had. She may feel sick from the chemo, but she smiles, she laughs, she chats with her school friends on Facetime. Our only focus now, is to save our little girl.”

Funds from the GoFundMe campaign will be paid to a professionally audited trust fund set up for Hannah to manage those expenses. Funds will be paid directly to the hospitals and treatment

centres where necessary. <https://www.gofundme.com/6cjc9j-help-hannah-heal>

- One of the fund-raising initiatives are selling Hannah-designed bracelets that are being sold at the Jewish schools.
- For updates, check Hannah’s Facebook page, titled ‘Hannah our hero warrior’. <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Hannah-our-Hero-Warrior-1956881604594853/posts/>



The three words nobody wants to hear

LANA JACOBSON

“You have cancer” are three words nobody wants to hear.

Few can brag of not being touched by this dreadful disease, either personally or through a friend or loved one. Cancer seems to occupy centre stage in our everyday lives.

Are we gripped in mass hysteria, or are cancer rates proliferating in our community to epic proportions? And if so, what is causing cancer rates to soar?

“Awareness of cancer has increased and people talk more openly about cancer which is why it seems as though there is more cancer present,” says Professor Bernard Donde of DMO – De Mûelenaere Oncology.

“In fact, the statistics show that only a few cancers such as melanomas and liver cancer are increasing significantly.

“While cancer does occur in young people, it is predominantly a disease of the aged. People are living longer and this might be why more cases are being reported. Sharing experiences of cancer between family and friends, creates awareness, which promotes early detection and saves lives.” he says.

Donde believes that media exposure creating a sense of awareness and earlier cancer detection, means that nowadays we are really made more aware of rising cancer rates. Donde also highlights that longevity and quality of life has improved in patients with cancer, due to early detection as well as medical advances.

Michelle Goodman, MD of Cancer Support Group DL Link, is witness to growing numbers of cancer patients. When her own daughter Devorah Leah aged 32, tragically succumbed to this cruel disease, the heartbroken mother honoured her

daughter’s ardent wish that an organisation be formed to support cancer patients and their families.

This was in 2008. For the first two years, DL Link offered support to 60 patients, delivering meals, lifts, lectures, and a myriad other services. Like proverbial wild mushrooms, membership swelled to more than 120 patients within five years.

Currently there are 700 Jewish patients and chronic cancer survivors needing support.

“We hear of almost two newly-diagnosed cancer cases daily,” says Goodman. She theorises that modern stressed lifestyles have a lot to do with the cancer rate increase.

“Chemicals in the food, hormones in meat and chicken, cell phones... there are a myriad reasons,” she says.

CANSA SA confirms Donde and Goodman’s findings with global statistics pointing to cancer worldwide killing more people than TB, Aids and malaria combined. In fact, there will be a 20 per cent increase in cancer in 15 years.

Cancer has no limits. This means 14 million people annually will hear these words... “You have cancer.”.

CANCER STATISTICS

- One in four South Africans is affected by cancer through diagnosis of family, friends or self.
 - Ninety per cent of cancers are caused by environmental and lifestyle factors such as smoking, diet, obesity, lack of exercise.
 - More than 100 000 South Africans are diagnosed with cancer every year.
 - South African cancer survival rate is 6/10.
- * *National Cancer Registry (2012)*

Having a tête-à-tête with the Pope

NICOLA MILTZ

It’s not every day you get to have a tête-à-tête with the Pope.

Self-styled artist, Joel Berman did just that recently, when he presented one of his sculptures to Pope Francis at the Vatican, in Rome.

His artwork, a colourful replica of the iconic knotted gun that symbolises non-violence worldwide, was one of several pieces selected by the Non-Violence Project Foundation (NVP) to be presented to the Pope on the International Day of Peace on September 21.

The NVP – which he supports – is an international youth-based organisation involved with violence prevention and peace education initiatives. Its mission is to engage people on how to solve conflicts peacefully. Its famous logo is the iconic Knotted Gun sculpture named Non-Violence, at first created as a memorial tribute to John Lennon.

An original bronze sculpture is displayed at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Several replicas can be found around the world, including at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town.

This year the NVP invited about 30 artists, including Berman, to put forward designs in keeping with a non-violence theme.

“My design was chosen, so that’s how I came to be invited to present my statuette of a painted knotted gun,” said Berman this week from his apartment in Brooklyn, New York.

He said it had taken months of planning to finally have his audience with this international religious icon.

“Pope Francis makes a speech before he greets people individually. He spoke about his trip to Colombia. Cardinals then translate what he says into different languages. The message was of peace, that we are all one and we need to take care of each other. This is a man who washes the feet of his people to symbolise humility, so I really took the words to heart.

“He walked around for about two hours meeting and greeting the sick, the poor and



Joel Berman presenting the Pope with his statuette at the Vatican

newlyweds. He then came to me and I presented him with my statuette. He smiled, said he liked the colours and the symbolism of the gun. I told him about what we do at the NVP and he closed his eyes in prayer and blessed the cause of non violence, and wished us well with our efforts.”

“It was very special,” he said.

The New York-based artist, who grew up in Johannesburg, has come a long way since he started his art career a mere six years ago, aged 40.

With no art knowledge whatsoever and very little appreciation of art before that, he embarked on his own “wild artistic journey” almost by accident in 2011 following a serious bout of depression and anxiety.

“I went to visit a friend in Singapore and when I walked into his apartment I saw a very basic Chinese painting of a man riding a rooster. I asked my friend how much he paid and he said \$20 000... I said if that piece could sell for so much, then I’ll paint you a rooster that will be worth a million dollars.”

And so, when he returned to the US he went straight to the nearest art store and painted a rooster and according to Berman “it will sell for a million plus one day”.

Following the rooster he says “colour and

ideas kept coming” and “I have never stopped”.

“The art was an explosion of colour that erupted out of me like a volcano when my depression and anxiety finally lifted. I had so many years of darkness, all this colour just exploded.”

Today, Berman, described by his friends as

“beyond eccentric”, claims to have sold pieces around the world. One of his more famous clients is South African-born Olympic swimmer, Princess Charlene of Monaco. Nelson Mandela personally signed one of his paintings entitled “Madiba’s Rainbow Nation” in 2011.

More recently he donated a large sum of money to Francois Pienaar’s Make a Difference Foundation with proceeds collected from his art sales. Each piece, he claims, sells for between \$2 000 and \$20 000.

Having learnt the not-so subtle art of promotion from his father before him, well-known Golden Gloves boxing promoter, Rodney Berman, Joel has managed to make a name for himself among New Yorkers who make up the bulk of his clients.

Using mainly acrylic and oil, he said: “Before 2011 I had basically never painted before. I am totally self-taught and there is not an ounce of art history in my family.

“I love glitter, so once in a while I throw a little into a piece. My art is explosive, colourful and full of life. I paint with a huge passion like I’m trying to find a colour that does not exist.”

We are looking for the names of South Africans who volunteered in the June 1967 Six Day War

The SAZF will be holding a function to mark the 50th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem to honour the South African volunteers.



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South African
Jewish Report

In dark places, rot festers

We have a kind, generous and caring community. You just have to read the story about the 11-year-old Hannah Katz on page four to be inspired. We have a community that goes out of its way not only to help our own, but the broader South African community as well. We are just like that.

But there is also a strong element in our community that wants to keep all that is dark in the dark. Don't tell anyone that you were abused! Don't you dare share that your father beats you. Keep quiet and keep up the appearances...

But this doesn't work, because quite simply: In dark places, rot festers. If we hide abuse – and yes, like in any community around the world, there is abuse in ours – it will not go away. It will get worse. Instead, we will fuel the fire of abuse and violence against women, rather than putting it out.

When people who abuse others are not stopped, they will not only continue unabated and feel empowered in their sickness, giving their abuse free rein. How many people need to be harmed before we realise that by speaking out, naming and shaming, taking an abuser through the legal system, we are not wrong? We are right.

Even if the abuser is a powerful, supposedly good man. Even if the abuser is a devout man. Even if the abuser is respected by all for the work he does for the community. Even then, it is incumbent on us all to make sure he is not able to harm anyone again.

This does not mean sending his victim or victims away. All you are doing then is punishing someone who has already been harmed. By this, you are telling the abuser to go ahead and do as he pleases because there are no consequences to his actions.

Following our story “Johannesburg doctor guilty of unprofessional conduct”, we were both praised and lambasted. In some cases, those who opposed us running this story were rabbis and there was a general rumbling among our rabbonim about us having done wrong. Although there were a number of rabbis, too, who called us to tell us how brave we were and how they supported us.

We heard about a wise and great Posek (a rabbi to whom rabbis go to for help with moral decisions) in New York who deals a lot with abuse and has done so for more than 25 years. His name is Rav Dovid Cohen. I knew he had been consulted on the situation behind this particular story we ran last week, so I contacted him.

He was familiar with the case and confirmed that without question we had done the right thing by running the story as we did. He told me that by publicising it, it was not a question of punishing the man, but rather about protecting his victims and potential victims. He said we are not out to punish anyone, but to protect innocent people. In this, he believed it was important to publicise the situation.

When I spoke to Rav Cohen about the accusation that we should not have written the story to protect the family, he said the family gets hurt when the law takes its course against someone who is guilty. The family gets hurt when someone goes to prison. It is not about the family, but rather the importance of protecting the innocent and the victims. He told me that this was most important and is halachic.

As a newspaper and as members of this community, we would like us to play a part in healing victims of abuse and protecting other innocents. In the last week, we have had a number of women coming to us with their stories of abuse that they had hidden because it might embarrass the family or the abuser.

They were made to feel they had done wrong by being victims. They live with such pain and their lives are forever changed. If we could prevent one such instance, I know we are doing the right thing. If we could protect many, what a mitzvah!

This could be your child, your mother, sister or wife. Or it could be you.

We as a community need to stand up against abuse. Not just pay lip service to it, really take it on and cleanse ourselves of this evil. The perpetrators are not evil, they have a problem and need help. By keeping quiet, we aren't helping them or anyone. We are not helping their families either. Let us stamp out abuse in our community!

I wish you all G'mar Hatima Tova and well over the fast!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



PAULA SLIER

Zahava Alon is an Israeli mother. She doesn't stand out from the hundreds of other Jewish Israeli mothers I've interviewed over the years, except that she's perhaps more angry than most. This propelled her to become active in the “Share the Burden” forum, a rallying call for all Jewish citizens of Israel, regardless of their background, to serve in the Israel Defence Forces.

“We felt in our guts that something was very unfair,” she told me. “We give our children to the army, not knowing if we will get them back, while 50 per cent of mothers in Israel don't have to worry about this because their children don't go to the army in the first place.”

Zahava is referring to the ultra-Orthodox who are currently exempt from compulsory military service so they can study Torah full time. The issue touches a raw nerve in a country where most Jewish men and women are conscripted at 18 years old in a country where security is of upmost importance.

The army is not only a matter of survival, it is a beacon of national pride. The issue is now back on the agenda after the High Court of Justice earlier this month ruled it was unconstitutional for the ultra-religious not to be drafted. The court has given the government a year to come up with alternative legislation.

Reaction from the Charedi community was swift and furious, with accusations that the High Court behaved “scandalously” and “arrogantly” and was “cut off from Jewish tradition”.

Arie Deri, the Interior Minister who also heads the ultra-Orthodox Shas party in the Likud coalition government, vowed that “those same Torah sons who chose to dedicate their lives to Torah study will continue to study Torah here in the Land of Israel, the Holy Land”.

Emotions are running just as high from supporters of the High Court decision. Yair Lapid of the Yesh Atid party, who has been pushing hard for this legislation change, said the draft is “for everyone, not just for suckers... We're done being suckers.”

It's not a new debate. For as long as the IDF has been around, so has the issue of deferred service. It started with the country's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, exempting 400 religious students so they could study Torah. It has since grown into tens of thousands following suit.

A 28-year-old father of two who spends his days studying in a Jerusalem yeshiva, insists that Torah scholars are the backbone of the Jewish people.

“My obligation first of all, is to preserve the Jewish intellect and the Jewish mind for our sake, our country's sake and for generations to come. And yes, while I might not be putting my life at risk, I am also contributing to this country's security.”

Ultra-Orthodox Jews believe Israel needs spiritual preservation as much as physical protection. There's also a growing concern from within their communities that their young men could abandon their worldview after being drafted into the army and, for the first time, moving beyond the constraints of their upbringing.



Dateline: Middle East

Changing conscription laws

Many are also critical of Israel and Israeli policy and don't want to be a part of it. This is a view shared by some secular Israelis, a handful of whom sign up each year as refuseniks.

But there's a bigger issue at play. Comprising some 10 per cent of the 8,5 million population, the Charedi are among the poorest in Israel. They typically marry young and have large families.

A study last year revealed that by the year 2060, they will have grown to become the single largest religious group among Israeli Jews, numbering more than four million. There is a significant demographic implication of this for Israeli politics, the economy and the relationship between religion and state is significant.

Already, ultra-Orthodox parties often serve, as they are doing right now, as coalition kingmakers in the Israeli government.

Ironically, the IDF has said it believes efforts to force the Charedi into the army, will backfire as their leaders, feeling pushed into a corner, will encourage their youngsters not to sign up.

It's why some experts are proposing that a constructive dialogue between the sides is the only way forward. There are also those who say that if these youngsters really don't want to be in the army, the last thing the IDF needs is reluctant soldiers.

One option could be to encourage enlistment into special IDF units that offer a way of serving that is in accordance with Jewish law. Since 1999 a Charedi regiment, which started out as a small company of 32 troops, has grown into one of the largest IDF units.

While more and more religious youngsters are coming forward – at last count there were 7 000 Charedi soldiers serving in the IDF – these numbers still fall short of what the government would like to see.

Rabbi Tzvi Klebnow, director of the Nahal Charedi battalion, insists these soldiers “come with emuna, they come with belief. They know why they are serving, they know why we live in the Land of Israel and they make wonderful soldiers.

“We are the only battalion in the entire IDF that has under its sector two Arab populations. There is no other battalion in the Israeli army which has such a wide sector of service.”

No one can deny that protecting Israeli citizens is a Jewish value – the question is what constitutes protection. But to some extent this issue is a theoretical one because for as long as the ultra-Orthodox are an essential part of the governing coalition, we are a long way from seeing them voluntarily encourage their young men to sign up in big numbers.

And for as long as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, or whomever is in power, depends on the ultra-Orthodox for his political survival, they're unlikely to be forced to, despite what the High Court might rule.

• 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 South African Absa Jewish Achievers.



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24 - 28 Sept:	9:00am - 5:00pm
1 - 3 Oct:	8:00am - 8:00pm
4 Oct (Erev Sukkot):	7:00am - 4:00pm
8 - 10 Oct (Chol Hamoed):	10:00am - 2:00pm

שוק 4 המינים המרכזי הגדול בדרום

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Chief Rabbi lauded internationally for his political stand

ANT KATZ

What do Donald Trump, Warren Buffett, Gal Gadot, Bob Dylan and Jared Kushner have in common with South Africa’s Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein?

They were all awardees at the fourth annual Algemeiner Jewish 100 Gala, unveiled at a star-studded event attended by over 600 guests in New York earlier this month.

Algemeiner’s now ubiquitous list of “Top 100 People Positively Influencing Jewish Life” is published annually and this year listed five awards in the “Religious” category.

This was the third showing in four years for Goldstein, He was included in the inaugural list in 2014 and again in 2016. These had been for the global influence of his projects such as The Shabbos Project. His inclusion this year

was for his political stand in South Africa.

“The chief rabbi of South Africa since 2005, Warren Goldstein walks a delicate line in a country still struggling with the legacy of apartheid,” wrote Algemeiner. “On the one hand, Jews are accepted as part of SA culture; on the other, the ruling ANC party still remains often hostile to Israel and Zionism.”

Rabbi Goldstein had distinguished himself by calling on all in South Africa to join in protests against President (Jacob) Zuma in 2017, they said, adding that Zuma is “accused of corruption”.

The chief rabbi is known for his communal initiatives, including the Shabbos Project which has become an annual event in which Jews of all backgrounds from across the world observe one Sabbath together, wrote the Algemeiner.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

“This year Goldstein took a stand against the president of the country, calling for his resignation and taking a lead in national protest marches against President Jacob Zuma. ‘Say no to corruption and state capture’, said Goldstein after an April interfaith meeting with four of the ANC’s Top-Six office bearers.

“Let us make our voices heard through the length and breadth of this country to say that we do not want a country of injustice and corruption. Let us be free from the tyranny of corruption, let us be free to create the country of

our dreams.” Among the other religious leaders on the top 100 list is Cape Town-born Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis of the UK and the Commonwealth, who has been “an outspoken advocate of Jewish unity”, since 2013 said his citation.

The other three are Mirvis’ predecessor, Lord Jonathan Sacks; Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, known as the rabbi-in-chief of the US Republican Party and Rabbi David Stav, the chairman of Tzohar.

Other high-profile attendees at the event included James Taranto

Rabbi Goldstein has been the recipient of a number of international accolades. Last October, he was on Jerusalem Post’s “50 Most Influential Jews” list.

of the Wall Street Journal; National Security Council member Victoria Coates; Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein; legal scholar Alan Dershowitz; World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder; Refet Kaplan of Fox News; artist Ron Agam; actor Paul Sorvino and former US Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro.

Rabbi Goldstein has been the recipient of a number of international accolades. Last October, he was on Jerusalem Post’s “50 Most Influential Jews” list. They said that, as “The Good Shabbos Rabbi”, he had hugely influenced global Jewry.

He came in 21st – ahead of the likes of Natan Sharansky (24) and President Reuven Rivlin (29). According to the Jerusalem Post: “What began as a local ‘unity initiative’, bringing together SA Jews from across the religious and geographical spectrums to celebrate and keep Shabbat together, became a full-blown global grassroots movement.”

Opinion

Togo becomes a no-go: Africa-Israel Summit cancelled

STEVEN GRUZD AND CARMEL RAWHANI

From October 23 to 27, up to 30 African heads of state were to attend the first Africa-Israel Summit in Lomé, Togo, but Israel abruptly announced its postponement on September 11. While key states like Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda supported the Summit, South Africa, Morocco, the Palestinians and most Arab states openly opposed it, in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Israel has reaffirmed its continued interest in engaging Africa despite this cancellation. Why was the Summit called off, and what lessons emerge?

The Summit was to be the crown jewel in Israel’s stepped-up engagement with the continent, on the economic and political fronts, and not least to break the African bloc’s automatic anti-Israel votes in international fora. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited both East and West Africa during the last 18 months, and hosted leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Zambia in Jerusalem, plus senior delegations from Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Rwanda.

While the public statement issued through the Summit’s webpage announced the postponement, with no new date proposed it reads more like a cancellation. The statement indicated that the Togolese president requested more time for the “elaborate preparations” needed to secure the success of the event. Palestinian solidarity organisation BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) South Africa was quick to crow that the boycott had worked.

But is that really why the

summit is on ice? It’s difficult to know exactly who was planning to snub the summit – no list has been published on which states had decided to go or not to go to Togo. Many states were apparently annoyed at Israel having bypassed the African Union to issue bilateral invitations to each country.

Although the calls to boycott the Summit may indeed have had some effect, domestic factors in Togo seem the more likely explanation. From late August, citizens massed in the streets, largely in opposition to the constitution which allows President Faure Gnassingbé to run for unlimited terms. It would have been impossible to host heads of state in this tense atmosphere.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Nahshon told Al Jazeera: “The decision was linked to the internal situation in Togo. The situation is seen to be unstable, and they asked to postpone... It has nothing to do with pressure or threats of boycott.”

Engaging with African countries bilaterally by Israel will be more difficult than at a summit, with multiple receptive leaders in one conference room.

Israel should learn that Africa can quickly become unpredictable and unstable, especially with autocratic leaders. Neither can Africa be approached as an ideologically united bloc, even if its members often vote in similar patterns.

For Israel’s determination to woo the continent to succeed, this effort must be grounded in a foreign policy that strikes a balance between being reactive and predictive, and appreciates the nuances influencing each African state’s choices and motives.

Facebook tightens ad policy in face of ‘Jew hater’ controversy

NEW YORK – Allowing hateful terms as options was “a fail on our part”, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg said in a post in which she also defended targeted advertising.

Sandberg also announced in the message posted on Facebook last week that the company is strengthening its policies and tools on targeted ads.

ProPublica, an investigative website, reported earlier this month that a news website was able to target ads at Facebook users who expressed interest in “Jew hater” and “how to burn Jews”. Facebook removed the categories after being alerted to their existence and said it would seek to prevent such categories from popping up for potential advertisers.

Sandberg wrote in her post: “Seeing those words made me disgusted and disappointed – disgusted by these sentiments and disappointed that our systems allowed this. Hate has no place on Facebook – and as a Jew, as a mother, and as a human being, I know the damage that can come from hate.

“The fact that hateful terms were even offered as options, was totally inappropriate and a fail on our part. We removed them and when that was not totally effective, we disabled that targeting section in our ad systems.”

She defended targeted advertising, which allows companies to place ads based on demographics on the buying history of consumers, or on behaviour and self-identification. Facebook relies heavily on algorithms to find and highlight content.

“Targeted advertising is how Facebook has helped millions of businesses grow, find customers, and hire people,” Sandberg wrote. “Our systems match organisations with potential customers who may be interested in their products or services.

“The systems have been particularly powerful for small businesses, who can use tools that previously were only available to advertisers with large budgets or sophisticated marketing teams.”

Sandberg said Facebook would clarify its advertising policies and tighten enforcement processes to ensure that



Sheryl Sandberg speaking at Advertising Week in New York

Photo: Slaven Vlasic/Getty Images

content that goes against Facebook’s community standards, cannot be used to target ads; by adding more human review and oversight to the automated processes; and by creating a programme to encourage users to report potential abuses directly to the company.

“We hope these changes will prevent abuses like this going forward,” Sandberg notes, adding that Facebook has had “a firm policy against hate”.

Meanwhile, last Wednesday, Facebook sent out Happy New Year messages to users it believed to be Jewish. But many who received the message are not Jewish and may have received the greetings because they followed a group with a Jewish theme or posted a message on the Facebook page of a Jewish friend, Mashable reported.

“We send messages about religious moments to people in countries where a large proportion of the population observes the religion, or where the religious date is a public holiday,” firm policy against hate. “We may also show the message to people who’ve expressed interest in the holiday.” (JTA)

Act, in your small ways to change SA, says Cameron

HELEN GRANGE

Constitutional Court Judge Edwin Cameron has called on all South Africans to do what little we can to make a difference, reminding us that inertness is the greatest threat to the constitutional freedoms we struggled so hard to secure.

Cameron stressed that our individual efforts are particularly important at this perilous time when “it is alleged that criminal syndicates seek to capture the state to loot it on a massive scale for their own ends”. He said this in his speech titled “Justice in South Africa, an urgent duty on all”, delivered as the Auerbach Memorial Lecture at the Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue recently.

He cited two reports, one by church leaders and the other by academic analysts, that had suggested that these syndicates had “very considerably infiltrated and already seized the apparatus of state power in South Africa for corrupt gain”.

“If this is proved true – if even only part of it proves true – then dishonest leadership, corruption, mass looting of state entities and the destruction of independent institutions could see the demise of the ambitious and yet fragile venture that is the Constitution,” he warned.

While part of the outcome of this was beyond our control – the outcomes of elections or electoral conferences, the sway of political events and negotiations – Cameron cautioned strongly against submitting to despair or inaction.

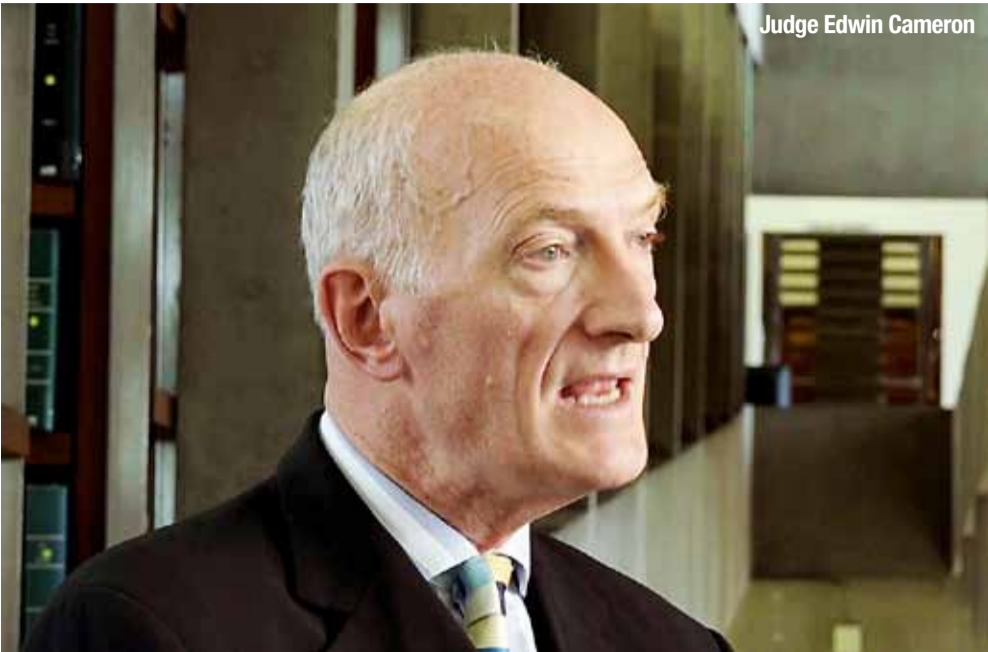
“To help change our society does not require heroic sacrifices... It may require as little as making a well-directed contribution to a well-run organisation with a well-conceived vision, or spending a few hours a month with someone younger for whom your attention might be life changing.

“These gestures may not be enough to save our country. If the forces at play are as cynical and ruthless as some commentators suggest they are, we may be in grave peril. But that does not mean – cannot mean – that we should lay aside our commitment to fight for the good.

“This is our duty. It is a duty that accompanies the rights that have been guaranteed to us by the Constitution,” he said.

Cameron chose, as the theme for his speech, the life of Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish justice on the US Supreme Court, whose notions of personal and legal duty have much to offer South Africans today, he said.

Brandeis developed the idea of the right to privacy and to free speech as a societal good.



Judge Edwin Cameron

I can speak only as a lawyer, for in law we must seek what justice there is to be had in a cruel, arbitrary and often capricious world.

As a Harvard graduated lawyer, he observed the law being used to protect the interests of the big and powerful at the expense of the vulnerable and poor, and later became known as the “people’s lawyer”. Diligent in data collection to bolster his cases, he revolutionised the field of constitutional law with his reliance on what have become known as “Brandeis Briefs” (research material).

“Today, human rights advocates around the world have embraced Brandeis’ visionary, fact-based approach to advocacy. His influence extends to the court in which I now sit. We often rely on *amici curiae* (impartial, knowledgeable adviser)... This forces us to examine the law as it works in practice, rather than simply how it works in theory,” he said.

Cameron said one of the reasons he chose Brandeis was because he was a Zionist who envisaged Palestine as a secular liberal democracy. “He embraced the notion that Zionism would extend the Jeffersonian vision of a state – one that would promote education, social justice and democracy and would protect the civil rights of all its inhabitants, men and women, Jews and Arabs.

“He stressed that the Jewish inheritance of ideals of democracy and social justice

the separation barrier violates international laws; the annexation of east Jerusalem is illegal; Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territory violate every precept of the law of nations and cannot be condoned; by flagrantly and persistently violating international law, Israel forfeits much of its claim to moral standing,” he said.

Cameron said the lesson that Brandeis offered on Zionism was that it was possible to work towards a vision of a state that promotes equality in all its aspects and still be a “Zionist”. For South Africans, Brandeis’ life embodied three lessons, he said. “First, a commitment to rigorous hard work in the interest of others and of public causes; second, a deep suspicion of power and a commitment to protecting the weak and vulnerable who are exposed to its abuses; and third, an abiding belief in the power of law to secure justice in society.”

In a country still beset by dispossession, inequality and injustice, Cameron again invoked Brandeis as an example of how we can do our bit. “At an early age, he committed himself to work one hour per day on pro bono legal services.”

He then reminded us of how we fought against the PW Botha regime. “What saved us in the 1980s was the will of committed, purposeful individuals... we are no worse off now.

“On the contrary, we are far better off. We live in a functioning democracy, where despite its glaring insufficiencies, the law still generally prevails and where we exercise rights unimaginable under apartheid... Those rights are worth fighting to preserve. But that depends on us.”



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Story of a tough NPA advocate turned DA politician

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

A hard-hitting advocate and MP, Glynnis Breytenbach, has faced death threats, criminal charges and unruly politicians. Now she’s collaborated with veteran journalist and best-selling author Nechama Brodie, to tell her story.

Launching their book, Rule of Law, Brodie and Breytenbach sat down with journalist Jessica Pitchford to discuss their collaboration.

Still facing charges of contravening the NPA Act, Breytenbach is used to going to battle. As a former senior state prosecutor for the NPA (National Prosecuting Authority) and now a DA MP and the party’s shadow minister for justice, she actually thrives on them.

memoir began and continued over a number of years. The two carved out – usually over weekends – time between Breytenbach’s busy schedule to work on the memoir.

While Rule of Law tackles serious issues, it’s also a very humorous book, said Pitchford as she spoke at the launch. “At the start, Breytenbach describes growing up in Kimberley, her closet Jewish maternal grandmother and the friend who taught her how to swear, the art of which she’s apparently now perfected!”

Asked about funny observations used throughout the book, Brodie said that injecting humour into the book came naturally. “Glynnis is a fantastic teller of tales and she’s very self-deprecating and she does this so well. “She’s also the most



Nechama Brodie with Glynnis Breytenbach

accomplished insulter I’ve ever encountered in my over 20 years as a journalist! She has a natural ability to slip the punchline in at exactly the right moment.”

Despite her challenges and humorous nature, Breytenbach’s unflinching passion for her work is palpable throughout the book. Asked about this, she said: “Being a prosecutor is the best job in the world. You get to help people every day; you make a difference in their lives. It’s a real job with great job satisfaction – but only if you do it honestly.”

While she thought she’d miss



working as a prosecutor when she left the NPA, Breytenbach says she surprisingly doesn’t, as parliament keeps her very busy and she still fills roles that require her legal know-how.

Dotted throughout the book are also tributes and funny

anecdotes from people who have worked with Breytenbach over her 26 years in the legal arena.

“I had to balance out who I’d speak to and we spoke to people who had worked with her at different stages of her career – all of whom have huge respect for her despite any differences they may have. There was also discussion about speaking to some of the

people she’s put in jail – some of whom still send her Christmas cards and call her for legal advice!” laughed Brodie.

“But as the writer, I thought it probably wasn’t a good idea.” The quote used on the book cover from former NPA head, Vusi Pikoli, epitomises Breytenbach: “I was always impressed with the fairness and high level of integrity shown by Glynnis. But, above all, I like the fire in her. She truly has fire in her belly.”

This fire has often landed her in trouble, but that’s something Breytenbach has come to expect. Asked when she learned that sometimes it’s best to keep quiet, Breytenbach said she’s never learned this lesson, despite the trouble she faced since insisting that former crime intelligence head Richard Mdluli be investigated and keeping the docket back, despite government interference.

“You should absolutely speak

your mind. I certainly knew with Mdluli what the consequences would be and I made peace with that.”

These consequences have included being shot at, something Breytenbach brushes off with her trademark humour. “The hitmen are not terribly good. I was driving a massive car and they only managed to hit it once – it’s not something you should concern yourself with.”

Despite her dry humour, her role in parliament is something Breytenbach takes very seriously. “It is redeeming for all of us, irrespective of where we lie politically to know that there are people in parliament that honour it and want to do that job – some people are fighting a good fight,” said Brodie.

“It’s a huge platform to help people,” said Breytenbach. “I admire the Constitution, it’s the best one in the world and it’s what’s keeping us all safe.”

A Yiddishe song in her heart

PETER FELDMAN

Leigh Nudelman is an engaging and vivacious young woman with an old Yiddishe soul and a song in her heart.

While the world is trying out the newest technology, this King David Linksfield High School alumnus is going back to our Yiddish roots. She has been giving a vivid new life to a batch of well-loved Yiddish songs by releasing her debut solo album, “A Bisl Libe – A Bit of Love”.

“I have always had a love for Yiddish songs,” she told SA Jewish Report, “and I was at a function performing when the rabbi suggested I do an album.

“I was very flattered. Obviously he liked my voice and it was suggested then that I record a Yiddish album, an idea which appealed to me instinctively.

“I discussed the project with my music teacher, Ann Hamblin, who thought it a wonderful idea. She was thrilled and said to me that Jewish people were always asking

for Yiddish music. I felt I really had a connection to this form of music because it has so much emotion. It’s not how you sing it but how you put the story across.”

A number of people helped her find the right material. An added boost came from opera singer Aviva Pelham, whose daughter happens to be married to Nudelman’s brother Craig, who also has a penchant for singing. Pelham boasted a diverse collection of Yiddish songs and it was just a matter of choosing the right combinations.

“A Bisl Libe – A Bit of Love”, was recently launched at a concert fittingly staged in the open at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre in Forest Town.

Nudelman treated her audience to a wonderful musical journey with nostalgic stories and anecdotes about her life and her family. She was tastefully accompanied by a six-piece band comprising Avi Kanar (piano), Peter Jaspan (saxophone), Avi Levy



(guitar), Jonathan Mayer (violin), Godfrey Mgcina (percussion) and Peter Sklair (bass guitar), who helped give the evening a special magic.

Songs such as “Mit Dir iz Mir Gut”, “Yid’l mit’n Fid’l”, “Oif’n

Pripitchik” and “Maz’l” stood out, all beautifully rendered with a simple infectious style and emotional verve.

Coming from a musical family, Nudelman moved effortlessly into her musical space. After

having completed a Masters in Performance Making at Goldsmith College, University of London in 2008, she began performing her works at various platforms in South Africa and also became more involved in community work.

Singing is part-time at the moment, but she would love to expand into a full career one day. She sees her main role at present as being a mother to her children, Benjamin and Ella, and singing in the Beit Emanuel choir. She also finds time to run her business in personal styling.

She adds: “I’m under no illusion that Yiddish music will bring me fame and fortune, but it’s something I’ve wanted to do. If people want me to perform I will be only too happy to do it for them.”

- If people would like to purchase the CD (R200) they can order it via e-mail: inudels@googlemail.com or on the link: <http://abisllibe.blogspot.co.za/p/the-songs.html>

Blow to Israel as Interpol admits Palestine as full member

RAPHAEL AHREN
BEIJING

In a stinging diplomatic defeat for Israel, the world’s largest international police organisation on Wednesday accepted the “State of Palestine” as a full member.

At Interpol’s annual General Assembly in Beijing, the Palestinians’ membership bid was accepted with 75 counties voting yes, 24 voting no, and 34 abstaining.

Israel fiercely objected to the Palestinians joining Interpol, arguing that Ramallah’s alleged support for terrorism could hinder rather than aid Interpol’s efforts. The US administration, too, objected to Ramallah’s membership bid and helped Israel lobby against it.

Israel had expressed concerns that the PA’s membership in Interpol would result in sensitive information being leaked to Palestinian terror groups. It also reportedly fears Palestinian efforts via Interpol to mount legal challenges, including travel bans and extradition requests, against Israeli army officers and others for alleged war crimes.

Shortly after the vote at Interpol’s Executive Committee, Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki welcomed the decision, hailing it as a “victory” for his people.

“The State of Palestine considers this membership and the responsibilities that it entails as an integral part of its responsibility towards the Palestinian people and a moral commitment to the citizens of the world,” he said, according to the PA’s official news site Wafa.

“Palestine is ready and able to shoulder these obligations and

responsibilities as an active partner in the international community, and to contribute effectively and significantly to advancing our common core values as nations,” he added.

Maliki stressed that “the State of Palestine will continue to struggle to raise the status and role of Palestine at the international level and defend the rights of our people in security and freedom by all diplomatic and legal means available and including joining the relevant international institutions.”

On Monday, PA President Mahmoud Abbas announced he would again put forward a resolution for Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations, after a failed bid in 2011.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation also celebrated the vote, writing on its Twitter account: “Over 75% of #INTERPOL members just voted in support of #Palestine’s full membership. Congratulations! Alf Mabrouk #Palestine! #Thankyou.”

The Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem did not immediately comment on the matter. The Israel Police declined to comment on how the move may affect Israeli co-operation with the international body.

In the first official Israeli response, Environmental Affairs Minister Zeev Elkin urged the government to immediately suspend all commitments and goodwill gestures to the PA the Cabinet had agreed to implement over the last two years. “One cannot wage war against us and incite against us here and in the world and at the same time enjoy gestures from the State of Israel,” he said in a statement.

But Wednesday’s Interpol vote can be seen as a bitter defeat for Israel’s diplomatic efforts.

HAILED AS HEROES, VICTIMS OF HAR ADAR TERROR ATTACK BURIED

RAOUL WOOLLIFF, TAMAR PILEGGI AND DOV LIEBER

Thousands of mourners gathered on Tuesday afternoon to pay their final respects to three Israelis killed by a Palestinian terrorist in the Jerusalem-area settlement of Har Adar earlier in the day.

Border policeman Solomon Gavriyah, 20, civilian security guards Youssef

Ottman, 25, from Abu Ghosh and Or Arish, 25, a resident of Har Adar, were laid to rest in separate funerals.

Gavriyah was buried in his central Israel hometown of Beer Yaakov.

In Jerusalem, Arish was buried in the city’s Givat Shaul Cemetery.

In the nearby Arab Israeli town of Abu Ghosh, hundreds attended the funeral for Ottman. The burial was held in both Hebrew and Arabic, and was attended by police officials, Knesset members, and town mayor Issa Jaber.

Gavriyah had joined the Border Police for his mandatory national service and had recently been serving as a policeman in the Jerusalem seam area. Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan said of Gavriyah:

“He put himself in front of the terrorist. He stopped him, even as his own life was taken.”

In Abu Ghosh, Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev praised Ottman for protecting lives in the face of “cowardly” terrorism.



Border Police attend the funeral of Solomon Gavriyah

Israel’s population tops 8,7 million on Rosh Hashanah eve



TOI STAFF

Israel’s population stood at 8 743 million on the eve of the Jewish new year, up some 156 000 people from the previous year.

The population growth rate was 1,8 per cent, similar to recent years, according to data published on Monday by the Central Bureau of Statistics to mark Rosh Hashanah.

Jews make up nearly three-quarters of the population at 6,5 million, while Israel’s almost 1,8 million Arabs make up just over one-fifth of the population. Those of other backgrounds, such as Druze, non-Arab Christians, and those not categorised as members of a religious group, make up less

than 4,5 per cent of the population, at 396 000 people.

Israel’s birth rate was 3,11 on the year, with 181 405 babies being born.

The birth rate, the highest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a club of mostly Western developed economies, was four times greater than the death rate, with 43 000 people dying over the last year.

The country also saw 27 000 people move to Israel over the last year.

Israel’s population would continue to grow in the years ahead and is expected to reach 10 million people by 2024 and 20 million by 2065.



China’s President Xi Jinping speaks during the 86th Interpol General Assembly at the Beijing National Convention Centre in Beijing on Tuesday. AFP PHOTO / POOL / LINTAO ZHANG



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Worried about Jewish pluralism in Israel? So are Israelis, poll shows

ANDREW TOBIN
JERUSALEM

For non-Orthodox Diaspora Jews worried by the Israeli government’s unfriendly policies

toward them this year, a new poll has some good news.

The 2017 annual survey by Hiddush, a nonprofit advocating religious pluralism in Israel, offers indications that the Israeli Jewish public is as



supportive as ever of religious pluralism, if not more so. Few are happy with how the state handles religion, and a record number would like to disentangle Judaism and politics.

“When you look across the years, there is a consistent high level, and on many issues a growing level, of support of freedom of religion and equality,” said Hiddush CEO Uri Regev. “As a result, the gap between the public and the political leaders is growing.” Hiddush has commissioned a version of the survey since 2009.

Many of this year’s findings are in line with those of previous years. Notably, 65 per cent of Israeli Jews support giving Reform and Conservative Judaism equal official standing to Orthodox Judaism.

Among secular Jews, who account for some 40 per cent of Israeli Jewry, the number was 92 per cent. Such a radical move would amount to dismantling the Chief Rabbinate, Israel’s Orthodox rabbinical authority, which controls marriage and other Jewish services in the country.

Also, 84 per cent of Jews agree Israel should uphold the freedom of religion and conscience promised in its Declaration of Independence, 67 per cent support state recognition of non-Orthodox marriage and 50 per cent would personally prefer it.

At the same time, the survey reveals a significant spike in support for separation of religion and state. A total of 68 per cent of Israeli Jews embrace this principle, which Regev said they interpret as entailing a depoliticisation of religion rather than a more complete American-style division. Support is up five per cent from last year and 13 per cent since 2010.

Zooming in on recent government policies on religion and state, the Hiddush survey found 73 per cent of Israeli Jews oppose the new conversion law, which grants the rabbinate a monopoly over officially recognised Jewish conversions in Israel.

Were the government-backed nation-state bill to pass, for the first time enshrining in law Israel’s status as a Jewish state, 65 per cent want it to explicitly

protect religious freedom for all.

The survey did not ask about the agreement to enhance an egalitarian prayer section at the Western Wall, which the government retreated from in June, outraging many Diaspora Jews and inspiring petitions now being considered by the Supreme Court. But a June survey by Hiddush found 63 per cent of Israeli Jews oppose the government’s action.

In general, Israeli Jewish support for separation of religion and state and pluralistic policies, is correlated with secularity and voting for more left-wing and less religious parties. Voters for ultra-Orthodox political parties overwhelmingly oppose both.

Despite recently escalating political rhetoric and legislation aimed at weakening the Supreme Court for its alleged disregard of Israel’s Jewish values, the survey found widespread support for the principles underlying many of its recent rulings and, at least relative to other government institutions, for the court itself.

The Supreme Court last week broke the rabbinate’s monopoly over kosher certification and struck down legislation from 2015 meant to delay efforts to increase the rate at which ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students are drafted into the military.

As in previous years, 83 per cent think yeshiva students should be

required to do military or national service, though a third would settle for national service and 14 per cent are OK with some exemptions.

Asked for the first time this year which institution they most trust, a plurality of Israelis, 39 per cent, chose the Supreme Court over the government, the Knesset, the rabbinate or the rabbinical courts. The least trusted institution is the government. (JTA)



News and views from the Fed The Israel Quiz is renamed in honour of Shimon Peres

NICCI RAZ
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONIST FEDERATION

The Israel Quiz, for many years has focused on encouraging students to learn about Israel’s history, current events, and their connection to Zionism. This annual event is also about empowering students with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the complexities and opposing narratives that Israel is faced with today.

The Israel Quiz has been running for 16 years and is a joint programme sponsored by the Israel Centre and SA Zionist Federation, and participants from all Jewish schools are represented and invited to join each year.

This year, the quiz finals fell on September 28, which marks the first *yahrzeit* (Born August 2, 1923) of the former Israeli President Shimon Peres who was in office from 2007 to 2014.

Peres was the last member of Israel’s founding generation; he was a visionary statesman, a noble soldier, a born leader, and a uniquely talented diplomat.

However, more significantly, Shimon Peres was one of the essential living examples of an unshakable belief in the pursuit of peace against all odds. His commitment to peace and progress was relentless, and always ensured that he surrounded himself with bright men and women who would challenge him.

We felt it would be a fitting tribute to this giant, to rename the Israel Quiz, the “Shimon Peres Israel Quiz”.

In this way we hope to perpetuate his memory and his deep love and commitment to the Jewish State, keeping our youth connected to his values and legacy. The Quiz will also be expanded in 2018 and be launched in Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal.

On behalf of the SAZF and Israel Centre, we would like to congratulate all the students and their teachers who participated in this year’s Quiz. It was by no means an easy task and shows their unbelievable commitment to Zionist education as the contestants were tested on all facets of Israel, including history, politics, current events and debating skills.

With important events such as this, the legacy of Shimon Peres will continue to thrive, keeping the spirit of the Israel he dreamed he could build, alive.

‘US told Israel not to be a pig on settlement building’

JACOB MAGID AND ALEXANDER FULBRIGHT

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told settler leaders on Wednesday that US officials told his chief of staff to not be a “pig” on new settlement construction and that the Trump administration is prepared to tolerate limited settlement building, a senior settler present at the meeting said.

“It’s okay to be a pig but not to be a hazer,” Netanyahu said, relaying a message he said his chief of staff was given and using the Yiddish word for pig, the official from the Yesha Council settlement umbrella group told The Times of Israel.

During the closed-door meeting, Netanyahu said he successfully convinced the Trump administration to drop its distinction between settlement blocs and so-called isolated settlements.

Settlement blocs are defined as large built-up areas, mostly located near the Green Line, while isolated settlements are located in more far-flung areas of the West Bank surrounded by large Palestinian populations.

Netanyahu also said that the US has refrained from criticising Israel over settlement construction due to Israel’s adherence to self-imposed limitations on new building.

The Yesha official said Netanyahu reiterated his promise to build 300 new homes in Beit El, which he had promised following the demolition of a number of homes in the settlement in 2012.

While Netanyahu did not directly address a series of demands for new settlement building and infrastructure, he said 3 330 new units would be approved for construction during the next meeting of the Civil Administration Higher Planning Committee on October 16,



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opens the weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem

according to the Yesha official.

Netanyahu also told settler leaders that he believes US President Donald Trump will soon present a plan for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Settler leaders called for advancing the construction of 10 000 housing units in the settlements of Negohot and Migron, as well in the mostly Arab West Bank city of Hebron, according to a statement from the Yesha Council.

Despite the claim of a building “freeze” during the presidency of Barack Obama, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics shows there was an average of 1 725.5 housing starts a year during his tenure. The settler leaders also called on Netanyahu to end the “discrimination” and “neglect” of infrastructure in the West Bank.



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Wife of Har Adar terrorist left him weeks before shooting

DOV LIEBER

Nimer Mahmoud Ahmad Jamal, the 37-year-old Palestinian who shot to death three Israelis and injured another at the entrance to the settlement of Har Adar outside Jerusalem on Tuesday, was recently left by his wife, likely due to domestic violence, and left her a final message before carrying out the attack.

Jamal, who was from the neighbouring village of Bayt Surik, was a father of four young children and held a licence to work in Israeli settlements. That set him apart from the typical profile of Palestinian attackers, who are generally young, unmarried men.

In his final message to his wife, which was released after the attack by the Israeli army, Jamal, who had worked for years as a house cleaner in Har Adar, mourned her departure and said he had been a terrible husband to her.

“When you wake up in the morning, share this message on my page. Let your conscience rest. You



were a good wife, Umm Baha [mother of Baha], and a compassionate mother and I was the one who behaved badly,” he wrote.

He added: “I say this in full awareness: my wife had nothing to do with what will happen tomorrow.”

He finished his message by asking for her forgiveness

and for her to raise the children.

Israel’s Shin Bet domestic security agency said Jamal’s wife fled to Jordan several weeks ago.

“The preliminary investigation indicates that he had significant personal and family problems, including those regarding family violence. His wife fled to Jordan several weeks ago and left him with their children,” the statement said.

A few hours before the attack, Jamal published a Facebook post, writing only, “Oh G-d.” His last post was simply the letter “z” in Arabic.

The night before his attack, he published a picture of himself flexing at the gym and wrote: “I fear nothing, Oh G-d. I testify there is no G-d but G-d.” It was a reference to a foundational Islamic phrase often repeated in prayer.

Police said Jamal had a legal work permit, making him one of only a few Palestinians with such a document to commit a terror attack in recent years. His permit was only applicable for work inside Israeli settlements, like Har Adar, which lie along the “seam line” between the West Bank and Israel, according to the Shin Bet.

At the scene, responding to questions about the rarity of attacks by Palestinians with work permits, Israel Police Commissioner Roni Alsheich said: “To my regret there is no [usual] profile for a terrorist.

“It could just be someone who is fed up with everything and decides to take out his rage in an attack,” he said, adding: “The incitement [against Israel] is constant.”

While the attacker did not make his motives for the shooting clear, the Hamas terror group, which controls the Gaza Strip, welcomed the attack, linking it to the struggle over control of nearby Jerusalem.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said in a statement: “Once again Jerusalem proves that it is at the heart of the conflict with the occupation, and that there is no way to get it out of the equation of the conflict.

“This morning’s operation north of Jerusalem is a new chapter in the Jerusalem Intifada, and is a confirmation from the uprising youth that the fighting will continue until the complete freedom of the people and the land,” he added.

The Hamas spokesman also used the opportunity to attack the Palestinian Authority’s strategy of seeking statehood through membership in international bodies.

Bibi tells Merkel by phone that Israel is worried about rising anti-Semitism



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, at the Chancellery in Berlin.
AP/WOLFGANG RATTAYL

RAPHAEL AHREN
BERLIN

Israel is concerned about the rise of anti-Semitic elements within German politics, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday, in an apparent first allusion to the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany party in Sunday’s Bundestag elections.

In a telephone call with Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was re-elected to lead the country for a fourth term, Netanyahu called on the next German government to assume “historic responsibility” and reject efforts to deny or marginalise the Holocaust.

He did not denounce the Alternative for Germany, known in Germany as AfD, instead highlighting Israel’s concern about rising anti-Semitism from various corners.

“I called on the to-be-formed government to act in order to strengthen the forces in Germany that accept the historic responsibility,” he said, according to a somewhat cryptic readout of the conversation provided by the Prime Minister’s Office.

“Israel is worried about the rise of anti-Semitism in recent years among political elements on the right and on the left, as well as among Islamist elements.”

The Jewish State not only rejects Holocaust denial, but also any attempts to deny “responsibility,” the readout went, noting that the two were different things.

The comment on ostensible efforts to evade responsibility for the Holocaust may have been a reference to controversial statements made by AfD politicians.

In January, Thuringian AfD leader Björn Höcke derided the Berlin Holocaust memorial as a “monument of shame”, and called for a “180-degree reversal on the politics of remembrance”. National party leaders have sought to oust Höcke over those statements.

Last week, senior AfD leader Alexander Gauland raised eyebrows when he said Germans have the right to be “proud” of the soldiers who fought for their country in the two world wars.

The Jewish community largely condemned the election victory of the far-right party, which garnered nearly 13 per cent of the vote in Sunday’s national poll, making it the country’s third-largest faction in parliament.

The AfD, derided by critics as anti-Semitic and racist, is the first openly anti-immigrant, far-right party to enter the Bundestag since the Second World War.

Merkel cruised to a fourth term with 33 per cent of the vote, even though the head of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union lost significantly compared to the last elections. According to political scientists and various polls, many traditional CDU voters flocked to the AfD.

After the election results were announced late on Sunday, Netanyahu congratulated Merkel, calling her a true friend of Israel.

A day later, Netanyahu hinted that Merkel’s victory bodes well for his own prospects of re-election. “It’s good that someone wins for the fourth time, it’s an omen for a fifth,” Netanyahu said at a toast for the Jewish New Year at the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu has been elected four times and announced that he intends to run for a fifth term in 2019.

Until Tuesday’s call with Merkel, however, he had not even alluded to the AfD’s rise. During their conversation, Netanyahu congratulated Merkel again, praising her as a true friend of Israel and the Jewish people.

“The State of Israel is confident that under her leadership the special relations between Germany and Israel will continue to deepen and flourish,” according to the PMO.

Merkel told Netanyahu that she wants to hold an intergovernmental meeting between the German and Israeli cabinets as soon as her next government is formed. Due to her party’s losses and the AfD’s rise, she is facing weeks of gruelling coalition negotiations. She has ruled out sitting in coalition with the AfD.

The so-called G2G consultations were originally planned for May 2017, but Merkel asked for a postponement. The official reason for the delay was the chancellor’s need to dedicate time to her election campaign, but sources in Berlin at the time hinted that Merkel was angry at Netanyahu for a series of hawkish moves vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

‘The man who cleaned our house for two and a half years was the terrorist’

TOI STAFF

The Palestinian father of four who killed three Israelis at Har Adar on Tuesday morning was a “completely normal” and “good-natured” man who worked as a cleaner for a group of families at the settlement, one of the residents who employed him said soon after the shooting.

Interviewed on Israel Radio, Michal Avidor said she was “on my way to the school to tell my children that the man who’s been cleaning our house for the past two and a half years was the terrorist”. The gunman was identified as Nimer Jamal, 37, from the adjacent village of Bayt Surik.

Avidor said she was astounded when she realised who the terrorist was. “I started to figure it out when they said he was a father of four from the village.

“This was a man who we talked with,” she said, “whom my children gave drinks and food.”

She said she felt completely shocked by the incident, and that the first thing she wanted to do when she got home from telling her children was to completely clean her house.

For help fighting terror, London police look to Israel

JUDAH ARI GROSS
LONDON

On June 3, three terrorists, wielding knives and fake explosive belts, drove a van into a crowd of pedestrians on the famous London Bridge, killing four people. They then got out of the vehicle and embarked on a rampage, stabbing to death four others, before they were shot dead by police.

Some 48 people were injured in the attack, which lasted approximately eight minutes, but whose ripples are still felt. As London has sought to thwart terror, increasingly it has been learning from others’ expertise in countering so-called “lone wolf” attacks, including Israel’s.

The unorganised assaults, carried out by individuals or small cells with basic, readily available equipment, are notoriously difficult to prevent. In the past year, the British capital experienced another combined car ramming-stabbing attack, in which six people were killed, along with the bombing of a subway train earlier this month that sent 18 people to the hospital with a variety of injuries.

Israel has found some success in countering these same type of attacks, by establishing physical barriers against vehicular assaults and by monitoring social media to find potential assailants before they attack.

Which is, in part, what brought City of London Police Assistant Commissioner Alistair Sutherland to Israel this month.

As part of the British police’s search for methods to better prevent terror attacks, Sutherland visited the country to deliver an address at the Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya’s annual counterterrorism conference.

During his visit, he met with representatives from the Israeli government, as well as local security technology companies, to see how their techniques and products could be integrated into his police department.

“We have to look to world experts in the realm of protective security, and Israel would be in that realm,” Sutherland said. It was his sixth visit to Israel, and his second time speaking at the IDC.

Police departments in the United States and Europe have often come under criticism for co-operating with the Israel Police, amid protests over Israeli policies toward Palestinians.

But Sutherland said the City of London Police is not



particularly concerned about the “controversy” associated with working with Israel, though it is “aware of it”.

As assistant commissioner of the City of London Police, Sutherland’s jurisdiction comprises the “Square Mile” of the capital’s historic and central business districts. The rest of the city is protected by the London Metropolitan Police Service, a separate force.

Despite representing a small geographic area, the City

of London contains many of the city’s most popular tourist destinations, like the London Bridge and St Paul’s Cathedral, as well as some of its most notable skyscrapers.

That makes the “Square Mile”, as it is known, a prime target for terrorists, as evident by the June attack.

The car-ramming prompted police to “make physical structure changes immediately” in order to prevent similar car-rammings in the future, Sutherland said.

As Israel did in 2015 and 2016 following a spate of rammings, the City of London Police has deployed bollards and fencing along popular streets using what’s known as the “National Barrier Asset”, Sutherland said.

The City of London Police are also looking to overhaul their surveillance and monitoring systems “to make it probably the most technologically smart control room and camera system in the world. That’s our ambition,” he said.

Sutherland would not say which Israeli products and companies he was eyeing for the City of London Police, but said he was seeking both real-time monitoring and the ability to prevent terror attacks by finding assailants before they act.

Wolves in Israel are raiding campsites to try to snatch children

STUART WINER

There have been 10 attacks by wolves on humans in the past four months in Israel, and in most cases the animals were trying to make off with infants or babies, the Haaretz daily reported on Tuesday. In what is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, wolves are approaching campsites to try and snatch what they can – including small children.

There are believed to be 100-150 Arabian wolves, a subspecies of the grey wolf, living in Israel. Most live in the southern deserts but there are also packs in the Golan Heights and the Galilee.

Haim Berger, described in the report as a wolf expert, said he believes that the animals were not playing or feeling threatened but were hunting for small human prey.

Berger had a close call while out camping with his family three months ago. His children saw a wolf entering the campsite and it appeared quite unafraid of the humans. The animal eventually ran away without incident but the encounter prompted Berger to look into the matter further.

Comparing statistics of attacks in Israel to those in the US, where there are tens of thousands of wolves but almost no

attacks, Berger came to the conclusion that the local wolf packs have adapted to human society and now see people as not only something to fear, but also as a potential source of food, the report said.

“Imagine a wolf that can’t find food for a few days,” Berger said. “Suddenly people arrive and do a barbecue, and the smell spreads across the whole wadi. So, it [the wolf] connects people with food and slowly the suspicion goes away. There is a process of adaptation. It is clear that 50 or 100 years ago no wolf would dare to go near the Bedouins who passed through the desert,” he told Haaretz.

Witnesses to attacks have told Berger that the wolves go for the easiest target, usually the smallest child. They can be scared off by groups of people but will often return to try for the same prey again.

Last week, two children were bitten at the Ein Gedi field school and another was attacked at the nearby Ein Gedi spring in the Judean Desert. In all the cases the children suffered light injuries.

Gilad Gabay, southern region director of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, said the organisation was aware of the problem and was taking measures.

Head of transplant organisation arrested over ‘organs for donations’ scheme

RAOUL WOOLLIFF

Police on Monday arrested the head of a charity that facilitates voluntary organ donations in Israel, and three of its employees, on suspicion that it illegally traded organs for donations.

The arrests took place alongside raids on the suspects’ homes and the organisation’s head offices in Jerusalem, according to a police statement.

The suspicions include managing the waiting list so as to bump potential recipients to the top in exchange for donations to the organisation, and paying compensation to potential organ donors, police said.

Israel, like other countries, has organ donation laws designed to prevent trafficking. It prohibits compensation or the promise of compensation to donors by potential recipients or persons acting on their behalf.

“We have come to the conclusion that

those without means are forced to remain on the waiting list and end up paying with their lives,” a police spokesman said.

The organisation is said to have encouraged relatives of those in need of transplants to make donations to the organisation in order to shorten the waiting time to receive organs.

Police noted that they are not treating individual donors or organ recipients as suspects. “If anything, they are victims who themselves have been working to save lives,” the statement said.

Police said the investigation began a number of months ago after a complaint was received against the organisation from the Health Ministry. Evidence has since been collected from organ recipients, their families and other sources.

A police spokesman explained that the investigation was “particularly complex and sensitive” and officers have made an effort not to interrupt the continuing work



of the organisation “in order to allow its life saving services to continue regardless of the ongoing probe”.

The identities of those arrested were prevented from being published due to a gag order which will remain in place until their remand hearing.

In March, the Jerusalem District Court lifted a gag order on an investigation into the Matnat Chaim (Gift of Life in Hebrew) charity, which facilitates voluntary kidney donations in Israel.

Over 400 healthy people have donated a kidney through Matnat Chaim. But the organisation has been criticised by Israeli health officials for allowing donors to set conditions over who receives their kidney.

Donors who donate their kidney through Matnat Chaim are allowed to give their organs to a recipient of their choosing or to an unspecified recipient, provided that “there is a medically suitable recipient for the donated organ” as determined by the Transplant Centre, also known as Adi in Israel.

Responding to Tuesday’s arrests, a representative for Matnat Chaim told The Times of Israel that the organisation is “certain that there was no wrongdoing and we are sure that the police investigation will bring out the truth”.

The Torah’s view on human rights and constitutionalism



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein speaking at Greenside Shul

GILLIAN KLAWSKY

Torah law has – in many cases – been successfully adopted by the secular legal system, especially in the protection of human rights. So says Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein in a recent talk at the Greenside Shul presented by The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning.

While a legal system creates order in society, simply instilling order is not enough for an effective legal framework to function, Rabbi Goldstein argues. In the Torah, the legal system not only instils order, it lays out “righteous laws” and “therefore has moral implications”, he explains.

Indeed, numerous tyrannical human rights atrocities, like apartheid, have been under the guise of just instilling order. “Another example is the Nuremburg Laws which constituted the abuse of the legal system for enforcing cruelty.” Therefore, just creating order is an insufficient basis for a legal system.

To uncover the true purpose and meaning of “righteous” law according to Judaism, the chief rabbi provides four examples of radical changes in Western law, when it comes to the protection of human rights.

In these examples, Western law eventually came around to Torah principles and accepted and applied Torah law after centuries of an opposite way of thinking.

In one example, he looks at the model of “separation of powers” for the independent judiciary and the supreme Constitution – which means that the king or president does not have absolute power.

“Possibly one of the most important areas of resistance to the president are the courts,” he says. Yet this has not always been the case.

This idea was only adapted in Western countries during the French and American Revolutions just over 200 years ago, yet it’s an integral part of Torah law. “That is fundamentally the model of a Torah state in the form of the Sanhedrin, which could keep the king in check,” he says.

In South Africa today, we use the courts to hold the president accountable – with varying levels of success – as in the case of (President Jacob) Zuma and Nkandla where the courts held Zuma in violation of the Constitution.

Rabbi Goldstein also looks at the example of poverty alleviation. The position for centuries throughout the European continent and the UK, was that begging and homelessness were illegal, he explains.

“In Torah law, not only is it permissible to beg, but if a beggar asks for money, you have a halachic obligation to give them something.”

Western law eventually came around to Torah law to the point where not only is poverty allowed, there’s also the concept of a welfare state where the state looks to support people in poverty.

Quoting Rabbi Mordechai Pinchas Taitz, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, the chief rabbi says: “The Torah speaks in the language of tomorrow.” Explaining, he says: “It’s ahead of its time, not behind it – we may not fully understand Torah ideas until the world has developed to a point where we can grasp their impact and significance.”

Through examining these examples, the true purpose of law according to the Torah, became clear: to protect people who are vulnerable – known as the vulnerability principle. “The vulnerability principle provides a vision for how we see the role of society and of human beings”, he explains.

Yet vulnerability is a complex idea as there can be shifting vulnerabilities and the needs of both sides need to be balanced.

In these examples, Western law eventually came around to Torah principles and accepted and applied Torah law after centuries of an opposite way of thinking.

“The true purpose of the vulnerability principle and therefore of a legal system – that extends beyond law and order – is ultimately to create an environment where the human spirit can flourish and reach its potential. We need to make this principle part of our lives so that we can nurture greatness in all the people around us,” he says.

Before concluding, the Greenside community challenged the chief rabbi with questions that have long been areas of debate. Asked about the fact that Torah laws are often left open to interpretation, the chief rabbi said: “The Torah functions as a legal system, a very sophisticated one.

“It has a system of rules and laws and principles within which things are interpreted, but the space for interpretation is not blank. For example, on an ideological level we have the 13 Principles of Faith and interpretations have to fall within this space. So, rabbinical debates fall within the framework of a system – it’s not a free-for-all.”

Finally, he was questioned around the idea of helping humans achieve their potential. “If that’s the case,” asks one audience member, “then why can’t we nurture women who believe their true calling is to become rabbis? It’s merely a genetic difference.”

The chief rabbi responded: “Torah law has many different dimensions – what we believe is that G-d gave us the system as a model for the flourishing of the human spirit – and the

best way for it to flourish is through performing mitzvot. It is through these that we reach our potential... So the framework within which we live our lives is through the mitzvot and the halacha.

“Anything imposed by the halacha is a part of G-d’s plan for the fruition of the human spirit – there are places within the halacha in which the role of women and men are defined and within which they can reach their potential; the system doesn’t view it as denying the potential of the person, but rather sees it as the fruition of the potential of the person.

“While women can’t publicly lead services, one of the most important parts of being a rabbi is teaching and women and men are both able to learn and teach Torah – no-one has a monopoly on this.”

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Almost 90 and flying through the sky

LANA JACOBSON

For one awful moment Elly Gotz stood frozen with fear. His heart skipped a beat. Then he plunged abruptly into the abyss. The icy air hit the 89-year-old engineer’s face. From 4 000 metres below his wife Esme, his daughter and son-in-law, stood rooted to the ground, nervously staring into the sky while Elly’s parachute opened and he floated to earth. “It was really scary for one second only, but then as the parachute opens, it’s the most amazing feeling in the world,” he exclaimed exuberantly. “I love adventure and I have always nurtured this dream of parachuting to earth from a plane. This was the perfect timing to live my dream. I’m about to turn 90 and Canada has just celebrated its sesquicentennial, 150 year anniversary.

“I’ve always been jealous of birds floating so freely above earth. It’s an amazing feeling. You look around and it’s the most beautiful thing in the world to be drifting so peacefully, so beautifully. “With everything that’s happening in the world, it’s a privilege to be free, in Canada and able to have opportunity to choose what I want to do. I loved it, I just loved it,” he extols. The South African-qualified engineer has every reason to celebrate being free and alive. His has been a life of torturous lows and many highs. Born in Lithuania in 1928, he was taken to the Kovno Ghetto with other Jews and he was later sent to work in a camp in Dachau, Germany. For Elly, life settled in the ghetto. Children aged 12-15 attended trade schools, and from the age of 15, everybody was put to slave labour



for 12 hours each day. With Elly’s love of electronics, he chose metalwork and blacksmith classes, trades which later saved his life. He became an instructor. Between classes, when the weather was warm, Elly would remove the slats in the roof where the books were hoarded. “I read all the German and Russian classics, and became fluent in both languages. To this day I know Pushkin off by heart. I loved Dostoevsky... Tolstoy.” This became his formal high school education. By 1944, there were only 8 000 survivors and they were told the ghetto was being liquidated. To the Gotz family this meant certain death, so they hid in a basement room, covering the entrance with a cupboard. They made a pact: If discovered by the Germans they would commit suicide. Sonja, a nurse, neatly laid out syringes she had stolen and a formula which when injected, immediately stopped the heart. These

she stole from the hospital where she worked, After three days, without food or water, soldiers came down the stairs, kicked in the coal shed door and the door of the room opposite. “There is nobody here,” they said, and passed on by. After five days, the family crept out slowly to witness the Jews being marched towards a train. The Germans were not murdering, but rather relocating the Jews to Dachau. The Gotz family joined the queue, where females were separated, dispersed, relocated elsewhere, where indescribable horrors awaited them. The carriages were so crowded that people lay atop one another, given no food or water. One after another during the four-day journey, they died. In Dachau, the survivors subsisted; 60 000 jam-crammed into a camp equipped to accommodate 24 000, 50 to a room. Inmates were given striped pyjamas, and put to manual labour, building a giant underground factory for bomber planes. They were given a slice of bread and a small bowl of soup daily. Hunger occupied their every moment, day and night. His technical training earned Elly an inside job working at the pumps, with his father as his assistant. Most of the outdoor labourers died of cold, hunger and exhaustion. Every day the barracks were littered with more dead bodies; men dying of disease and starvation. Typhus raged, there were no bathing facilities, indeed no water with which to wash. The outside taps were frozen. Elly’s father lay on his deathbed – where the last inhabitant had just died. He was too weak

to get up and queue for his slice of bread. Miraculously, at that precise moment a cry of liberation arose. “The Americans are here!” Seventeen years old, six feet tall and weighing seventy pounds, Elly was hospitalised together with his comatose father for six months and nursed to recovery. Eventually, they traced Sonja, miraculously alive, having survived surgery, for an abdominal wound from a bomb attack. Free, healthy and living in a displaced persons camp in Germany, Elly was taught radio repairs and became a radio technician. Determined to become an electrical engineer, he saved parcels of food given to survivors by the United Nations and sold them to pay for university fees. The Norwegians took in 900 Jews, including the Gotz family. It took Elly three months to learn Norwegian, working as a radio technician by day and by night he was schooled to write his matric. Julius, his father had a wealthy relative in South Africa, who urged them to immigrate so that he could help fund Elly’s schooling. At the time Jan Smuts, then prime minister, said: “They will crucify me in Parliament if I let in even one Jew to South Africa.” “So my family ended in Zimbabwe, (then Rhodesia), I was 19, had to learn English and write my matric, which I managed within a year. Maths and physics were easy, but English was more challenging. “I got a student’s visa for South Africa to study engineering at Wits in 1949. I finally got my wish to study electrical engineering. “The injustice in SA affected me very badly. I protested as much as I could, but I was on a visa; I had to ensure I was not expelled; that I graduated as an electrical engineer. “In 1952, I graduated, returned to then Rhodesia, worked in the battery radio industry. I expanded into advertising and after marrying Esme, my South African wife, I went into electronic plastic welding. “We had three children, and decided, together with Esme’s entire family, to immigrate to Canada in 1964, due to the unacceptable political situation. “My engineering degree was perfect for my future successful business career in North America, where we, with other family members, began a plastics manufacturing company. “Today South Africa is a non-racial, democratic country, how I always imagined it should be. I have come full circle, and life couldn’t be more perfect.”

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Torah talks inspire

In 1984 the Lubavitcher Rebbe launched a campaign to get as many people as possible to study the works of Maimonides – the Rambam – on a daily basis. Since then each year at the completion of the yearly cycle Siyumim – completion events – are held around the world. In Johannesburg, this year celebrating the 36th cycle, a thought-provoking set of masterful talks was held at the Sandton Shul Hall, hosted by Chabad House. Dr Yossi Unterslak spoke of the Rambam’s influence and foresight in the field of medicine and how he has inspired generations in the art of healing. Advocate Jonathan Hoffman gave a legal overview of how the important methods of the Rambam are, and should be, integrated into our own civil laws. Justice Sherise Weiner delved into the Rambam’s view of Judges and the Judiciary, paying special tribute to the Rebbe who inspired a modern generation to be inclusive. Rabbi Ari Shishler delivered the actual siyum – highlighting the Rambam’s profound insights, underlining the reasons he put his great Mishna Torah together in the first place. The audience was treated to inspiration, education and an uplifting evening appropriately poised this year straight after Rosh Hashanah, when everyone is encouraged to make positive decisions for the coming year.



• For more information on how you can participate in study of the Rambam’s works go to www.chabadsouthafrica.org or call Chabad House on (011) 440-6600.



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CNN’s Nadia Bilchik back to inspire

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Light the Fire! F-I-R-E. This is dynamo Nadia Bilchik’s mnemonic for kicking relationships up a notch.

South African-born Bilchik is a CNN International television news anchor and host. Considered a networking specialist, she runs training programmes for the likes of politicians and corporate businessmen. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, this UCT graduate has interviewed many high-profile individuals such as former President Nelson Mandela and heartthrob movie star George Clooney.

“What is the question that I get asked most?” asks Bilchik as she kicks off as the keynote speaker at a fundraising breakfast held under the auspices of Bnoth Zion – WIZO and Herzlia Middle School. “Do you get nervous before you go on TV?” she says.

“I focus on a positive past experience,” she reveals. “I take a deep breath and go ‘1, 2, 3, Huh!’” she exhales, accompanying the grunt with a simultaneous movement of her elbows backwards.

Bilchik’s journey began in 1997 when she left Johannesburg for Atlanta. “I had an organic network here, people I grew up with and was at university with.

“When you move to a new country, you don’t have that. I had to consciously do some things that I’d never had to do before, like building new relationships.”

Addressing the topic “Kick your

business relationships up a notch”, Bilchik asks: “Do we maximise our impact on existing relationships or bring new people in? You have to do both.”

Demonstrating the importance of relationships across the spectrum, she relates how, because she was friendly with the head of security at M-Net, her previous employer, she was able to hand her demo tape to the head of security at CNN who knew him. “You just never know,” she stated.

Bilchik notes that the first part of networking boiled down to how one feels about oneself – the “F” in her mnemonic. “There were times after I moved, when things were really, really tough,” she remembers.

She recalls receiving a major dressing down from her boss for taking a 10-minute nap in the makeup room, which upset her immensely – just before an important audition. Her coping mechanism was to draw on what she calls positive emotional memory – thinking about validating moments when one finds oneself in such a situation.

“We buy from people who look as if they’ve got it together, we buy from people who have got confidence, we like people who are positive,” she stresses.

Recalling her difficulty in building a career on “total anonymity”, she acknowledged that she was now well-established, “but it hasn’t been without pain”.

Before she interviewed



distinguished film actor Anthony Hopkins, she heard that he was in a very bad mood. Her solution was to remind herself: “You really are the world to at least one person.” This ties in with her starting point for building relationships – Feel good about yourself. “Am I someone I want to be around?”

What stops us from nurturing existing relationships and reaching out to make new ones to take things up a notch? The fear of rejection, she states, which, according to a book she had read, is experienced in the same

part of the brain as physical pain.

“Courage is the taking of action despite the fear – you sometimes have to override the fear.”

Next up is “I” – showing genuine interest. To demonstrate, Bilchik got the audience asking the stranger sitting next to them what their biggest challenge right then was.

Afterwards, Bilchik asks: “Is that individual now not just a cardboard cut-out but a real person to you?”

“Just listen,” she urges, “without feeling the need to bring (the conversation) back to yourself all the

time.”

“R” is for relax and “E” is for engaging with energy, excitement and enthusiasm. “Be a go-giver as much as a go-getter,” she said, adding: “Giving releases oxytoxin in the brain that makes you feel good.”

Bilchik tells the audience that German Chancellor Angela Merkel is her role model. “She is awesome in the way she conducts herself, in her general demeanour and her principles. She really does own her space.”

She also relates that her tipping point was the moment she accepted that she was leaving South Africa. “I question it every day, South Africa is an amazing place.”

Another tipping point for her was meeting a representative of Coca-Cola at a social event in her new country. “She asked if I could do a programme on relationship building.

“Although I’d never done it before, I thought: ‘How difficult can it be?’” she remembers. “I did the programme and it changed my life – the training business is very lucrative.”

She now works at CNN over the weekends and trains during the week.

Harking back to the theme of her address, Bilchik repeats that lighting the fire in relationships had served her well.

“You really have to be in touch with how you feel about yourself, feel good about yourself and have a genuine interest in others.

“And relax. We’re all resilient. As long as you have a few more successes than failures.”

Turning a heart of stone into a heart of flesh

RABBI NAOMI LEVY
LOS ANGELES

Was your father a rabbi?

When I tell people that I wanted to be a rabbi from the time I was four years old, they always ask me that same question.

No, my father made women’s clothing, but he was my rabbi.

When I was a child, my father would read me tales of biblical heroes and prophets. These were my bedtime stories. He taught me how to pray, to love the melodies of prayer and how to sing in harmony with him as we’d walk hand in hand down the street. While my friends stayed home on Saturday mornings to watch cartoons in their pyjamas, my father would take me to synagogue, and I would sit beside him and play with the strands of his prayer shawl.

Just two years after my batmitzvah, when I was 15, my parents were walking down the street one night. A man approached them with a gun, demanded money, then shot my father.

My father died and my whole world came crashing down.

My father’s murder was an earthquake that upended my life. Just a day before I was a happy teenage girl, a curious, fun-loving kid living in an amazing family. And then my world was shattered and I learned too soon what it was like to have a heart of stone. I was filled with anger.

I hated myself for being weak and vulnerable. I hated my mother for not being strong for me. I hated my father for abandoning me. I hated my friends for having trivial concerns about hairdos and parties.

I hated the Sabbath and all the holidays for reminding me of beautiful days that were dead now. I hated the prayers with all their false promises about all the great things G-d does.



Really? Where was G-d? I hated G-d for doing nothing.

This is the vow I made when I was 15: “I’m on my own now. I don’t need anyone.”

There was a storm raging inside of me. But outside my goal was to be normal. That’s the dream of every high school kid: I’m fine, I’m OK, I’m perfect. I’m a straight-A student. Just don’t pity me. Just don’t get too close. Just don’t make me have to feel anything.

On the first anniversary of my father’s murder, I was 16 and on my very first trip to Israel with my camp friends. We went to visit the Western Wall in Jerusalem. I walked up to the wall and at first I just touched the ancient stones. Then I got closer and closer and I smelled it.

I smelled the Kotel. And the Kotel smelled like my father. It didn’t smell just a little like my dad, it smelled like my father’s armpit!

There I stood, eyes closed, with both of my arms outstretched, leaning against the wall so hard that I couldn’t tell anymore if I was

standing up or lying down. Just lying there with my nose in my father’s armpit. And I began sobbing. The wall melted.

And I knew in my heart I had a father who would never leave me. And I had a mother who had more wisdom and love in her heart than I would ever know. I had siblings who adored me and whom I adored. I had friends who had my back forever.

And I had G-d, who might be a little lame.

“G-d, did you hear me?” I said. “You’re a little bit lame, but I have come to love you again, even more. You are a lot less powerful than I once imagined, but more perfect than any of us can ever conceive.”

And I had me. I wasn’t so weak after all. It was OK to be me. It was OK to be vulnerable. And all at once I annulled my vow. I didn’t have to go it alone anymore. I wasn’t on my own. I never had been.

Yom Kippur comes down to: “I will remove your heart of stone and I will give you a heart of flesh.” What melts the heart of stone?

Sometimes it’s a sense of memory that cuts through all your defences and brings you back to something precious. That’s what happened to me at the Kotel.

Cutting through the heart of stone and arriving at the heart of flesh isn’t a one-time job. The stone heart isn’t gone forever. At every loss, at every disappointment, at every new challenge, it’s there ready to return, ready to take its familiar place inside you. And it takes so much courage to stay alive and soft and vulnerable.

To me today, it feels good to feel lost and hurt and to know that these feelings are essential to have because it means you’re alive with a heart of flesh that is also able to feel ecstasy and bliss and kookiness and abandon.

So, let down the “I’ll never forgive him”. Let down your stubborn stance. Let down the “I’m not going to apologise first”. Let down the gripe you have been holding against G-d.

Forgive. Forgive life. Forgive her. Forgive him. Forgive yourself. May our vows not be vows. Break down your defences and get to the heart of flesh.

It takes a lot of energy to carry that boulder around. Put it down! Maybe there’s a hurt you’re holding on to, a resentment, a jealousy, a guilt, an anger. Put it down. Let its grip on your heart be released. Our souls are calling us back to ourselves. We long to return to our suppleness.

You have the power to strip away all the muck that’s dimming the light of your true luminous soul. And G-d keeps whispering to us: Open for me the eye of a needle, and I will make you an opening wide enough for chariots to pass through.

May we all find the power to fulfil the prophecy of Ezekiel: Remove your heart of stone, and let your heart of flesh lead you back to the life you’ve been searching for. Amen. (JTA)

If you can't take the heat...



Aliya – the good, the bad and the meshuga

Benita Levin

We were warned by many that the summer school holidays here would be incredibly hot. We weren't phased – after all, how bad can it be when you've grown up in the coastal city of Durban, known for its high humidity?

How wrong we were. The high temperatures continued to escalate in the July and August vacation time – with no smidgen of a sign of rain. It's a popular topic of conversation here, but locals seemed to know something we didn't.

Whenever we commented on the need to have a second shower by the afternoon, people would smile: "Wait, this is nothing... it's going to get hotter."

Swim, shower, sprinklers – you find a way to cool down.

If you are walking along Ahuza Street – the main road in Raanana – you can easily find yourself browsing in a hardware shop, just because the place has an air-conditioner. The country is well equipped for this weather – all malls, office blocks, shops and restaurants, are cool inside.

Outdoor water drinking fountains are interspersed throughout the city and children are often found cooling off at various park fountains.

An unofficial personal snap survey saw many

residents agreeing that the air-conditioner or fan business would be a foolproof career move! If your air-conditioner at home breaks down, you are in for an uncomfortable wait of at least a few days. Best, though, that the heat doesn't affect your sense of humour, because it may just be tested, as we found in this unusual interaction:

A man came to our flat to service our broken air-conditioner. It took a few days for him to get to us, because – as the unofficial survey suggests – it's a busy business during the unbearable heat.

He spent around 15 minutes attending to the machine. When he was about to leave, I pointed out that it was still leaking. (I wondered if some of our interaction had been lost in translation.)

"Are you sure it's going to work"? I asked in Hebrew, pointing to the dripping water to illustrate my concern? He shrugged and put his hands up in the air, pointing to the heavens, and replied: "Be'ezrat Hashem..." "With the help of G-d"!

Service with a smile

It wasn't the first time in the few months we've been in our new home country, that I'd been left surprised by certain responses in the "service industry". It takes getting used to, especially when you're used to the over-polite South African culture. Small talk and niceties aren't hugely obvious here.

But with time, one realises there is something refreshingly honest and blunt about a shop assistant who tells you not to buy a certain item because the quality isn't great. A cashier sent

a friend back to the aisles in the supermarket, because she hadn't chosen the "better" brand, for the same price!

One shopkeeper also advised us not to buy the milk we wanted, because – as he pointed out – it was set to expire the next day. He suggested we come back when the fresh cartons had arrived. But the biggest service surprise award goes to an incident at a small hair-dressing salon. I'd never been there before, and had just walked in off the street for a quick last-minute appointment.

As the friendly Israeli hair-stylist chatted away, I noticed he was trying to make my hair curl. I explained – as best I could – that I would prefer him to leave it straight. "Loh (no)" he replied, and continued creating unwanted flicks and curls.

I was confused, and used my hands to show him that I'd prefer my hair to be straight. Again, he said no.

Then came the explanation that could only happen in this country: "No, it is my salon and I don't want you to have your hair straight – I will not let you be boring!"

So, it's not exactly a case of "service with a smile". It's not simply strange behaviour one can blame on the heat. It's more a case of service with a splash of brutal honesty, like it or not.

Whether you find it offensive, bizarre or refreshingly honest, depends on you.

Food find of the week

Sabich – pita filled with brinjal, eggs, humus and tahina.

Phrase of the week

Chai Be-Seret – "living in a movie" – seems to be used by young people who are loving life.

Appeal to 'stand against' boycott of Israeli institutions

A group of concerned students, parents and alumni of the University of Cape Town, have called upon UCT's management and leadership to stand against an ongoing campaign calling for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions at the university.

The concerned group started a petition on Wednesday urging the university's relevant bodies to reject calls for the boycott, saying that an academic boycott violated the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech, which were guaranteed in Section 16 of the South African Constitution.

The group says that the "true essence of a university is to foster dialogue and develop solutions to problems without regard to political, racial, and cultural differences. UCT has always shown these qualities, leading us to celebrate our association with UCT."

The group says it is concerned that "despite there being a difference between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, there is a dangerous convergence. Conclusive evidence shows that anti-Semitism is on the rise globally, and it is a new type of Jew-hatred that masks itself as opposition to Israel's state policies and Zionism".

It said student groups like the Palestine Solidarity Forum (PSF), at UCT, "do not make the profound distinction" between anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and criticism of the policies of a particular Israeli government. That these "blurred lines" had a negative impact on campus.

Raising funds to help Israel's Lone Soldiers



Rabbi Ilan Herrmann and the King David Sandton choir

DESIREE RAICHLIN FIRER

There are thousands of soldiers currently serving in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) who have left their countries of residence to commit themselves to serving in the IDF.

Many of these "lone soldiers" have little or no family support in Israel. The volunteer soldier may be a new immigrant, an emancipated orphan, or may come from a broken home. The common calling of these soldiers is to protect the State of Israel and its citizens. In the volatile context of the Middle East, this means a willingness to place their lives on the line.

Soul Workout organised a musical concert at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg before Rosh Hashanah, to raise funds for The Lone Soldier Center in Israel. This organisation takes care of and provide for these lone soldiers.

The concert line-up included: Shmuli Brill, Ezra Altschuler, Elton Krawitz, Ilan Herrmann, Ezra Sher and Ezy Slasky, The Alexandra Harmonious Melodies Group, and the King David Sandton boys choir.

The Lone Soldier organisation was formed with the aim of meeting the needs of these

young soldiers, which range across the spectrum from basic living requirements, to communal Shabbat meals, to placements with families who provide them with a home from home, to helping them with emotional and sometimes even financial support.

The Lone Soldier Center was founded in 2009 in memory of Michael Levin. US-born Levin was lost in battle during the Second Lebanon War. He had left Dara, his twin sister, a voicemail just before going into Lebanon: "If anything happens to me, I just want to say that I love you and miss you and wish you all the best."

Michael was shot in the head by a Hezbollah sniper during the subsequent clash of forces in the Lebanese village of Ayta ash-Shab.

Formed by a group of former lone soldiers, the centre is fully cognisant of, and concerned with, the needs and struggles of the more than 6 300 "Lone Soldiers" currently serving in the IDF. The Lone Soldier Center is the first and only organisation in Israel solely dedicated to meeting all of the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of Israel's lone soldiers.

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Monday – Thursday 8am – 6pm

Friday 8am – 4pm | Sunday 9am – 3pm

Skin deep: Is conflict still inevitable between colours and races?



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The past week’s events in the United States and Germany add fuel to a perennial question: What is a nation’s true nature behind its outward veneer? What demons hide there? The relevance for South Africa is clear. The US constitution posits a society with everyone equal before the law. Yet to President Donald Trump’s outrage, black American footballers refused to stand for the national anthem before a game, kneeling in front of thousands of spectators to protest police brutality towards blacks. For them, America is not what the anthem’s stirring words profess. Predictably, Trump roared publicly in speeches and tweets that they must

stand, or be “fired”. But they won’t. Germany’s demons are emerging from the closet too, shown by dramatically increased support in last week’s federal elections for the far right, ultra-nationalistic party, Alternative for Germany, making it the Bundestag’s third largest party. It calls for Germans to stop feeling guilty for Nazi crimes, to honour Wehrmacht soldiers who served in the Second World War and to examine crimes of the Russian Revolution’s “Jewish murderers”. It has likened Muslim refugees and asylum seekers to “invaders” and expressed understanding for a right-wing nationalist’s mass murder in Norway. Since the War and the Holocaust, Germany has resolutely presented itself as an enlightened democracy. Does this shift to the right signal reversion to previous identities – anti-Islam, anti-black, anti-Jewish? Turning to South Africa: Despite

its history, it is doing relatively well on such issues. Last Sunday marked Heritage Day, when people across the spectrum of hues, languages, religions and ethnicities, celebrated their diversity, with different groups donning traditional clothing, hairdos and other items. While politically the country is under assault by the corrupt shenanigans of President Jacob Zuma and the Guptas, assisted by enablers such as auditing firm KPMG and PR agency Bell Pottinger, who stoke racial tensions, as a society it shows a remarkable degree of tolerance, even friendliness, among different groups. It is by no means perfect; racism and xenophobia are often expressed by individuals and politicians, but in the public domain they are generally slapped down as anti-South African. Beneath the surface, racial tensions will take generations to solve – if ever. And the dynamics of race relations are more complicated than just black

and white. An excellent film in Afrikaans (with English subtitles) currently on circuit called Vaselinetjie, unpacks some of the fine nuances of what skin colour means, beyond the black-white labels. It portrays a young white-skinned girl’s anguish growing up in a poor coloured village, reared by her coloured “grandparents”, who is maliciously derided by school peers for being “too white”. At the school principal’s prodding, she is sent to a Johannesburg orphanage containing white kids. They regard her as white, but she never feels safe enough to reveal that her grandparents are coloured, or how this situation came about. The veneer collapses when her grandparents attend a social event at the orphanage, leading friends she had trusted and loved to label her, contemptuously, as a “half-breed” – not white enough, nor black enough to fit in. She is shattered, but clings

to the memory of her grandmother’s words: “G-d doesn’t make mistakes.” What is it to be South African? White minorities – including SA Jewry – fear for their long-term future among the country’s huge black majority, still struggling with the racial legacy of its history. So do minorities like the coloureds. Racial demons lurk everywhere despite grand proclamations of liberal constitutions, including Trump’s America’s or Merkel’s Germany. Is South African society far enough down the road of multiracial tolerance to stay on track? There are good and bad signs. But mischievous politicians scratching the wound for expedient ends, could easily sabotage the idealistic “rainbow nation” project once again.

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

Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

A time for remembrance

Speaking at last Sunday’s SA Jewish Ex-Service League’s memorial service at West Park cemetery, Rabbi Ron Hendler emphasised how appropriate it was that this event should always be held between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a time when the theme of remembrance looms so large in our thoughts and prayers. The service is devoted to remembering those men and women from our community who risked – and in many cases gave their lives – in defence of both South Africa, including in the fight against the scourge of Nazism, and of Israel. We must never allow ourselves to forget how much we owe to those unsung heroes for the peace and security that we enjoy today. I commend the SA Jewish Ex-Service

League for continuing to ensure the holding of this important annual event. Taking the theme of remembrance further, we should also call to mind during these days those community members of bygone years who laid the foundations for the outstanding Jewish communal infrastructure that we all benefit from today. When our pioneering forebears first arrived in this country, such an infrastructure had to be built up literally from scratch, usually starting with a place of worship and thereafter by welfare, educational, Zionist, cultural and youth organisations, all of which we today take for granted. At the biennial SAJBD national conference, we take the opportunity of honouring certain individuals that are adjudged to have made an especially outstanding contribution in their particular fields. In doing so, however, we are well aware that only a fraction of those who have made a worthy contribution in the course of their

lifetimes can be so recognised. Ultimately, the most meaningful way in which we can pay tribute to their memories, is to build on what they achieved, for their own and future generations, thereby perpetuating their legacy.



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

relationships with our overseas colleagues in addressing such common issues as combating anti-Semitism, promoting inter-religious contacts and encouraging cultural and intellectual exchanges. That South Africa has been chosen as the venue for this year’s event, represents a vote of confidence by world Jewry in our Jewish community specifically and our country in general. It reminds us that we are a valued, active part of a global Jewish network, and that the challenges we all face can best be met and overcome through our working together. This being my last SA Jewish Report column for a while in view of the coming chagim, I take this opportunity of wishing you all a good and meaningful Fast and a very joyous Sukkot with your friends, families and loved ones.

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

Family matriarch Mary Atlas dies at age 104

SUZANNE BELLING

Mary Atlas (née Cohen), one of the two oldest residents at Highlands House in Cape Town, passed away on Shabbat Shuva, a few days after her 104th birthday. She was the last member of her generation of the prominent Cape Town Atlas family. Regal, strong and the family matriarch, she was known, not only for her communal work, but for her creative writing and study of positive thinking, on which she wrote several booklets. She used to visit ill, depressed and bereaved people on a voluntary basis, reading them positive affirmations to help them cope, until a few years ago when she lost her hearing.

With an active mind, right up until her peaceful passing, Mary was buried in Pinelands Jewish Cemetery last Sunday. Rabbi Matthew Liebenberg, of the Claremont Wynberg Hebrew Congregation, said in his eulogy: “I believe that if we had asked Mary what the secret was to her longevity, she would have said it was her philosophy of positive thinking...”

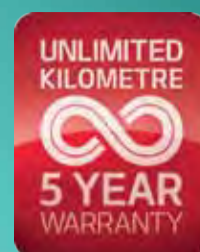
Mary wrote poetry and speeches on her birthdays and other simchas, which she continued to deliver as a nonagenarian up to her 100th birthday. She was also in demand for many years for composing rhyming greetings for friends and acquaintances to use at simchas. But she was best-known for her script and staging (with Bernice Borok) of a mock wedding “Reid Mir a Shidduch”, the story of a matchmaker “Shadchan Shmendrik” which they produced in 1951, 1963 and the early 1970s as a shul fundraising effort. It was so successful that there were repeat performances and the show went as far afield as Stellenbosch. Mary wrote it for the Wynberg Hebrew Congregation (which has since merged with Claremont), where she was active in the Synagogue Guild and the shul. She was, for many terms, chairman and treasurer

of the Wynberg branch of Bnoth Zion Association (now Bnoth Zion Wizo). She was a recipient of the BZA Rebecca Sieff award for long service to the organisation. Her legacy is recorded in the congregation’s centenary book, as her life revolved around the shul and the BZA. Born in Johannesburg in 1913, the elder of two daughters, she became a shorthand teacher at the age of 25. After meeting her husband of 40 years, Maurice, she relocated to Cape Town where the couple was married in the Wynberg Shul. In those days, few women drove cars, but she was then the epitome of a liberated woman, fetching and carrying children and her friends who did not drive.



The late Mary Atlas.

In her latter days, her writing was featured in Highlands House publications, in which she quoted her philosophy: “Life is a big adjustment; the past is history; today is a gift; though tomorrow is a mystery. So, we live day by day and make the very best – with good health may we all be blessed.” Although devastated by the loss of her high-achieving grandson, Zalman, at the age of 19 through a serious illness, Mary applied her positive thinking and was a tower of strength to the family. She leaves her sons, Ivan and Alan Atlas; her daughters-in-law Miriam and Vicky Atlas; her grandchildren Seymour and Lisa Atlas; Janine and Daniel Silke; Jacques Atlas; Julia Atlas and her great-grandchildren, Kayla Silke and Jaden Atlas.



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18 SA JEWISH REPORT			29 September – 20 October 2017
Letters			
ARTICLE ON DR LEVY NOTHING BUT LOSHON HORA		SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE	COMMENDING SA JEWISH REPORT FOR REPORTING ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT ISSUE
<p>I was absolutely appalled by your recent decision to publish an article about the conduct of Dr Stephen Levy.</p> <p>Firstly, let me say that I do not know Dr Levy personally, have never met him either professionally or socially and, in fact was totally unaware of the furore associated with him until quite recently.</p> <p>Without in any way condoning his behaviour, I feel that your decision to publish details on this matter was outrageous, irresponsible and mindlessly stupid. I remind you that the HPCSA has already weighed in on the matter, handed down judgment and instituted disciplinary measures that it deemed to be appropriate.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the comments that Dr Levy himself made regarding his sabbatical from his medical practice, just about the entire Jewish community is well aware of the situation by sheer word of mouth, and no further action was called for.</p> <p>Who are you then to add further fuel to the fire and publish these details that are already widely known, in the interests of “putting the record straight”? It is vindictive and malicious.</p> <p>Dare I say, you probably have some personal axe to grind against Dr Levy, and this clearly took precedence over your journalistic integrity, should you have any at all.</p> <p>It is not within your editorial mandate to exercise your right to malign anybody and to spread loshon hora with impunity. You are a disgrace to the office that you hold and to the entire community. You should resign from your editorial position and keep your shameful and obnoxious comments to yourself.</p>		<p>The doctor got suspended but his victims got a life sentence! I cannot stand in the wings any longer without commenting...</p> <p>I support all victims of abuse, especially of authority abuse, where a perpetrator in a position of power misuses his power to sexually abuse people. This relates to anyone in a position of power, whether it be a teacher, doctor, rabbi or sports coach.</p> <p>What about chillul Hashem of a doctor betraying his medical oath to care for his patients, of violating the trust of his patients to meet his own sexual needs, of the damage to the victims who have to live with this for the rest of their lives?</p> <p>The Torah commands us: “Do not stand aside while your fellow’s blood is being shed (Vayikra 19:16)”. We are obligated to spare no effort in preventing our fellow Jew from suffering physical, emotional, or monetary damage.</p> <p>In a situation where a potential victim is unaware that he is being threatened, one is required to warn him, even though this will reflect negatively on the person or persons responsible. Speech of this sort is not merely permissible, it is obligatory.</p> <p>Nevertheless, one must be certain that conditions which render speech constructive, have been appropriately met.</p>	<p>To the women who came forward and to you who pursued reporting on the sexual harassment charges against a doctor who violated a most important trusted relationship, I am truly humbled by your courage and in awe of your moral sense of what is right and wrong.</p> <p>As the Jewish sense of community seems to have strengthened, it would appear to me, based on my own experiences, that certain Jews have lost moral direction and are giddy with their own sense of power and are prepared to over-ride legal justice with their own beliefs and lie to prove their point.</p> <p>I am so proud of your courage and example in being true “Women of Worth”.</p>
Dr Robert Bloch Johannesburg		Ashleigh Elad Johannesburg	Gail Reiner Johannesburg
KEKANA'S GIFT OUTRAGE IS ACTUALLY HATRED OF THE JEWS		EVERY ONE OF BDS’ ASSUMPTIONS ON ISRAEL IS WRONG	‘BRAVERY’ IN REPORTING LEVY’S MISDEEDS, LAUDED
<p>Kwara Kekana on behalf of BDS South Africa, issued a press statement expressing “shock” that the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (Dirco) presented the previous Israeli ambassador (Arthur Lenk), with a gift (when the latter left to return to Israel). Now this is really something to get hot under the collar about – presenting an accredited outgoing diplomat with a gift is normal protocol in these circles.</p> <p>Kekana may be interested to know that incoming diplomats on presenting their credentials to the President, also present him with a gift of sorts. And knowing our president – he accepts all gifts from all sources including his friends from Saxonwold.</p> <p>However, blinded by hatred for the Jewish State (read Jews) this person wouldn’t know anything about the niceties of the diplomatic world. In the recent “press statement” she castigates Dirco’s Anil Sooklal, and is “shocked by this blatant insult to the South African people”. One must wonder how many South Africans feel insulted by this gesture?</p> <p>One must think that the South African people would feel far more “insulted” by our President for what he is doing to our country. Surely our people must feel not only insulted but aggrieved and livid by the actions of the likes of KPMG, McKinney’s and the SAPS, not to mention Bell Pottinger, for the damage done to our country and specifically the poor and jobless population!</p> <p>Again, this person and her fellow travellers at BDS, so focused on their one-dimensional goal of the destruction of Israel – on their call to “shoot the Jew – Dubula iJuda” – that they seem oblivious to what the real issues are that affect the daily lives of the vast majority of their fellow countrymen.</p> <p>But in truth, they care less about the state of our country than missing the bus. All their energies and efforts are directed only on damaging Israel. And what a frustrating enterprise it must be to waste the kind of effort and resources on such a futile endeavour, only to see Israel prosper like no other country in only 70 short years.</p> <p>Kekana has yet to issue any “press statement expressing her shock” at the treatment of the Palestinians being killed in Syria and Yemen, of the apartheid practices facing the Palestinians living in Lebanon.</p> <p>In truth, it’s not about the Palestinians or the Syrians or even the half a million Muslims being persecuted in Myanmar, or the millions of Kurds living without a state of their own. It is hatred of the Jew that drives Kekana and her organisation.</p>		<p>Recent events have brought people face to face with the fact that the BDS movement’s dishonest contention that it is anti-Israel and not anti-Semitic, is shown up unequivocally to be a lie.</p> <p>Much has been made of the justice of the cause promoted by the BDS campaign that gives the impression that the Israelis are a bunch of bloodthirsty child killers. Its proponents accuse Israel of causing a humanitarian catastrophe.</p> <p>Reality is turned on its head; facts and falsehoods, victims and victimisers, have their roles inverted; logic is suspended and an entirely false narrative of the conflict is accepted as unchallengeable fact, from which a global web of false conclusions has been spun.</p> <p>Every one of the assumptions being bandied about by BDS is wrong. This inversion of reality and morality echoes the worldwide reappearance of anti-Semitism disguised an anti-Israelism. Justice and injustice, oppression and freedom, truth and lies are reversed.</p> <p>Israel’s perceived “oppression” of the Palestinians, its “disproportionate” attacks on them and its supposed violations of international law, are actually the very opposite of the truth. BDS and others like them, make truly ridiculous claims about Israel, such as its perpetration of apartheid or ethnic cleansing – claims which, to anyone with even a passing knowledge of the situation, are demonstrably ridiculous.</p> <p>One must hope that UCT by its actions will not support this campaign, and will be brought to the realisation that false utopias fail as they always do, because they are built on a flimsy structure held together by untruths. The scapegoat in this sad narrative is Israel, and by extension the historically convenient Jew.</p> <p>The matter being debated at UCT cries out for firm and strong leadership, which is in short supply. Professor Max Price’s reported comments on page in the SA Jewish Report of September 15, are disingenuous at best. The dangers to UCT as an academic institution of quality are being put in jeopardy.</p> <p>The New York State Senate passed a landmark bill earlier this year stripping public funding for universities that support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. It is common cause that BDS calls for the total boycott and destruction of Israel. The bill is a specific response to the smear campaign against Israel launched by the American Studies Association (ASA), which recently singled out Israel for criticism and voted to boycott the Jewish state.</p> <p>This boycott move itself was deemed to be a blatant abuse of academic freedom. Not a single university has come out in support and several top universities – including Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, Boston, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Texas – have already slammed the boycott.</p> <p>The reasons given by the Senate: “Make no mistake: the ASA’s boycott is targeted discrimination against Israel that betrays the values of academic freedom that we hold dear. No other nation – not even those with far worse records on human rights and academic freedom than Israel is accused of – is subject to a similar boycott...”</p> <p>This principled stand sends a very powerful message that has relevance in our country, which is that we should never in a democracy, and especially in a university, support intolerance and discrimination of which an academic boycott is a part.</p>	<p>I would just like to commend you and your writers on your bravery in exposing Dr Levy (SA Jewish Report September 15). Unfortunately justice is not always in the hands of the court and we have to take measures to ensure people will no longer come to harm at his hands.</p> <p>Kol Hakavod and thank you.</p>
			Gila Germon Johannesburg
			HOWARD FELDMAN ‘BELITTLES’ SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS
			<p>I refer to recent articles by Howard Feldman in the SA Jewish Report</p> <p>This is a parody:</p> <p>“Dear Heidi, do you wake up Grumpy in the morning?”</p> <p>Heidi: “No, I allow him to sleep. “</p> <p>Does Feldman ever have anything complimentary to write about our wonderful Jewish society and community which is the envy of the wider Jewish world?</p> <p>Is it his commission and appointment to belittle, insult, degrade, denigrate, disparage and demean our Johannesburg and South African Jewry from Pesach to Shabbat and in numerous other articles?</p>
			Chaim Cohen Bedfordview
			SA JEWISH REPORT HAS VENTURED INTO REALM OF SENSATIONALISM
			<p>The SA Jewish Report has always been revered and respected for what it is and should be: a community newspaper of the highest standard, catering for the community replete with inspiring and community-related articles.</p> <p>It is thus disturbing and disconcerting to note that the SA Jewish Report has now ventured into the realm of sensationalism. The articles that are now being given prominence, are entirely devoid of inspiration and in fact give cause for grave concern.</p> <p>With respect, these articles are inappropriate and unsuitable for a Jewish community newspaper of this stature and in the process, are demeaning and discrediting the high standing of this newspaper.</p> <p>Your justification that by publishing these articles you are providing a service, is with respect, flawed and fallacious. These articles are little more than unadulterated loshon hora and have no place in a Jewish community newspaper.</p> <p>Please leave such reporting to the Sunday Times et al and restore our faith in the SA Jewish Report so that we can again look forward to receiving and reading this once worthy publication erev Shabbat and Yomtov.</p>
		Rodney Mazinter Cape Town	Olga-May Musnitzky Johannesburg

Victory Park’s Tzipora wins Israel Quiz



Aviad Sela and Tzipora Krawitz

ANT KATZ

Tzipora Krawitz of King David High School Victory Park (KDVP), was the winner of the 16th annual Israel Quiz, now rebranded as the Shimon Peres Israel Quiz. This is the seventh time since the quiz’s inception in 2004 that KDVP has won it.

Tzipora, who also happens to be the first female winner in seven years, won two return flights to Israel.

Five of the 10 finalists at the finale at at King David Linksfield (KDL) on Sunday September 17 were from KDVP. The school’s five finalists were Tzipora, Warrick Hirson, Jonah Kollenberg, Raizel Lampert, and Gaby Nossel.

Yeshiva College’s Matan Kaplan, Jacob Sacks and Saul Joseph represented their school with pride, as did Torah Academy’s Shoshana Cohen and Yakira Shalpid.

Israel Centre shaliach, Aviad Sela, told the finalists that Israel needs champions and they were the “new champions of Israel,” whether they came first or tenth. “We as a community are proud of you.” Of the community, Sela said: “I am fascinated each and every day the love

for Israel here, 7 000 km away from Israel and at the huge bond that links us.” This, he said, was the “strength of our people”.

Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan, paid tribute to late President Shimon Peres, who had died a year and a day before the Quiz finals. He quoted Peres as saying: “Israel is a dream that came true.” The ambassador told how when Peres was confronted by anti-Israeli hecklers once, he told them: “We do not need your permission to stay alive.” Another of Peres’ oft-quoted words of wisdom, he said, was: “I am free to be free.”

The ambassador, who had spent time with Peres, also shared the fact that this man, one of the founding fathers of Israel, had told him: “My greatest mistake is that my dreams were all too small.” Keinan and his daughter then lit a memorial candle to Peres at the quiz.

The Israel Quiz was started by the South African Zionist Federation in 2004. The Quiz is open to all pupils in Jewish day schools in South Africa.

The purpose of the Quiz is to give pupils the opportunity of broadening their knowledge of the history of the State of Israel and current Israeli affairs.

‘Lives, Loves and Lands’ at the Norwood Mall

Shortly before Rosh Hashanah, the Grade Rs, Grade 3s, Grade 6s and Grade 9s from King David Linksfield held an exhibition of their artworks in the Norwood Mall entitled “Lives, Loves and Lands”.

Hundreds of parents and other pupils marvelled at the magnificent creations which were on show throughout the week.

Grade 3 pupils at King David Junior Primary Linksfield, Dahlia Nahman and Tayla Edelstein



Sunday (October 8)

• Opening of the multimedia exhibition “Where is Kovno?” by artists Yda Walt and Cheryl Rumbak at the JHGC. Time: 17.00. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP: shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100.

• Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium, Parktown (entrance in Third Avenue). Programme compiled by Lionel Gordon - an audio on Big Band music from his collection. After interval a DVD on James Last. Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.



• Second Innings hosts William de Waarde and Natalie Wood, senior investment specialists, on “Warwick Wealth The Investment And Estate Planning Specialists”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting at 10:30 sharp. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Tuesday (October 10)

• Hebrew speakers meet at 11:00, in the sukkah at the Beyachad building in Raedene. Every fluent Hebrew-speaker can join. Contact: Avigail Tajer (011) 640-2376.

Tots share heritage in a fun and informative way

With September being Heritage month in South Africa, Mina Lopato Nursery School used this opportunity to show its children the different cultures in their very own school.

Staff (and children) came dressed in clothes relevant to their cultures and treated us all to a morning of traditional stories, songs, dancing, face painting and food.

As one young learner, Alexa, summed it up: “This has been the best day of my life!”



Belinda Dube, Bruk Belay, Doreen Bulwa, Rose Chauke; Sahara Young, Catherine Radebe, Marina Takahashi, and Thobeka Siza, all dressed in their traditional clothes.

Tashlich Sydenham style

Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School did their own Tashlich in the water trough on the playground last Tuesday. The symbolism of Tashlich is something that’s easily translatable for small children. We think about all of the things we’ve done wrong in the past year, and then we throw them away, with a promise to try harder in the next year.



Sunday (October 15)

• Second Innings hosts Klaas Masilo on “Africans For Peace”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting at 10:30 sharp. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Sunday (October 22)

• JHGC hosts acclaimed writer and former head of the BBC History programme, Laurence Rees, on “The Holocaust: Meeting People Who Were There”. Time: 18:00. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP essential to shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100.

For Kevin, rugby is about believing in the magic

JACK MILNER

For Kevin Musikanth, rugby has always been more than just a game – it’s a passion. That is a word often used quite loosely these days, but there is no doubt when speaking to the 40-year-old that he has a devotion not to the sport alone, but in particular, to winning in the sport.

It is that winning drive that has made him a successful rugby coach and seen him set up a formidable CV.

Among his recent endeavours was coaching the South African team at the recent Maccabiah.

He came away with a surprise gold medal in the sevens, and a slightly disappointing silver medal in the 15-man game.

But most importantly, he came away with a new job, to coach the Israeli rugby sevens team. “For us rugby sevens is secondary to the 15-man game, but in Israel they take it seriously. I think they see it as step to the other forms of the sport.”

Sevens is now an Olympic sport and that could also be a motivating factor for the Israelis. “At the moment they are in the third tier of the European Pool. They have a long way to go to reach the next tier, but they have some test

matches coming up and I have been asked to coach them in those tests which is a massive honour.”

His first encounter will be in Andorra on October 21 and after that Israel will face the others in their Pool – the North group – who are Malta, Bosnia and Croatia. “If they win their group, they will play the winners of the North group. A win there will see them move up into the next tier in 2018.”

Kevin was born in Muizenberg and attended Wynberg Boys’ High. He played rugby at school and probably would have gone on to play at a higher level, but he got injured and that forced him into coaching.

He started coaching schoolboy and club rugby. He coached False Bay club from 2009 to 2013, but took a year out in 2012 when he took up a post at Wynberg Boys.

“I had a great start and we managed to win promotion that year.”

He continued with the club until 2012 with great success, but then he was offered the job at Wynberg Boys which he took up. However, in the year he left False Bay, they went into decline and he was asked to come back in 2013.

The success was immediate and they won the league.

“It was then that the University of Cape Town offered me a position. They were in dire straits at the time and they were facing relegation from the Varsity Cup. I had one instruction when I took over – avoid relegation,” said Kevin.

However, what transpired with UCT was the stuff that dreams are made of, as not only did they avoid relegation, but went on to win the Varsity Cup.

“With five minutes to play we were down 15-33. Then Michael Botha scored a try which was converted but we were still 10 points behind.”

With less than three minutes on the clock it looked all over. “With less than two minutes to go we scored a second try which was converted and we rushed to get the game restarted with just one minute left.”

The 80 minutes was up and all Pukke had to do was get possession and kick the ball out. But Pukke made a fatal error when they were close to the try line. Instead of kicking the ball into touch, their player attempted a drop goal which got run down by UCT. With the game now in the 83rd minute, the boys from Cape Town managed to work the ball down field and finally scored the winning try.

“Magic is around us all the time and it only exists if you truly believe in it,” says Kevin. “By the time the 73rd minute rolled around, the masters had given up on their belief but the



SA Maccabi rugby coach Kevin Musikanth (right) with Player of the Tournament Jesse Wilensky, as the team won gold in the sevens competition at the Maccabiah in July.

players, the students on the field, had decided they truly believed and were never going to give up. That turned us around.”

The next year UCT finished third in the Varsity Cup but as winners in 2014, they went to Oxford in the UK and became World University Champions in 2015.

“I was hoping to become the Super Rugby coach but when the Stormers reunited with Eddie Jones, I knew there was no chance for me so I decided to move on.”

Kevin was offered the job at St John’s College in Johannesburg and he jumped at the opportunity. “It’s fortunate the job is a passion for me. I had been a coach for over 300 first team games with a good record, but I realised I had to move on.”

The St John’s job has been very rewarding as they have a great record. But more than that they have been incredibly supportive with this job in Israel and have allowed me to go.”

Kevin says his success has come from understanding “the value of the person behind the player. Many coaches just concentrate on the sport. But there are other issues one needs to deal with: Are there any personal problems he might be dealing with? It’s a matter of attention to detail and also understanding one’s own shortcomings. The art is to pick players who are well rounded, nurture and protect them.”

Kevin will leave for Israel on October 10 to prepare the team for the Andorra match.

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