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**Jewish Report**

■ Volume 22 - Number 7 ■ 2 March 2018 ■ 15 Adar 5778

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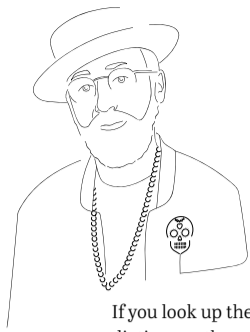
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## NEW YORK LONDON PARIS

*The Retail Trailblazer*  
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JHB

If you look up the word cool in the dictionary, there – dressed all in black – sits a picture of Alexandre Elich. Along with his brothers, Elich is the founder and creative force behind one of Europe's most iconic fashion labels – The Kooples – a brand that effortlessly fuses Parisian chic with London rock 'n roll. With his black *tzitzis* and leather pants, Elich is as comfortable in the front row of Fashion Weeks worldwide as he is at his local *beis medrash*.



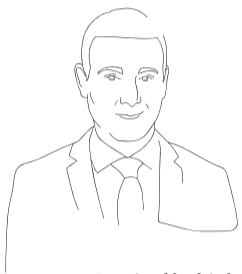
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**Michael Dickson**  
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## YOU LIVE YOU PRAY YOUTUBE

*The Virtuous Vlogger*  
**Rivka Malka Perlman**  
JHB | CT

Life coach and YouTube sensation Rivka Malka Perlman spends some of her time vlogging (video blogging) to her thousands of fans online, and travelling the world as a transformation coach and educator, helping others discover their personal connection to G-d's unconditional love. Perlman is all about fun, authenticity and inspiration, and her mission is to bring every woman on a powerful healing journey.



## OMMMMM OMMMMM AHHHHHH

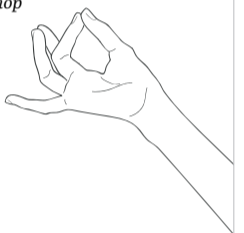
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Esther Wein fervently encourages her students to think outside of the box. With a strong text base and philosophical, Kabbalistic emphasis, she is a master in applying eternal truths to our modern reality. From founding the 5 Towns Keshet Yehudi – an organisation that aims to embrace the secular Israeli community living in the area – to hosting student groups from around the world, Wein is relatable, brilliant and not to be missed.



## KNOWLEDGE KABBALAH KA CHING

*The Wealth Rabbi*  
**Saul Djanogly**  
JHB | DBN | CT

While Saul Djanogly makes his living as the owner of a successful wealth management business, his passion is educating others on bringing truth and values to the world of money. "The Wealth Rabbi" combines a deep academic knowledge of Torah with 30 years of experience in the world of the financial markets.



## ENQUIRE INSPIRE ACQUIRE

*The Thought Provoker*  
**Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**  
JHB

Director of Interfaith Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein's writing has appeared everywhere from the *Wall Street Journal* to the *Los Angeles Times*. He is an expert in Jewish philosophy, and is co-founder of "Crosscurrents", an online journal that confronts modern societal issues and current affairs from a Torah perspective.

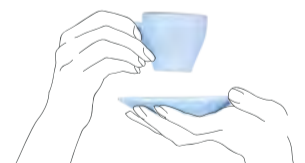
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*The Rockstar*  
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JHB | CT

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## ON STAGE ON AIR ONLINE

*The Learned Leader*  
**Rabbi Moshe Taragin**  
CT

Whether you know him as one of his many devoted students at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Gush, or as one of his 5 000 subscribers online, you know Rabbi Moshe Taragin is a legend. With *smicha*, a BA in computer science and an MA in English literature under his belt, Rabbi Taragin's knowledge is both vast and relevant. While his home is with his wife and eight children in Gush Etzion, Rabbi Taragin's teachings reach far beyond the *yeshuv*. He delivers a weekly shiur online and has hundreds of audio shiurim available, inspiring millions all around the world.



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# south african Jewish Report

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Volume 22 – Number 7 ■ 2 March 2018 ■ 15 Adar 5778

## Thulsie connection to suspects in IS-linked kidnapping

TALI FEINBERG

One of the two suspects arrested in connection with the Islamic State-linked abduction of British-South African Rodney Saunders, 73, and his wife Rachel, 64, is linked to the terrorism case of twin brothers Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie.

The suspect, Fatima Patel – who was arrested with Safydeen Aslam Del Vecchio – was previously detained during the anti-terror raids in Azaadville, Gauteng, back in 2016, which also saw the Thulsie twins apprehended for allegedly planning attacks on Jewish targets and attempting to join the Islamic State (IS). In April last year, evidence in court emerged that the Thulsie brothers' proposed targets included King David Linksfield School and Jonathan Shapiro, also known as cartoonist Zapiro.

Patel and Del Vecchio face charges of abduction, robbery and theft after they went on a spending spree using credit cards belonging to the abducted couple. They stand accused of contravening the Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorism and Related Activities Act by hoisting the IS flag and having IS recruitment material in their possession.

This latest situation regarding the Saunders' abduction reads more like a movie script than reality. It involves an IS flag fluttering in a remote location near the Drakensberg; a stash of jewellery, camping equipment and electronic devices stored at the same location.

The Saunders are believed to have been kidnapped by the terrorist organisation in KwaZulu-Natal last month. The couple moved to Cape Town from the UK in the 1970s and ran an indigenous seeds store.

They were searching for rare plants when they disappeared from the town of Vryheid, in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains, on February 12.

The couple vanished just four days after filming with one of the presenters of BBC *Gardeners' World*, Nick Bailey, who tweeted a selfie with the Saunders – the last known photo of them. He wrote: "The amazing Rod

and Rachel Saunders of Silver Hill Seeds. These guys know their South African native plants... and vitally, where to find them. They sell an incredible range of seeds online."

Alain Rzepecky, one of the couple's customers, wrote to SA Jewish Report from Portugal, stating: "As far as I know, they were in the Drakensberg looking for a rare *Gladiolus* species, possibly *Gladiolus symonsii*. They are professionals, known by South African plant growers for decades. Their botany and local flora knowledge is extremely accurate, and a huge amount of South African

succulent and xerophilous species have been introduced to cultivation, thanks to their never-ending quest for rare species."

In 2016, the couple had written this in their newsletter: "We have spent the last two Christmases in the Drakensberg looking for *Gladiolus symonsii* – a very rare high-altitude species only ever seen by a handful of people... We did not find it despite a systematic three-day search for it in known and preferred habitats."

Another customer, David Feix, posted this on Facebook: "It will be very sad if it turns out Rod and

Rachel have been murdered. They were both such kind and important people, helping to popularise South African plants around the world through their botanising, collecting and seed supply business. I feel blessed to have met them personally back in 2002."

A third customer, Jimmy Turner, wrote: "This couple were amazing plant geeks and so passionate about the plants of South Africa. Have many a wonderful plant we have purchased from them."

The couple's blood-spattered Toyota Land Cruiser has been found

and fears are growing that they have been murdered. Investigative unit The Hawks also discovered £20 000 (R325 000) was withdrawn from their bank account.

HuffPost SA reported that the pair checked into a bush lodge in KwaZulu-Natal three days after leaving Cape Town. An employee at the lodge said the couple stayed for only one night. They reportedly paid in cash and left in a hurry.

The HuffPost SA report added: "It is believed that a police hostage

Continued on page 4>>

## From 'feared and dreaded' to local buddy

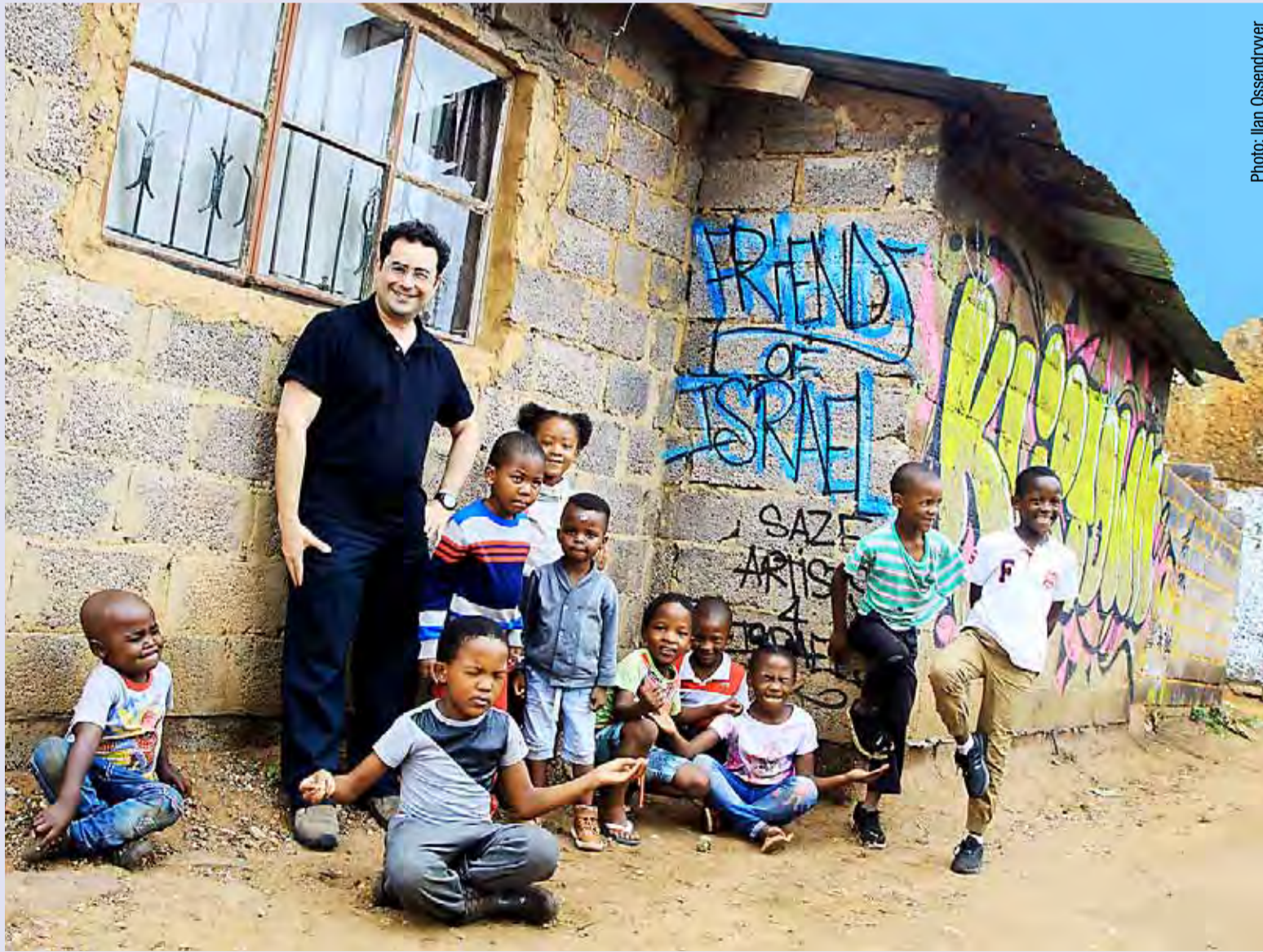


Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Hillel Neuer, the director of UN Watch in Geneva, Switzerland, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to countering anti-Israel bias by the UN organisations, takes time out to get to know the kids of Kliptown, Soweto. Neuer, described in the media as being 'feared and dreaded' by world dictators and as the man 'who makes the UN tremble', was in South Africa as a guest of the SA Zionist Federation. See story on page 8

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# A KosherCoin for your thoughts

DR HAYMAN TASSEN, PhD

**W**ith the sudden and meteoric rise of Bitcoin and the emergence of the volatile and unpredictable universe of cryptocurrency, Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein has decided to climb onto the initial coin offering (ICO) bandwagon and launch the world's very first Kosher CryptoCoin.

Goldstein has always been at the forefront of innovation, having launched the Sinai Indaba Hotel and the internationally acclaimed Shabbos Project, where people who usually keep Shabbos get to take off one Shabbos a year.

Last year, the value of a Bitcoin skyrocketed from \$700 (R8 147) per coin to nearly \$20 000 (R232 779) per ounce. There were people davening all through Rosh Hashanah, praying for the digital currency to hit the magical \$18 000 (R209 501) mark.

"Many claim there is evidence in the Gemara", says Goldstein, "that the initial coins in Purim mishloach manot were actually a crypto coin launched by Queen Esther." Esther may have been governor of the central bank of Iran, an olden-day Gill Marcus, for want of a better description.

Goldstein rushed his ICO to market in order to beat the RebbeRuble, soon to be released by Rabbi Masinter of Chabad during next week's Miracle Drive, where people who have never driven a car before, are suddenly able to drive.

The genius of Goldstein's CryptoCoin is: The more you daven, the more the value of the KosherCoin increases. Apikoruses will immediately see the value of their KosherCoins crash like Steinhoff shares.

Says world-famous "Cryptoman" Ran Neu-ner: "This is one of the biggest scams we have ever seen. It will fit perfectly into the world of blockchain." Blockchain is the technology underlying cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, and operates in accordance with strict halachic principles on a decentralised model with little control, just like the rabbinate.

Explains Shaun Matisonn of Discovery Vitality: "The KosherCoin will attract value every time you eat a kosher meal or phone your mother."

Property genius Herschel Jawitz has decided to invest all of his newborn son's barmitzvah money into the



**The genius of Goldstein's  
CryptoCoin is: The more you  
daven, the more the value of the  
KosherCoin increases.**

KosherCoin. It's a big challenge for Jawitz because every time he falls asleep during a rabbi's drosha, the value of his son's KosherCoin reduces by 18%. "It's an investment in our future," says Jawitz. "Property has been a great investment but now, we have a much better Ponzi scheme to invest in."

Crypto mining magnate Dina Diamond says mining has always been in the Jewish blood, just like high cholesterol. Many of the earliest Jews came to South Africa to work on the diamond mines and gold fields. At one point, even the Oppenheims were Jewish. It's just a small skip and jump to move from diamond mining to crypto mining. "Mining most crypto currencies requires an enormous amount of computing power and electricity, but the KosherCoin requires mitzvah and mazel," says Diamond.

One of the biggest questions is whether the KosherCoin can be traded on the holy Shabbos. The official halachic Poisek on Bitcoin, Benjy Porter, says KosherCoin can rise in value during the holy black-out

days, but no trading will be allowed until three stars are clearly visible in the crypto universe. "There is a reason that the main South African crypto exchange is called Luno," says Porter. "It's from the heavens created on the first days of creation."

Many believe that Luno is short for Lunacy and that the KosherCoins will move in a trading range that will make rand currency traders even more white-knuckled.

The Bitcoin founder is a mysterious character who goes by the shadowy pseudonym Rabbi Satoshi Nakamoto, and whose net value came close to \$20 billion (R250 billion) during the peak of the Bitcoin bubble. Says fellow mythical Rabbi P Shpiel: "If you take the gematria of 'Satoshi Nakamoto', you come to the same numerical number as 'Mordechai' – and that's why it is so auspicious for the Chief Rov to launch KosherCoin during the festive Purim season. "And besides," says Rabbi P Shpiel, "something is needed to pay for the costs of the Sinai Indaba."

**Shabbat times this week**

Starts	Ends	
18:20	19:08	Johannesburg
19:04	19:55	Cape Town
18:11	19:00	Durban
18:29	19:19	Bloemfontein
18:35	19:26	Port Elizabeth
18:25	19:16	East London

**Torah thought of the week**

## The half shekel of service delivery

**S**ervice delivery is a sacred obligation in our religion. You could say that it is illustrated in the mitzvah of giving the yearly half shekel. This obligation devolves on every Jewish family and has been loyally adhered to for well over 3 000 years by rich and poor alike.

The rich are not allowed to give more than a half shekel and the poor cannot give less. The rich cannot claim a greater share, nor can the poor claim exemption because of poverty. Every Jew has to contribute to the daily temple service for the welfare of the nation.

We may call this divine service delivery. Service delivery is a divine duty. There can never be any justification for lack of delivery.

The half shekels were used to buy the national daily sacrifices on behalf of every individual in the nation.

Richness or poverty pulls no weight in the face of duty. Adam was not born with any rights. In fact, he was created with a set of duties and prohibitions later developed by the Torah. The Torah speaks from the premise of duty, not of rights.

The nation, like the community, like the congregation, is a holy concept and represents a heightened social existence in which every member serves the interest of the whole. In a Jewish community everybody from bar or bat mitzvah age, without exception, is a service deliverer and a service provider. Nothing less will do.

Therefore, as an educational divine project the half shekel is unique.



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# Local terror attack could be a matter of time, experts warn

NICOLA MILTZ

Experts have warned this week that South Africa has become a solid breeding ground for terrorists, following a spate of recent terror-related arrests – and this, they say, is just the tip of the iceberg.

The last few months have seen a sinister increase in terror-linked cases which experts attribute to the country's dire lack of security, as well as to incompetent and lax intelligence gathering.

"We should've been worried 40 years ago," warned terrorism analyst Hussein Solomon, senior professor of political studies and governance at the University of the Free State.

He said terrorist organisations have been operating in South Africa for years. "They are all here: Islamic State (IS), Hamas, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab – terror networks of foreign and local jihadis operating on local soil.

"What we know is the tip of the iceberg. These organisations have tentacles and they entrench themselves," he warned.

There is a disturbing and popular opinion among government and security bodies that such threats are not too worrying, as terrorists have not yet carried out attacks within the country's borders. But the possibility of an attack by a lone extremist remains real.

A few weeks ago, the British government updated its travel advisory for South Africa, warning its citizens that there is a terror threat from extremists linked to the IS group in South Africa. It warned that "terrorists are likely to try carry out attacks in the country".

This follows the February kidnapping of two South African-UK nationals, Rod and Rachel Saunders, near Vryheid in KwaZulu-Natal, by people allegedly linked to the IS (see page 4).

Three people have since been arrested in connection with the couple's kidnapping and possible murder. The first two suspects arrested were Sayfydeen Aslam Del Vecchio and Fatima Patel. The house where they were found is suspected to be a safe house. When the Hawks raided it they allegedly found explosives and the couple's vehicle.

Disturbingly, Patel was on bail

after being arrested with her brother, Ebrahim, near Johannesburg during anti-terrorism raids in July 2016 on charges of possessing unlicensed ammunition and explosives. The infamous twin brothers, Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie, were arrested at the same time as Patel. They are still in custody and stand accused of planning terrorist attacks on behalf of the IS, including attacks on Jewish

state security. "Given the enormity of the situation, President Cyril Ramaphosa should have appointed a consummate professional with a thorough knowledge of state security matters, at the very least."

He maintains the government has for years tolerated the presence of terror networks in the country, turning a "blind eye" to the activities of violent extremists. Its thinking is that if the South African government

unlikely that a terror attack would take place on our soil any time soon.

"IS-inspired supporters in South Africa appear to be amateur; they are not professionals. Is South Africa vulnerable? Yes. Is there going to be an attack tomorrow? Most likely not. However terror groups are attempting to expand their silent footprint in South Africa, it is not in their interests to expose themselves until they are certain that they can

continue their presence and gain maximum propaganda value."

She said Patel and her two accused were acting out of criminality and that any link to the IS was "coincidental".

But, she added, South Africa – like any country in the world – cannot deny its vulnerability to attack. "There is a historical footprint of recruitment in South Africa and groups like the IS and al-Qaeda are actively recruiting

and spreading their propaganda."

Travel alerts and advisories indicate high levels of uncertainty about the IS's next move, but Opperman called these "alarmist".

Nevertheless, she stressed the urgent need for South Africa to have an effective intelligence service to execute its legal mandate in countering threats to national security.

The British government has highlighted the security risk posed by South African nationals who have travelled to places like Iraq, Syria and Libya to receive training, and the danger they present on their return.

Experts warn that South Africa is also vulnerable to exploitation by numerous organisations registered in the country under false pretences which claim to be "non-violent and peaceful". The BDS SA movement displays strong support of extreme

Islamic groups and shows violence against citizens who are opposed to their cause. The organisation serves as a training ground for youth indoctrination and recruitment, particularly on university campuses.

Jevon Greenblatt, director of the Community Security Organisation (CSO) in Gauteng, said reports suggest terror organisations use South Africa as a base to train, finance and plan terror operations across the globe. As a result, there may be a misconception that groups and individuals will not carry out attacks here.

"It is imperative to be aware that a number of attempted attacks locally have been foiled over the past decade, including al-Qaeda plots in 2010 and again in 2014, Hezbollah in 2012, and the IS in 2016.

"Historically, there may have been a reticence by centrally controlled terror organisations to disturb the status quo in countries that supported or tolerated their logistical ambitions and infrastructure, but at best, this was always a temporary 'stay of the hand' until a time when the target was too attractive or the status quo had changed – either as a result of activities by the 'host country' or a shift in the strategic vision of the terror organisation.

"It is important to remember that al-Qaeda of Iraq, a branch of al-Qaeda morphed into the IS, which has continuously called for attacks to be carried out across the globe, regardless of previous unwritten agreements – resulting in the foiled local planned attacks by the Thulsie brothers and their IS-linked cell.

"It is deeply irresponsible to assume that a terror attack will never take place in South Africa," warns Greenblatt.

"That said, it is incumbent on our community to pray for the best but plan for the worst.

"Security is not, and should never be, a knee-jerk reaction to a particular scare or media report. By that stage, it is already too late. Establishing security takes time, funds and preparation, and starting tomorrow is too late," he says.

"As in most tragic incidents, no one expects it to happen to them until it does. Let us not be the community that has to ask itself what could have been if we'd done things differently."



installations. Brigadier Hangwani Mulaudzi of the Hawks said that Patel and her partner had been on their radar.

Meanwhile, two Lebanese citizens appeared in the Kempton Park Magistrate's Court this week for allegedly illegally exporting components of drones to Hezbollah in Lebanon. South Africa emerged as the central location for their alleged activities. They have been accused by the US of illegally exporting items to Hezbollah, which it has classified as a terrorist organisation.

Solomon firmly believes that South Africa has aided and abetted the blossoming of these groups over time as state security organisations have been directing their focus more on politics – and on keeping former president Jacob Zuma in power.

Solomon said he was dismayed by the appointment this week of Dipuo Bertha Letsatsi-Duba as minister of

lets them fundraise, recruit and train operatives on local soil, they will not bomb or attack this country.

"Ramaphosa needs to crack the whip," warned Solomon this week.

"South Africa has a legal obligation to prevent these groups from operating here. While it has become harder to strike at targets in other parts of the world because of increased security measures, South Africa has become a soft target for these extremists because of our lax security apparatus.

"There needs to be the political will to eradicate the scourge of terrorism – which there is not," he cautioned, "and Ramaphosa needs to ensure a radical overhaul of the security apparatus and a radical restructuring of intelligence services."

Jasmine Opperman, director of Southern Africa Operations at the Terrorism, Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC), said it was

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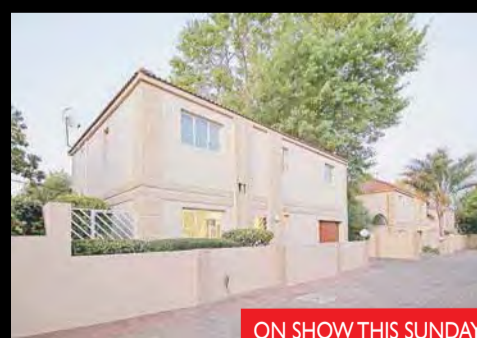
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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

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# International affairs minister favours cutting ties with Israel

NICOLA MILTZ

The newly appointed Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindiwe Sisulu, undertook to convey a message which would help to ensure that the “Embassy of Israel packs up and goes to the Dead Sea”.

She told this to a BDS-linked Muslim organisation called the Social Compact for Peace and Justice shortly before the ANC’s December elective conference at Nasrec. It was there that the ANC took the policy decision to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel.

She told the members of this group in January that she had, according to their wishes, spoken to members of the international relations commission, which was handling the downgrade. The SA Jewish Report could not confirm whether Sisulu did indeed speak to members of the commission, or do anything at all, before the ANC’s decision to downgrade the embassy.

Sisulu, who was sworn in this week as part of President Cyril Ramaphosa’s Cabinet reshuffle, had dinner with members of this organisation shortly before the ANC’s elective conference in December and committed to doing what she could for them.

On January 4, Sisulu was invited again by the same group to report back on the role she played and to further engage on the Palestinian issue.

A video of this gathering was seen by SA Jewish Report. In it, Sisulu is seen addressing a relatively small crowd – made up of members of this organisation, along with the top leadership of BDS SA and other members of the Muslim community – at the Jiswa Centre in Lenasia.

She reported back to them about the dinner she had with the Social Compact members before the conference took place at Nasrec, saying: “We had a wonderful time with them... We discussed a whole variety of things... But one thing that stood out was the concerns around the issue of Israel.

“Two requests were made: One – there must be a downgrading of the embassy, and two, please make sure that tomorrow the Embassy of Israel packs up and goes to the Dead Sea. Am I correct?” she said, to loud applause.

Sisulu said she took the message through to the international relations commission. “Fortunately, it fell on very fertile soil,” she said.

She added that she thought it was very important “to come back and say thank you for making that very strong suggestion. It was taken up and today you can say you were part of a very important decision that was taken by the ANC at the conference.

“Unfortunately, the Embassy of Israel is not in the Dead Sea; it’s very much in Pretoria and we still have to work very hard to make sure the final request that was made is carried through.”

There were several prominent speakers at the Lenasia event, including South Africa’s ambassador to Palestine, AY Suliman; the co-founder and director of BDS SA, Muhammed Desai; and South Africa’s former ambassador to Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia, Mohamed Dangor. Professor Farid Esack, the chairperson of BDS SA, and members of the SA Council of Churches were also present.

Sisulu has been a long-serving Cabinet minister in portfolios including defence, public service and administration, and human settlements. Sisulu is the daughter of anti-



Lindiwe Sisulu

apartheid activists Walter and Albertina Sisulu.

In 2014, she was accused of squandering public money while she was defence minister when it emerged that she had spent R11 million on chartered flights in a Gulfstream jet.

She has also come under fire for several appointments she made in her portfolios, which included the appointment of former national director for public prosecutions Menzi Simelane as a special adviser, despite him facing charges of misconduct.

Sisulu initially ran against Ramaphosa in the ANC leadership race in 2017 but later withdrew, choosing to pursue the deputy position, which she lost to David Mabuza.

Sisulu told the audience that when she was invited to dinner with Social Compact for Justice and Peace in December, she shared her own personal experience of having been sent by Madiba to go and see Yasser Arafat just before he died. She said that Arafat told her that his “fate was in the hands of the South Africans”.

“So, all of us here have the responsibility that a man died for peace, a man who supported us through our struggle, and I came back here to report to you because we knew that the message he was sending us to give to the conference was one that came from the heart...”

Desai said at the report-back meeting that when the embassy is downgraded, “we’re going to have a welcome party, Comrade Sisulu, and we want you to be part of it”.

Desai spoke about the numerous so-called BDS successes last year, including when government ministers participated in a 24-hour solidarity fast; and the snub the government gave to the visiting Israeli parliamentary delegation.

Calling the downgrade “no small feat”, he added: “We must acknowledge members of the ANC and Minister Sisulu’s role.”

Wendy Kahn, the national director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), said this week: “The SAJBD was concerned by comments by Minister Sisulu in January this year when she stated in an address at the Social Compact for Peace and Justice that she had delivered on her promise to them to downgrade the South African Embassy in Tel Aviv and would now work hard to cut diplomatic ties.

“We have written to the minister with a view to meeting with her to discuss this issue. It is our hope that the new administration will be open to the possibility of South Africa playing a role in attempting to facilitate dialogue between the Palestinians and Israelis with a view to finding solutions going forward. Many in the Ramaphosa Cabinet have valuable experience in dialogue and negotiation, having led our country to democracy and, more recently, in terms of our leadership transition.”

The board said it look forward to discussing with Sisulu “the role that this experience and expertise could have in peace building between the Palestinians and Israelis”.

The board added: “We have stated previously that if you shut your embassy, you shut your ability to play a role in the conflict. This does not help anyone. As President Ramaphosa said in 2014: ‘It is often best, when you want to solve problems, to remain engaged so that you can have some leverage.’

“We also intend sharing with the minister the real concerns that the Jewish community has in terms of the implications of the downgrade.”

## Thulsie connection to suspects in IS-linked kidnapping

>> Continued from page 1



BBC Gardeners' World presenter Nick Bailey with Rodney and Rachel Saunders, four days before they disappeared

negotiator is the only one who knows where the couple is, and that no ransom demands have been made.”

Just days after they vanished, armed police arrested Del Vecchio and Patel in Vryheid, about 320km north of Durban, after a raid on their remote hideaway.

Del Vecchio also faces another terrorism-related charge for allegedly participating in “extremist web forums that support the IS and offering to supply phone numbers and SIM cards that are not traceable”. A third suspect, a 23-year-old man, was arrested in KwaZulu-Natal on Monday morning.

Hawks spokesperson Captain Lloyd Ramovha said on Monday that “the search is ongoing. We have a dedicated team [in the KwaZulu-Natal area] that is working around the clock.”

The incident prompted the British government to issue a travel advisory about possible terrorist attacks on foreign

nationals in South Africa, implying that this is not a once-off incident but rather a warning not to be taken lightly.

However, Community Security Organisation (CSO) director Dean Rosin says the Jewish community does not need to panic. “The IS is generally a threat to Jewish communities globally and will try to create havoc and disruption wherever it can. It does not care about political alliances – for example, South Africa’s friendly relations with Arab countries – and will try to attack Western targets when possible.”

But he maintains that his team has not seen an increased local threat and says CSO is waiting for the investigation into the couple’s abduction to reach its conclusion. He recommends that community members remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the CSO.

## DA MP Breytenbach is acquitted of all charges

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Members of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) hounded DA MP Glynnis Breytenbach for at least four years, with one of them even accusing her of being a Mossad agent – but on Wednesday, she was finally acquitted of all charges.

Former state prosecutor Breytenbach was cleared of all charges relating to unauthorised access to, and modifying official laptop computer contents, while she was still at the NPA.

Handing down judgment, Pretoria North Magistrate Brian Nemavhidi acquitted Breytenbach and her co-accused and former attorney, Gerhard Wagenaar, finding that neither of them had broken any laws.

Last year, Breytenbach and Wagenaar were acquitted on two counts of obstructing or defeating the ends of justice, relating to their refusal to hand over an official laptop computer to NPA officials who were investigating acts of misconduct against Breytenbach.

Breytenbach told reporters after the judgment that she felt vindicated. “We have always said that we were innocent. We always held the view that these charges were malicious. I still hold that view and my rights are reserved in that regard.”

# ANC MPL uses anti-Semitism to attack the opposition

TALI FEINBERG

Sharon Davids, the ANC's MPL in the Western Cape, made outrageous anti-Semitic remarks in an attempt to besmirch the DA during a debate on Friday in the provincial legislature, following Premier Helen Zille's State of the Province Address.

Davids blamed the Jewish community for the water crisis, which she said was a fabrication, and accused Jewish leaders of belonging to a "Jewish mafia" and of being paid to create fear and discord.

The DA "fabricated" the Day Zero water crisis in Cape Town to gain kickbacks from the Jewish mafia, claimed Davids, adding that former leader Tony Leon was hired to communicate the party's "doomsday message" of Day Zero and that "Zille had it in for Patricia [de Lille] after she stood up to her about this land in the Jewish area".

Proof that the DA was favouring Jewish people, said Davids, was illustrated by party leader Mmusi Maimane "hanging out" with DA MP Michael Bagraim, who had spent time on the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

**"If there is an illicit relationship between the DA and some Jewish-aligned formations, such must be interrogated without fear or prejudice."**

This is not the first time Davids has landed in hot water. In 2016, she was found guilty of inflating her travel claims. Denis Joseph, who was chairperson of the legislature's conduct committee at the time, said: "As chairperson of the conduct committee, I find it unacceptable that a public representative inflates travel distances for financial benefit. Member Davids was charged according to Clause 2 (4) (b), that holds every member of the provincial Parliament accountable for due diligence in the execution of his or her official duty."

While the DA released a statement condemning Davids' anti-Semitic remarks while the sitting was still in session, the ANC's lack of response was deafening. And when the SA Jewish Report called the ANC's media officer for the Western Cape, Yonela Diko, for comment on Monday, he asked: "What did Sharon say?"

This was in direct contrast to the reaction by DA chief whip Mark Wiley, who, during the sitting, had pointed out that Davids' remarks violated Article 15 of the Constitution, which protects freedom of religion and belief.

When the ANC eventually released a statement at the SA Jewish Report's request, it said that Davids' comments deserved consideration: "Anti-Semitism is not a scaremongering tool to whip others in line and to prevent them from interrogating the truth," wrote provincial secretary Faiez Jacobs.

"If there is an illicit relationship between the DA and some Jewish-aligned formations, such must be interrogated without fear or prejudice. We will therefore be talking to Davids to understand the context in which the remarks were made."

Said Rael Kaimowitz, chairperson of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council): "Instead of outright condemnation of Davids' bizarre statements, Jacobs has effectively supported her. Suggesting that her anti-Semitism is a result of something that Jews have done is a classic form of racist victim blaming."

The University of Cape Town's Professor Milton Shain, an expert in anti-Semitism, explains why Davids' comments are a classic form of what's been termed 'the world's oldest hatred': "The comments are clearly anti-Semitic. The very notion of a 'Jewish mafia' plugs

into age-old canards of sinister cabals and nefarious actions on the part of all Jews. The idea that Jews are 'manufacturing the water crisis' to serve their own interests reminds one of the medieval well-poisoning libel.

"Sharon Davids is emulating the language of the infamous Greyshirt leader Louis Weichardt [whose organisation followed Nazi doctrine] and others on the radical right in the 1930s. Is the ANC happy to follow in the tradition of South African fascists at the time of World War II who blamed Jews for all their problems and asserted sinister motives on the part of Jewish parliamentarians and the Jewish left? Is the ANC happy to have the equivalent of the pro-Nazi Robey Leibbrandt speaking for it in the provincial council?" he asks.

"If reported correctly, Davids should be expelled from the ANC. She should know better. Is she talking about Albie Sachs? Is she talking about the late Arthur Chaskalson, or the late Joe Slovo, or the late Helen Suzman? I'm afraid that must be the conclusion if she chooses to generalise about ethnic groups," continues Shain.

"Michael Bagraim should take Davids to the Human Rights Commission. Is he not allowed to 'hang out' with his party leader? Are Jews not allowed to tender for a Jewish community centre or school in Sea Point? Should the 'sinister' Tony Leon be sidelined from business or political activities? Perhaps Sharon Davids wishes to curtail Jewish rights. Sadly, it would appear that the ANC is going to play the 'Jewish card' as we move toward the provincial and general elections in 2019. No one should fall for it."

The ANC's silence was met with outrage on social media. "This creature is the ANC version of Penny Sparrow minus the outrage against her," wrote Tony Leon, while Zackie Achmat tweeted: "The @ancwcape\_Info must condemn this stupid and populist anti-Semitism."

Sheryl Lowenthal tweeted directly to President Cyril Ramaphosa and ANC MPs Naledi Pandor and Derek Hanekom: "This disgusting anti-Semitism and racism is a direct result of the

ANC being captured by hateful BDS. It's a total insult to Jewish South Africans. I am disgusted – this is not what Nelson Mandela stood for and is an insult to the Constitution."

Howard Feldman added: "@CyrilRamaphosa @NalediPandor: Two consequences that will naturally follow the ANC obsession and hatred towards Israel. 1. A rise in racist anti-Semitism. 2. A rise in terror within SA borders. Both are already a problem.

The power sits with you to change it. #BDS #Antisemitism"

Mike Abel tweeted to the powers that be: "Have you issued a statement yet condemning these wild, insane, inflammatory and wholly untrue statements of your Sharon Davids from ANC WC? Silence = consent... Speak up if you have a conscience and then, fire her. This is hate speech."

Popular former DA councillor Jacques Weber wrote on Facebook: "It has now been 48 hours since this ignorant MPL stood up and made probably one of the most despairing statements, yet not a single murmur of an apology from her nor a single statement from the newly appointed ANC Top 6. I guess for me the honeymoon period in the 'changed ANC' is very much over."

Kaimowitz explained: "Such allegations amount to a racist smear campaign against the Jewish community. The surfacing of such clearly anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are particularly disturbing in view of the very difficult situation that the people of Cape Town find themselves in and the potential this creates for seeking convenient scapegoats for what has gone wrong.

"We urgently call on the ANC nationally and in the Western Cape to show it is genuinely committed to fighting racism in whatever form it arises. The ANC must distance itself from these remarks and justifications, and speak out clearly that this is an unacceptable narrative. As always, we are available to engage on this issue."

Davids has since attempted to backtrack on her remarks, claiming that she had referred only to a "foreign-based company" and "Israel-based people".



Sharon Davids

## Stan & Pete's kosher licence revoked

TALI FEINBERG

In a shock move on Erev Purim, the Beth Din of Johannesburg revoked Stan & Pete Caterers' Beth Din kosher certification with immediate effect after a routine inspection on Wednesday morning revealed an "irregularity".

"Any existing products made by Stan & Pete may not be used," said the Beth Din. "However, crockery and food utensils need not be kashered."

"We picked up a serious irregularity... We acted swiftly and are now auditing everything," explains the head of Kosher

Partnerships at the Beth Din, Dovi Goldstein. "They do have a mashgiach, but it took a particular trained eye to find this irregularity and we needed to revoke their licence immediately.

"We are working on this matter full time. The core of our business is kashrut and transparency, and we take it very seriously. We never compromise our standards and never forgo our responsibility."

Although members of the community immediately suspected, given the timing, that this was a Purim spiel, Goldstein was adamant. "We don't joke about Kashrut – it is our core business and responsibility.

The licence was withdrawn with immediate effect and we won't certify anything of Stan & Pete's right now. You cannot eat product from them, even if they are from a while back."

In a message to friends that was shared on Facebook, Jeff Shull of Stan & Pete confirmed that the ruling was not a joke: "Yes, it's true... on a routine inspection earlier today some irregularities were found in our main kitchen. The Beth Din has taken precautionary measures to stop us trading with immediate effect. I am working closely with the Beth Din to see if we can resolve

Continued on page 7>>



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## South African Jewish Report

### The enemy of my enemy is my friend

As we put our newspaper to bed on Wednesday evening, Jewish people around the world are revelling in and enjoying Purim. They are letting their proverbial hair down and celebrating how we survived the threat of Haman through the wisdom of Mordechai and Queen Esther.

Although this chag has undertones of anti-Semitism and the threat of genocide, it is a joyous holiday because we withstood and outwitted an evil and sinister threat.

To be honest, I wanted to bring you a newspaper this week that was full of fun, as well as some great religious and intellectual food for thought about Purim.

However, the news overtook us and it was a week in which we could not avoid bringing you some pretty hair-raising stories.

That is the life of a newspaper and it is incumbent on us to ensure that you know everything you need to know. I say that, knowing full well that sometimes we need to tell you things that we would rather weren't true or weren't happening. But we don't do sunshine journalism.



Having said that, we still made sure you have some great food for thought, and we snuck in a wonderful Purim spiel to get you going. Please try and find it and let us know which one it is.

However, while people are revelling, I find myself very concerned about the situation we are in. While I am sure our new President Cyril Ramaphosa is going to do the best for this country, I am unhappy about the sinister forces that exist here and their potential impact.

In the past week, we had an ANC member of the Western Cape provincial legislature making ugly anti-Semitic statements in the legislature. (See story on page 5.) She later comes out denying she meant what she said and manages to blame it all on the DA. Really!

The ANC was very quiet about this.

Last week, we had Minister Naledi Pandor pushing for the government to cut ties with Israel in an apparently bizarre outburst in Parliament. Then, after the SA Jewish Board of Deputies sends a letter asking to meet her, she makes snide remarks directed at the board during a public address at the memorial for the late struggle veteran AnnMarie Wolpe. (See page 7.) What is that about?

Then we discover this week that our new Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindiwe Sisulu, has a clear anti-Israel agenda that she has already been pushing. Now that she is in this position, she will be setting the foreign affairs agenda. (See story on Page 4.)

There is clearly a strong force in the upper echelons of the party that is vehemently against anything to do with Israel. They are not open to debate or to seeing all sides of the situation. They apparently are not even concerned about the dire state of the people in other Arab states. No, they are single-minded. This has to impact on us.

And while those running the country are desperate to uplift the plight of the Palestinians, they are not taking care to keep the horror of Islamic fundamentalism out of our country.

So, we see infiltration of Hezbollah, Hamas, people linked with Islamic State and other terror-related fundamentalist groups here. In fact, the government invited and welcomed Hamas leaders to the ANC electoral conference at the end of last year. Hamas, like Hezbollah, unapologetically calls for the destruction of Israel to be replaced by a Palestinian state. Its rhetoric and its original charter – whitewashed by its revised one in May last year – is horribly anti-Semitic and speaks of the destruction of the Jews. Leaders of this organisation were welcomed to this conference, while the Israeli ambassador was not. There is no hiding the message that this sends out to the fundamentalist world.

Now it seems these terror groups feel welcome in South Africa. Why shouldn't they be? The enemy of my enemy is my friend – not so?

So far, we have been spared terrorist attacks in this country, but the experts are clear: we shouldn't be naïve in believing this will continue indefinitely.

I find this all extremely worrying. I am not sure that the ANC is doing this on purpose. The governing party cannot possibly want terror organisations in the country. It cannot be blind to the terror that these organisations wreak around the world.

Coming back to Purim, we are reminded of how we need to be mindful of what is happening around us, ensuring that we stop the evil that could negatively impact the country and us.

Having said that, I would like to think we can celebrate the fact that there is a new lease on life in the government, one in which moral and ethical leadership should prevail. We also have a strong community with brave leadership.

Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
Editor

## Dateline: Middle East

### Closing the church in protest has caused much frustration



PAULA SLIER

It was a strange sight. For a few days this week, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City – built on the spot where Christians believe Christ was crucified, buried and resurrected – was closed.

Disappointed pilgrims mingled in the square in front of its ironclad doors, while a group of Russian worshippers knelt in prayer off to the right. The last time the church was closed for political reasons was three decades ago.

Behind its doors lies a chequered history. Managed by six competing – and often warring – Christian factions, the church's leaders decided 800 years ago to entrust two Muslim families with the church's keys and the task of opening and closing its doors each day.

This, they felt confident, was the only way they could ensure that no Christian denomination would be granted favour over another. And it has worked.

Each morning – at 04:00, to be precise – Adeb Jawad Joudeh treads the familiar cobblestones from his home in the Muslim quarter to open this sacred Christian site.

I accompanied him on one of these walks. He told me that since 1187, when his family received the church's keys from Salah al-Din (the first sultan of Egypt and Syria, credited with capturing Jerusalem from the Crusaders), the keys have been passed from generation to generation.

On a wall in his home hangs a collection of the various keys used over the years. At night he shuts the doors, locking in the monks who sleep there.

When I visited the church this week, disheartened worshippers bemoaned the fact they'd come from all over the world – especially now in the weeks before Easter – but were unable to enter. Joudeh sat off to one side.

"I'm from Gaza," one pilgrim told me. It was the first time ever that this elderly man had been granted permission by the Israeli authorities to visit Jerusalem, and now he could only pray in front of a closed door. That sentiment was echoed by worshippers from as far afield as Asia, America, Europe and even South Africa.

The decision to shut the church's doors was made by leaders of the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian Apostolic communities. They made this decision after the Jerusalem municipality announced its intention to start collecting taxes for church-owned properties that did not house places of worship. This meant that church-run halls, restaurants, hostels and the like that, until now, have been exempt from taxes thanks to a decades-old agreement, would have to start coughing up.

The decision also applied retroactively. But following the outcry – also from the international community – three days after making its announcement, the Jerusalem municipality said it was postponing such collections.

Jerusalem is one of Israel's poorest cities and the tax revenue from such properties would have run into millions of dollars.

It's a fair argument that such places should be taxed in the same way that other similar establishments in the city are. However, the churches insist that they return the money into their community and use it to feed and house

poor Christians.

They felt that they were being used as pawns in a bigger fight between the Jerusalem municipality and the finance ministry in lieu of budget shortfalls and mounting debts the city is facing.

Church leaders were also worried about proposed legislation which, they suspected, would allow the state to confiscate church-owned land.

Here too, in light of the outcry, the government has since frozen a controversial bill that its sponsors insist was not meant to affect what the churches could do with their property. It was meant – they believe – to deal with what happens when the land rights are sold to a third party.

The legislation is designed to protect hundreds of Jerusalem landowners whose property was built on land owned primarily by churches, and subsequently sold to other investors.

The timing of the decision to close the church could not have been worse for Israel. That is because it comes on the heels of US President Donald Trump's game-changing public recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

That announcement has instilled fear among the country's minorities (only 2% of Jerusalem's citizens are Christian). It has also fuelled anti-Israel critics with charges that the authorities are tightening control over the city.

Hamas was quick to call for an escalation of the "al-Quds [Jerusalem] Intifada" against Israel's "religious war on the Palestinians and their Islamic and Christian holy sites".

The Palestinian Authority also linked the church's closure to the US's plan to move its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May.

Church leaders accused the Jerusalem municipality of attempting to "weaken the Christian presence in Jerusalem". They issued a joint statement in which they accused authorities of a "systematic and unprecedented attack against Christians in the Holy Land". They compared it to anti-Jewish laws issued in Nazi Germany.

None of this is actually true. In fact, on numerous occasions Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spoken about the hospitable climate for Christians in Israel, especially when compared with their persecution in other parts of the Middle East.

But the most worrying aspect of the whole debacle – which has since returned to the status quo of a week ago – is what it says about how Israel communicates with the Christian world.

There were other ways to solve the standoff. However, Netanyahu is busy with more urgent matters and the decision by the church's leaders to close the doors took everyone by surprise.

"Israeli officials need to learn to handle such matters away from the public eye, in quiet negotiations, and not by making unilateral decisions and announcements. No doubt the Christian leaders are also at fault – as even Pope Francis has supported taxing churches' commercial properties – and the lesson for everyone here is to be more careful not to paint Israel as a country that is in battle with a helpless minority. It does no favours to Israel or to its Christian minority."

• Paula Slier is the Middle East Bureau Chief of *Russia Today (RT)*, the founder and CEO of *Newshound Media* and the inaugural winner of the *Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the South African Absa Jewish Achievers*.



Worshippers pray in front of the closed doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City

Photo: REUTERS/Amir Cohen



## Pandor takes a dig at Jewish Board

### OWN CORRESPONDENT

Higher Education Minister Naledi Pandor used the platform of a memorial service to late human rights activist and struggle veteran AnnMarie Wolpe to rebuke the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD).

The board had written a letter to Pandor last week – who was this week moved from her science and technology ministerial portfolio to that of higher education – asking to discuss her recent anti-Israel statements in Parliament.

When she stood up to speak in memory of Wolpe, in front of a packed audience at Temple Israel in Green Point on Friday, Pandor said: "It is a very interesting moment. I am Muslim South African, in a synagogue, in a temple, and who has just made

the Jewish Board of Deputies very angry with her. They have written to me, they say on behalf of all the South African Jewish community, which I don't quite believe. Nevertheless, I am a recipient of such a letter."

This all started when Pandor stood up in Parliament last Tuesday and announced: "The majority party has agreed that government must cut diplomatic ties with Israel."

She went on to say that the decision was based on "the absence of genuine initiatives by Israel to secure lasting peace and a viable two-state solution that included full freedom and democracy for the Palestinian state".

Her announcement came as a surprise, given that it was made during the debate on President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address and he had not mentioned Israel-South Africa relations or any foreign policy issues at all. The debate was meant to focus on discussions around the president's address and was not a place for grandstanding, as explained in last week's SA Jewish Report.

The SAJBD then wrote to Pandor, requesting a meeting to discuss and clarify

her remarks. It simply referred to her statement, saying that it "has caused great distress amongst members of the local South African Jewish community".

Says Wendy Kahn, SAJBD's national director: "Our letter was respectful and non-confrontational."

The SAJBD was amazed that Pandor chose that venue and event to address this issue, specifically when she was meant to speak about Wolpe's illustrious career in the field of human rights activism and her important contribution to defeating apartheid.

"The minister claimed we were 'angry' with her. Nothing could have been further from the truth," said Kahn after the memorial. "Our letter was courteous in our request for a meeting to engage with the minister. Surely, as the representative body of one of the South African stakeholder groups, this was the correct recourse in addressing what we believed to be distressing to members of our community?"

"The minister further questioned the credentials of our 115-year-old, democratically elected, representative body of the South African Jewish community. Since the minister has chosen to interact with us in the public domain, we too are forced to respond in this way," said Kahn.

"Furthermore, we fail to understand why it was relevant to draw attention to the fact that she is a Muslim South African speaking in a synagogue. Those who had come together for the occasion were not doing so as Jews or Muslims, whites or blacks, but as fellow South Africans wishing to pay tribute to someone whose life had been devoted to bringing people together, not dividing them.

"Moreover, the implied suggestion that there was something very unusual in a Muslim person speaking in a Jewish place of worship is entirely incorrect. The Jewish community regularly holds interfaith events in our places of worship and joint prayer services.

"The SAJBD remains committed to engagement and dialogue," she concluded.

The SA Jewish Report attempted to get comment from the minister, but she has not responded as yet.



Higher Education Minister Naledi Pandor

## Stan & Pete's kosher licence revoked

### >> Continued from page 5

this issue. I thank you all for the many years of wonderful simchas and memorable moments. I will keep you all updated as soon as I know."

Speaking to the SA Jewish Report, Shull would not reveal what the irregularity was, but said "it was a small mistake".

He added: "I hope we can rectify it. We need to give the Beth Din time to investigate. At the moment we have been temporarily shut down as a precautionary measure, and because of Purim it may take longer to get feedback on what will happen next. It was a human error and we hope it can be rectified.

"We will keep our valued clients and the community updated. We have always strived to maintain the highest standards of kashrut. I appreciate the Beth Din sorting this out – without them I wouldn't have known. It's good to know the system works."

Stan & Pete was booked to cater for Chabad's Miracle Drive on Tuesday, which they have done for the past 28 years. "We

have now made alternative plans," says Rabbi David Masinter, the founder of this lavish annual event. "It will still be an outstanding dinner."

Members of the Jewish community commenting on social media were concerned but hopeful. On Twitter, David Shapiro added some humour to the situation, tweeting: "Oy vey. A calamity worse than Steinhoff. Just received notice that the Beth Din have withdrawn caterer Stan & Pete's certification with immediate effect. And just before Purim."

On Facebook, a woman commented: "Honestly, I think Jeff and his team will do everything they can to fix this asap... I believe that he will move heaven and earth to be up and running and exceed all expectations."

Another wrote: "I completely and utterly trust Stan & Pete. They catered my wedding nearly two years ago and were a pleasure to deal with. They are a cut above the other kosher caterers with absolutely no comparison. I would definitely use them again!"



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# In the viper's nest: Defending Israel at the UN

STEVEN GRUZD

Day after day, Hillel Neuer defends the State of Israel against the forces seeking to demonise, delegitimise and destroy it at the United Nations. He doesn't view this as a lost cause, but rather, as a calling to stand up for the truth.

The pugnacious Neuer is the director of UN Watch in Geneva, Switzerland, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to countering anti-Israel bias by the UN organisations – no small task. Brought to Johannesburg by the SA Zionist Federation, Neuer was in conversation with journalist Mandy Wiener at the Sandton Shul hall on Sunday night.

A March 2017 video of Neuer at the UN Human Rights Council showed him turning the tables on a string of speakers accusing Israel of apartheid, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, violence and terror against the Palestinians, land theft and "Judaising" Jerusalem. Neuer calmly asked the world's worst human rights offenders: "How many Jews live in your countries? Where are your Jews? Where is the real apartheid?"

Neuer outlined what Israel is up against in the UN, why, and what can be done.

He said that the UN's noble aspirations had been "hijacked", recalling the body's nadir in November 1975, when the then USSR successfully sponsored General Assembly Resolution 3379 – supported by most recently independent states – equating Zionism with racism, denying Israel the very same right to self-determination. Repealed in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, "its spirit lives on in many UN bodies", said Neuer.

The UN Commission on Human Rights, founded in 1946, similarly betrayed its founding principles. Despite being "reformed" in 2006 into the Human Rights Council (UNHRC), it continued to single out the Jewish state for unprecedented condemnation, vitriol and opprobrium. From 2006 to 2016, UN Watch calculated that the UNHRC adopted 68 one-sided resolutions on Israel, and 67 on the rest of the world combined.

Neuer rattled off the deplorable human rights of many UNHRC members, including Afghanistan, Angola, China, Cuba, Egypt,

Iraq, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. He said: "Every democracy has its blots and can be criticised" – but disproportionate hatred and hypocrisy painted Israel as a uniquely evil state.

He explained how Arab and Islamic countries had refused to remove or amend the UNHRC's agenda item 7 on "the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories".

To explain this orchestrated campaign against Israel – led by the Palestinians, the Arabs and Islamic states, and supported by the "automatic majority" of the developing world – he cites oil reserves, sovereign wealth funds and vote-trading that can be offered as carrots and sticks. He adds a fear of being targeted by terrorists if states are seen to support Israel.

Neuer agrees with Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Britain's former chief rabbi, that demonising the Jewish state for human rights transgressions is the modern anti-Semitism.

Neuer has chosen to fight back, to air the truth. UN Watch convinced Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Poland to join Israel and the US in boycotting the 2009 follow-up event to the anti-Semitic hate fest that defined the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban.

It exposed that Saudi Arabia – legendary for its discrimination against women – had been elected to the UN Women's Rights Commission. Neuer's quip that this was like "making an arsonist into the town fire chief" rapidly made global news. Belgium embarrassingly admitted voting for the Saudis after a UN Watch exposé.

The UN also appoints supposedly apolitical and credible experts as special rapporteurs on countries, regions or themes. UN Watch has exposed some so-called experts harshly critical of Israel as biased, anti-Semitic hypocrites or 9/11 conspiracy theorists.

Neuer said: "Nothing stops European states calling out human rights abusers, but they do not. They're a weak lot."

Pulling out of the UN is no "magic solution" for Israel. "The UN is not going anywhere," he said. "Hatred of Israel is embedded – if you leave the UN, you will find it in FIFA, the international football federation. You can't run away."

He lauded America's tough-talking UN ambassador, Nikki Haley, as a voice of truth and morality, and mused that he could do with a Haley clone in Geneva.

Wiener asked whether Neuer's aggressive, abrasive approach worked better than diplomacy. Neuer replied: "There is a time and place for everything, and I can be a nice,



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

Hillel Neuer



Hillel Neuer in Kliptown, Soweto

polite Canadian when I need to. But I only have 90 seconds in a whole day of vitriol, so I have to think how to be most effective. That can come across as dramatic."

He said behind-the-scenes meetings with the

Palestinian and Egyptian ambassadors had yielded nothing "They come to Geneva to demonise Israel. That's their job."

Countries like Egypt, ostensibly allies of the Jewish state, use this platform to shore up their anti-Israel credentials.

Reflecting on South Africa at the UN, Neuer said: "At times, it votes the right way... but it always votes against Israel."

"It has stood with the perpetrators, not the victims, in defending regimes like Iran, Sudan, Syria and Zimbabwe."

Neuer remains bullish that change can come, noting how India, the former engine of the anti-Western Non-Aligned Movement, has developed strong bilateral ties with Israel, and has selectively abstained on some key votes.

When asked by the SA Jewish Report whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's outreach to African countries (with three trips to the continent in 18 months) had yielded greater UN support, Neuer noted that Togo had recently begun voting with Israel. He mentioned isolated abstentions from states such as Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria, but said that perhaps Netanyahu had raised expectations unrealistically.

The near-universal African backing for the December 2017 UN vote condemning the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital showed how much work remains.

He urged the audience not to give up and to bravely defend Israel and stay informed. He said changing ingrained attitudes takes time and work.

Neuer encouraged people to follow UN Watch on social media at [www.UNWatch.org](http://www.UNWatch.org).



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# THE TRUTH ABOUT ALZHEIMERS... & HOW YOU CAN PREVENT IT

Despite the occasional headlines that a pill or a cure for Alzheimer's is right around the corner, the truth of the matter is that scientists and researchers are still far away from finding a miracle pill or cure. Why? Because the brain is by far the most complex organ in the universe and there are so many things we still need to discover and research," revealed Michal Beeri, Professor and Director of the Joseph Sagol Neuroscience Center at Sheba Medical Center in Israel and Professor of Psychiatry at Mt. Sinai Hospital School of Medicine in Manhattan.

Professor Beeri is at the forefront of innovative research in determining the cause of dementia and Alzheimer's, with a major focus on people who suffer from diabetes and the metabolic syndrome, which have been determined as key triggers of dementia and Alzheimer's.

"Alzheimer's is a neuro-degenerative disease caused by a cascade of biological triggers that we don't fully understand," she claimed. "The brain is protected by a blood brain barrier which maintains communication between the body and central nervous system. It is a highly sophisticated system that it's almost impenetrable."

However, doctors and researchers discovered that people who suffer from chronic diabetes have double the risk of developing dementia and a faster rate of cognitive decline. Those who develop diabetes in middle age have even a higher risk of developing dementia in old age.

Professor Beeri, who has been funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) in the USA for two decades, added that "well-designed clinical trials" that improved lifestyle (such physical activity) together with enhanced intensity of cognitive activities showed that patients who have high risk of dementia displayed marked improvement.

Which means that despite the downer diagnosis, there is cause for optimism and hope for the general population in preventing the onslaught of dementia and Alzheimer's.

"Studies have shown that people who engage in physical, social and cognitive activities on a regular basis stand an excellent chance of postponing the onset of dementia," said Professor Beeri. "The benefits for the average person and the public health system are enormous because if you can delay this debilitating disease simply by changing your lifestyle, doctors and hospitals will have less patients to treat, not to mention the personal and societal benefits involved."

Which physical sports does Professor Beeri recommend to maintain a healthy body and mind?





"The sweatiest, the better—especially aerobic type sports, which raises your heartbeat. Yoga and stretching have not shown the same benefits as sweaty sports activities," she divulged.

"The sweaty sports activities spur various other mechanisms, including the oxygenation of your brain. The blood flows more effectively, cleans out toxins. Exercise in general triggers other chemicals in your brain creating the birth of new neurons, which communicate with each other. People who don't exercise or don't use their brains enough within cognitive functions have higher risk of synaptic dysfunctions, where neurons don't get enough info from each other and eventually die, which will eventually cause dementia and Alzheimer's. Bottom line, keep yourself out of your comfort zone, eat healthy, exercise, use actively your mind, be involved with your family and community. That's the best prescription for being of sound mind and body even into very old age."

The cure for Alzheimer's might be far away but we still have the power to stave off the disease.

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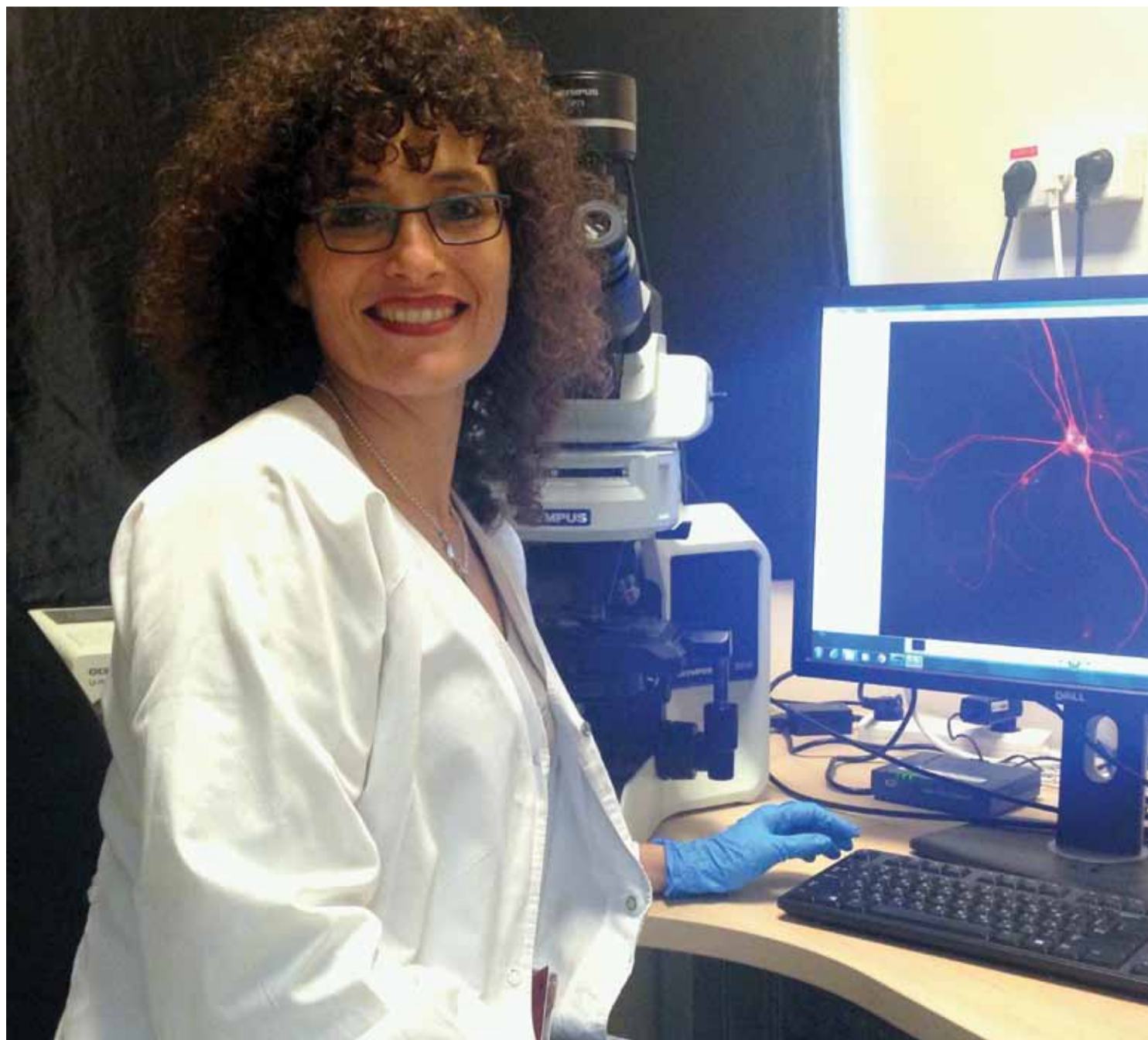
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# Deadly Medicine – the ultimate form of discrimination

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

“The absence of discriminating legislation does not mean the absence of discrimination.” So said Professor Jonathan Jansen, a patron of the SA Holocaust and Genocide Foundation (SAHGF), who officially opened the exhibition *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race* at the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre on Sunday night.

Jansen is the former vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State and now a distinguished professor in the faculty of education at the University of Stellenbosch. “In Mandela’s country that many others look towards, regarding our incredible attempts to build one nation, every now and again there are threats to it,” he said.

“In January this year, a doctor in Mokopane, Limpopo, was found to run a surgery in which patients are treated by race... from admissions to treatment to facilities. We still have publications about tuberculosis as a Coloured disease when, in fact, it is a disease of poverty and of socio-economic conditions under which people live, [as if] there is something inherent in race that explains patterns of diseases rather than that they are externally located in the environment.

“Just today, the front page of the Sunday Independent reports on a black leader and his group who threatened to burn down a theatre playing a movie on relations between Indians and Africans.”

Mentioning the Life Esidimeni tragedy – in which 144 mentally ill patients died from causes such as starvation and neglect, after having been moved to ill-equipped psychiatric facilities – Jansen said there were different standards of treatment for different psychiatric patients. “So, just below the skin of South African politics lies this monster constantly threatening to come out.

“We fool ourselves that, because we have this glorious Constitution, we have dealt with this issue of race. There is a need for us to be alert to those who exploit our perceived differences for

political ends,” he warned.

“One has to constantly be alert and learn from the past so that when we say ‘never again’, we must mean ‘never again’ – and this means building interracial community in peace time.”

Jansen expressed his delight at the presence of schoolchildren in the audience and praised the Holocaust Centre for its efforts in attracting the next generation, saying this bodes well for the future.

*Deadly Medicine* is a travelling exhibition produced by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC. It is on the first leg of its 18-month tour of South Africa and Namibia, and this marks the first time that the US museum has featured an exhibition on the African continent. It has allowed the SAHGF to adapt the exhibition, and has supported the project financially.

The exhibition shows how the Nazi regime under Adolf Hitler aimed to change the genetic make-up of the population through measures known as “racial hygiene” or “eugenics”, and the role that medically trained experts played in helping to put these policies into practice.

“*Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race* has special relevance in contemporary South Africa, specifically because of issues about medical ethics that continue to this day,” Richard Freedman, director of the SAHGF, told the audience at the launch. “This exhibition is a reminder of the inherent worth of each person and the tragic consequences when this is forgotten, as we have just witnessed in the Life Esidimeni tragedy.”

He said it was important that the exhibition made connections to South Africa’s history and drew the audience’s attention to a section about South Africa, designed specially for this tour, that was informed by the research of Dr Handri Walters.

Dr William Meinecke Jr, a historian at the USHMM, introduced the exhibition. He noted that no other profession had worked as closely with the Nazi state as the medical profession, half of whose members had joined

Photo: Archiv zur Geschichte der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Berlin-Dahlem

Dr Otmar von Verschuer examines twins as part of a genetic study



the Nazi Party.

The state had encouraged people it defined as physically fit to have as many children as possible, and the so-called unfit not to procreate.

On display is a letter from the Reich interior ministry instructing midwives and physicians to register all children born with severe birth defects. The letter’s recipients were unaware that the collected information would be used in the paediatric “euthanasia” programme.

We read that doctors and nurses used a number of methods to kill selected disabled children, from overdoses of the sedative Luminal to starvation, deadly injections of morphine and asphyxiation by carbon monoxide.

Another panel tells us that 400 000 Germans diagnosed as “feeble-minded”, mentally ill or with other conditions assumed to be hereditary, were surgically sterilised between 1934 and 1945.

Turning to South Africa, the special panel created for this exhibition is titled Human measurement in South Africa, Stellenbosch University 1925 – 1952. On display are

German anthropologist Rudolf Martin’s Eye Colour Table, designed in 1903, and German eugenicist Eugen Fischer’s Hair Colour Table, designed in 1907. There is also a set of calipers to measure the human head.

By 1917, the eye and hair colour tables were offered for sale to so-called scientists and researchers worldwide.

On arrival here in 1925, the collection was put to use measuring white Afrikaner students, Coloured males in Stellenbosch and, until 1952, a sub-group of the Khoisan. The objects were initially employed in studies of human measurement at Stellenbosch University for the purposes of racial categorisation.

There is an ancillary programme of events for the next month relating to medical and legal issues, including a lecture titled Ethical challenges for health professionals by Professor Solly Benatar and Professor Anton van Niekerk.

• *The exhibition is on at the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre until March 26 before doing a tour of the country.*

## Does the Holocaust hold lessons for Iraq’s shattered society?

STEVEN GRUZD

“We said ‘never again’ after the Holocaust, but today genocide is still being perpetrated,” said Tali Nates, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC). “There were genocidal acts, tendencies and warning signs in Iraq... and it is important to increase awareness, to shine a light on what is happening there.”

Nates was reacting to Dr Maria Rita Corticelli – who teaches European History and Genocide at a university in Erbil, located in semi-autonomous Kurdistan in northern Iraq – who spoke at the centre last week.

Italian-born Corticelli has been collecting testimonies and documenting atrocities against minorities in Iraq, including Christians, Kak’ais, Yezidis and Mandeans. She has found parallels with historical Jewish persecution, exile and suffering.

**“We must continuously use the past to help those who suffered recently. They can rebuild, as we did. We can offer hope.”**

Corticelli said: “I would like to see the Holocaust experience taught in the Middle East. Most people think they are the only ones who suffer. The don’t know European history,

the centuries of killing each other.”

While admitting that teaching Holocaust studies in Iraq would be difficult, she noted that her university has previously invited Israeli professors and was translating Hebrew Holocaust texts into Kurdish.

Though attacks on vulnerable populations by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (the IS) have faded from the headlines, Corticelli believes that Iraq could learn much from the experiences and

lessons of the Shoah, especially as survivors of these genocidal acts now lead efforts to inculcate tolerance and fight for human rights in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iraq is no stranger to violent conflict. In the recent past we’ve seen it played out under the Ba’ath Party and Saddam Hussein, in the war with Iran (1980-1988), the First Gulf War (1991), and through Sunni-Shi’a conflict after the US-led invasion in 2003. Weak government has left a power vacuum, eagerly filled by al-Qaeda, ISIS and other radical Islamists.

Corticelli explains how hundreds of villages

and holy places of minorities have been destroyed, and how populations have fled, facing the choices of conversion to Islam, exile or death. There are just 150 000 Christians left in Iraq, down from 300 000 four years ago.

The IS has sunk landmines to prevent the Kak’ai from rebuilding their devastated towns and fields. Some 6 000 Yezidis have been kidnapped, with women sold into marriage or sexual slavery, and children recruited as soldiers. The fate of 3 000 kidnapped Yezidis remains unknown. And, with many Mandeans having fled to Sweden, there are only 5 000 of them in Iraq today.

“Some minorities have been displaced six, seven times. It isn’t surprising that there is fear and hatred,” said Corticelli.

However, in contrast to growing intolerance in the rest of Iraq, the Kurdish regional government has, since 1991, tried to promote a secular, semi-autonomous state accepting of all religions. Minorities are represented in Parliament, permitted to join organisations



Dr Maria Rita Corticelli

# THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

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## Israeli officials alleged to have discussed ways to manipulate 'naive' Kushner

AP AND TOI STAFF

Officials in Israel and three other countries discussed ways they could manipulate White House official Jared Kushner by taking advantage of his complex business arrangements, financial difficulties and lack of foreign policy experience, according to a report released on Tuesday.

Current and former US officials familiar with intelligence reports on the matter told *The Washington Post* that officials in Israel, the United Arab Emirates, China and Mexico saw opportunities to leverage Kushner, who is the son-in-law of US President Donald Trump and, like the president, comes to government with little policy experience and a wide web of business interests around the world.

The newspaper said it was unclear if any of the countries had acted on the discussions.

The report came as news broke that Kushner's security clearance had been downgraded on Friday, after he failed to gain permanent authorisation. According to *The Post*, US officials were aware of Kushner's vulnerability because of his foreign contacts, and factored that into the decision to keep him from gaining full clearance.

Kushner's contacts with foreign officials have been a part of special counsel Robert

Mueller's investigation, a former US official told the AP. Mueller's team, in its interviews for the ongoing Russia probe, has asked people about the protocols that Kushner used when he set up conversations with foreign leaders.

The paper quoted an official as saying that Kushner was "naive and being tricked" in those talks, and that National Security Adviser HR McMaster had brought up concerns in daily intelligence briefings.

The paper did not say what business interests or leverage Israel might try to gain with Kushner, who is heading up the Trump administration's efforts to put together a peace plan. He has visited Israel several times and met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was a family friend over a decade ago, though Palestinians have boycotted the White House's peace efforts since Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital on December 6.

Kushner stepped down as CEO of his family's real estate company to join his father-in-law's administration, but is still seen as being closely linked to the family business.

The news that Kushner's security clearance was downgraded has set off rampant speculation among Trump allies

that Kushner's days in the White House might be numbered.

Kushner is one of dozens of White House aides who have been working without permanent security clearances for the better part of a year.

Kushner's attorney told the AP that Kushner's ability to do his job won't be affected by any change to his clearance.



Special envoy Jason Greenblatt, US ambassador to Israel David Friedman, Special envoy Jared Kushner with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem last year

## PA OFFICIAL SLAMS WORLD SOCCER CHIEF FOR CAVING IN TO ISRAELI PRESSURE

KHALED ABU TOAMEH

On Tuesday, top Palestinian official Jibril Rajoub attacked the president of the international governing body of football, FIFA, Gianni Infantino, accusing him of "capitulating to the will and influence of Israel".

Rajoub, who is head of the Palestinian Football Association (PFA), has long been demanding that FIFA ban Israeli soccer teams from international competition because six of the teams in the Israeli leagues are from West Bank settlements.

Rajoub complained that the FIFA president "did not deal appropriately" with complaints against Israel lodged by the PFA.

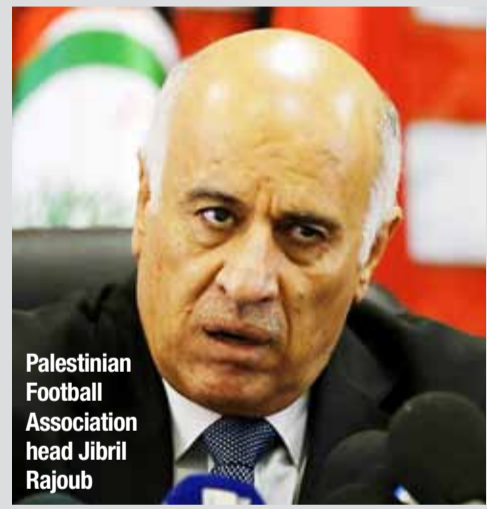
He claimed that because the West Bank is "sovereign Palestinian territory", the teams violate Article 72.2 of the FIFA Statutes, which states: "Member associations and their clubs may not play on the territory of another member association without the latter's approval."

The six teams are based in Kiryat Arba, Givat Ze'ev, Oranit, the Jordan Valley, Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim.

The Palestinians claim all of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Six Day War, for a future state.

Israel, for its part, has accused Rajoub and the Palestinians of using sports as a political weapon.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport,



Palestinian Football Association head Jibril Rajoub

an independent institution based in Lausanne, Switzerland, is scheduled to look into the PFA complaint on March 6 and 7, he noted.

In May 2017, the FIFA Congress in Manama, Bahrain, removed from its agenda a Palestinian motion to suspend the six Israeli teams, drawing sharp criticism from Rajoub.

Later that year, FIFA, citing the "exceptional complexity and sensitivity" and "political" nature of the issue, announced that it will not take a position on the six Israeli teams.

"Given that the final status of the West Bank territories is the concern of the competent international public law authorities, the FIFA Council agrees that FIFA, in line with the general principle established in its Statutes, must remain neutral with regard to political matters," FIFA said.

## ISRAELI TECH CAN NOW UNLOCK ANY PHONE

TOI STAFF

An Israeli company is reportedly able to unlock any phone, making it easier for law enforcement agencies to gain access to files and prompting Apple to issue a security update.

Petah Tivka-based Cellebrite markets itself as a "global leader in the digital intelligence market", offering its services for law enforcement, military and corporate investigations.

Business magazine *Forbes* reported on Monday that an iPhone X was "successfully raided for data by the US department for homeland security back in November 2017, most likely with Cellebrite technology".

Cellebrite, a subsidiary of Japan's Sun Corporation, has not made an official statement about its capabilities, but a source told *Forbes* that in recent months, the company developed tools to break into iOS 11.

This appears to be backed up by



descriptions on the company's website, stating that its "Advanced Unlocking Service is available to law enforcement agencies globally for lawfully authorised examinations" and is able to retrieve data from "Apple iOS devices and operating systems, including iPhone, iPad, iPad mini, iPad Pro, and iPod touch, running iOS 5 to iOS 11".

The company's technology was reportedly used to unlock the cellphone of San Bernardino shooter Syed Rizwan Farouk in 2016, after the FBI suddenly asked the court to call off a hearing to force Apple to unlock the phone.

Cellebrite's latest literature claims that its technology can "determine or disable the PIN, pattern, password screen locks or passcodes on the latest Apple iOS and Google Android devices".

*Forbes* reported that the company charges as little as \$1 500 (R18 000) for a single unlocking.

In response to the reports, Apple encouraged its users to upgrade to the latest iOS, but did not deny that its phones could be hacked, Threatpost cyber security website reported.

"I'd be zero-percent surprised if Cellebrite had a zero-day that allowed them to unlock iPhones with physical access," Patrick Wardle, a chief research officer at Digma Security, told Threatpost. "These guys clearly have the skills, and there is also a huge financial motivation to find such bugs."

A zero-day vulnerability refers to one that the developers are unaware of, and therefore cannot be fixed with a security patch or an upgrade.

# Poll: Likud gaining strength despite Netanyahu graft allegations

TOI STAFF

A poll published on Saturday showed the ruling Likud party gaining strength, despite the graft allegations surrounding its leader, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, putting it in pole position to win elections should they be held today.

The survey, which was aired by Hadashot TV news, said Likud would win 28 seats if elections were held today. While down from its current 30, the poll result was the best yet for the right wing party since police recommended earlier this month that Netanyahu be indicted in a pair of corruption investigations.

Polls over the past two weeks have shown Likud to be on 27 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

In the past few days, there have been a series of reported developments in another criminal case linked to Netanyahu; Saturday's poll suggested these have not dented Netanyahu or his party's popularity.

Netanyahu has reportedly indicated to his various coalition partners in recent days that he might call early elections if they seek to oust him amid the corruption probes, apparently assessing that they are less ready for a return to the ballot boxes than his Likud. Elections are not due until late next year.

Trailing Likud in the Saturday poll was Yair Lapid's centrist Yesh Atid party, which would win 24 seats, up from its current 11.

The poll, which was conducted for the network by the Midgam Research Institute, was made up of 538 respondents and included a 4.3% margin of error.

The survey results came after a week of dramatic developments in the so-called Case 4000, which involves suspicions that Netanyahu advanced regulations benefiting Bezeq in exchange for owner Shaul Elovitch ordering the telecommunication giant's Walla news site to grant positive coverage to the prime minister and his family.

Shlomo Filber, the suspended director-general of the communications ministry and a long-time confidant of Netanyahu, signed a deal on Tuesday to



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his wife Sara and Likud lawmakers attend a rally in support of the premier in Tel Aviv turn state's witness in the probe.

Last week, police recommended that Netanyahu be indicted for fraud, breach of trust and bribery in two other cases.

In Case 1000, Netanyahu and his wife are alleged to have received illicit gifts from billionaire benefactors, most notably the Israeli-born Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan, totalling NIS 1 million (R3.3 million). In return, Netanyahu is alleged by police to have intervened on Milchan's behalf in matters relating to legislation, business dealings and visa arrangements.

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

The prime minister has also been linked indirectly to Case 3000, a probe into suspected corruption surrounding a multibillion-shekel purchase of naval vessels and submarines from a German shipbuilder. While Netanyahu has not been named as a suspect, close associates of his, including two personal aides, have been arrested or questioned.

## Prosecution fingers Netanyahu in Case 4000 'bribes'

RAOUL WOOLIFF

In a first official on-record statement implicating him in the so-called Case 4000 corruption investigation, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was named on Tuesday as one of the people believed to have been involved in bribery as part of an illicit deal with the communications giant, Bezeq.

Speaking at a hearing in which Shaul Elovitch and Nir Hefetz – the majority shareholder of Bezeq and a former media adviser for the prime minister, respectively – appealed their continued detention in the case, state prosecutor Yehudit Tirosh of the Israel Securities Authority said that in his former position as communications minister, Netanyahu was at the centre of “a very grave instance of giving and taking bribes”.

The case involves suspicions that Elovitch ordered the Walla news site, which he owns, to grant positive coverage to Netanyahu and his family in exchange for the prime minister advancing regulations benefiting Elovitch.

Tirosh, arguing before the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court, said that “positive coverage is a mild way of putting it”.

Netanyahu served as communications minister from November 2014 to February 2017. During that time, Walla's coverage notably changed to favour the Netanyahu family, and Bezeq was given permission, among other things, to buy the satellite cable provider Yes, overriding anti-trust issues, and to renege on its commitment to lease out its infrastructure to telecommunications competitors so they could provide competing fixed line and internet services.

Suspended communications ministry director Shlomo Filber, who turned state witness last week and is expected to provide information possibly incriminating Netanyahu in the probe, had his remand extended by 15 days last Wednesday.

Sources close to Netanyahu, who has denied any

wrongdoing in the case, rejected claims that the prime minister had sought to help Bezeq as part of a quid pro quo deal.

Tirosh, repeating comments she made at a Monday hearing, said the benefits given to Bezeq were worth “up to NIS 1 billion (R3.4 billion)”.

On Monday, the court acceded to a request from the prosecution to keep Elovitch and Hefetz in custody until Sunday.

Netanyahu is expected to be questioned in the case on Friday, “possibly” even under caution as a criminal suspect, a source familiar with the investigation told *The Times of Israel*.

## Jewish Agency urges Israel to grant asylum to 500 young African migrants

TOI STAFF

On Tuesday, The Jewish Agency for Israel urged the government not to deport 500 young African migrants, who came to Israel as minors and have been integrated into society.

In a letter, the board urged Interior Minister Aryeh Deri to grant them legal status in Israel, saying they had come as unaccompanied minors and had been “integrated in the education system of youth villages operated by The Jewish Agency and the ministry of education”.

“These youngsters have grown up in an Israeli educational environment, speak fluent Hebrew, are imbued with Israeli culture and are loyal to the State of Israel,” the agency said. “Therefore, it is right that they be granted legal status.”

Israel recently launched a campaign to deport unmarried male migrants to third-party countries – widely reported to be Rwanda and Uganda – with jail time facing those who refuse to go.

The Africans, nearly all from dictatorial Eritrea and war-torn Sudan, say they fled for their lives and face renewed danger if they return. The vast majority arrived between 2006



## News and views from the Fed A new dawn for SA?

BEN SWARTZ

The excitement at Sandton Shul hall on Sunday evening was palpable. Hillel Neuer, our guest speaker, was joined by Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Lior Keinan, and Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, with other dignitaries as well as members of the South African Jewish community among the sizeable crowd.

The gravitas of our honoured guest was a direct consequence of his standing and the work he has done on the international stage at UN Watch, based in Geneva, Switzerland, for the past 15 years.

Before welcoming Mr Neuer to the stage, I shared a key message with the audience regarding the dramatic and inspirational developments that had occurred in South Africa over the past six weeks.

With the ascension of Cyril Ramaphosa to the presidency, all South Africans have awoken to a new and hopeful dawn, something that has not been felt in the country for almost a decade.

I say “all South Africans”, with one caveat. Last week, in response to the president's State of the Nation Address, ANC MP Naledi Pandor stated in Parliament that government must “cut diplomatic ties with Israel”. No doubt, with the Jewish community having watched the proceedings at the ANC's national policy conference in December, the results in respect of Israel were alarming enough. Yet nothing could have prepared us for the bombshell which Minister Pandor dropped on behalf of the ANC in Parliament.

And, 48 hours after her statement, ANC member of the Western Cape legislature Sharon Davids accused the “Jewish mafia” of manufacturing the drought in the Western Cape.

The events abovementioned make it clear that the line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism does not exist. And the implications of this will prove disastrous to the Jewish community of South Africa if it is not stopped.

Sadly, large portions of the governing party have moved towards scapegoating Israel for almost anything she does.

Today, as the ANC moves closer to Hamas and embraces the racist and anti-Semitic BDS movement, we see it calling only Israel out for its policies on illegal immigration to Israel, while ignoring the fact that South Africa deports about 250 000 illegal African immigrants every year.

We do not hear a word about the war in Syria, where half a million souls have lost their lives at the hands of Bashar al-Assad, as well as Iran and Hezbollah. Nor do we hear about the abomination of the African slave trade in Libya. We hear nothing of the plights of the Kurds, of those oppressed in Tibet, Cyprus or Kashmir, or of the ongoing onslaught against men, women and children in many countries in Central and North Africa.

I plead with you all to urge the president and the ANC to seek to return to a place of greatness from where the ANC came. The ANC must know that you can stand in solidarity with the Palestinians, but this does not mean that you have to be the enemy of Israel.

I plead that the ANC returns to playing a constructive role in leading the way through mediation and reconciliation, and through showing the world that engagement is the only way to resolve what would seem an insurmountable challenge and conflict.

• Ben Swartz is chairperson of the SA Zionist Federation



Asylum seekers attend a memorial ceremony to commemorate 14 years since the genocide in Darfur

and 2012.

The Jewish Agency also called on the government to ensure that “every migrant has an opportunity to apply for asylum and receive transparent due process in the examination of their application”.

About half of the 38 000 asylum seekers could be deported under the plan. Women, married men and children will not be deported under “the first stage” of the deportations, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said.

The expulsion policy, which offers each migrant \$3 500 (R42 000) and a plane ticket, has been condemned by the United Nations as chaotic, poorly executed and unsafe.

# Anti-Semitic incidents in US more than doubled in two years – report

JTA AND TOI STAFF

The number of anti-Semitic incidents in the US spiked in 2017, according to a new report by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which partly blamed US President Donald Trump for the rise, saying it was because of “the divisive state of our national discourse”.

There were 1 986 acts of anti-Semitism in the US last year, according to an ADL audit released on Tuesday. That is more than double the total from 2015, which was 942. It’s also a 57% increase over the 2016 total of 1 267. According to the audit, the rise is due in part to an increase in people reporting incidents of anti-Semitism.

The toll represents the second-highest number of anti-Semitic incidents ever recorded since the ADL began documenting them almost 40 years ago, and is the highest-ever single-year jump.

The 2017 number includes more than 160 bomb threats sent to Jewish community centres and other institutions. A Jewish teen from Israel has been arrested for making the vast majority of those threats, none of which were credible.

Even discounting these bomb threats, reported incidents still increased by

43% over 2016. Anti-Semitic incidents on schools and college campuses also doubled in 2017 for the second year in a row. Non-Jewish elementary and high schools experienced 457 anti-Semitic incidents, compared to 235 in 2016 and 114 in 2015.

Almost all of the instances were either harassment – including the bomb threats – or vandalism, including seven instances of Jewish cemeteries being desecrated. There were also 19 anti-Semitic physical assaults, a decline of 47% from 2016.

“A confluence of events in 2017 led to a surge in attacks on our community, which included bomb threats, cemetery desecrations, white supremacists marching in Charlottesville and children harassing children at school,” said Jonathan Greenblatt, the ADL’s CEO and national director. “These incidents came at a time when we saw a rising climate of incivility, the emboldening of hate groups and widening divisions in society.”

Much of the nation was shocked last summer to see the level of anti-Semitic and racist vitriol when a white supremacist rally turned violent in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Rally-goers, who billed themselves as part of the “alt-right” movement, marched



A white supremacist carries a Nazi flag in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017

through the streets of the bucolic town hoisting Nazi flags and confederate regalia. Some were wearing Ku Klux Klan garments. The day culminated in a Nazi sympathiser ramming his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing one and injuring many.

“We’ve never had a moment like this,” said Greenblatt, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. “We’ve seen so much intolerance sneak into the public.”

Greenblatt pointed to Trump’s delay in condemning anti-Semitic incidents. After the Charlottesville violence, for instance, he said Trump blamed “both sides” for what unfolded and said there were “many fine

people” marching with the neo-Nazis. At the time, Jewish congressman Jamie Raskin told *The Times of Israel* a response like that would “invite repeated actions”.

Trump has rejected similar criticism in the past, citing his Jewish family members, including daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner, and has described himself as the “least anti-Semitic person you’ve ever seen in your entire life”.

The states that saw the most anti-Semitic incidents were those with large Jewish populations: New York had 380 incidents of anti-Semitism, California had 268 and New Jersey had 208.

## Rabbi, imam defend circumcision in the face of Iceland bill to ban it



Imam Salmann Tamimi

Jewish and Muslim leaders in Iceland have defended their communities’ rights to perform circumcision, slamming that country’s proposed law to ban the practice as a violation of human rights.

Rabbi Avi Feldman of the Chabad Jewish Center of Iceland, who last month became the country’s first permanent rabbi since World War II, said he hoped the bill did not become law as circumcision “is a core Jewish practice that serves as a bedrock of Jewish life”.

He added that despite the move, he was hopeful that the “rights for people of all faiths will be preserved and respected”.

During Friday services at a prayer space above a home goods store, Imam Salmann Tamimi warned his multinational congregation about the proposed law.

“Circumcision is harmless if it’s done at a hospital,” he said. “This bill is appealing to people’s emotion, not evidence.”

He said circumcision was important to Muslims, but even more so to Jews.

“This is an attack on all religion and especially Judaism,” Tamimi said.

Under the proposed law, the circumcision of boys would be viewed as equal to female genital mutilation and punishable by up to six years in prison. Circumcision for medical reasons would still be allowed.

If the law passes, Iceland will become the first European country to ban the practice.

“This is fundamentally about not causing unnecessary harm to a child,” said Silja Dogg Gunnarsdottir, lawmaker for the centrist Progressive Party, which introduced the bill this month.

The proposed law calls circumcision a violation of human rights “since boys are not able to give an informed consent of an irreversible physical intervention”.

Circumcision is not common in Iceland, a small Atlantic Ocean island nation of 340 000 people that is overwhelmingly Lutheran or atheist. An estimated 150 Jews live there and 1 100 practising Muslims.

The bill is considered unlikely to get a majority in the 63-seat Icelandic Parliament. It does not have the formal backing of any government ministers, but has drawn the support of 422 Icelandic doctors who favour outlawing the 4 000-year-old religious practice.

Gunnarsdottir said many male “victims” of circumcision had reached out to share their stories and seek support since she introduced the bill.

“It’s important for us as a society to discuss this,” she said. “The experience of many men who have had this done to their body without consent confirms that.”

## Haley slams UN for inviting Iran rights abuser

ERIC CORTELLESA

US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley lashed out at the Human Rights Council on Sunday, saying it should be “ashamed” for inviting an Iranian minister notorious for his human rights abuses to address the body’s annual meeting in Geneva this week.

The prejudicial remarks by Iran’s Justice Minister Alireza Avaei have elicited outrage from Iranian and international activists.

Haley said his appearance bolsters the criticism of the UN made by the administration of US President Donald and threats to cut US aid to the organisation.

“The Human Rights Council should be

ashamed to allow Mr Avaei to address its membership,” the South Carolina native said in a statement.

“Yet again the council discredits itself by allowing serial human rights abusers to hijack its work and make a mockery of its mandate to promote universal human rights. This does nothing but reinforce the United States’ call for much-needed reforms at the council for it to be viewed as a good investment of our time and money,” she said.

The European Union imposed sanctions on Avaei and other Iranian officials in October 2011 because, as Tehran’s former top prosecutor said, he was “responsible for human rights violations, arbitrary arrests, denials of prisoners’ rights, and an increase in executions”.

Exiled members of the Iranian opposition also said Avaei played a key role in a 1988 massacre of political prisoners. Amnesty International has said that during that episode, nearly 5 000 prisoners were executed in a matter of months; Iranian opposition groups put the figure closer to 30 000.

“Allowing Avaei to address the Human Rights Council is disgraceful and would make a mockery of the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms,” Shahin Gobadi, a member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, told AFP earlier this week. “This must not happen.”



US ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley

## Streisand says she cloned her dog – twice

AFP TODAY

Not once, but twice before Barbra Streisand’s dog died, she cloned it.

The US Jewish singer and actress disclosed this in an interview published on Tuesday by *Variety* magazine.

Streisand’s dog Samantha – a Coton de Tulear, a small breed with a cotton-like coat – died last year.

The cloned versions are named Miss Violet and Miss Scarlett.

Streisand, 75, did not give many details of the cloning, but said she collected cells from the mouth and stomach of her dying dog.

Of the new dogs, and Samantha, the two-time Oscar winner said: “I’m waiting for them to get older so I can see if they have her brown eyes and seriousness.”

When Streisand brought the dogs



Barbra Streisand

home, she dressed them in violet and scarlet to tell them apart.

She has a third dog, a distant relative of Samantha, that she calls Miss Fanny.

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# Sammy Davis Jr. charms the world again in new documentary

RICH TENORIO

Director Sam Pollard can't believe the acclaim being heaped on his new film about the late Sammy Davis Jr.

But given the multifaceted legacy left by the performer – from breaking down barriers faced by African-Americans to converting to Judaism in the wake of a gruesome 1954 car accident – maybe Pollard shouldn't be so surprised.

Davis' story is featured in the new documentary, *Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me*.

None of the 10 films that Pollard, a long-time collaborator with Spike Lee, has made over the past 15 years have been met with "such a huge response and popular reception", he said, adding: "The feedback has been mind-boggling."

Maybe that's because Davis had such mind-boggling talent. "I think he should be remembered as one of the greatest performers of the 20th century, up there with Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, those great performers," Pollard said.

Davis' success was considerable – appearances

with Sinatra's Rat Pack, brilliant impersonations of Humphrey Bogart and Jimmy Stewart, and a voice that recorded a number one hit, *The Candy Man*. Yet, *I've Gotta Be Me* seeks to go beyond Davis the celebrity.

The idea for the film was conceived by executive producer Michael Kantor five years ago, Pollard said.

Davis left a trove of archival material that helped tell the story. There were TV appearances on popular shows like *All in the Family* and movie roles with the *Rat Pack*, including *Ocean's 11*.

Poignantly, Davis' fellow legend, US actor Jerry Lewis, gave an interview before his death last year.

The film also features Davis' own voice through audiotapes from his estate.

Asked how Davis rose to stardom, Pollard said: "It was a combination of hard work and luck."

Relatively early in his career,

Sammy Davis Jr.



Davis met Sinatra – a pivotal moment in his life.

"Frank Sinatra was like a big brother, a mentor to him, who watched over him. He got some breaks. It was hard work, perseverance and lucky breaks," said Pollard.

But as a black man, Davis faced an unfair burden.

"Here was a young man, born in 1925, who had to deal with sitting on the back of a bus and segregated hotels and bathhouses," Pollard said. "It was the height of segregation in

America. Even with success, there were barriers."

And then, in 1954, Davis was involved in a car accident in which he lost his left eye. While recuperating, he realised that there was a spiritual vacuum in his life and turned to Judaism, Pollard said.

"He grew up with lots of Jewish people," Pollard said. "He was very close to [entertainer] Eddie

Cantor."

According to Pollard, while in the hospital after the car accident, a rabbi visited him. "Talking to the rabbi... I think he really found himself in a spiritual way. Judaism seemed to be the way for him. He converted.

"That's not to say there weren't black Jews before Sammy Davis Jr. But since he was such a well-known celebrity, it was an amazing surprise, a black man who most people think is probably Baptist or Christian, and here he is, Jewish."

Davis could quip about his new life. In a widely reported anecdote, he played golf with comedian Jack Benny, who asked about his golf handicap. He replied: "Handicap? Talk about handicap – I'm a one-eyed Negro Jew."

But for people in both the African-American and Jewish communities, "they had in him someone they could embrace", Pollard said.

Pollard said the anti-Semitism that Jews faced, and the racism that African-Americans faced, resulted in "a kinship that brought people together" in the 1950s and '60s.

Pollard said Davis also faced a backlash from both African-Americans and whites, who did not approve of his romantic relationships with white women.

Davis struggled with drug and alcohol abuse during his life and died of throat cancer at the age of 64 in 1990.

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## German Olympic skater sparks Twitter outrage with Schindler's List score

TOI STAFF

A German figure skater at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, earned the ire of Twitter on Friday with her routine, choreographed to the theme music to the Holocaust movie, *Schindler's List*.

Nicole Schott was slammed by social media users for her choice of music – a haunting violin soundtrack used in the 1993 film about German factory owner Oskar Schindler, who saved about 1 200 Jews from the Nazis.

Nancy Armour, a sports columnist at *USA Today*,

wrote: "No one should be skating to *Schindler's List*."

Ariel Helwani, another sports journalist, felt it was particularly inappropriate to have a German competitor dancing to a Holocaust-themed melody.

That view was echoed by Karen Gesell, an American figure skating coach.

"No matter how it is skated, and after all these years, I still have a problem with a non-Jewish athlete, representing Germany, skating to *Schindler's List*," she wrote.

Comedian Adam Sank wrote that he could find nothing to say in Schott's defence.

However, Schott was not the first person to skate to the tune at an international competition. Composed by John Williams, the music has proven popular with skaters for several years.

Months after the movie was released, German figure skater and two-time Olympic gold medalist Katarina Witt used it for her routine, though not in an Olympic competition.

Russian figure skater Yulia Lipnitskaya helped her team win a gold medal at 2014's Sochi Winter Olympics with the same music.

Williams won an Academy Award for Best Original Score for the heart-wrenching piece.

## Culture minister aims to take Israel's 70th celebrations to the Big Apple

TOI STAFF

Culture Minister Miri Regev, the top Israeli official overseeing the state's official 70th independence day celebrations, is said to be planning some of the year's biggest events far beyond Israel's shores.

According to Hadashot television news, Regev is considering an international celebration of Israel's Independence Day to take place in New York under the auspices of the Israeli government.

The events marking the day may include the screening of a short film about Israel on the jumbo television screens at Times

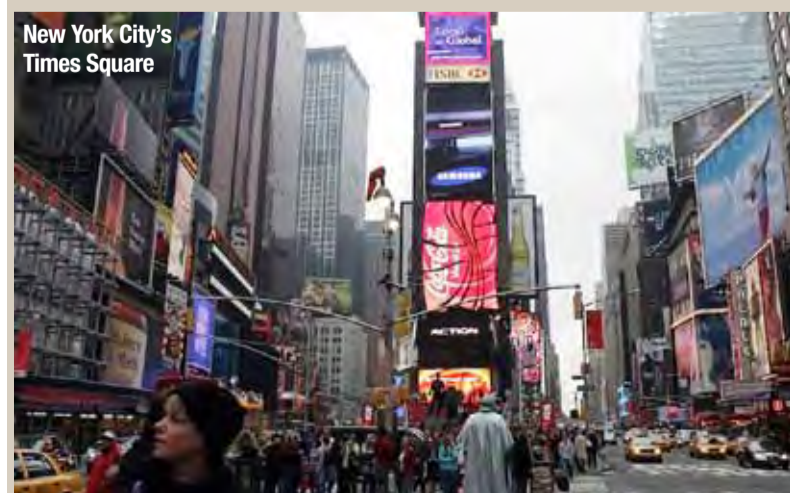
Square, scheduled to coincide with the Big Apple's annual Celebrate Israel Parade, taking place on June 3.

The culture ministry is also considering arranging a glittering gala event at a luxury hotel in Manhattan.

The plan is facing blowback from other branches of government. According to foreign ministry officials, it would cost about \$4 million (R47 million). "At a time when the foreign ministry is fighting for its budgets, Regev is throwing away money on a gala evening whose diplomatic benefit is unclear," said a foreign ministry official.

Despite the criticism, officially the foreign ministry backs the venture, describing it as "an important national project".

A source in the culture ministry said plans would not go ahead if their cost reached as high as the figure cited by the foreign ministry official.



New York City's Times Square

## Israel, Google eye greater productivity at low-tech manufacturing plants

SHOSHANNA SOLOMON

Israel's small and medium-sized manufacturers are set to get a productivity boost through a NIS 3 million (R9.9 million) programme run jointly by Israel's finance ministry, the Manufacturers Association of Israel and Google

Businesses that have a sales turnover of up to NIS 100 million (R332 million) and/or employ up to 100 workers will be granted a workshop for senior management on how to improve productivity, as well as a data analytics course for workers. In addition, each company that takes part in the programme will get a government grant of NIS 10 000 (R33 000).

Google will help the companies implement necessary changes and grant them an additional NIS 10 000 (R33 000), the finance ministry said last week.

The programme is the first step by the ministry to promote innovation among small and medium-sized, low-tech enterprises and forms part of its goal to bridge a gap in productivity between traditional and high-tech industries, said Shai Babad, the finance ministry's director.

Data is one of the most important resources in the world today, according to a Deloitte report commissioned by Google. But while data is highly accessible, it is not "sufficiently exploited", said the report, adding that those who know how to make use of data will have an advantage over others. "Technology and innovation are the major causes of increased productivity," the report said.

Israel ranks a low 23rd out of 35 countries listed on the latest productivity scale of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – just below New Zealand and one above the Slovak Republic.

The scale measures how efficient the labour input is, as part of a production process.

Productivity per work hour in Israel is lower than that of other industrialised nations, and Israel has not managed to close this gap for 40 years, according to data provided by the Bank of Israel.

A significant improvement in data-driven innovation could generate a 6.4% growth in sales in traditionally run businesses, and could contribute NIS 54 billion (R179 billion) to Israel's economy, the Google-Deloitte report showed.



# Jacques Pauw cooks up food for thought at WIZO ladies' day

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Those attending the annual ladies' day hosted by the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) would be familiar with investigative journalist Jacques Pauw's hard-hitting news coverage over the years, but many were unaware of his love for cooking and baking.

Pauw is also the author of the recent bestseller *The President's Keepers*, in which he reveals the hidden depths of corruption that festered during Jacob Zuma's presidency.

He began his address to those attending the WIZO event at Mushie and Issie Kirsch's Oaklands home last week by speaking about his mother.

Pauw, who now runs a guest house, restaurant and bar in Riebeeck-Kasteel in the Western Cape, said: "She was the dearest woman in my life, but she was a terribly bad cook. She wasn't interested in food, which was unique for an Afrikaner mother in Pretoria! I had to bake my own cakes and make my own lunch. I would start writing down the recipes I used and I'd innovate with other ingredients.

"My cooking was far better than mother's and I would add funny things to my food, like fresh herbs – quite unknown in Afrikaans cooking. And my mother would say to me: 'You're a real troublemaker.' Those

words never stopped leaving her lips until she died a few years ago."

Pauw retired from journalism at the end of 2014, but followed the news with keen interest. "A retired journalist is like a rehabilitated drug addict," he said. "You never quite get over it – there's always something of it in you. I was very happily cooking in Riebeeck-Kasteel when in December 2016 I received a call from someone I used to know when I was still a journalist. He said he had information for me."

Although Pauw protested, saying he was out of the game, his interest was piqued when his contact said it concerned corruption in the State Security Agency. The corruption that Pauw uncovered for the book was staggering. "As we stand here today, the SA Revenue Service (SARS) doesn't have an investigative capacity, which must make it the only revenue service in the world that doesn't have the capacity to investigate the 'informal' economy," said Pauw. "Within the first year of SARS head Tom Moyane's leadership, 56 senior managers left. This institution has to be rebuilt."

After speaking about the ongoing shenanigans at crime intelligence and at the National Prosecuting Authority, Pauw turned his attention to the new ANC leadership. "When Cyril Ramaphosa became president, he inherited a hollowed-out law

enforcement cluster," said Pauw. "I've always said that the secret to Ramaphosa's success is going to be his ability to bring back those officials who were worked out of government. There's no time to train people. He needs to get people back and they've all

forget that he was appointed deputy president in May 2014 and for three and a half years, he held Zuma's hand and praised him in Parliament for his leadership.

"While there, he knew the corruption that was going on and he

to spell out.

"After I launched *The President's Keepers*, I said that under Zuma, there were really only three pillars that separated South Africa from becoming a mafia state," said Pauw. "The one is the courts, which have been doing a superb job. Then the media, specifically investigative journalists, have really stood up. And the third pillar is civil society, people like me and you. We've played an incredible role in the past two years: organisations have gone to court, organised marches and so on. It's not always easy for people to speak out against their own. It was painful for ANC members to go against Zuma."

Wrapping up, Pauw

suggested cautious optimism. "I think all we can hope for is that we've been through a very hard learning curve. We sometimes elect the wrong leaders in a democracy and you sit with them for years.

"If you look back, it's incredible that the ANC could have elected a man like Zuma as president. It's very much up to civil society to march, to speak up, to write letters to newspapers if they aren't happy with their leaders. I think South Africans have an incredible ability to stand up and do the right thing. Let's not suddenly sit back and let Ramaphosa have his own way. Don't trust politicians!"

Photo courtesy WIZO



Jacques Pauw, Helen Maisels Trisk, Esther Mor and Moonyeen Castle

been approached. If he can get these people back, we might see some justice at least."

Saying he's being asked a lot about Ramaphosa, Pauw painted a largely positive picture. "There is lots of optimism around the country at the moment, justifiably so," he said. "Look at his track record, where he came from, the fact that he was Nelson Mandela's chosen person to become president. He's very skilled and clever and he has enough money so he doesn't need to steal any!"

Yet Pauw cautioned against complacency. "Ramaphosa also comes with his baggage. Never

did very little.

Of course, his supporters will argue that if he wasn't in the Cabinet, he wouldn't have been able to become ANC president; he had to do it from the inside and get the support he needed. Let's hope that's true."

Pauw thinks that Ramaphosa's role in the Marikana massacre has been greatly exaggerated. "There's so much about him we don't know, though. His State of the Nation Address was wide and, on some points, very non-committal. Every president around the world promises jobs, but how is he going to create jobs and how is he going to get us out of junk status? All of that, he has

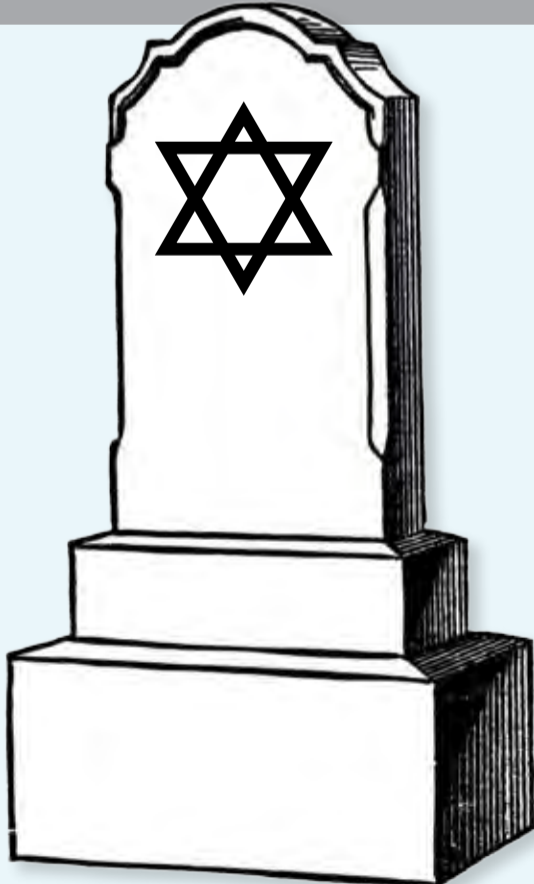
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## CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL COMPENSATION PROGRAMS FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The Claims Conference has negotiated liberalizations with the German government. The following changes to individual compensation programs are now effective.

- Jewish Holocaust survivors who were persecuted in Iasi, Romania, for at least three months between August 1941 and August 1944 may be eligible for a monthly pension.
- Jewish Holocaust survivors who lived in hiding for at least four months, under inhumane conditions without access to the outside world, or lived under false identity for at least 4 months in Nazi-occupied territory and/or in Nazi satellite states, may be eligible for a monthly pension from the Article 2 or Central or Eastern European Fund.
- Jews who were residing in Algeria between July 1940 and November 1942, and suffered Nazi persecution such as restrictions or deprivation of liberty, may be eligible for a one-time payment from the Hardship Fund.

Pensions may only be paid to survivors who do not already receive a pension from a German source (including but not limited to, Article 2 Fund, Central and Eastern European Fund (CEEF), German Federal Indemnification Law (BEG), Länderhärtefonds, Austrian pension (OFG) or Israeli Ministry of Finance) and who meet all other criteria, including the income and asset criteria.

In addition, Jewish Nazi victims who were not eligible for a payment from the Hardship Fund because they had received a prior payment from a German source, such as the BEG (Bundesentschädigungsgesetz) or a global agreement, may now be eligible for a supplemental payment that represents the difference between the amount received from that German source and € 2556.46 the current amount of the Hardship Fund one-time payment.

Applicants who were a fetus during the time that their mother suffered persecution described above should also apply. The Claims Conference funds homecare and other welfare services for vulnerable Holocaust survivors according to the criteria of the German Government. There is no cost to apply. Heirs are not eligible to apply.

To download an application from our website, please go to: [www.claimscon.org/apply](http://www.claimscon.org/apply)

For more information, contact: Claims Conference  
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Tel: +1-646-536-9100 Fax: +1-212-685-5299  
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# A tale of two presidents – lessons in (our) leadership

**RABBI ASHER DEREN**

“Thank you for the blessing – it worked!” With his trademark beaming smile our newly inaugurated President Cyril Ramaphosa thanked me outside Parliament following the #SONAReply last week. His gratitude was for the blessing I was privileged to give him just a few days earlier, at the #Mandela100 rally prior to his election.

Like many of my fellow South Africans, I am relieved that the country has a new leader.

After 10 years of enduring the relentless onslaught of our past president Jacob Zuma’s corruption charges, the shameful rape case, continuous allegations of state capture and theft, his nauseatingly close friendship with Hamas and his shameful disregard for the dignity of the nation, the people of South Africa (and people across the world, for that matter) were thirsty for change, for someone who could make it all come right.

But as the dust settled, the questions started. What about the downgrading of relations with Israel? And what of an ANC MP’s comments, going undisputed, confirming that the country would “cut diplomatic ties” with Israel? And what of another member of the ruling party’s remarks against Cape Town Premier Helen Zille, accusing her of fabricating Day Zero in collusion with the so-called Jewish mafia – with no demand by her party, headed by Ramaphosa, for

her to withdraw the statement?

Uh-oh. Suddenly the chatter around the table isn’t so simple anymore. Maybe he isn’t the messiah and land expropriation isn’t a side issue, after all. And, you know, his deputies are all from the old regime anyway, so it really isn’t such a change. Here we go...

We’ve been here before.

We’ve already had a tale of two such leaders. Let me remind you of that time.

Then – as in our present-day situation – we found ourselves living in the grip of corrupt leadership. At the helm was a selfish, criminal misogynist beholden to a greedy family of cunning advisers and leeches, friendly with anti-Semitic ministers and obsessed with accumulating wealth and power.

The second leader was, like our new president, a breath of fresh air. He was a compassionate leader, a friend of the people, and had a good relationship with the Jewish community. He also had greater insight into our relationship with Israel.

Only then, the leaders were the one and the same Achashverosh of the Purim story.

In the first half of the story, we encounter an evil despot, banishing his wife, flaunting his wealth in the company of raucous friends and associates, and then shamelessly selling out the Jewish people to the genocidal dreams of Haman, the Hamas of his time.

In the second half of the story, we encounter a kind and compassionate king, respectful to his wife Queen Esther and her visionary uncle, Mordechai, and beginning a new relationship with the Jewish people, laying the foundation our sages tell

1992, I merited to have my last face-to-face audience with my beloved mentor and leader, the Lubavitcher Rebbe of righteous memory, when he personally gifted me with a copy of his fascinating essay on different responses to the different forms

of Shushan, studying Torah and praying with them in public for the welfare of their people.

But the Ramaphosa Achashverosh requires a far more nuanced approach. Here, as in the story of Purim, we run the risk of falling into a false sense

**Rabbi Asher Deren and President Cyril Ramaphosa after the reply to the SONA debate**



us, for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Then, too, there may have been a momentary flash of adulation for the “new” king, but thanks to the faithful leadership at that critical time, Mordechai was able to direct our focus towards who we are as a people, and our responsibility as leaders because of that.

This week 26 years ago, in February

of Achashverosh. It serves as my inspiration for the two models of a Jewish community living in the diaspora that I’ve presented here.

When living under a Zupta-style Achashverosh the response is obvious, and almost natural, for a Jew: Be strong. Resist. Oppose. Protest. Be ready to give your life, as exemplified by Mordechai when he gathered the 22 000 Jewish children

of tranquillity where the luxuries of our current lifestyle lull our sense of responsibility to transform our world – and we risk becoming immune to the simmering truths that this world (and South Africa in particular, under any president) is still very far from perfect.

“And the Jews accepted at that time” is how the Megillah describes the atmosphere under the newly benevolent Achashverosh. For the first time in history, the Jews were then living in the paradox of an exile that supported them, albeit relatively, while still holding them far from the vision of our prophets of a world perfected and redeemed.

And they “accepted” their Sinai mandated role to be agents of change for good, through actively committing to a life of Torah and mitzvah, conscious of the presence of G-d in totality.

We too must “accept”, as they did then, our role as vigilant custodians of the gifts Hashem has given us in our beautiful South Africa. Part of this role is to help our compatriots achieve real and lasting change, far beyond the momentary thrill in the image that any selfie might give us.

We must recommit ourselves to being proud Jews and leaders, not just when it comes to protesting a Zuma-sanctioned BDS outside Woolworths.

Because, in truth, every moment carries an opportunity for us to be leaders and render our skills and services for the betterment of our beloved country. This can be done in every act of goodness and kindness for our fellow South Africans, or more broadly working towards radical transformation of the world at large. The latter could be achieved through a passionately inspired commitment to a soul infused life of torah and mitzvah.

In this way, we move forward with the knowledge that “Moshiach is coming soon, and it will be even better thereafter”.

• Rabbi Asher Deren is the rabbi of the *The Shul of Blouberg – West Coast*

## The king is dead: long live the king

### Politics, power and personhood in the Story of Purim

**ADINA ROTH**

These past few months in South Africa have felt extreme. We have had waves of hope, interspersed by disappointments, as we’ve seen a corrupt and selfish leader be replaced by someone upon whom so much hope is pinned.

Yet, even as the dust settles around President Cyril Ramaphosa’s inauguration, there are whispers that the balance of power might not be as tipped towards the good as one might hope.

The long-awaited purge of those who bolstered a corrupt president is in a perpetual state of #happeningnothappening and we enter back into the swing of realpolitik, the machinations of power, where leaders are still motivated by survival, self-interest and power preservation.

Indeed, Judaism is not a religion that vests much hope in the hands of political leadership. The Israelites were never supposed to be ruled by a king; King Saul was appointed only at the request of the people themselves. The Jewish idea is that ultimately, we are governed by a more powerful king, one impervious to the ways of bribery, ego and nepotism – Hashem.

The question, however, is this: In a world where G-d’s face is not revealed and where it is not always obvious what is G-d’s will or wish, from where do we take our guidance and how do we live?

The power of the Purim story lies in the ways it echoes through history. The narrative of the bellicose and pompous king, who relishes extravagance but fails to show leadership is all too familiar. The conniving ministers who prop up the king for their own power and benefits are a mirror for our own times. And there is sheer delight at the topsy-turvy nature of the story: the corrupt minister is deposed; the king eventually takes

counsel from the wise; the weak overwhelm the strong; and there is celebration on the streets.

Central to the text, however, is the absence of G-d’s name. G-d’s name is not mentioned once in the Book of Esther, one of two books in the Bible to contain such a significant omission. Yet the Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar Maimonides teaches that in the times of the Messiah, the only book to be read aloud from among our prophets and writings, other than the Five Books of Moses, will be the Book of Esther. The very book which instantiates the effacement of G-d’s name is chosen



to be preserved for eternity. What is its power and its message?

The name Esther comes from the Hebrew root S.T.R, which means concealment. Our rabbis connect the central character of the Purim story, Esther, to the biblical sentence, “I will hide (*haster/astir* in Hebrew) my face (*et panai*)” (Deuteronomy 31, 18). This refers to a time when God will hide His face from the world. The rabbis in the Talmud have coined this sentence “hester

panim” – it has become a theological description for a state in the world where G-d, the ordering and controlling principle of the world for good, becomes hidden.

This doesn’t mean that there is no Divine Providence in the world, but it does indicate a time when G-d’s presence is less obvious. According to Scottish contemporary Torah scholar and author Avivah Zornberg, when G-d’s face is hidden, there is a sense of disorder and chaos, and we feel as if we’re in a world that resonates sharply with these words by poet William Butler Yeats: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.”

Some might suggest that the hiding of G-d’s face is a contraction of G-d’s overt force in the world, which creates space for G-d to emerge through the actions of ethically courageous human beings.

The direction of the story of Esther tends towards the small acts of conscience and courage which come from the unlikely of individuals.

The story begins with Esther introduced as an orphan, Hadassah, who has been adopted by her uncle Mordechai. Her vulnerability and passivity are revealed through the language, “Esther was taken to the King Achashverosh” (Esther, Chapter 2). She seems but a pawn in a larger plot and she takes all her instructions from Mordechai. He warns her to keep her Jewish identity secret and in the first half of the Megillah, Esther is but a passive witness to the courtly goings-on.

Then, crisis hits! A decree is issued to destroy and wipe out all the Jews of Persia. The news is made public and a wail is heard through the city of Shushan.

Continued on page 14>>

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# Our Purim moment lies in Jewish education

RABBI RAMON WIDMONTE

I was sitting at breakfast with a friend whose daughter is enrolled at one of our Jewish schools. He related the following story to me: A week or so ago, a Jewish Studies teacher (whose identity is not known to me) was teaching the class about Purim. During the lesson, the teacher turned to the pupils and asked a stunningly honest question: “Be honest with me: am I boring you?” My friend’s daughter, who has no doubt inherited her parents’ authenticity and confidence, replied: “To be honest, you are. We have learned Purim for the past 10 years – there’s nothing new here!”

While we should all be proud of the teacher’s

**For a 21st-century millennial school pupil who becomes a young adult and becomes an old(er) adult, Judaism, Israel and Jewish identity have to be presented in a way completely different to anything done before**

authenticity and honesty, we should also all tremble at such stories. And, more than tremble, we should act, as a community.

The Jewish community as a whole – including our schools, shuls and myriad communal organisations – is only sustainable if the graduates of our schools are proud of, and want to be part of, our Jewish community – and then become part of it and stay part of it. Our community is not sustainable if the graduates of those schools do not have a positive enough association with their Jewish identity so that they in turn, participate in the community, join shuls and communal organisations, go to Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha’atzmaut events, fund the community, have Jewish families and children, and then send their children back into those schools to begin the cycle again.

Without this, our community is not sustainable in its current form.

We see a growing demographic gap across the board: Generation X, or Gen X, is not attending shul like those of us born in the previous millennium, and Gen X is not funding or leading our communal organisations to the extent that their age-group did in previous generations. Our cycle has been broken.

This is our Purim moment – this is a point where we realise what we need to survive, when we realise what the existential threats and existential opportunities really are. Outstanding Jewish education and educators – for school pupils, young adults and adults – are our opportunity and lifeblood.

For a 21st-century millennial school pupil who becomes a young adult and becomes an old(er) adult, Judaism, Israel and Jewish identity have to be presented in a way completely different to anything done before, and the educators who present these subjects need to come from the best of the incredibly talented people our community has to offer.

All in all, between our major adult education organisations, Jewish schools and shuls, we need a modest number of talented individuals – and those people can drive the sustainability of our community. Those people need the best training available, they need to be encouraged and even inspired to take this as a career path – and we, as a community, need to send a strong message that they are a priority for us. There should be no more respected and valued profession in our community than a Jewish educator; and our children should sense this in the way in which we discuss and relate to those teachers and their “subjects”.

I often say to the Jewish schools with which we consult that their secular subjects need to be superb, but Jewish Studies needs to be

their best offering. A Jewish graduate needs to KNOW maths and biology, but they have to LOVE and DO being Jewish, otherwise that school will not be sustainable.

Similarly, for a shul, the brochah needs to be mouth-watering; but the spiritual and identity offerings have to be soul-watering.

This also applies to Zionist education – if our young adults are not Confident on Campus (the title of one of our Academy programmes), will they feel any affinity with Israel, will they ever come to Yom Ha’atzmaut, will they bring their kids?

These priorities need to be rethought in terms of time and resources and, as a community, we need to demand measurable results in these areas.

In the same light, adult educators and rabbis and rebbetzins in shuls should not be viewed with a communally jaundiced eye, as people who “couldn’t get a real job”. That attitude must change. Our adult educators take the graduates of the school system and nurture and develop them further, to the point that they participate in our community as members, funders and leaders, and again ensure our sustainability.

Our rabbis and rebbetzins are educators who can, and should, be offered the training and encouragement to facilitate their vital tasks.

Returning to Purim specifically, one must laud the honesty of that teacher, who was prepared to open themselves to a painful truth. But on the other hand, Purim is one of the most relevant, powerful events in our history and it lends itself to the most impactful and diverse set of modes of presentation.

One can learn Purim through drama, art, cooking, fashion, Torah text, modern-day politics, film, ethics and music – the list of age-appropriate presentations doesn’t end. It’s also amazing fun and should be one of the highlights of Judaism, serving as a carnival of meaning and joy in being Jewish.

For older (adult and teen) community members, we could introduce various activities leading up to Purim, as well as on the day: do a trial session of Krav Maga and learn Torah attitudes to self-defence; watch the film, *The Pianist*, and contrast it both to movies such as *Black Panther* or *Operation Thunderbolt* as well

as to the Tanach’s presentation of David and Goliath, to discuss narratives around power and powerlessness (great excuse to watch movies); hold a discussion about US President Donald Trump’s stated plan to build a wall between the US and Mexico and his hardline stance on immigrants, comparing it with the issue of the Sudanese migrants in Israel and attempts to get them to leave, and learn the Torah approach to sensitivity to the “stranger”; host an art session around perceptions of beauty in society (in relation to Queen Vashti in the Purim story and beauty competitions) and raise gender and self-image issues in Torah and western society; meet with a psychologist/sociologist and explore the hierarchies of power and assimilation in immigrant societies (perhaps look at xenophobia in South Africa?); and discuss the dynamics of a society based on rights and taking (such as in Shushan) versus the Jewish concept of a society based on mutual support

(maybe reflect on the fact that in Europe, Jews had to wear a triangle on their clothes?); do some chesed on Purim for Jews and non-Jews (matanot la’evyonim?) and emphasise the need for lifelong commitment to tzedakah; and, in a music class, we could “create your own Purim song”.

I don’t mean to imply that none of this is being done. We have a team of highly committed, passionate Jewish education professionals in South Africa. However, they need support and training; their “subject” needs to be prioritised in terms of time, resources and our attitudes; metrics need to be produced on key success factors; they need to be remunerated commensurate with successful professionals in other fields; and they need, more than anything, our confidence and affirmation. For they are at the coalface of our future.

I conclude by paraphrasing Mordechai’s



(tzedakah) after packing mishloach manot at the Chev with our kids.

For younger students, we could teach resilience against anti-Semitism and segue into self-esteem and bullying issues; create Megillot with a sofer and learn to do calligraphic Hebrew (half art, half Hebrew); bake homentashen with a celebrity chef – kids could do this with their parents while learning what the triangle means

powerful challenge to Esther: “Who knows if it is not for this very moment that we have reached where we are?”

While we still can, we need to ensure our future – and we still can.

• Rabbi Ramon Widmonte is dean of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning. For details visit [www.theacademy.org.za](http://www.theacademy.org.za)

## The king is dead: long live the king

>> Continued from page 12

Mordechai sends a message to Esther to intervene. But Esther is frightened. She protests that her very life will be endangered if she goes before the king.

Mordechai upbraids Esther with words as relevant now as then: In Esther, Chapter 4, 14 he says: “If you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for just such a crisis.”

These words are somehow able to penetrate through Esther’s mask of impassivity, her refusal to take action, her frozen inertia. She tells Mordechai to fast and she says she and her maidens will fast for three days and nights, after which she will go to the king without having been summonsed: “And if I am to perish, I shall perish.”

The rest, as they say, is history. We know that Esther’s courage eventually turns the king around and that we are blessed with the unlikely of outcomes – a topsy turveydom where the “bad guys” are hung on the gallows intended for Mordechai and where the day of impending doom turns to a day of joy and celebration.

But let us pause to consider the unlikely hero of the story – the hidden character of Esther which is not obvious at the outset. Esther undergoes a *bildungsroman*, a development of character, to find her voice, her power and her willingness to act from a place of both conscience and courage.

Esther’s story is indeed our own. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein poignantly says that we are all “in the state of Esther”. Each one of us, for one reason or another,

has hesitations and misgivings about the ability to act.

At this time last year, former president Jacob Zuma’s reign stretched into 2019 with fears that he might even amend the Constitution to entrench his power. Then suddenly, it seemed, he was gone – and we have a new leader and promises of a new, ethical sweep.

As suddenly as this seems to have happened and as miraculous as it might feel, many have pointed to the persistent voices of activism that chipped away at the corrupt edifice, calling out corruption, speaking out at the expense of their jobs and their salaries. Many might have thought: “What difference will my actions make against such forces?”; or the almost inevitable “Who am I to think I can make a difference?”

The brave voices of the men and women who have spoken and written throughout this time are, like Esther, acting not because they don’t feel frightened. But somehow, a voice like that of Mordechai’s to Esther is able to penetrate through the web of fear and despair, and wake people up.

From that point, people have acted with tremendous courage, like Esther, not knowing if they will survive in the world of Machiavellian politics. In a time of *hester panim*, it is surely through listening to conscience and acting with courage that we reveal G-d’s presence in our world.

• Adina Roth is a psychologist, Jewish educator and Melton educator in Johannesburg. She attributes some of the sources in this article to the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning

# The BDS-knee jerk: Almost a witch-hunt?



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

South Africa's Jewish leaders have work to do concerning ANC members' negative perceptions of Israel, exemplified in Parliament last week during a speech by then minister of science and technology Naledi Pandor. Her speech formed part of the debate following President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address and was meant to respond to the international co-operation objectives he'd announced. However, Pandor's comments in this regard had nothing to do with foreign affairs and was instead used as an opportunity to slam Israel. Pandor was confirmed on Monday as minister of higher education in Ramaphosa's Cabinet reshuffle.

But how should Jewish leaders relate to Jews criticising Israel? For example, a group was recently formed in South Africa calling for Israel to end the "occupation" of the West Bank. An unfortunate response in the Jewish community has been a hunkering down whereby anyone, Jewish or not, who criticises Israel is labelled a BDS messenger.

Some Jews label anti-Israel activity as anti-Semitism, and might justifiably point to the distasteful comments by ANC MPL Sharon Davids in the Cape Legislature on Friday, who said Premier Helen Zille is "too much in love with the Jewish mafia". She added that the DA had "fabricated" Cape Town's water crisis

deadline so desalination contract kickbacks could occur. A sub-text can be easily inferred, that such contracts would come from the world's expert in water affairs – the Jewish homeland, Israel.

There may be some truth in parts of that. But how should Jews debate among themselves about Israel? Let's take the example of when the abovementioned South African group – made up of born and bred Israelis, Jews who have lived there, and Jews who simply love Israel – says current Israeli government policy is wrong and it should withdraw from the West Bank, the most contentious Israeli issue.

Amongst the Israelis, the group includes the former Israeli ambassador to South Africa at the time of Nelson Mandela's ascendancy to power, Alon Liel, who was also previously director-general of Israel's foreign ministry, and who had a close relationship with the South African freedom icon. In a 2013 article on Israeli news website YNet, he said: "I met [Mandela] just five days after assuming the position of Israel's ambassador to South Africa. Even before I submitted my credentials, Mandela himself telephoned me at 6am... and said, 'I've heard Israel is changing its policy. Let's talk.'"

When this group, which includes several South African notaries such as a judge of the high court, asked recently to engage with Jewish institutions, many Jewish community leaders – although not all – said no, and certain individuals were summarily labelled "BDS".

However, the Cape Board of Deputies hosted Liel, and the South African Jewish

Board of Deputies – which supports a two-state solution to the conflict, thus implying an end to the occupation – met with him and his wife, and issued a statement afterwards.

Liel and his cohorts are hated by the political right in Israel for, amongst other things, their alleged ties to the leftist organisation Breaking the Silence and promoting boycotts of goods from the "occupied territories" to make it clear that the settlements endanger Israel's future.

Are they too far left for most South African Jews? Organisations which shunned them included the SA Zionist Federation, Johannesburg's main Jewish community centre, and the youth movement Habonim – which was warned not to host him. Although his group repeatedly asserted its opposition to BDS, which advocates a total boycott of Israel and supports its destruction, some Jewish leaders still accused him of representing BDS.

Shunning people like those in this group is misguided. South African Jews miss the opportunity to strengthen their views by debating contesting perspectives even if they disagree, and they push to the margins Jews reluctant to express themselves in the mainstream for fear of being ostracised.

Other, larger Jewish communities successfully incorporate wide-ranging debate on Israel. But South African Jewry is small. It is essential not to provoke people to leave because of their Israel perspectives. The last thing we need is an echo chamber of identical views.

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

# A comedy night to remember



Chairman of the IUA-UCF Avrom Krengel welcomes the guests

It was a night of laughing all the way to raising funds for the Young Adult Division (YAD) of the IUA-UCF. YAD – hosted a comedy evening on February 22 in Sandhurst.

Arye Kellman was MC and warmed up the crowd before welcoming the first of three comedians, Claudine Ullman. Ullman was voted one of *Mail & Guardian's* Top 200 Young South Africans for 2017 and kept the crowd in stitches.

Up next was Gilli Apter, who delved into what it's like to be single and dating in today's age, to much laughter.

Mojak Lehoko was the final act of the evening, and was just as funny. A young, up-and-coming Johannesburg comedian, he received the Comics' Pen Award last year for his outstanding writing on several local television productions. Lehoko spoke about his discovery of challah and how he'd like to be invited to the fun holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, not the hard-knock ones like Pesach.

Everyone left on a high, and a few audience members went home with raffle prizes.

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# SA artistic director revels in Israeli dance

ROBYN SASSEN

An invitation to be a scout for Israeli contemporary dance is priceless. More so if you're the only South African on the guest list. Mark Hawkins, the artistic director of the acclaimed Johannesburg dance company, Moving Into Dance Mophatong (MIDM), enjoyed this privilege late last year.

Contemporary dance in Israel is booming. It boasts the business's unequivocal best, in the form of companies such as Batsheva Dance, which was founded by the great Martha Graham and Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild in 1964. Israel is also the home of fantastic young choreographers such as Rachel Erdos, who visited South Africa in 2015 to choreograph a new piece.

Dance connections between Israel and South Africa are not new. South African dancers/choreographers such as Dada Masilo and Sunnyboy Motau have made significant inroads into Israeli dance. Indeed, Lynore Blum, a significant voice in Israeli dance, who hosted Hawkins, is an ex-South African – she was born in Brakpan.

When Hawkins received the invitation to attend International Exposure, Tel Aviv's annual choreography showcase, the question of whether to accept was a no-brainer for him.



A still from Ekodoon, a word choreographed by Rami Be'er and performed by the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company



Photos courtesy of Mark Hawkins

Glasser immigrated to Australia at the end of 2015.

Hawkins' credentials are also impressive. He has more than 30 years' dance experience and training in diverse ballet techniques, including in Vaganova, the Royal Academy of Dance and Cecchetti – and is not afraid to be outspoken in his critical opinions.

Regarding the dance programme he saw at the International Exposure Festival, Hawkins said that, while

he pondered the value of work so motivated by political values that the skill and aesthetics took second place, he was wowed by much of the work in the showcase. Indeed, he flooded this interviewer with pamphlets and comments, expletives and expressions of sheer wonder while recounting his Israeli experience.

The festival was headlined by work staged by Batsheva Dance, Inbal Dance – Israel's oldest dance company, founded in 1949 – and

Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, which is identified with the work of its artistic director, Rami Be'er.

Hawkins singled out the works of choreographers such as Dana Marcus of Tel Aviv's BiZarre Dance Company; Ravid Abarbanel, who trained in Jerusalem and the Netherlands, and is respected throughout Europe; classically trained Martin Harriague, who has recently begun choreographing his own work; Noa

Shadur, who blends video and dance in her work; and Ohad Naharin, the former artistic director of Batsheva Dance. "There were more than 30 performances," he says, explaining how busy he was during his stay.

Overall, he loved the Israeli dance aesthetic. "Israeli dancers have got beards! They're hairy. They're tall and skinny with no calves. They're not classic dancer bodies. They're like normal people!"

"I couldn't see everything in the festival," he adds. "Each work had a single performance and there were six or seven each day. I gave three master classes and a lecture to a range of dancers. One was for teenagers, who couldn't speak much English. Another was for dance teachers."

The classes were important and enabled Hawkins to speak to the dancers through his techniques and the universal language that is dance. They were well received. It is a few months after the December trip, and Hawkins says his email account is still beeping with thanks and positive feedback from the students.

He makes mention of Gaga, a dance style developed by Naharin which is taking the world by storm. Punting itself as a movement language that originates from the belief in the healing, dynamic, ever-changing power of movement, it's a style that blends Pilates with meditative listening to the body. And it's beautiful to watch. Hawkins is determined to bring Gaga to South Africa soon.

After his Israel trip, Hawkins is inspired for the year ahead in dance. This week sees the opening of Johannesburg's 30th Dance Umbrella, an annual festival of contemporary dance in which MIDM dancers – and dancers trained by MIDM – feature significantly. And later this year, MIDM celebrates its 40th birthday. Exciting milestones indeed.

## Farewell to a great Torah teacher

RABBI RAMON WIDMONTE

Maureen Kendler, a great British Jewish educator, passed away last week, a few months after falling ill.

Maureen was part of a team from the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS) who came to South Africa six years ago to give input into the founding of what would become the Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning. At the time, the dean of LSJS was Britain's then chief rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, and he put together a formidable team of Torah educators. Maureen was among them.

As Rabbi Dr Raphi Zarum, the current dean of LSJS, puts it: "Thousands learned from Maureen's many talks and lectures. She was an incredible teacher, a sensitive listener and a wise counsellor. Teaching was in her blood. She inspired many young women when she was on the faculty at North London Collegiate School. Then she was head of Jewish Literacy at United Jewish Israel Appeal, where she was the star teacher on the Melton Programme. Here at LSJS, she transformed Adult Jewish Education. She broadcast regularly on BBC Radio."

What was most impactful for me were the hours spent at LSJS being trained and guided by Maureen. She and Rabbi Zarum pushed the Academy faculty to become accredited in courses and to reach for excellence. I still remember her impact when giving shiurim at Yeshiva College on the Book of Iyov (Job) and on the idea of "the field and the city" throughout Tanach at Investec. People were astounded at her mastery of Tanach, her love for Torah and her commitment to our community.

At that time, who had even read Iyov? And how many female Torah teachers did we have who had read Iyov? It is a testament to Maureen that as of this writing, more than 500 men and women have learned Iyov (and the rest of Tanach) in South Africa as part of the Academy Tanach

course, of which more than 300 are women. Moreover, it is also a tribute to her that so many female Torah teachers learn so powerfully with students at the Academy and other adult Torah schools.

Maureen enabled so many other teachers in a profound manner. She was open to, and encouraged us to be open to, the ways that different teaching styles connect to different people. I remember chatting to her after the first interviews she conducted with potential faculty members for the Academy; she saw so deeply into what each person could offer – one person's knowledge, another's vibrancy, a third's self-containment.

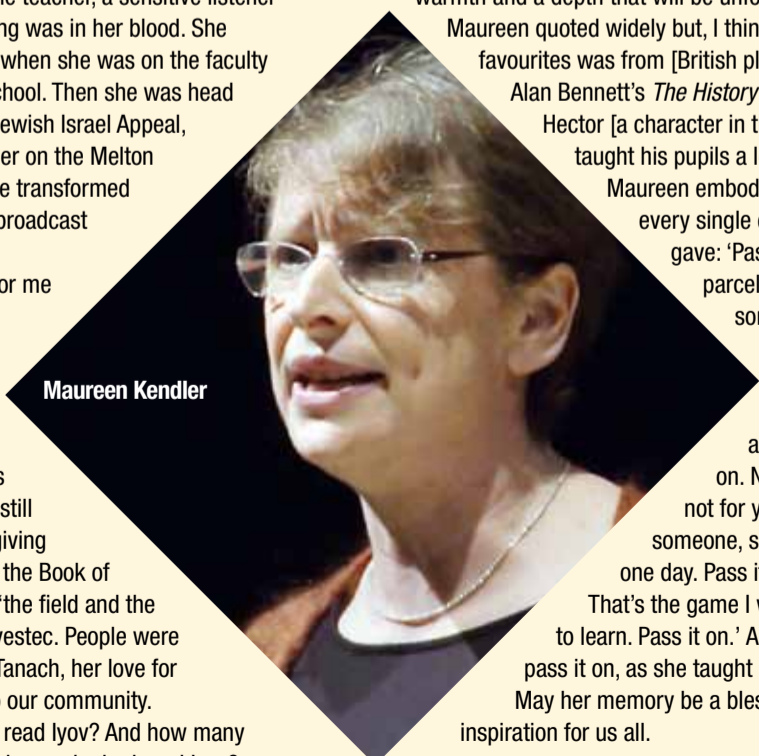
To quote Rabbi Zarum, who concluded his tribute thus: "Anglo-Jewry just lost one of its finest. A smile, a warmth and a depth that will be unforgettable.

Maureen quoted widely but, I think, one of her favourites was from [British playwright] Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*.

Hector [a character in the play] taught his pupils a lesson that Maureen embodied through every single class she gave: 'Pass the parcel. That's

sometimes all you can do. Take it, feel it and pass it on. Not for me, not for you, but for someone, somewhere, one day. Pass it on, boys.

That's the game I want you to learn. Pass it on.' And we will pass it on, as she taught us to." May her memory be a blessing and an inspiration for us all.



Maureen Kendler

• Rabbi Ramon Widmonte is dean of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning. For details visit [www.theacademy.org.za](http://www.theacademy.org.za)

• Dance Umbrella runs from March 6 to 18 at various venues in Johannesburg. For details, visit [www.danceforumsouthafrica.co.za](http://www.danceforumsouthafrica.co.za)

"Israeli dancers have got beards! They're hairy. They're tall and skinny with no calves. They are not classic dancer bodies. They're like normal people!"

The festival, which takes place at the Suzanne Dellal Centre for Dance and Theatre in Tel Aviv, is supported by Israel's ministry of foreign affairs and ministry of culture and sport. For a South African to be in the audience for his dance savvy, his critical eye and his ability to invite Israeli dancers to South Africa, is a feather in the cap of contemporary South African dance.

MIDM was founded by Sylvia Glasser in 1978, at a time when it was illegal for black and white dancers to perform on the same stage. Glasser, who studied ethnomusicology in the US and social anthropology under anti-apartheid activist David Webster in South Africa, launched this project from her home in Victory Park. It flew in the face of everything regimented by apartheid values, but it took hold.

Today it remains the biggest, the oldest and arguably the most important contemporary dance company in the country, having offered training to many contemporary dancers in the field, including such shining lights as Robyn Orlin, Sonia Radebe, Vincent Mantsoe and Gregory Maqoma.

## Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

## Let's fight the bigotry while keeping the positives in mind

The national and Cape Board of Deputies worked together this week in responding to several scandalous allegations made by Sharon Davids, an ANC MPL in the Western Cape, and the equally unacceptable attempts by ANC provincial secretary Faiez Jacobs to deny, and even justify, them.

Speaking in the Cape Provincial Legislature last Friday, Davids accused the DA of having fabricated the Day Zero water crisis in order to obtain desalination contract kickbacks from what she referred to as the "Jewish mafia". She further claimed that the antagonism to Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille within the DA was sparked by De Lille having opposed the awarding of a property for the purpose of building a Jewish day school.

There were several more obvious inferences made, to the effect that the DA was beholden to Jewish interests. Davids has

since tried to backtrack by saying that she had been referring to foreign business interests, but her own recorded words belie this.

It is shocking to see such bigoted and paranoid conspiracy theories being aired in the political arena instead of being confined to the darker corners of the Internet. It may well be that the recent decision made by the ANC to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel has emboldened anti-Semitic elements within the party. The ANC's Western Cape branch, as will be recalled, has been the driving force behind the downgrade initiative.

While there are times when it is appropriate to adopt a low-key, behind-the-scenes approach to dealing with anti-Semitism, this is something that we need to confront publicly and head-on.

Our first step has obviously been to communicate with President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Hopefully, we will have the opportunity of meeting with him soon to take the matter further. In our media statement, we described the allegation that the DA was pursuing a pro-Jewish agenda against the best interests of the greater Cape Town population as "a racist smear campaign against the Jewish

community" and Jacobs' suggestion that Davids' anti-Semitism was a result of something that Jews had done as "a classic form of racist victim blaming".

We referred to previous occasions where ANC leaders in the Western Cape, notably Marius Fransman and Tony Ehrenreich, had made anti-Semitic comments, which the ANC as a whole had neither condemned nor distanced themselves from.

The board also condemned certain remarks by Minister Naledi Pandor, who chose to use a memorial service

for AnnMarie Wolpe as an opportunity to make untrue and disparaging remarks about the board. These uncalled-for attacks on the elected, representative spokesperson of the Jewish community were all the more inappropriate for being delivered in a synagogue at an occasion organised to honour a member of that community.

Despite these unsavoury developments, the sense of euphoria in the wake of Ramaphosa's appointment continues to hold strong, receiving another boost with this week's Cabinet reshuffle. The board will look to ways to harness this positive energy and help keep the momentum going, while at the same time ensuring that all instances of anti-Semitism that come to our attention are appropriately responded to.

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

Above Board  
Shaun Zagnoev

Moses Moyo

## Running to make a difference

"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make."

These words of wisdom, from acclaimed British primatologist and anthropologist Jane Goodall, have inspired Moses Moyo to make a difference. He has done so career-wise as a newspaper publisher, as well as by committing to run the DL Link Jerusalem Marathon.

Moyo, 40, hails from Zimbabwe and is based in Johannesburg. This husband and father of five is the publisher of four community newspapers: *Inner-City Gazette*, *Tshwane Gazette*, *RSA Today* and *Joburg Gazette*.

"These publications are my contribution to making a difference to communities by keeping them informed and updated with what directly and indirectly affects them," says Moyo.

"After speaking to the director of DL Link, I decided to run the 2018 Jerusalem Marathon in remembrance of loved ones whom I have lost to cancer, and in support of community

members in the inner city and of colleagues battling the disease.

"It's disheartening to hear the poorest in our communities buy into the myths about this deadly disease. I want to demystify these myths, especially the myth that cancer is a witchcraft disease. In this regard, my role in keeping communities properly informed about cancer is paramount.

"I thank DL Link Marathon for making my training more meaningful by raising awareness and funds to support this worthwhile cause, and for enabling me to pursue my passion for creating awareness and supporting cancer patients and their families.

"I also wish to thank the SA Zionist Federation for sponsoring me and Chai FM's Kathy Kaler for introducing me to the DL Link family.

"I will be streaming my 10km run live. Follow me on Twitter @moses\_moyo."

Readers can also sponsor

Moyo per kilometre or make a once-off payment. You can even sign a debit order over the year for any amount you choose.

To donate, log on to <http://www.dllink.co.za/donate/jerusalem-marathon-2018> and select Moyo's name in the dropdown menu.

You can do an EFT to:  
DL Link  
Nedbank Melrose Arch: 196605  
Cheque Account: 1001082818  
Reference: Your name / Moses Moyo  
Swift Code: NEDSZAJJ

A column of Yad Aharon &amp; Michael

## Yad Aharon &amp; Michael is proudly independent

From its humble beginnings more than 20 years ago, Yad Aharon & Michael has grown into the respected nongovernmental organisation it is today and has remained independent of other such agencies.

We've grown exponentially in our mission to provide needy Jewish families in Johannesburg with weekly, fresh produce food hampers, all the while retaining the compassion and respect we've always shown to our clients.

With the multitude of charity organisations in Johannesburg "fishing from the same pond", this journey has been challenging, yet we have unconditionally upheld our mandate and our pledge to the poor.

Our weekly food parcels remain our flagship project, but over time, the persistent nutritional insecurity within our community has resulted in further assistance having to be rendered.

To this end, Yad Aharon & Michael introduced additional projects, namely:

- *Ohr Natanel* for school lunches;
- The establishment of an in-house supermarket. Its shelves are stocked by *Chesed from the Garden of Eden*;
- *Chickens for Shabbos* to ensure Oneg Shabbos; and
- *Yad's Soup for the Soul*, which provides a safe haven for the lonely and the hungry to come and enjoy a healthy, nutritious meal in a congenial atmosphere.

Yad Aharon & Michael comprises a cohesive

team who remain ever thankful to our donors for their support. These attributes have helped to ensure that we remain specialists in our line of business: food.

As the organisation's managing director, I have noted misconceptions that have arisen about Yad Aharon & Michael within our community and would like to address them here. Firstly, bear in mind that Yad Aharon pays

for the entire contents of our food parcels, with the exception of the donated "extras" from bakeries, delis and kosher supermarkets.

Donors' concerns that recipients may get food parcels from both Yad Aharon and the Chevrah Kadisha, resulting in the "doubling up" of services, are valid. However, the Chev's recent policy of referring anyone needing food assistance to Yad Aharon has gained our full support and, in the case of a family receiving parcels from both sources, they are made to choose one service provider – except for Pesach and Rosh

Hashanah, whereby some recipients receive Yom Tov hampers from both sources. I reiterate the fact that Yad Aharon operates independently of the Chev and every other charity organisation.

Having said that, it bears acknowledging that each Jewish organisation fulfils a unique and vital role within our community. Yad Aharon & Michael's mission to provide food and nutrition to those in need is wholly dependent on your support and, together, we will succeed at providing this basic human right.

Food for  
Thought

Alice Friedman

This column is paid for by Yad Aharon &amp; Michael Food Fund

SPORTS DIRECTOR:  
MACCABI SOUTH AFRICA

A vacancy has arisen in Maccabi SA for a Sports Director. This is a full time position based in Johannesburg encompassing the day to day running of the organisation as well as planning, preparing executing sports events both locally and abroad.

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- Day to day running of the organisation on a National and Provincial level.
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- Representing the organisation locally and abroad.
- Coordination and facilitation of events locally and abroad.
- Working within Committee Structures.
- Working hand in hand with volunteers.
- Handle a wide scope of issues and challenges.
- Administration of marketing and communication platforms.

## Personal Attributes:

- Self-Driven.
- Determined and motivated.
- Operationally strong.
- Strong administration skills.
- Well-spoken and presentable.
- Good command of the English Language.
- Passionate about sports and community activities.
- Able to work in ambiguous and changing environment.
- Strong people skills.
- Diplomatic and able to resolve conflict

**Note: Salary is negotiable and dependent on experience.  
Only successful applicants will be short-listed and contacted.**

Please submit CV to: [admin@maccabi.co.za](mailto:admin@maccabi.co.za)

# King David Schools' Big Walk 2018 a big hit

To commemorate the King David (KD) Schools' 70th anniversary year, the annual big walk was hosted at Johannesburg Zoo on Sunday, February 25 at 07:30. Thousands of King David students, parents, grandparents, teachers and staff woke up early to take to the winding, picturesque paths that form part of the zoo's design in order to participate in this year's KD Wild Walk and Run.

The event was a great success, attracting well over 2 500 participants.

The aim of the KD Wild Walk and Run, generously sponsored by Discovery Health, is to unite all the King David Schools in a fun and healthy way by encouraging unity and cohesiveness across all ages and between all its campuses.

The Johannesburg Zoo proved to be an outstanding choice of venue as everyone enjoyed the magnificent zoo facilities and attractions. King David students from pre-school to matric loved seeing and hearing the animals as

they walked or ran through the zoo along the 5km route.

The celebrations continued after the walk and run on the bandstand grass area, where participants and their families enjoyed the fun-fair rides, listened to the background music and ate their picnic breakfasts while basking in the glorious Johannesburg sun.

According to Rabbi Craig Kacev, director of the SA Board of Jewish Education: "The KD Wild Walk and Run was certainly a fantastic way to start the year of festivities that will be taking place across all King David Schools this year. A 70-year milestone provides the ideal opportunity to look back on the role and contribution our King David Schools have made over the past seven decades, and we look forward to continuing this legacy for our King David community."

"The KD Wild Walk and run is a fantastic opportunity for King David families across all campuses to enjoy time together outdoors, and a great morning was had by all."

# Herzlia class of 67



A total of 29 members of the Class of 67 returned to Herzlia in Cape Town recently to celebrate their 50th reunion. They came from all over the world to attend. The day kicked off with a visit to their alma mater, where the alumni met with the current Student Leadership Council (SLC) and were addressed by the head boy of 1957, Dr Michael Nochomovitz, as well as by current head boy Alexander Korber.

As the Class of 67 entered the school's media centre, they were welcomed with a photo display of themselves as Herzlia pupils. It brought on laughter and animated conversation as the visitors reminisced about their school days and caught up with one another's lives over the past 50 years.

# A night to remember

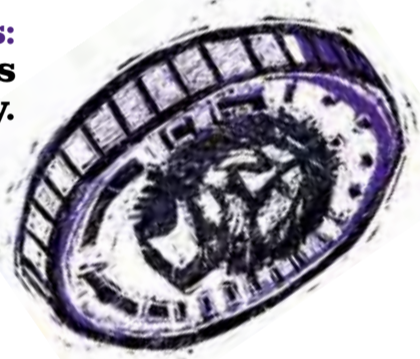
Yeshiva College Pre-Primary School hosted an outdoor movie night recently to raise funds for the nursery school. Parents, grandparents and children were all invited.

The youngsters turned up in their pyjamas and were treated to delicious food while watching an animated movie.



Photo: Jason Crouse

**Reason says:**  
this acquisition is too costly.



**Instinct says:**  
not as costly as missing out.



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# Celebrating Purim and the joy of sharing

The mitzvah of giving *mishloach manot* is meant to ensure that everyone has enough food for the Purim feast, and to increase love and friendship among Jews and their neighbours.

To this end, King David Victory Park Primary School created Purim hampers consisting of apple juice, crisps and chocolates for Seniors of South Africa, a non-profit organisation that offers assistance to the elderly in the community. Pupils designed and packed their own hampers and helped deliver them to the elderly. This made Purim that much more meaningful for all involved.



Daniel Gamsu and Sienna Duek

### Friday (March 2)

- UZLC hosts David Batzofin on "The Call of the Wild". Time: 12:45 to 14:00. Venue: Our Parents Home. Contact: Gloria on 072 127 9421 or 011 485 4851.

### Sunday (March 4)

- Second Innings hosts Anna Cox, Metro Editor and Chief Reporter at The Star on "The City of Joburg – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly". Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting starts promptly at 10:30. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors includes tea and light refreshments. Contact: Linda Fleishman on 011 532 9701.
- Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa hosts Professor



Scott Hazelhurst on "A history of the Jewish people(s) through their DNA", about how DNA is used for understanding population and genealogical histories, as well as for recent evidence of Jewish history.

Time: 19:30. Venue: HOD. Cost: R30 includes refreshments. RSVP: Hannah on 011 485 2188.

### Monday (March 5)

- UJW hosts Maggie Holliday, inveterate participant in the performing arts, on "Labours of love – my years in theatre, radio and film". Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office on 011 648 1053.



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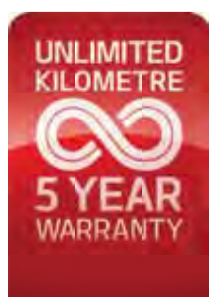
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# Cycling champ aims to showcase the 'real Israel'

JACK MILNER

As a new immigrant to Israel, Canadian-born Sylvan Adams has one mission – to show the world “the real Israel”.

Adams was instrumental in bringing the Giro d'Italia to Israel, making this the first time the three-week, multiple-stage, annual bicycle race has started outside of Europe.

“The haters are out there,” said Adams in an exclusive interview with the SA Jewish Report on Tuesday. “They’re shooting at us although we are unarmed. We’re just trying to put on a cycling event.”

“When 800 million viewers see Israel on their television sets around the world, they will see that the narrative does not match all the negative things they are hearing from the haters.”

Adams, a billionaire from Montreal, clearly loves Israel.

Adams began cycling competitively about 20 years ago. He has won the Canadian Championships six times and is a 15-time Quebec champion. He won four gold medals at two Pan-American meetings and clinched a total of five gold medals at the 2009 and 2013 Maccabiah Games. And in November 2015, he won the World Masters Championship in Manchester, England.

Adams has assembled an impressive Israel Academy cycling team of 24 top riders from 17 countries, including the best five riders from Israel, and he is hoping that one of his imported stars will win one of the Giro d'Italia stages and finish in the top 10.

The riders will also wear new kits that will prominently display the Peres Centre for Peace and Innovation's logo of a flying dove carrying an olive branch. Situated in Jaffa, the centre is



Sylvan Adams  
Photo: velloimages.com

an independent organisation founded in 1996 by Nobel Peace Laureate and former president of Israel, Shimon Peres. Each rider will carry the title of Peace Ambassador on the back of his jersey alongside his name and national flag.

It will be the first time a professional team will carry an outright message of peace on their jerseys, and the first time that the Peres Centre will be promoted by a sports team.

The idea of getting the Giro d'Italia to Israel started as a “thinking-out-of-the-box idea” by Adams, the general manager of the Israel team. “From there we secured an introduction to the organisation which runs the Giro d'Italia and got to meet its chief executive.

“Most people thought it was a crazy idea until we brought the Giro officials over. After they travelled around the country, they soon learned that Israel was not the country portrayed in the media, but rather, a beautiful place with mixed cultures who have all come together.”

The Tour de France attracts the most live supporters of any sporting event in the world, “and the Giro is No 2”, said Adams.

“We expect there to be thousands of people along the route cheering the cyclists,” he added.

Asked whether that would create any security problems for the police and the army, Adams replied: “Early on in the negotiations, I brought up the issue with the security chief of the tour.

He replied that he had already discussed the issue with the Italian police, and they told him that the cyclists are safer in Israel than they are in Italy.

“We have been assigned a crackerjack team to look after the event and we have no worries.”

What's foremost in Adams' mind is the positive spinoff that this event will have on Israel and the economy. “We will be bringing the world to Israel. After people see what the country is like on TV, it could double the number of visitors.

“The more non-Jewish tourists we can attract, the more we can combat organisations such as the BDS, as well as haters of Israel.

“The Giro d'Italia is a way to attract first-time visitors to Israel. We can reach them in a non-political way and let them see that we have a normal country. We believe it will bring about 45 000 tourists to the country, but it could be a lot more. Cycling is now the fastest-growing sport and the race attracts many spectators.”

The Giro d'Italia will start on Friday, May 4 with a time trial in Jerusalem.

Stage two will start in Haifa and comprises a 167km journey through to Tel Aviv.

The third and final stage in Israel, on Sunday May 6, stretches 226km from Be'er Sheva to Eilat.

On Wednesday, a group of Italian cyclists arrived in Israel to test the route. Adams will not be out on the road with them. “It wasn't a co-ordinated event. A group of Italian cyclists has been invited to Israel to ride in an event to promote the Giro d'Italia,” he explained.

Adams concluded by reiterating his goal: to have Israel exposed to the widest audience possible during the Giro. “I am daring to dream, because it's Israel, that for the first time ever, we get a billion TV viewers.”

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**JOHANNESBURG**  
**SATURDAY 10 MARCH | SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE**

20:00 | DOORS OPEN

The optimism bias

Strategies for living optimistically, by **Rabbi YY Rubinstein, Alexandre Elicha, Michael Dickson, Peter Himmelman, Esther Wein and Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**, some of the most successful and extraordinary people out there.



22:00

Saturday Night Live

There's no better combination than good food and good music. At Sinai VII, we're offering the best of both. Come hear the soulful sounds of the Jewish answer to The Lumineers – Levi Robin, as you feast on some genuine gourmet cuisine... as we officially open It's Kosher Fest 2018. It doesn't get better than this.



The LATE SHOW

**SUNDAY 11 MARCH | SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE**

ROOM ONE

ROOM TWO

ROOM THREE

ROOM FOUR

09:30

**Rivka Malka Perlman** | Transcend

Retreat WORKSHOP

From the powerhouse who had a near-death experience and went on to inspire millions from both the digital and physical stage, Rivka Malka Perlman brings you a 50-minute retreat. Join her as she helps you to understand how everything negative that comes your way is a healing opportunity. Learn how to face these experiences head-on, find the light and ultimately reach transcendence.

Only for pre-booked Mom's Track ticket holders. [sinai-indaba.co.za/moms-track](http://sinai-indaba.co.za/moms-track)



**Rabbi Laibl Wolf** | Yes: mindfulness

Meditation WORKSHOP

Join Laibl Wolf as he takes you on a spiritual journey that will ultimately change your life forever. In a world filled with pessimism and distraction at every turn, learn how to kick the habit of negative thoughts and emotions, and live a positive, fulfilled existence. Through the sacred texts of Kabbalah coupled with positive psychology, Rabbi Dr Wolf will teach you how to change your brain to change your mind.



**Michael Dickson** | Israel: looking good for 70



At 3 000 years old, but 70 years young, this is a momentous year for Israel. Dare we even begin to contemplate where we would be without Israel? No stranger to challenge, from security to geopolitical, we thought Israel had faced it all. But now, Israel faces a newly intensified threat in the form of boycotts and defamation. In this eye-opening talk by Israel's leading man, Michael Dickson teaches us how we can join the modern-day fight for the Jewish State.

**Saul Djanogly** | Wealth ethics



From the rabbi who earns his very successful living as the owner of a wealth management business, Saul Djanogly discusses the ethics of money and its temptations. Why would G-d create a world where making a profit is so significant? Come find out from Djanogly as he breaks down the Jewish, spiritual approach to our finances, and furthermore, teaches us how to build a healthy relationship with money.

11:00

**Dr David Ribner** | Raising a moral child in a promiscuous world



From Jerusalem's very own sexologist comes a talk that is vital for every parent to attend. Discussing the genuine challenge of raising your kids in today's sexually explicit world, Dr David Ribner speaks about how bringing up a child with morals, respect and healthy priorities is not just a goal, it's non-negotiable.

11:00

**Peter Himmelman** | Let me out

Creativity WORKSHOP

From award-winning musician turned communications expert Peter Himmelman, this workshop will force you to stop listening to the negative thoughts that hold you back, and achieve the professional and personal success you deserve. Stop procrastinating and start creating, communicate more effectively and create more fearlessly. Perfect for anyone in a mental rut, Let Me Out will give you the means and the confidence to harness your fear and take steps to make your goals a reality. As Himmelman says: "Creativity is what happens when we are deeply engaged in the things we believe in."



(Double session)

11:00

**Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein** | Unlocking the secret code of the Talmud



The Talmud contains a whole dimension of spiritual content that deals with life, wisdom, ethics and philosophy, called the *Aggadah*. Yet it has a code in how this wisdom is presented. Using the incredible insights of one of our great philosophers – the Maharal of Prague – Rabbi Adlerstein invites you to join him as he unlocks it and provides us with a satisfying way of accessing this depth of rabbinic wisdom.

11:00

**Esther Wein** | The soulmate search



They say that 40 days before a foetus is formed, it is announced who its soulmate will be. A concept that seems truly out of this world – yet the Rambam states that marriage is *not* in the hands of heaven. So, how can we better understand this concept of soulmates and the partnership between which soul is paired with which body?

12:00

**Michael Dickson** | Can you tell Israel's story?



From Woolworths protests to thousands marching in the street, anti-Israel groups are spreading misinformation about our beloved land, and their voices have never been louder. It's vital, now more than ever, that we are able to tell Israel's story, in a compelling and informative way... but do we know how to? In this session by Israeli educator, Michael Dickson, we look at who speaks for Israel and how to tell the story of the world's only Jewish country.

12:00

**Rabbi YY Rubinstein** | The guilt trip



While Jewish guilt has become a cliché, it remains something we all relate to. It is the central theme to many novels and films, but, most importantly, plays a role in our everyday lives. Most of us regret our mistakes and our missed opportunities, and replay them over and over again in our minds. If any of this sounds familiar, come and hear as Rabbi YY Rubinstein explains how the Torah invites us to rather use guilt as a positive force. You'll never feel bad about it if you do...

12:00

**Rivka Malka Perlman** | Trust in G-d (for women only)



Stepping into a raging and furious sea – believing without a doubt that it would split – took complete and absolute faith in Hashem. Rivka Malka Perlman helps us understand that it is the power of prayer that creates such a connection with Hashem, and how it can "break through" nature itself to the point of turning it on its head. We need to relearn how to get back to that place in our history, where we trust in Hashem beyond what we know and understand about nature in order to awaken such undeserving gifts.

13:00 | LUNCH

14:00

**Rabbi YY Rubinstein** | 😊



If laughter is the best medicine, then we Jews clearly have connections to the most generous pharmacists around. Many are amazed that, given our history, Jews can still laugh. But we do laugh and always have, even through the toughest of times. Join the hilarious Rabbi YY Rubinstein as he explores why laughing is such an essential part of who we are as a nation, and how to utilise laughter individually in our everyday lives.

14:00

**Rabbi Laibl Wolf** | Mindfulness over matter



Laibl Wolf invites you to join him in a mindfulness meditation session. Discover what it truly means to bring your attention to experiences occurring in the present moment. Alongside this spiritual mentor with over 35 years' experience, learn how to utilise mindfulness in order to live smarter and develop the self-knowledge and wisdom to achieve conscious living and enlightenment.

14:00

**Dr David Ribner** | Jewish sensuality (adults only)



Unlike other religions, Judaism has always maintained a sexually positive and progressive philosophy. Based on the twin pillars of procreation and pleasure, in this fascinating talk by Jerusalem's leading sexual therapist, Dr Ribner will explore the Jewish perspectives on mutuality, sanctity and time as guidelines for creating and maintaining satisfaction and fulfilment in marriage.

14:00

With rockstars, fashion designers and millionaires on the schedule, you could go as far as to say it's the best one yet. So, bring some friends and spend the afternoon in the presence of legends. It's gonna be proper extra.

15:00

**Peter Himmelman** | Caught between rock and a hard place



The life story of Peter Himmelman – Grammy and Emmy nominated singer/songwriter and film and television composer. Himmelman was formerly leader of the successful indie rock band Sussman Lawrence, before he left to pursue an extensive solo career. Hear what happens when you juggle family time, Judaism and a successful rock career.

15:00

**Saul Djanogly** | If I were a rich man



In a world dictated by the money we make and the things we have, knowing when to be happy with our lot seems almost impossible. In this talk by the hugely successful Wealth Rabbi, Saul Djanogly helps us understand how to view what we have as the glass being half full rather than half empty. And by asking the question: "To have, or to be?" Djanogly teaches us to first define ourselves as people, rather than the possessions we own.

15:00

**Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein** | Beyond the Jewiverse



As a Jewish community living in a multicultural diverse society, it's vital that we understand the Torah's perspective on how to live and engage with the people around us. In this relevant and insightful talk by the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein, we look at some classic Torah sources to help us engage with people from other religions and cultures in the way that Torah values and ethics have guided us since the beginning of time.

16:00

**Alexandre Elicha** | Black magic



Hear the incredible life story of The Kooples founder and creative director Alexandre Elicha. Discover how an encounter with an Israeli Kabbalist led him to form one of Europe's most iconic and successful contemporary fashion labels, and how an experience in Ibiza brought him to the beauty of Shabbat, and how tefillin have a magnetic rock 'n roll aesthetic for him. From growing up with the Jackson Five to eating kosher falafel with Paris's top fashion journals – Elicha will keep you riveted as he tells the incredible story of his synchronised rise to fashion celebrity and Jewish spirituality.

16:00

**Rabbi YY Rubinstein** | Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows



Easily the most popular series ever written, Harry Potter pulled us in and gave us hours of delight and distraction, as we followed Harry and Ron's adventures in the wonderful world of muggles and magic. In this enchanting talk by Rabbi YY Rubinstein, we explore Judaism's approach to magic and its place in our world today. Bring your wands and finally find the answers to this chamber of secrets...

16:00

**Esther Wein** | How not to act when your friends are suffering



Unfortunately, we all currently know someone who is suffering, and as their friends, we strive to do and say the right thing. But, sometimes we struggle to know exactly what that is. It has never been more pertinent than now to look to the Navi, at Iyov's friends, who blamed him for his "punishment" and told him to do teshuva. And for this they were called sinners. In this talk, Esther Wein explores this important question: How do we approach someone who is suffering?

**SINAI NEXT**

EXCLUSIVELY FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS. IT'S FREE

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17:30 | CLOSING CONCERT

Levi Robin

# it'skosher fest

**At Sinai Indaba**  
Sandton Convention Centre  
JHB

Saturday 10 March, 10pm  
Open to the community,  
no Sinai Indaba ticket needed.

Sunday 11 March, from 10am  
Access with any Sinai Indaba ticket.



*Black Bun Salmon Slider*  
by Next Door

Char-grilled and ocean-fresh: Norwegian salmon patty, beetroot-mayo, celery salsa, rocket and ruby cabbage on a black-bun.



*Poke Bowl*  
by SoSushi

Bowl of goodness: Salmon and mango with sushi rice, nori, crispy onion and avo. Also available as a veg option.



*Ice-cream Sandwich*  
by Paul's Homemade Ice-cream

DIY: Name your flavour, sandwich it between two delicious homemade cookies, choose your sauces and toppings.



*Latke Pops*  
by Feigels

Lap up these latkes: Sweet potato latke pops with an endless choice of sauces, both sweet and savoury.



*Sushi Roll*  
by SoSushi

Let the good times roll: Salmon and mango sushi rolls with a side of wasabi and ginger. Also available as a veg option.



*Mediterranean Veg Sushi Burrito*  
by Feigels

East meets west: Grilled veg rolled in a sushi burrito served with wasabi mayo and sticky soy ginger sauce.



*Salmon Tacos*  
by Next Door

Fill it up: Tacos with tequila and lime marinated salmon and tuna ceviche, salsa, a yoghurt-based sauce, avo and cabbage.



*Cappuccino Bar*  
by Thirst

Get your fix: Coffee, cappuccino, flat white and cortado. And water and soft drinks for the kids.



*Crepes and Ice-cream Parlour*  
by Sally Williams

Indulge your tastebuds: Luxury ice-cream in countless flavours. Taste it with freshly-made crepes and Belgian chocolate sauce.



*Phic Stix*  
by Paul's Homemade Ice-cream

Stick 'em up: Natural crème anglaise ice-cream, dipped into the sauce of your choosing, sprinkled with toppings.



*Fresh Juice*  
by Pressed Juice Co

Colour me impressed: A rainbow of freshly pressed juices, and some health boosters too.



*Vegetable Chow Mein*  
by Next Door

Wok-fried Asian cuisine: Handmade egg noodles with crunchy veggies, shitaki mushrooms, cashew nuts and teriyaki sauce.



SINAI  
INDABA  
VII

