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2018 GUIDE

south african

Jewish Report

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SARAH KLEGMAN

Los Angeles based Sarah Klegman is Co-Founder of Challah Hub, Head of Content for AtTheWell-Project.Com, and host of the popular podcast "What's Wrong With You?" on the Awkward Human Network.

Her work has been featured in The Huffington Post, The LA Times, The Dodo, Grok Nation, XO Jane, and more. She's made enthusiastic appearances of arguable significance on Comedy Central, The Great British Baking Show, and KTLA. Sessions include a live podcast recording of "What's Wrong with You" and Challah Hub's Challah Braiding Workshop

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by our fantastic volunteers, each of whom has had experience in youth movements, education or childcare.

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JOBURG: Friday 3 to Sunday 5 August. DURBAN: Thursday 9 August. CAPE TOWN: Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 August



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Photo: David

JUST SOME OF THE GREAT HIGHLIGHTS OF LIMMUD 2018

TEN LOCAL SPEAKERS YOU MUST NOT MISS

CAROLYN RAPHAELY
Senior journalist at Wits Justice Project
The Journalist and the Jailbird: Rectifying a Wrongful Conviction.

TEMBEKA NGCUKAITOBI
Advocate of the High Court and Author of ‘This Land is Ours’
Land Reform in South Africa.

GIDON NOVICK
Entrepreneur turned venture capitalist, founder of Lucid Ventures
Pitch your business idea to Gidon at Shark Tank 2018.

ANN HARRIS
Founding member of Afrika Tikkun and President of the African Jewish Congress
The Secret Life of the Rabbi’s Wife.

DANIEL ZIMBLER
Film and TV maker, co-writer of Tali’s Wedding Diary
Presenting his documentary “Goldblatt” on David Goldblatt.

IRWIN MANOIM
Former newspaper editor and lecturer in media studies at Wits
The Fordsburg chazzan who wrote Hava Nagila and the first Hebrew opera.

LAUREN SHAPIRO
Durban based writer and journalist
Women and Wellness: What happens when nice Jewish girls get perinatal depression?

DAVID BILCHITZ
Secretary-General of the International Association of Constitutional Law
Creating a future in the shadow of a difficult past: reflections on living a year of Jewish life in Berlin.

DANNY (ADENO) ABEBE
Shaliach for Habonim Dror South Africa and for the World Zionist Organization
My Ethiopian Journey to Israel.

LAUREN NOSSEL
Advocate of High Court of South Africa and founding member of Hugo’s Greenhood
Don’t waste trash.

MIDDLE EAST TODAY



FIGHTING MEDIA BIAS

SIMON PLOSKER
Simon is the Managing Editor of HonestReporting, the largest grassroots organisation defending Israel from media bias. He has also worked for various NPOs including the Jewish Agency and Board of Deputies of British Jews. He moved to Israel in 2001 and has since worked for BICOM and the NGO, Monitor.
Sessions include:
• *Fighting Anti-Israel Media Bias: Time for Some Honest Reporting*
• *Red Lines: The Eight Categories of Media Bias*
• *The Camera Never Lies? Photo bias in the Media*



VISION AND DIVISION

SARAH KREIMER
Sarah is Director of External Relations at Beit Berl College.
She has dedicated her last 40 years to building bridges between Jews and Palestinians in Israel. She founded and co-directed the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development from 1988. She was a co-founder of Ir Amim, which works toward a more equitable and stable Jerusalem for all who share the city. Her book, Vision and Division in Israel, illuminates the struggles and triumphs of this work.
Sessions include: *Eyes Wide Shut: Jerusalem as a United/Divided City.*



PUTIN IN PERSPECTIVE

PAULA SLIER
Award-winning war correspondent, Paula, is the Middle East Bureau Chief of Russia Today (RT), with a viewership of over 700 million. Paula has worked for over 20 years as a foreign correspondent, anchorwoman and news editor. She can be seen reporting from the frontlines of Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Egypt, Gaza, Israel and Lebanon. Paula is the founder and CEO of News-hound Media International.
Sessions include:
• *Up Close and Personal with Islamic State*
• *Countdown to an Israel-Iran War has Begun.*
• *The Comeback of the Russian Bear*

EYE TO EYE WITH ISIS

JONATHAN SPYER
Jonathan went into the heart of the wars in Syria and Iraq. He will share his stories from the frontline and unpack the causes and effects these gruesome conflicts. He will tell you about his telegraphs from Baghdad, Aleppo and Mosul, and his encounters with trapped Yazidis escaping ISIS genocide. Spyer will recount his meetings with ISIS, Shia militias and Kurdish separatists. Jonathan writes regularly for The Jerusalem Post and IHS Janes.
Sessions include:
• *Syria 2.0: the situation in Syria and how it affects Israel*
• *Middle East overview: competing blocs, emergent processes*
• *Days of the Fall - My journey in the Syria and Iraq Wars*



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Some key principles

- DISCOUNTS:** Limmud SA is an inter-generational learning experience. If you would like to attend the Limmud conference for the weekend as a young adult (19-29), or with your family, you could qualify for discounts. To apply, please contact us at conference@limmud.org.za
- KOSHER FOOD:** There’s delicious food and snacks, constantly available, thanks to the fully kosher catering of Gary Friedman in Johannesburg, Norrie Caterers in Cape Town and Heidi Matisonn in Durban.
- VOLUNTEERS:** Limmud is organised almost entirely by teams of volunteers. We believe there is space for everyone to contribute in their own unique way. We would be delighted if you would volunteer to help.

THE FIVE STEPS GUIDE TO LIMMUD

- LEARNING**
1 Everyone should be a student and anyone can be a teacher. Learning changes people, inspires action and opens new worlds.
- DIVERSITY**
2 We value choice in form, content and style in our programmes. We value the rich diversity among Jews, and so we seek to create cross-communal and inter-generational experiences.
- ENABLING CONNECTIONS**
3 We aim to create opportunities for communities and individuals to connect.
- PARTICIPATION**
4 Volunteering one’s time is a key feature of almost everything we do. No matter how small the contribution, we encourage participants to take an active part in all aspects of our conferences.
- RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**
5 Shabbat and kashrut are observed in all public areas. We recognise that in private areas, people will behave as they wish. Should participants wish to hold a prayer group, they may do so providing they supply all resources and are responsible for the session or prayer group in its entirety.

- JOHANNESBURG**
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- CAPE TOWN**
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south african Jewish Report

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SA courting Iran despite human rights abuses

NICOLA MILTZ

The South African government is cosying up to Iran, acknowledged as one of the world’s worst human rights abusers. A high ranking Iranian delegation spent two days in Pretoria last week, meeting with President Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister of International Affairs and Co-operation Lindiwe Sisulu, among others. The visit went virtually unreported in local media.

While the South African government has taken a strong line against Israel for its human rights record, it is meeting to improve relations with Iran. In November last year, the United Nations Third Committee on Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs approved a resolution criticising Iran for extraordinary human rights abuses.

The recent talks between South Africa and Iran follow US President Donald Trump’s withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the nuclear deal Iran signed with world powers in 2015. Trump said he would impose “the highest level of economic sanctions” on Iran. He threatened that countries or companies that continued to invest in or do business there could risk violating US sanctions, with vast political and economic repercussions.

The SA-Iran meeting agenda included discussions on the JCPOA and improving existing trade ties.

On 13 June, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif posted a picture of himself with a smiling President Cyril Ramaphosa, and tweeted: “Delighted to be back in South Africa, long-time friend & partner of #Iran and solid JCPOA supporter. Excellent talks w/ Min @LindiweSisuluSA & other ministers & w/ Pres @CyrilRamaphosa to forge closer co-operation. Agreed on a joint mechanism to turn political will into action.”

Sisulu retweeted Zarif’s tweet that day, but that was her only public acknowledgement of the meeting.

Zarif told Iranian media he had held “excellent” talks, with senior South African officials in a major bid to forge closer co-operation and bilateral trade relations.

Iran – which is involved in major conflicts throughout the Middle East – has a history of deplorable human rights abuses. It has steadfastly threatened to wipe Israel off the map. Iran is a known supporter of internationally recognised terror organisations Hezbollah and Hamas, which it funds to the tune of millions. This is the country the South African government considers its friend and ally.

Political commentators say the ANC remains loyal to Iran for its historical support of the South African liberation movements during apartheid. Iran severed official relations with SA in 1979, and imposed a trade boycott in protest against the country’s apartheid

policies. In 1994, Iran lifted all trade and economic sanctions against South Africa, re-establishing diplomatic relations.

Interestingly, this cosy relationship between the two states is not without its share of darkness. Like Israel, prior to the re-establishment of ties with South Africa in 1994, Iran had several dealings with the National Party government. The apartheid regime had solid relations with Iran under the Shah. These were severed by Tehran after the 1979 Revolution. The South African government, however, does not seem to hold this against Iran like it does with Israel.

Steven Gruzd, an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs, said the ANC’s ties with Iran went back decades to the struggle.

“History has shown the party has tremendous loyalty to its friends, and doesn’t ask too many questions about their internal affairs, especially when it comes to human rights.”

He said Iran and Israel were both courting African states in a “giant strategic chess game on the continent”.

“SA is seeking to punish Israel for what

it sees as wrecking the peace process with the Palestinians, as we saw with the recall of Ambassador Sisa Ngombane after the Gaza clashes in May. It plays down its not inconsiderable trade with Israel, which quietly chugs along. Even in forums like the United Nations Human Rights Council, South Africa avoids criticism of human rights issues in other countries, especially amongst its friends, citing sovereignty issues. This is perhaps ironic – apartheid was mostly an internal policy, and the ANC spearheaded international condemnation of it.”

He said South Africa painted Israel as having the most egregious human rights record, but other states, including Iran, had worse records.

“One’s enemies always abuse rights; one’s friends never do. All the evidence shows that SA is much tougher on Israel. The Palestinian struggle is refracted through the lens of its own experiences, and ideology clouds that vision.”

The JCPOA nuclear deal was struck in 2015 between Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the US, then led by Barak Obama.

Under the pact, sanctions were eased in return for a commitment not to pursue a nuclear bomb. Trump consistently complained about the agreement, citing perceived flaws, including “sunset” provisions lifting some nuclear restrictions from 2025.

Iran has said it will not renegotiate the nuclear agreement.

Iran’s support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad via the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah in Syria’s civil war, and its backing for Shiite Huthi rebels in Yemen, have added to the friction between Tehran and Western powers.

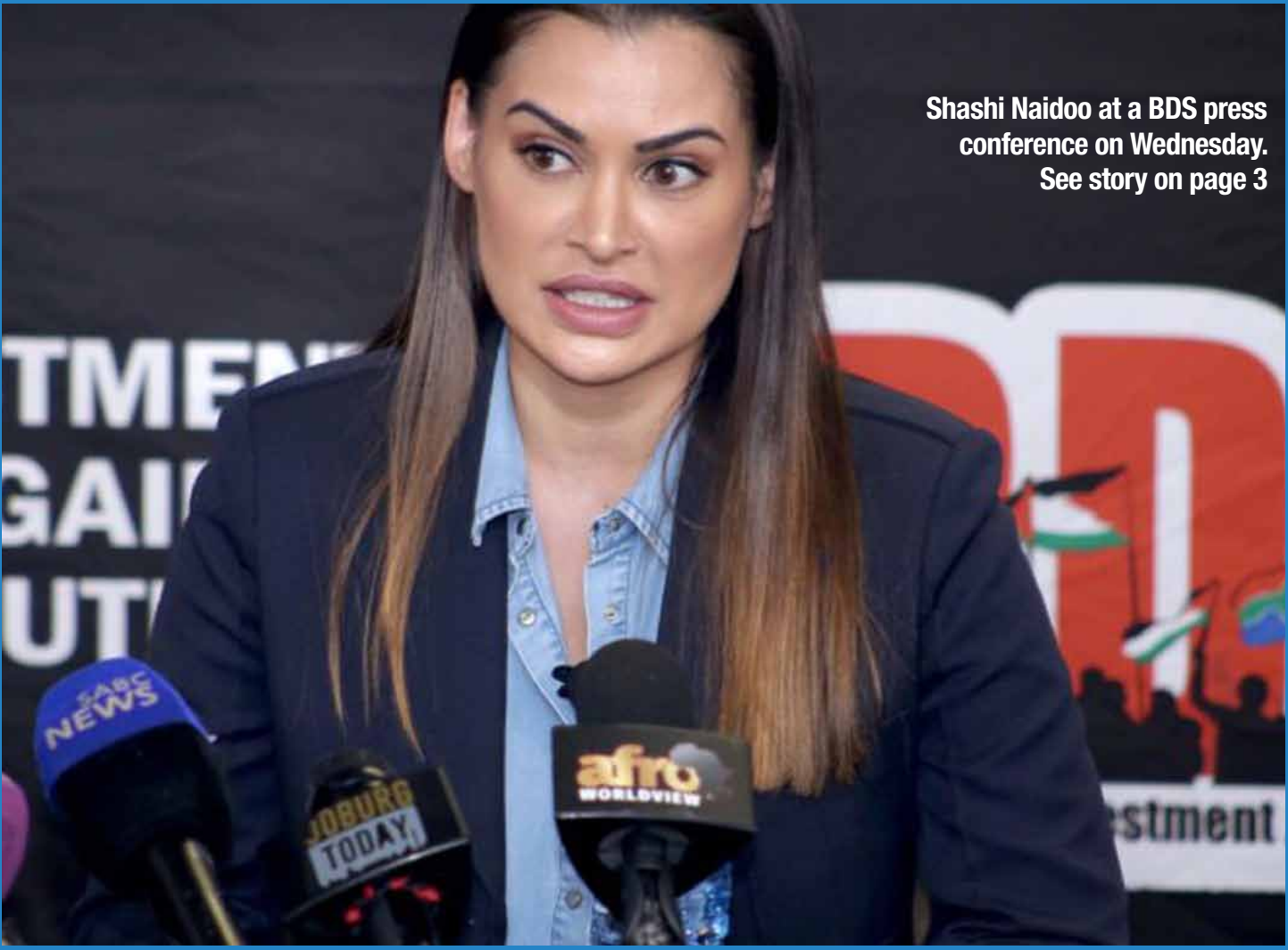
Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has warned that the US will regret pulling out of the nuclear deal “like never before”.

He reiterated his country’s opposition to curtailing its non-nuclear missile capabilities, saying “Tehran will build as many missiles and weapons as needed” for its defence.

According to the Human Rights World Report 2018, executions, especially for drug-related offenses, continue at a high rate in Iran. Authorities in the security apparatus and Iran’s judiciary continue to

Continued on page 2>>

From anti-Israel pariah to BDS poster girl



Shashi Naidoo at a BDS press conference on Wednesday. See story on page 3

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Netanyahu simulates cyberattack to demonstrate security challenges

SHOSHANNA SOLOMON

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday called on nations to collaborate to fight growing cybersecurity threats, which he said could cripple the most sensitive systems of nations and bring down airplanes and fighter jets. To underline the threat, the prime minister simulated a hacking attack in the course of his address.

“One of the greatest challenges facing humanity,” he said, speaking at a cybersecurity conference in Tel Aviv, “is securing our devices, our airplanes, and our networks.” To demonstrate the threat, Netanyahu faked a hacking attack on the conference by a country not far from Israel, with a voice and slide presentation that told the attendees that their bank accounts, private conversations, and information were being shared with the enemy.

This scenario, he said, “is not far-fetched”. States can do this, and much worse.

But, Netanyahu said, nations

can defend themselves from the cybersecurity threat. “It is an ever-present race,” and the outcome is not guaranteed. “We need to run ahead and stay ahead.”

Israel, he said, was in a good place when it came to cybersecurity – and the world recognised this. The nation, which had cybersecurity exports of \$3.8 billion (R51.7 billion) in 2017, gets about 20% of private global investment in cyber security. “We are punching 200 times above our weight here,” he said. “My goal was to make Israel one of the top five cyber powers. We have reached that and even further.”

There are 480 cybersecurity companies operating in Israel, with 50 international research and development centres in the sector. Israel is ranked among the top 10% in cyber academic research, and in 2017, the nation attracted about \$815 million (R112 billion) in investment, Netanyahu told the gathering of about 8 000 attendees from 60 countries at the Cyber Week conference in Tel Aviv.

The Beersheba Cyber Security Complex set up in the south of the country would help boost dialogue between academia, the military, and industry, he said. This generated some risk, especially to the army, but it was worth the risk because “cybersecurity grows through co-operation,” Netanyahu said.

Because the digitised and connected world presented tremendous new opportunities and new wealth, there was no going back, he said.

“We cannot go back to a world of levers, pulleys and couriers.” And since the world was going forward, it was “absolutely vulnerable”.

“Our airlines can be brought down. Our fighter planes can be brought down,” as can systems in all countries. “So, we have unbelievable opportunities”, but at the same time also “unbelievable challenges and we must confront them. There will be no silver bullet. It doesn’t exist”.

Netanyahu said that the national Computer Emergency Response

Team in Beersheba managed to monitor events and stop “quite a bit” of the attacks.

“But, the only way we can address this enormous challenge to the enormous opportunity is to keep running ahead, faster and faster and faster. This is a supreme test for our civilisation. It is going to be tested not only by criminal organisations, but terrorists, and by other states. We have to combine forces, to protect the present and ensure the future.” (*Times of Israel*)



SA courting Iran despite human rights abuses

>>Continued from page 1

target journalists, online media activists, and human-rights defenders in an “ongoing crackdown, in blatant disregard of international and domestic legal standards”.

Iranian law considers acts such as “insulting the prophet”, same-sex relations, adultery, and certain non-violent drug-related offenses, as crimes punishable by death.

The report said Iranian courts, particularly revolutionary courts, regularly fell short of providing fair trials, and used confessions obtained under torture as evidence in court.

Scores of human rights defenders and political activists remain behind bars.

Iranian women continue to face discrimination, according to the report.

A married woman may not obtain a passport or travel outside the country without

the written permission of her husband. Under the civil code, a husband is accorded the right to choose the place of living, and can prevent his wife from having certain occupations if he deems them against “family values”. Women are marginalised in the economy, constituting only 16% of the workforce. Authorities prevent girls and women from attending certain sporting events, including men’s soccer.

According to the 2017/2018 Amnesty International Report, acts of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence and early and forced marriage, are widespread in Iran and committed with impunity.

Authorities have failed to criminalise gender-based violence, according to the report. The legal age of marriage for girls remains 13, and fathers and grandfathers can obtain

permission from courts for their daughters to be married at an even younger age.

The report further identifies the fact that police and paramilitary forces harass and detain women for showing strands of hair under their headscarves (*hijab*), the wearing of which is compulsory. Dirco could not be reached for comment on last week’s talks with Iran.

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:07	17:59	Johannesburg
17:27	18:22	Cape Town
16:47	17:40	Durban
17:07	18:01	Bloemfontein
16:58	17:53	Port Elizabeth
16:52	17:46	East London

Torah thought of the week

The leader within

Moses, G-d’s trusted servant whose devotion and obedience is supreme, has a single career moment of insanity. An infraction which would be negligible for the average man is defining for Moses. In one instant, his fate is altered and sealed.

The people complained that they were thirsty. G-d commanded Moses to “speak to the rock” to produce water. Instead of speaking to the rock, he hit it, violating the commandment, the consequence of which would have an impact on all of Jewish history.

The result is that Moses is decreed not to enter the promised land. Significantly, with the absence of Moses in the forage into Israel, the unique phenomenon that his reign wrought is lacking.

To explain. Throughout Moses’ leadership, the children of Israel were accompanied by a supernatural form of existence. The exodus; splitting of the sea; Sinai revelation; the manna sustenance; and so on, all confounded the laws of nature. Miracles abounded. Moses inspired divine transcendence in a revealed, open manner. Had Moses entered Israel, the process of sweeping all before them would have continued through to its conclusion, including our sages say, the ushering in of the Messianic era.

But with Moses being prevented from entering the land, and Joshua taking the helm, the miraculous accompaniment diminishes. From then and throughout all subsequent generations, the process becomes one defined

by natural law, and man must confront challenges on his terms. In a sense, we are the product of the fatal choice Moses made that day to hit the rock.

The obvious question is: Why did Moses do it? The possibility of an unwitting error, or loss of control, is hardly an option for an individual described as “a man of G-d”, a tzaddik regarded as having mastered his human temperament. The question is intensified.

Our sages offer a fascinating answer.

If Moses was to be the catalyst for the achievement and success of the Jewish people, had he led their march with an illuminated skyline of miracles, an essential and necessary ingredient in the Jewish psyche would be missing.

Three and half thousand years on, we are able to look back and see a pattern of a people challenged, tried and tested and yet, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, repeatedly displaying the ability to rise and succeed in a way that’s unparalleled in the annals of the history of nations.

In Moses’ seeming error, a new chapter began. That of the realisation that, rooted in the Jewish spirit lies the ability to achieve the miraculous. By forging a bond with G-d; embracing the divine strength in our soul; and being fuelled by Torah, the limitations and barriers that threaten are rendered impotent.

The implication is startling. Moses hits the rock with full volition, knowing that he is signing his own fate. His motivation is that of every true leader – the ultimate good of his people – for them to realise that the miracle is not outside, but in them. As they are challenged, their greatness will shine, and they will find the leader within.



Rav Ilan Herrmann

From anti-Israel pariah to BDS poster girl

TALI FEINBERG

“People said they hoped I [would] get raped; others sent me my address, saying ‘we know where you live and you better not sleep at night’.” This is what South African model and celebrity Shashi Naidoo told the *SA Jewish Report* on Monday, after receiving more than 10 death threats and harassment because she posted a series of pro-Israel comments on Instagram.

Just 48 hours later, she had become a poster girl for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions South Africa (BDSSA), and was holding a press conference with the organisation. There, she said that supporting Israel “was a mistake I will regret for the rest of my life”, and she wanted to “re-educate” herself by visiting “Palestine”, which she will be doing with the South African Council of Churches and the South African Jews for a Free Palestine.

Flanked by BDSSA Director Muhammed Desai and Chairperson Farid Esack, Naidoo sat quietly as the men condemned her initial pro-Israel views, and thanked the public for standing up to them. When Naidoo eventually took the mic, she said that the backlash she had received “was a necessity. It was warranted. How else was I going to know I was wrong? It was a form of punishment”.



“We celebrate the outcry [in response to Naidoo’s pro-Israel stance] on social media,” said Desai at the press conference, giving further credence to the harassment she endured. “We will be watching and waiting, and holding her accountable,” he said with a smile.

How did this dramatic change of heart occur? On Monday evening, Naidoo told

the *SA Jewish Report* that her life had been made a living nightmare by Israel-haters: “My mother and friends also received threats,” said Naidoo, who had to ensure that she had security outside her home. “Everyone is saying how ‘uneducated’ I am, but threats like this are not the best way to get someone to change their point of view,” she said, explaining that she had written the comments to defend her friend, DJ Black Coffee, who had come under fire for performing in Israel.

Naidoo explained that she had many Jewish friends, and was married to a Jewish man (Marc Sandler – they divorced in 2011), so she understood how South African Jews were supportive of Israel, and did not think expressing this view would incite such a vicious reaction.

“I asked a friend to help me write a response, and I copied it verbatim, even though that is not exactly my stance – the words were not my own, so this is something I shouldn’t have done,” she admitted. In fact, the points had been written in the context of a completely different debate. Naidoo then found herself being attacked from all sides.

Her post had been factual. She wrote, among other things, that “Israel in 2005 withdrew behind the green line (1967) border, and so does not in any way ‘occupy’ Gaza. Israel is the antithesis of an apartheid state, and Arab Israelis, Jews, Christians, gays, women etc all have equal rights. Hamas, the elected government of Gaza, refuses to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist, and is hell-bent on its destruction. This has been clearly articulated inter alia in its manifesto.” In the many attacks of this statement on social media, hardly anyone refuted these points.

However, ironically, when Naidoo agreed with anti-Israel activists that “Gaza is a sh*thole of immense proportions”, and does not have adequate living conditions, she was attacked by the very people propagating that narrative.

Eventually, Naidoo deleted her pro-Israel comments, and posted a video of herself tearfully apologising for them. She asked for forgiveness from Muslims, and anyone else she may have offended, but the response in the Twittersphere remained relentless.

A man named Waleed Abrahams, whose biography describes him as “full-time dad, part-time coach” tweeted: “Sashi Naidoo, you & Gareth Cliff are cut from the same cloth. Save your million apologies about Muslims. Apologise to the people of Palestine. The damage is done you tart!!”

The vicious response to Naidoo comes hot on the heels of similar aggressive reactions

to radio host Gareth Cliff supporting Israel’s right to defend its Gaza border. “We see on Twitter how people hide behind their screens and pseudonyms attacking someone in a way they would never do face to face,” said internet expert Arthur Goldstuck. “It’s the equivalent of beating someone up in public. The distance of the computer screen dehumanises both the victim and the perpetrator, as can be seen in the language Naidoo used, which she would never use in real life.



Furthermore, even if you delete something, it cannot be removed from social media. People will always take screengrabs. The statement lives on and takes on a life of its own,” he said.

Meanwhile, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, South African Friends of Israel, and a number of prominent members of the Jewish community made statements supporting Naidoo’s right to freedom of speech and to support Israel without being attacked.

By Tuesday evening, a very depressed-sounding Naidoo told the *SA Jewish Report* that she “would like to go to Palestine and see first-hand what’s going on”.

“I want to re-educate myself... this started because of mainly ignorance on my behalf, and I think part of that process is hearing both sides and knowing first hand what’s going on,” she said. “I know it’s a bit of a drastic decision, but I cannot be one side or the other. I don’t want to be a lobbyist for either extreme – I don’t want to be a tennis ball going from one side or the other. I just need to educate myself and know what is going on in the world. It’s a humanitarian issue at the end of the day. So I’m not on either side, but this is part of the journey

that I’ve undertaken to go on.” However, the invitations to her BDSSA press conference had already gone out, showing that she had swapped sides. In response to Naidoo’s dramatic shift, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and South African Zionist Federation released the following statement: “It took less than 48 hours for BDS to do a complete turnaround over Shashi Naidoo. On Sunday, Ms Naidoo was the devil incarnate, the target of multiple death threats for having

dared to tweet comments supportive of Israel. Now, having apologised for her ‘heresy’, she is suddenly a celebrity. Indeed, the intention now is to set her up as a poster girl for the BDS movement.

“If all this represents a victory for BDS, and for anti-Israel extremists in general, it is a decidedly hollow one. Actually, what it represents is a triumph of censorship over freedom of expression, a victory for those who resort to threats, insults, and intimidation to silence those who express views in support of Israel.

“The tactics of the hate lobby merely show how false their claim is to be motivated by human rights concerns. Really, what motivates them is naked hatred for Israel, and a desire to bully other South Africans into going along with their radical agenda. Shashi Naidoo is the latest victim of this bigoted vendetta. Unless ordinary South Africans take a stand and declare, ‘Enough!’, she will not be the last.

“Ms Naidoo has expressed a willingness to learn more about the Middle East conflict. We encourage her in this endeavour. She certainly won’t learn anything but emotive rhetoric and half-truths from the BDS, and we hope that she won’t allow herself to be exploited by an obviously one-sided agenda.”

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Judaism: the ‘Incredible’ balancing act between rights and duty



OPINION

Rabbi Ramon Widmonte

sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender.

In some senses, these are not new ideas. As Jews, we have lived in many societies in which sexuality, as a concept, did not even exist; Paul-Michel Foucault, the post-modernist philosopher, in his classic, *The History of Sexuality*, makes the bold claim that the very idea of sexuality is a modern construct. Whether it is or it isn’t, Jews have lived in societies in which a variety of sexual practises abounded and which were paid no attention.

Today, there is a growing group of people who assert openly a wide variety of sexual orientations and genders. Moreover, we see the plight of many Jews in this space, who are deeply conflicted, lonely, and feel that they are not welcome as Jews.

Here we reach the climax of this issue. On the one hand, in a society which is based on human rights, we all have the legal right to be treated in certain ways, but Judaism is not a rights-based enterprise, Judaism has two pillars, and one of those is duty, not rights.

So what is the duty of a Jew towards a gay friend, brother, or child?

So what is the duty of a Jew towards a gay friend, brother, or child?

All the laws which apply to a fellow Jew apply to a fellow gay Jew. We are both mutually obligated. He is required to fulfil the mitzvot, and so am I. If I intentionally speak *lashon hara* (which I do at times), his duty is still to behave towards me as a fellow. He may not judge me unfavourably, he must visit me when I am ill, and he may give me an aliya in shul. The same holds for me. An individual who is gay is no less a Jew, as Rabbi Dovid Lichtenstein discussed in a recent podcast.

Torah has no stigma within or without for people with differing sexual orientations or genders. It does not categorise such people in a particular way, there is no “gay” category in Torah. As my Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, pointed out, there are some acts in the Torah which have the additional qualifier of being termed a “to’eivah”, such as not giving charity to the poor, cheating on weights and measures, and also homosexual sex, however, this does not create an halachic or social category of opprobrium (we sadly have a fair number of people who juggle weights and measures).

Additionally, we have other duties towards such Jews, duties to be sensitive to their loneliness and needs, as we should be to anyone who is more vulnerable.

But, as we said above, this doesn’t mean acceptance of the rights-based culture and societal outlook which governs most Western liberal democracies. For those people who assert that their primary identity is their sexuality, the Torah responds that in its view, a person’s primary identity is a human being created in the image of G-d and empowered and bound by love and law. These are indeed two very different approaches.

Torah is duty-based, focused on responsibilities, and in such a space there is no doubt that a gay Jew will sometimes feel excluded. So too will other individuals who feel that their identities are not affirmed fully within the encompassing Jewish communal identity.

I believe that we have good reason (based on our historic track record) of being able to navigate this tension for most individuals. It is our duty as Jews to ensure that we focus as holistically as possible on the full gamut of mitzvot, both the love and the law, to preach what we practise and to practise what we preach. If we do this, with true unconditional regard, most Jews will, please G-d, feel both, the tension (and perhaps pain) between their individual sense of identity and need for communal affirmation; but also the warm love and acceptance of being of value and of belonging to an embracing collective.

• Rabbi Ramon Widmonte is the dean of The Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning.

There is a scene from the marvellous animation, *The Incredibles*, which is indelibly seared into my memory. We join the superhero, Mr Incredible, on a regular night of saving the world when suddenly, his attention is caught by a man, Oliver Sansweet, about to cast himself off the top of a building. We watch the attempted suicide tumble down, and we witness that moment of decision on Mr Incredible’s face, we see the conviction, “Not on my watch!”

Our hero gathers himself and leaps across the chasm, catching the victim, and crashing with him through plate glass into the opposite office block. We breathe a sigh of relief – success! But there is a twist to the tail. Later in the film, Mr Sansweet sues Mr Incredible because, as his lawyer claims, “Mr Sansweet didn’t ask to be saved, Mr Sansweet didn’t want to be saved, and the injuries received from Mr Incredible’s actions... cause him daily pain.” We are stunned by the absurdity.

This brief episode captures some key essences of Judaism, and the tension it shares with societies which identify themselves entirely by the rights of their members.

There are two primary pillars to Judaism. On the one hand, from the youngest ages, we teach our children and inject into our social discourse the need for *chesed* – loving kindness.

But we have another pillar, and that is law. We are the nation which stood at Sinai and received the Torah, with 613 mitzvot. Although we often use it to mean “good deed”, the word mitzvah means, “commandment”. In this sense, we have the honour, privilege and heavy responsibility to live lives governed by a moral code, which we accepted as a community, but with which we all struggle as individuals, at various points in our lives.

Like Mr Incredible, we are animated by two urgent drives: the desire to help and nurture, which is inward and voluntary; and on the other hand, even if we didn’t feel anything for that victim, the law, the Torah, would demand that we make the leap, because it is our duty.

Often, these two pillars, the love and the law, overlap. We have mitzvot which mandate that we visit the sick, not judge our fellow unfavourably, not slander, treat another’s possessions and dignity with the same care we would our own, and more. But sometimes they collide.

Our Bill of Rights

Against this background, we understand Mr Sansweet’s legal suit. Coming from a society which identifies itself completely with the rights its individuals enjoy, he is claiming, “I had the right to take my own life, and you, Mr Incredible, infringed on my rights. It is my body, my life, to do with as I please!” And from a rights-based perspective, Sansweet is correct. The South African Constitution can never command us to fulfil a duty, all it can do is enshrine the passive enjoyment of our rights by preventing others from infringing on them. But, there is a yawning gap between a community activated by ensuring its individuals’ rights, and a duty-centric society. One of those differences lies in the rights versus duties focus; and another lies in the balance between the community’s needs and those of its individuals.

Being judged or uplifted

Both the love and the law are aimed at enabling us to bond with the infinite source of life, channelling G-d’s structure for life as well as G-d’s care into an imperfect world and an imperfect me.

I am created because I am imperfect. I embrace that. Devaluing myself or another for their imperfections is questioning G-d’s wisdom in creating us in the first place.

Those who don’t fit in

In every generation there are those in our community who feel excluded from this vision. In Hellenistic Israel, the issues were philosophy and beauty. There were those Jews who felt that the entire world view of Judaism was dated and barbaric, and whose identity was instead grounded in the all-consuming Greek outlook of *hedone*. In Maimonides’ era, there was a generation of Neo-Platonists who rooted their identities in a semi-mystical stoic philosophy. And in each generation, Judaism has applied a fairly consistent approach: accepting without judgement the right of the individual to be torn and conflicted, and supporting the individual; but openly opposing the conflicting world-view.

Sexuality

One of the major fault lines today is the grouping of

For the expanded version of this article, see www.sajr.co.za

Israel and Palestinians ‘lack Mandela-like icon of peace’

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

It is not the Palestinians, but the politicians on Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin (“Bibi”) Netanyahu’s right who are preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

So said Avraham Infeld at the opening of the “Israel at 70” exhibition at the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town last Thursday, where he reflected on Israel through his eyes.

The exhibition was developed by Beit Hatfutsot: the Museum of the Jewish people, and presented by the South African Jewish Museum, in conjunction with the South African Zionist Federation and the Israel Centre.

South African-born Infeld made aliya as a teenager in 1959. He is President Emeritus of Hillel International, the largest Jewish campus organisation in the world, and is described as a compelling teacher and leader.

Infeld said he had no choice in making aliya. “I don’t remember my parents talking about anything else. I was one of the first pupils at King David, where my mother was head of Jewish Studies. I grew up in a very, very Zionist home. My dad insisted that I go. ‘You’re a young man, Israel is a Jewish state, bye!’, he said.

“I came to Israel not as a refugee, but as someone who found Israel his natural home.” His parents and sister arrived soon afterwards.

Infeld recalled walking in the streets of Tel Aviv four months after his arrival, when air-raid sirens went off. “I had no idea what I was supposed to do. Everybody was standing frozen. After two minutes, they stopped, and a guy said to me: ‘Today is Yom Hashoa.’

“The entire country comes to a standstill to pay tribute to an event that didn’t even happen in Israel. I’ve never heard of anything like it in

the world. I know of no event that says Israel is a Jewish state other than that one. It was my first encounter, and I fell in love with Israel immediately.”

Infeld remembers marching to the Kotel on the fourth day of the Six-Day War. “The Six-Day War was a massive victory, but it brought a major challenge to Israel that we’re still battling with today,” he said, referring to the growing number of non-Jewish citizens, and the “serious threat” to the Jewish character of the country if it is to keep all the territories.

There is so much good happening in Israel, the only thing missing is peace, Infeld said. “It is more innovative than any other country. It is one of the top two economies in the world. If we can innovate all the other things, surely we can innovate peace.”

It is his wish that Israel should become a state reflective of all Jews, whether they live there or not, and take into account the impact it has on communities in the Diaspora. “Israel was created to support the Jewish people, not the other way around,” he said.

“Israel has to go back to being deeply, deeply concerned about all the Jews in the world, not only those who come there. The Kotel cannot belong only to some Jews, it has to belong to all Jews.”

In the case of South African Jewry, he hopes that the government “recognises the truth and not propaganda [about Israel], that it was not created to take land from anyone. We deserve a different situation with the general public understanding Israel. This will make South African Jews much more comfortable”.

Infeld believes that a one-state solution would be a “terrible error” for Palestinians and Jews. He insists that neither the Palestinians nor the



Rowan Polovin, the Chairman of the SAZF (Cape Council); DA MP Darren Bergman; and Avraham Infeld, the President Emeritus of Hillel International

Israelis have a “desperately needed” Mandela to take them forward to peace. “Bibi can’t move towards a two-state solution because he has partners on the Jewish side who don’t let him move that way.

“Israel’s electoral system is probably our biggest enemy,” he said, explaining that the country adopted the electoral system of the World Zionist Organisation, which was unsuitable to running a state with its 17 or 18 political parties for 4.5 million voters. “No-one ever gets a majority, so they always have to create coalitions,” resulting in parties with a small percentage of the vote having undue influence.

“It’s not the Palestinians, it’s the people on his right who form his coalition that are preventing a Palestinian state. I don’t like Bibi, but I feel desperately sorry for him.

“I know of tens of thousands of Palestinians who’d be our partners in a two-state solution,”

Infeld maintained. “It’s complicated, it’s tough.

“We’ve managed to solve serious things – we’ll solve this. We need commitment and pressure from Diaspora Jews.”

A member of the audience asked how it was possible to make peace with people who hate you. In his response, Infeld spoke of how he had recently paid a condolence visit to a family in Bethlehem and “they’re saying the same thing about us. They’re told Israelis hate them, and want them out of the land”.

Most Arabs had reached the following conclusion about Israel: “I don’t want them to be there, but they are there,” Infeld said.

He described Tel Aviv University’s Faculty of Humanities’ recent decision not to play *Hatikvah* at its graduation ceremony to avoid offending Arab students “a criminal decision, a terrible mistake”. “This is a Jewish state with an Arab minority – it must have all the rights, but it must realise it’s a Jewish state,” he said.



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Jewish Report

Yet another pro-Israel voice taken down

I was hoping to steer clear of the anti-Israel lobby in South Africa this week and tackle something completely different. It is getting repetitive.

However, that sense is so often dangerous. Like crime in South Africa, the more it happens, the more we get lulled into a sense of complacency. In fact, so few crimes make it into the local media these days because our sense of horror has been dulled by how common it is.

In the case of the anti-Israel lobby, as one person vocalises any support for Israel – making even the most puerile of statements – they get brought down. Last week, we saw how City of Johannesburg Health and Social Development MMC Mpho Phalatse was suspended because of a massive outcry against the fact that she supported Israel.

This week, local personality and model Shashi Naidoo got death threats after calling Gaza “a sh*thole” on social media. While it sounds superficial and quite silly, her explanation was not inaccurate (even though she didn’t come up with it herself).

She didn’t even have time to polish up on her Middle East politics before the bottom fell out of her world, and she got more than 10 death threats. Why? Simple. She apparently took Israel’s side.

This woman did what so many people do, and didn’t think much before putting something on social media. In response, she had sponsorships cancelled, and people alienating her in the extreme.

Apologising, apparently, wasn’t enough. In fact, she was hauled over the coals for saying the wrong thing in her apology.

The end result is that this woman – sounding battered and bruised, with no place to turn – took what she apparently believed would be her saving grace. She turned to BDS – the very organisation that those who turned against her support – for help. Talk about being beaten into submission! Was it fear? Did she think she would get her sponsorships back if she went against what she supposedly believed in?

Ultimately her reasons are irrelevant. However, it was a real win for BDS. She is its new poster girl – showing how apparently misguided the rest of us are for believing in a Jewish state.

Now, she is planning to go with the anti-Israel lobby and visit “Palestine” – not quite sure where that is exactly – to get an education. She makes no mention of even going to Israel. No, her lexicon has changed totally. As she now speaks about Palestine, any guess what kind of “education” she will get?

This is so frustrating. The point is, we have totally lost the freedom to voice our opinions. We have lost our freedom of expression – one of the pillars of our democracy.

Just put Israel or Palestinians into social media, and you will get an emotional response, no matter what you say. Should you say something that supports Israel in any way – and you are not the Israeli ambassador – you will be harassed and condemned.

And, if you are not strong enough to withstand the pressure and vitriol, you will go down. The only way up, apparently, is to turn into a BDS supporter.

This sickens me. While I feel quite strongly that I am entitled to be critical of the Israeli government and things done in the name of Israel, I still support the Jewish state. This does not make me a human-rights abuser, in fact, I remain a humanist.

I believe in a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, and I long for the day it happens. I am sick of this revolting game that is being played by the anti-Israel lobby, in which it attacks individuals with an opinion it doesn’t approve of.

It has long since stopped being about the cause, but rather the individual, and how to make their lives so unpleasant, they have nowhere to turn.

I witnessed a social media conversation recently in which a group were talking about bringing Israel to its knees with sanctions, etc. They insisted it was the only way that Israel would give Palestine back to the Palestinians. And what of Israel?

The aim is to literally destroy a phenomenal country and its people. Why is it that those on the periphery of the anti-Israel campaign – those who feel for those they see being badly treated – cannot see that there are two sides to this situation?

I do understand why people keep their views on Israel to themselves, especially after witnessing so many of these attacks on anyone who believes in the state of Israel.

However, these attacks are all the more reason we need to stand up and be counted.

Every week, we print a *Times of Israel* supplement. As I see it, it is the only publication in South Africa that shows Israel for what it is. Four pages a week are gleaned from the daily *Times of Israel*. We have lost our sponsorship for this, and while I believe people love getting a sense of what is happening in Israel and all the various views of what is happening there, we may lose this if we don’t get sponsorship. If you can, help us keep it going so that the true picture of Israel is still available in our country.

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

What is the impact of the US pulling out of the UN Human Rights Council?



DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

This week, the United States quit the United Nation’s primary human rights body, the Human Rights Council (HRC). It is the Trump administration’s latest snub of the international community, and the first time since the HRC was established 12 years ago that a serving member has dropped out voluntarily.

It is a move that is a long time coming. Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the UN, has on more than one occasion criticised the HRC for being “grossly biased against Israel”. Washington, it seems, finally had enough.

Israel is the only country in the world whose rights record comes up for discussion at every council session, held every three months, under “Item 7” on the agenda.

The council hears more reports on Israel than Syria, Iran, and North Korea combined. During its session in March this year, it passed five resolutions against Israel, compared with two against Syria, and one against North Korea and Iran respectively.

Not one was passed against China, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Zimbabwe, or Turkey, countries known to carry out severe human rights violations against their populations.

Tasked with reviewing the human rights record of the 193 UN member states, some of the worst violators of human rights sit on the HRC. Among them are Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Congo, and Cuba.

Israel is not a member, and has repeatedly criticised the body as being an anti-Israel platform. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has suggested changing its name to “The Council for Resolutions Against the Only Democracy in the Middle East”.

Following the recent spate of violence on the Gaza-Israel border, the council passed a resolution calling for a commission of inquiry to investigate “individual criminals” by Israeli soldiers and commanders.

Israel has boycotted previous such inquiries, like the Schabas Commission that investigated Operation Protective Edge (2014) and the Goldstone Commission that investigated Operation Cast Lead (2009) by denying investigators entry into Israel.

Although such commissions have no practical ramifications on the ground, they damage Israel’s diplomatic standing and reputation. More importantly, they could serve as the basis for lawsuits against Israeli army officers and officials at the International Criminal Court (ICC). For four years, ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda has been weighing the question of whether or not to formally open a war-crimes investigation into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She is still undecided. In light of the recent Gaza violence, she has said that should she decide to go ahead with one, any new alleged crimes will be included. These would cover current clashes to anything that happens in the future.

It’s a double-edged sword for the Palestinians. On the one hand, they recently requested the ICC to expedite

a fuller investigation into Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, it could also lead to charges being brought against Palestinians, including rocket assaults on Israeli civilians.

Either way, such investigations could take years, and there’s no guarantee at this stage that the ICC will even conduct them.

Israel is not a signatory to the ICC, but theoretically, it is possible that Israeli citizens or institutions could be prosecuted for alleged crimes on Palestinian land.

The court was established in 2002 as a “last resort” to step in when a state is unwilling or unable to investigate crimes on its territory. Since then, Israel has opposed its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There are 123 countries party to the ICC, including the Palestinian Authority (PA). In 2015, they all signed the Rome Statute. Palestinians are allowed to file petitions from the Gaza war of 2014 onwards, in addition to calling for investigations into Israeli settlements and the indictment of Israeli officials.

Jerusalem argues that Palestinian requests to the ICC hold no legal validity as Israel is not a member and the PA is not a state.

What’s more, Israel sees the ICC as anti-Israel. In fact, Israel sees the United Nations as an anti-Israel structure, complaining that it singles out the Jewish State for disproportionate criticism.

The Israeli position has always been that a Palestinian state cannot be achieved by UN resolutions alone. It believes that direct negotiations between the sides is needed if any lasting peace is to be achieved.

This is in stark contrast to the global diplomatic strategy currently being employed by Palestinians, who are trying to join as many UN agencies as possible. This is not as a means to revive the peace process, but rather to bypass it.

A full pull out by the US from the HRC is no doubt a victory for Israel. However, it does raise the question of who is left to defend the country after her biggest and most powerful supporter is no longer there.

Many in Israel don’t care, arguing that the HRC is ineffective and biased. As for the HRC itself, it is now left without one of its traditional defenders of human rights. This has a direct impact on countries like China who, while flexing their diplomatic muscles, are simultaneously cracking down on human rights at home.

On several occasions, the US has been the main country willing to stand up to Beijing. The US has already withdrawn from the UN cultural and educational agency, UNESCO, of which Israel is also no longer a member.

In 1945, the UN was established to prevent another global conflict involving world powers. Until now it has achieved this, but it has proven to be ineffective when it comes to regional conflicts and proxy wars.

From 1947, when it passed a resolution partitioning Mandatory Palestine and paving the way for the creation of Israel, it lacked buy-in from the Arab world. Today it lacks buy-in from Israel, causing it to fail repeatedly on the Israeli-Palestinian front.

• Paula Slir 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 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards*.



Photo: AFP

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

Righting a universal wrong

OPINION

Ian Levitt



“Is there anything that we can do? But it was so long ago? We were little children when it happened. But, we have no money. He is very powerful, connected, dangerous. He still has access to children...”

I knew then, at the very first consultation, that I wanted to help. I had to help.

When I was first approached to act, and was told in graphic detail what the late Sidney Frankel had allegedly done to little children, I became incredibly angry. How could a human being hurt an innocent child – and under the nose of her parents, Frankel’s best friends? What drives a person to be so evil?

I offered the services of my firm pro bono, and we started to work. The fact that the crimes were allegedly committed decades ago posed a major legal problem. There would be a bar to instituting both a civil case and a criminal prosecution.

Would this case end as quickly as it began? Not a chance. I spoke to two eminent senior counsel, Advocate Anton Katz SC, who would assist on the constitutional side, and Advocate Laurence Hodes SC, who would assist on the criminal and civil side. Both offered their services pro bono. Subsequently Advocate Leigh Franck also joined this team. Angelike Charalambous and Sadiyah Samrod of my firm were brought in to complete the team. Frankel, bring it on!

Section 18 of the Criminal Procedure

Act differentiated between rape and other forms of sexual assault. While rape can be prosecuted at any time, sexual assault (often labelled as sexual abuse) could be prosecuted only if a charge was laid within 20 years from the date that the crime occurred. This was the case irrespective of whether the complainant had proof of the crime, even an admission from the suspect, or an acknowledgment by his wife that it had happened.

This did not seem logical.

My initial instructions in this matter were to press ahead with criminal charges. They wanted Frankel exposed for what he allegedly was. But, because at that stage there was no criminal avenue open to the so-called “Frankel 8”, a summons was prepared.

As the matter gained publicity, more survivors contacted me. The Frankel 8 decided to press ahead, not knowing what they would encounter personally, legally or publicly. Every survivor’s history of alleged abuse by Frankel was different, although much of the time, the same *modus operandi* was employed by him in isolating the children. When each survivor told me their story for the first time, I literally saw the darkness and pain in their eyes. It strengthened my determination to find a solution.

Law can be a mechanism for societal change and, armed with Katz’s advice, I believed I had to challenge Section 18 of the Constitution if justice was to prevail. To challenge the 20-year prescription period, criminal charges had to be laid first. The National Prosecuting Authority declined to prosecute.

Driven by a strong, supportive team, and determined to pursue justice, the



Frankel 8 applied for direct access to the Constitutional Court. Direct access was refused. This meant we had to go the long route, via the High Court first, even if Frankel passed away before the Frankel 8 were able to prosecute him.

In May 2017, the Frankel 8 approached the High Court, and were successful in their application. Section 18 of the Criminal Procedure Act was declared unconstitutional by Acting Judge Clare Hartford.

In a ground-breaking judgement, Judge Hartford held: “The law must encourage the prosecution of these nefarious offences, which are a cancer in South African society, and must support victims in coming forward, no matter how late in the day. The law should not smother a victim’s ability to bring sexual offenders to book, as it presently does. Victims should not be hushed by Section 18 of the CPA.”

An application was then launched to the

Constitutional Court, and argument was heard in November 2017. In a unanimous judgement, the Constitutional Court confirmed that Section 18 of the Act was constitutionally invalid as it was irrational and arbitrary. The effect of the judgement is that there is no longer a distinction between rape and sexual abuse victims.

The Frankel 8, together with our legal team, changed the law on sexual assault. The Constitutional Court lifted the 20-year time bar within which victims of sexual assault had to report the assault. In delivering its judgement, the Court stated: “Although rape is the most reprehensible form of sexual assault, other forms of sexual abuse also constitute a humiliating, degrading, and brutal invasion of the dignity and the person of the survivor. Sexual abuse in all forms, not only rape, infringes the survivor’s right to bodily and psychological integrity.”

The Talmud teaches us that destroying a soul is like destroying an entire world. And, saving a life is like saving an entire world. This resounding judgement has not just changed the life of eight people, but millions of sexual assault victims’ lives. Paedophiles now have no window to crawl out of to escape prosecution. As long as they live, they will be at risk of being imprisoned for their heinous acts.

This is just the beginning. I am setting up a small yet dedicated team that will assist on a pro bono basis, to the extent that it is possible, with the criminal prosecution of any person that has perpetrated a sexual crime against a child. Let their silence find in me a voice.

• Ian Levitt is the attorney who represented the Frankel 8 in this case.



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Jewish Report 2018

ABSA KIA Europcar LCC

Are our children screen addicts?

ELIANA CLINE

We try to ensure that our children stay away from drugs, alcohol and other addiction-forming substances, but internet technology is a challenge for parents, given its prevalence in the world today.

Young kids are adept at trawling through apps and by age 10, are self-taught experts at smartphone or tablet navigation. “Just Google it, Mommy” has become part of their daily lexicon.

Children spend a significant portion of the day interacting with screens. By the age of four, research shows that they are spending almost 150 minutes a day navigating screens and by age eight, consume almost three hours of media in a typical day. This includes computer, cellphone and tablet use, as well as listening to music and reading, says Dr Brent Conrad, a psychologist in Canada who runs the treatment centre, TechAddiction.

Many parents know that excess screen time is detrimental, but may not be aware of its effect on the brain’s development.

Dr Nicholas Kardaras, a US-based addiction expert and author of the 2016 book, *Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking Our Kids – and How to Break the Trance*, describes how compulsive technology use can neurologically damage the developing brain of a child in the same way that drug addiction can.

In an interview with *Vice*, a US magazine, he explains: “Kids’ brains develop during key

of Southern California and the author of *The Hacking of the American Mind*, also addresses the addictive properties of technology. “It’s not a drug, but it might as well be. It works the same way,” says Lustig.

In studying what happens to our brains when they’re addicted to something – be it to sugar, heroin or alcohol – Lustig has found that the brain responds to technology in much the same way it responds to other addictive substances.

“Technology, like all other ‘rewards’, can over-release dopamine and over-excite and kill neurons, leading to addiction,” he says.

Too much use of technology can cause stress in the brain, which has two negative effects. Firstly, more stress leads the brain to release cortisol, which can kill neurons on the hippocampus – the brain’s memory centre. Secondly, the stress can inactivate the brain’s prefrontal cortex, or

the “executive” part of the brain, which limits dopamine and our sense of pleasure or reward. When the brain gets used to a higher level of dopamine, it wants us to keep seeking out the addictive substance or habit, explains Lustig.

Kids who are exposed to screens are more vulnerable at younger ages. So-called “high screen-diet kids”, who are raised on iPads and the like, are more prone to develop addictive behaviour when it comes to technology. These include kids who are over-exposed to *Minecraft* in first grade or to social media in adolescence. The result is mood dysregulation when they have their screens taken away.

“You see the exact same withdrawal symptoms with screen addiction that you see with substance addiction. I’m not saying that screens are as lethal as heroin, but they’re certainly as addictive,” says Kardaras on fatherly.com.

SIGNS OF DIGITAL DEPENDENCE

Even if a child is not addicted to the extreme, parents should watch out for:

1. Lack of interest in other activities.
2. Constant distraction by technology. Are you unable to communicate with them when they’re using digital devices?
3. Problematic behaviour when they’re unable to access digital devices. Are there tantrums when they’re unable to access their phones or tablets? Do they become aggressive or act out of character?
4. Constant talk about their screen time. On occasions when they’re not using screens, do they often refer to them – for example, by discussing things they have seen or done online?
5. Withdrawal symptoms. Do they seem anxious or upset when they can’t access their devices – and then calmer once they can?

Parents need to understand the power and the danger of the internet, and take responsibility for deciding on how your children access it. That way, you equip them with the correct skills to use, manage and incorporate technology into a balanced life.

By setting up healthy habits for screen time while they’re young, kids will be better able to take these habits into adulthood and navigate the digital world in a more mindful and productive way.

Are we losing our children to gaming?

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

It was a Saturday night, and we had six little boys over for a pre-Barmitzvah celebration. While grateful that they were entertaining themselves, there was something strange in the way they were interacting.



developmental windows when they engage their active imagination in such things as creative play. These windows are when the body builds the most neuronal connections. Kids who are just passively stimulated by a glowing screen don’t have to do the neural heavy lifting to create those images. The images are provided for them, thus stunting their own creative abilities.”

A crucial part of childhood development is the process of creativity. Research shows that kids who spend hours every day on screens have a lower creative ability.

Says Kardaras. “One of the best things that a child can do developmentally is to use their imagination. Kids have to read books and use their imagination to create the visual imagery of the story.”

There are functions that develop at certain age milestones, given the right environment. While the brain can adapt at any age, the results are optimal when we use these specific developmental stages to grow these skills.

Take language development, for example: in the right window of development a child’s grasp of language will flourish. If this ability is stunted from an early age, the neuro-synaptic muscles which work to fine-tune language comprehension tend to atrophy.

Robert Lustig, a professor of paediatrics in the division of endocrinology at the University

Four of them were glued to a FIFA game on the TV, one was actually playing the game, and the other three were cheering him on. Normal, you might think. But their opponent was an anonymous individual from the FIFA 2016-loving void, who could be any age, and who probably did not even speak the same language as them.

One of the other boys sat on the couch with them, but he was engrossed in a different game on his iPad with someone else. The sixth boy was in a different room, on another computer, playing the latest “shooter” craze, *Fortnite*, and chatting through headphones at the same time. When asked who he was talking to, he responded “friends from class”.

Sad, you might think. Kids don’t really socialise these days. But, these boys were engaged in social interaction, and they were having fun – just in a different way.

The point is, so-called millennials – children born after 2000 – don’t limit their interaction to the people in the room. They assume that whatever they are doing will include participants from outside their immediate physical realm. These can be friends who are not in the room with them, or anonymous people in the wider digital ether.

Some may know people in the conventional physical world, but only become friends only after they find each other digitally – often in the case of *Fortnite*.

Fortnite is the latest gaming craze. It is a cross between *Minecraft* and the *Hunger Games*, according to a recent article in *The New York Times*. *Fortnite* differs slightly from other games in that it has a strong social element. Friends can team up, and if they are not in the same physical space, they communicate through headsets. They develop strategies, cheer one another on, or just trade banter. In fact, these seems to be the game’s key selling points for kids.

Experts on global trends point out that the digital world is making the world much smaller culturally. In other words, a youngster with access to a smartphone, games and the internet in Somalia will have more in common

with a youngster in, say, Ireland than we may think.

Of course, all of this applies only to children with access to such tools – read middle class or upper-middle-class families – but the barriers are fast breaking down with cheaper smartphones and broadband.

So, what does the digital divide – and there really is a divide between those who were and weren’t born with an iPad in their hands - mean for our kids? Is it affecting the way they socialise, does it make them more vulnerable/less able to have a conversation? And/or is it making them more masterful in terms of developing split-second reflexes, heightened spatial and mathematical ability, access to information, and global savvy?

It’s a question pondered by teachers, psychologists, social workers and media law experts, who are concerned with the vulnerability of youngsters in “digital socialising”, such as cyberbullying, reputation damage, and online predators.

“Though there are benefits to gaming like quick reaction time and cognitive skills, children are losing out on the lessons learnt through non-verbal communication – which makes up about 65% of our communication,” says Fran Chetwin, a clinical psychologist in private practice. “To a certain extent, it affects levels of EQ, or social learning, which is crucial to make one’s way in the outside world.”

She warns about the negative consequences of many youngsters and teens’ “lack of impulse control”, particularly in a medium in which it is easy to say what you might never say face to face.

“We see many disasters,” she says. “The fallout of social media interaction includes exclusion and social bullying, causing depression, stress, anxiety – and this to my mind presents a greater danger than predators.”

“Unprecedented levels of connectivity comes with unprecedented levels of risk – from a legal, reputational, psychological, and health perspective,” warn legal and communications experts Emma Sadleir and Sarah Hoffman.

They recommend that parents educate their children on the risks of the “interweb”; make sure that they have tight privacy settings in place; and that their children balance screen time with real-life activity.

The latter can be difficult in an environment like Johannesburg, where there is no centralised, free place for children to socialise, like a beach, for example.

A King David School counsellor, who wanted to remain anonymous, pointed out there just aren’t that many options for kids to socialise, hence gaming looms large in our tweens’ lives. Real-life interaction is limited to playdates, house parties, or malls – and as we can see in the example above, even when children are in the same room, they are also on their devices.

The counsellor said the gaming obsession was age related to some extent, with younger children more involved than teenagers, who gravitate towards what we might call more “traditional” socialising.

But, though young adults still appear to be doing the same thing at malls they always have, shopping, eating and watching movies, retail is catching onto the digital trend.

From large malls down to individual shops – even financial services – the focus is on how to give the customer an experience as well as a transaction, and how to link the physical and digital worlds. Banks are putting games onto devices in waiting areas, malls are investing in all-encompassing digital entertainment areas, shopfronts are becoming personalised and interactive.

The bottom line is that we can’t seal our children off from artificial intelligence. It’s important to accept that all human interaction inevitably involves some sort of digital interaction.

We are literally at the very start of the age of the cyborg – the mythical half man, half machine. What is critical is that we don’t lose our humanity while doing so, our emotional intelligence, ability to read each other face to face and communicate with honesty and love.

Global Cup keeps us glued to the box

OPINION

Julie Leibowitz



The Soccer World Cup is a jamboree that takes over homes, living rooms, spouses, and children. And if you happen to be living in the country hosting the tournament (as we were in 2010), it can take over your emotional, retail, and work life as well. At the time, we also had to grin and bear the dulcet sounds of those midnight Vuvuzela festivities down the road – RIP SA World Cup 2010!

It is that time again for this real-life, old-fashioned, couch-potato event, with 64 matches, eight groups, 32 teams, 31 days, and 12 venues, some of which are an education in language and geography in themselves – can you pronounce Nizhny Novgorod?

Aside from the team you drew in the office competition, there are other reasons to panic. Watching the FIFA World Cup 2018 requires a trip to Russia, and if that can't be arranged, you need a DSTV connection, a very good friend, or a local sports bar with a big-screen TV.

Our family ditched our DSTV contract in favour of cheaper streaming options. But, with a son who lives and breathes soccer, we had to get a DSTV connection fast – or send him off to boarding school.

So, weeks before the competition started, we contacted Multichoice to find out about secondary streaming options. Then, to make sure that we could watch wherever we were, we experimented on our iPads, cellphones and computers to find which streamed the signal

the best, and how we could watch as a family. It felt like organisation on a global scale – which, I suppose is appropriate for a global event.

We were not alone in trying to figure out how to get connected for the few weeks that the Cup was in play. One Jewish family revealed that they had kept their DSTV Premium subscription precisely because of the World Cup.

Though our family is soccer mad, it seems our fervour isn't shared by everyone. "Fortnite trumps the World Cup. It's the much older boys who are interested not the new generation, in my opinion," one of the moms I contacted told me.

Another suggested that I should write about how to be a "sports widow", or "how the World Cup saved my marriage". She was alluding, of course, to the fact that for many people – particularly women – the event is a big yawn or a constant battle over the TV remote.

"One of my congregants had a wedding anniversary on the same day as the opening match," a local rabbi told me. "He wasn't sure what to do. I told him to take his wife to a restaurant with a big screen and sit facing the screen. That way, he could do both – celebrate the anniversary, and watch the match." (Soccer widow, anyone?)

Of course, for observant Jewish families who love soccer there is the issue of what to do about those matches being played on Shabbat. They can't be watched live, and must be recorded and watched later.

"Maybe the time difference [between Russia and SA] could work in our favour for those afternoon matches," one individual quipped. This could be the case with a match played in Yekaterinburg – which is two and a half hours flight east of Moscow (Russia has nine time

zones). However, seeing as Moscow is officially only one hour behind South Africa on global time zones, it's not likely.

Though neither Israel nor South Africa made the cut, it hasn't dampened our enthusiasm for the most beautiful game with the most melodramatic fouls.

And, in spite of some of the ugly politics, like the cancellation of the Argentine warmup in Jerusalem two weeks ago, or the inevitable controversies about the costs of building FIFA-sized stadiums, the World Cup is a truly global moment. Sitting on our couches in our living rooms, we can pretend that we live in a global village – with some strange accents – where "prefects" in black keep order at the flip of a card. It gives us something to talk about that isn't world peace or global poverty. We'll get back to that after the match.



World News in Brief

Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt meet Jordan's King Abdullah

Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt, two of the Trump administration's point men in negotiating a Middle East peace plan, met King Abdullah of Jordan in Amman on Tuesday.

Kushner is a senior White House adviser, and Greenblatt is the Middle East peace envoy. A day earlier, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made an unannounced visit to the Jordanian capital to meet Abdullah.

Kushner, who is Jewish and the son-in-law of President Donald Trump, and Greenblatt, discussed "increasing co-operation between the United States and Jordan; regional issues; the humanitarian situation in Gaza; and the Trump administration's efforts to facilitate peace between Israelis and Palestinians", according to a White House readout of the meeting.

The meeting comes after reports last week that Kushner and Greenblatt would visit the region's capitals to hone the Middle East peace plan they have been working on. They reportedly will also visit Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia in coming days.

Netanyahu's office on Monday said that the Prime Minister had travelled to Amman to meet Abdullah and that the two leaders discussed "regional developments; advancing the peace process; and bilateral relations". The announcement also said that Netanyahu "reiterated Israel's commitment to maintaining the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem", as he did at each meeting with Abdullah.

The last public meeting between Netanyahu and Abdullah took place in November 2014. (JTA)

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Jewish Report 2018

ABSA KIA Europcar LCC

Shark Tank sharpens prospects for new businesses

JORDAN MOSHE

Four well-dressed young men appeared before the Shark Tank at Limmud last year. Their business idea sparked interest among the sharks, and they got funding from two members in the tank.

“The Shark Tank was incredibly helpful for our business,” said Joshua Miltz, Jonathan Ferrer, Dean Joffe, and Bradley Goldman, last year’s winners. “It forced us to question our business model, what we had already built, and what we aimed to build going forward.” Their proposal was so well received, they got R2 million in funding for their idea, and went on to found Bitfund, a cryptocurrency investment platform.

“We got some great exposure from the event itself,” they said. “The audience and the networking that followed gave us serious reach in terms of connections and potential clients. Building our business over the past year has been an awesome experience – things like market fitting, agile business development, and getting our name out there have been a huge focus.”

This year’s sharks – Howard Sackstein, Gil Sperling, Gidon Novick, and Joel Kessler – are determined to find the next big idea, and see it come to fruition.

These business fundis are giants in their own right, making them a force to be reckoned with. They all possess business acumen of note, and know exactly what sort of talent they are

looking for. “We will choose applicants based on whether they’re solving a major problem,” says Sperling, the co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of Popimedia, and Head of Investment Committee at Kalon Venture Partners. “We need to see some serious innovation, ideas that can flip things over in South Africa and in the world at large.”

“I’m far more attracted to technological innovation,” he said. “Tech enables that type of revolution far better, and it can make a real change. However, we won’t limit ourselves. Last year, we were very impressed by a drama school idea. Such a project involves education, and is thus an investment in our society. It doesn’t matter what area the idea is in, as long as it involves making a real change to the everyday.”

Sperling stressed that experience was not essential, and inexperienced applicants could still get backing. One thing, however, is non-negotiable: the need to impress. “Applicants need to wow us in the six to seven minutes they have. Are you changing the world, are you passionate, and do you want to see dramatic change?”

Novick, the founder of Kulula.com, agrees. “Applicants should have a strong and unique business plan, not just an idea. They should be able to demonstrate that they have capability, experience, energy, flexibility, resilience, confidence, and the ambition to achieve success in their business.”

“It is necessary that they clearly demonstrate the problem they are solving for. They should state where they are in the process of building their business, what has been achieved to date, and what assistance and/or capital they need.”

The type of idea these sharks are looking to invest in, said Sackstein, is one that will stand out immediately. “We’ll know it when we see it,” he said. Sackstein is the Executive Director

must remember that the sharks are committing their own money to the project. It’s not a charity, but a commercial decision.

“I have not bought into crypto mania myself,” he said, “but two of my fellow sharks offered R2 million for a stake on the spot last year. Can you imagine the excitement of sitting in that audience when someone is willing to do that for a share in someone’s business? That is part of the magic of

which were for punting the proposal, and the rest for the sharks to respond. “This means that unless we choose to extend the session, we will probably admit only six teams to compete.”

Benjamin said the amount the sharks chose to invest in the project was not set, and the winners could negotiate the amount they were looking for in exchange for equity in their venture. But, whether a team wins or not, fledgling entrepreneurs



Gil Sperling (shark), Dean Joffe, Gil Oved (shark), Howard Sackstein (shark), Joshua Miltz, Jonathan Ferrer and Bradley Goldman

of Saicom Voice Services. “Different sharks look for different things, but we all need to see whether the proposal is a practicable business or just an idea.”

“Ideas alone are irrelevant, it’s all about implementation,” Sackstein said. “We want to see if this is the right jockey to ride the business horse and make it successful. People

this event. We are hoping to attract entrepreneurs of all ages, people with real ideas that can generate a profit, all they need is a little capital.”

The session will be held at the Limmud conference in August. Organiser Sheryl Benjamin explained that because the event lasted only one hour, applicants were limited to roughly six minutes each, three of

can only benefit from the experience.

“The sharks are more than happy to mentor applicants, helping them to make any improvements that will be of help to them.”

• *Applications for the Limmud Shark Tank should be directed to sheryl@icon.co.za as soon as possible. The deadline for applications is 30 June.*

MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS ARE ENTITLED TO EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION IS THAT SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS WITH ASHKENAZI HERITAGE ARE OF LITHUANIAN DESCENT AND THAT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO PROVE THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR LITHUANIAN CITIZENSHIP ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN A EUROPEAN PASSPORT. THE FACT IS THAT MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS DO QUALIFY FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP, WHETHER THEY CAN PROVE THEIR LITHUANIAN LINEAGE OR NOT, AND MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS OF SEPHARDIC HERITAGE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR EUROPEAN PASSPORTS TOO.



Adv. Avi Horesh has in depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and in his experience, the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship. As their descendants, these Jews are eligible for European citizenship which will result in their obtaining a EU passport.

Adv. Avi Horesh is a leading Israeli lawyer who specialises in the field of European immigration and citizenship. He has in-depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and advises that the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship, and accordingly, their descendants are eligible for European citizenship, which would result in their obtaining a EU passport. Horesh explains that many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would accordingly be entitled to Polish citizenship and an EU passport.

In addition, many Sephardi South African Jews of Greek, Moroccan or Turkish origin, amongst others, are entitled Portuguese citizenship, and an EU passport.

Ashkenazi:

Adv. Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed. After WWII borders in Europe changed, resulting in the countries in which cities were found changing. The adjacent map of Poland and Lithuania illustrates that cities such as Vilnius, which was a polish city until 1939, is now a Lithuanian city. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi:

Descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for Portuguese citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Adv. Horesh currently resides in Israel,

but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship. He has a full understanding of local immigration laws.

Living in Israel — a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius — provides Adv. Horesh with quick and easy access to Poland and Lithuania. Accordingly, he is able to work closely with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications for European citizenship.

In addition, and as a result of his close ties with Portuguese authorities to date he has a 100% success rate with applications for Portuguese citizenship.

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Silly Gaza weapons could lead to serious war

JUDAH ARI GROSS

For more than two months, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been flying kites, birthday balloons and inflated latex condoms into Israel, relying on the gentle Mediterranean coastal breeze to push them across the border.

Silly as they may sound, these weapons are no joke. Most of them carry metal mesh pouches containing a burning piece of coal or oil-soaked rag, which have sparked hundreds of fires in southern Israel, destroying thousands of acres of land and causing



A masked Palestinian prepares a balloon that will be attached to flammable materials

Photo: Abed Rahim Khatib/Flash90

intended to kill and inflict damage,” Israel Defence Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus told reporters on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, a cluster of balloons carrying one such small explosive device landed in a backyard in the Eshkol region of southern Israel, getting stuck on a trampoline, a spokesperson for the local government said.

“Balloons on a trampoline in the backyard – it’s a decorative play area and beckons the most innocent ones, yet our children have lost their innocence because of this phenomenon,” said Meirav Vidal, the homeowner.

The kites are almost all handmade. Three criss-crossing scraps of wood, bound in the middle with a piece of wire, form a hexagonal frame, which is covered in a piece of plastic sheeting. The tails are often made out of cut-up homework assignments.

The balloons come in two main varieties: birthday and inflated condoms.

Adding to the absurdity, many of the birthday balloons have printed on them endearing or celebratory lines turned ironic under the circumstances.

“I ♥ you,” was written on one balloon to which a small explosive was attached that landed on a highway in southern Israel last week. It shut down traffic until a police sapper detonated it under controlled conditions.

In at least two cases, balloons covered in hearts with the Arabic word habibi, or “my beloved” touched down in fields in southern Israel – one in an empty lot, the other in the middle of a peanut field. In those cases, a police sapper also had to be called in.

millions of shekels in damage.

A smaller number carry small explosive devices, which seem to have not yet caused injury because of repeated warnings by police and local government officials not to approach them.

“They are not toys, they are weapons that are

Human Rights Council ‘hypocritical and self serving’ Haley says

ERIC CORTELLESSA

In a cutting op-ed published on Tuesday night, the United States envoy to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, excoriated the United Nations Human Rights Council for including repressive regimes and blocking investigations of human rights violations around the world. She also said that a wide range of countries talk about supporting Israel – but only in private settings.

The op-ed by the former South Carolina governor was published in *The Wall Street Journal* shortly after the Trump administration announced that it would withdraw from the global body, citing, among other things, its “chronic bias against Israel”.

The member nations’ intense focus on Israeli actions, coupled with the organisation’s failure to address other countries’

wrongdoing, was chief among them.

“In the past decade, this organisation has passed more resolutions to condemn Israel specifically than to condemn Syria, Iran and North Korea combined,” Haley wrote.

That narrow focus on the Jewish state, she said, was reflected in the council’s refusal to eliminate its Agenda Item 7 (“the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories”) which, she said, “targets Israel unfairly by mandating that each session include a discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

Haley explained that the Trump administration was angered by the body blocking efforts to put pressure on despotic regimes that harm civilian populations. “[It] obstructs investigations and reports, while interfering with the council’s ability to name and shame the perpetrators of the world’s worst atrocities,” she said of the council.

Yet another reason, which she said was “even more frustrating”, was that many of the HRC’s member nations were open to siding with Israel, but would say that only when the cameras weren’t present. They also voted against Israel in resolution after resolution, she said.

“Many countries agree with the US about shunning human-rights violators and supporting Israel – but only behind closed doors,” Haley said.

“Despite numerous overtures, these countries were unwilling to join the US in a public stand,” she said. Haley warned the UN a year ago that the US would leave the body if certain reforms were not carried out. But on Tuesday, she used even starker language. “We take this step because our commitment does not allow us to remain a part of a hypocritical and self-serving organisation that makes a mockery of human rights,” she said.

AFTER SLEEPLESS NIGHT OF ROCKETS, SOUTHERN ISRAELI SCHOOLS REOPEN

JUDAH ARI GROSS

Schools in southern Israel opened as normal on Wednesday morning, following a “sleepless night” of dozens of rocket and mortar attacks from the Gaza Strip, including one that hit just outside a kindergarten, local officials said.

“Lessons in education facilities are being held as usual. Security co-ordinators from the communities [in the region] will accompany the students’ buses to schools,” said a spokesperson for the Eshkol region, the area that was hit hardest by rockets.

Though the schools opened as usual, the day’s activities were altered in light of the predawn Palestinian attacks and the Israel Defence Forces’ counterstrikes in Gaza.

“Lessons will be adapted to the events of the night. The teaching staff will speak to students and try to identify any problems,” she said.

Around midnight on Tuesday, Israeli jets bombed three Hamas positions in the Strip in response to numerous airborne arson attacks by Gazans earlier in the day.

Minutes later, Palestinians in the Strip launched the first of many barrages at southern Israel, triggering sirens and sending thousands into bomb shelters.

Over the course of the next four hours, about 45 rockets and mortar shells were fired at southern Israel, with at least six

exploding inside communities, causing damage but no injuries. One of them hit just outside a kindergarten in the Eshkol region.

Seven projectiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defence system, and three fell short of the border and landed inside Gaza, the army said. The rest appear to have fallen in open fields.

It was the second time in less than a month that an Israeli kindergarten was hit in an attack from the Gaza Strip. On 29 May, a mortar shell fired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group exploded on a tree in the yard of a kindergarten, causing damage but no injuries as the building was empty at the time.

On Wednesday morning, Gadi Yarkoni, the head of the Eshkol region, praised the IDF for carrying out the initial airstrikes in response to the Gazan arson attacks.

“Eshkol residents had a sleepless night last night,” Yarkoni said. “We support the IDF for its response to the terror kites, which harm our way of life. We expect the IDF to continue working to bring back calm to the region.”

The army said it believed Hamas, which rules Gaza, was behind the rocket and mortar attacks, but was investigating to see if other terror groups were involved, like the Iran-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which has repeatedly carried out attacks on Israel from the Strip.

Former minister could face death penalty for spying for Iran

RAOUL WOOLLIFF

Former Minister Gonen Segev – found guilty of drug smuggling in 2006 – has for years been a source of ridicule, his name usually only brought up in public discourse as a comparison with other loud-mouthed, rule-breaking legislators.

But the charges announced on Monday alleging that he engaged in espionage against Israel for arch-foe Iran could result in him facing much stiffer penalties than the three years he served in prison a decade ago.

If Segev is found guilty of handing information to Iran – as alleged in an indictment revealed by the Shin Bet security agency on Monday – he could face either the death penalty or up to life imprisonment, legal sources told *The Times of Israel* following the bombshell announcement.

Segev, who served as Infrastructure and Energy Minister from 1995 to 1996, provided Tehran with information about locations of security centres and Israel’s energy industry, the Shin Bet said. As somebody who sat in government meetings and headed up ministries dealing with

energy and national infrastructure, Segev would have had access to sensitive material during his time as a politician, although it is unclear how damaging the information would have been 20 years later.

The ex-minister is also accused



Photo: Haushot TV screenshot

Former Israeli Minister Gonen Segev

of making contact with Israeli figures in security, defence and diplomacy, in order to mine them for information to send to Iran. According to the Shin Bet, he tried to make direct connections between his Israeli contacts and Iranian handlers, presenting the spies as businesspeople.

He is also said to have met with his Iranian handlers in hotels and safe houses around the world,

using a special encrypted device to send them messages in secret. He even allegedly travelled to Iran twice to divulge security secrets.

After having been extradited to Israel from Equatorial Guinea last month, he was indicted in a Jerusalem court on charges of

assisting the enemy in wartime, spying, and a number of other related crimes.

While Segev was sentenced to a relatively short five-year prison sentence for drug smuggling (which was cut by a third for good behaviour), the Israeli legal system is unlikely to treat his latest apparent crimes nearly as lightly.

“Even the death penalty is an option,” said Michael Sfard, an

Israeli lawyer and political activist specialising in international human rights law and the laws of war.

“Espionage is in its own category according to Israeli law, and the most serious punishment is available,” said Sfard, who co-authored the biography of the Soviet spy Marcus Klingberg, perhaps the most damaging spy in Israel’s history, with Klingberg himself.

From 1957, Klingberg, then Deputy Director of the top-secret Israel Institute for Biological Research at Ness Ziona, south of Tel Aviv, and a professor of epidemiology at Tel Aviv University, passed information about Israel’s chemical and biological activities to the Soviet Union.

Charged with spying for the KGB for three decades, Klingberg served 20 years in prison, the first 10 in solitary confinement.

Segev could end up with a similar sentence, or worse.

“He’s facing a life sentence or death penalty for the crime of aiding an enemy in a time of a war, and 15 years to life sentence for espionage,” said Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, the President of Shurat HaDin – Israel Law

Center, a Tel Aviv-based non-governmental organisation whose aim is to put terror organisations out of business.

Only one person has ever been put to death after a death sentence by a standing Israeli court: Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann, one of the architects of the Holocaust, sentenced to death on 1 June 1962. In 1948, the country put to death Meir Tobiansky for treason, after a field court martial, the first and only execution of an Israeli.

John Demjanjuk was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and sentenced to death in 1988. But five years later, Israel’s Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Demjanjuk was not death camp guard “Ivan the Terrible”, and overturned the 1988 verdict.

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Netanyahu holds rare meeting with Jordan king

TOI STAFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Jordan’s King Abdullah in Amman on Monday, ahead of an expected visit by top White House officials seeking to lay the groundwork for the release of an Israeli-Palestinian peace plan.

The trip to Amman by Netanyahu was disclosed by the Prime Minister’s Office only after he returned to Israel on Monday evening. It was their first publicly confirmed such meeting in four years.

“The king and the prime minister discussed regional developments, advancing the peace process and bilateral relations. Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated Israel’s commitment to maintaining the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem,” Netanyahu’s office said.

Attending Monday’s meeting was Mossad Chief Yossi Cohen; Netanyahu’s military attaché, Eliezer Toledano; Chief of Staff Yoav Horowitz; a representative from the National Security Council; and the prime minister’s top economic adviser, Professor Avi Simhon.

The rare meeting came after months of strained ties between Jerusalem and Amman over the killing of two Jordanians by an Israeli embassy guard.

The two leaders last spoke in July 2017, as Netanyahu sought Abdullah’s help in calming protests over metal detectors placed on the Temple Mount.

The meeting came days before White House special adviser Jared Kushner and US peace envoy Jason Greenblatt are due to arrive in the region for peace talks.

Kushner and Greenblatt are

Photo: Kobi Gideon / GPO/FLASH90/ File



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets Jordanian King Abdullah II

expected to visit Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, ahead of the expected unveiling of United States President Donald Trump’s plan to broker Mideast peace.

Although Kushner and Greenblatt will meet regional leaders to iron out details of the Trump peace plan, they are not scheduled to hold talks with the Palestinians, who have refused to meet US officials ever since Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December, and then moved the US Embassy to the city last month.

An aide to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday condemned the US peace push and a reported plan to raise hundreds of millions of dollars from Gulf donors to rehab the Gaza Strip.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh warned Mideast countries “against co-operating with a move whose goal is to perpetuate the separation between Gaza and the West Bank and lead to concessions on Jerusalem and the holy sites”.

Top Indonesian cleric calls for ‘compassion’ between Muslims and Jews

RAPHAEL AHREN

Visiting Israel this week, the secretary-general of the world’s largest Muslim organisation appealed for “compassion” between Jews and his coreligionists which he said could help the Jewish state build ties with Muslim countries around the world, including Indonesia, where he serves as a cleric and government official.

“I want to call [on] the whole world to choose a better future. Let us choose rahma, meaning compassion and caring about others,” Yahya Cholil Staquf, the Head of the 60-million member Nahdlatul Ulama,

told *The Times of Israel*.

Part of Nahdlatul Ulama’s mission is to advance “world peace, including the independence of the Palestinian people”, Staquf said. Asked whether, as part of that mission, he is interested in promoting political relations between Jerusalem and Jakarta, Staquf, who is a member of Indonesia’s Presidential Consultative Council, replied: “Yes, of course. See, we are in the middle of complex problems that needs to be dealt comprehensively in a global manner.”

Any process aimed at full normalisation between

US said to be seeking to raise funds for Gaza from Gulf states

STUART WINER

The United States is reportedly seeking to raise more than \$500 million (R6.8 billion) from Gulf states to fund energy and economic development projects aimed at improving the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip as a prelude to revealing President Donald Trump’s plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The funds would be used to develop an industrial area in the northern Sinai region, which abuts Gaza, including a power station and factories to serve the residents of the Palestinian enclave, the *Haaretz* daily reported on Monday.

White House special adviser Jared Kushner and US peace envoy Jason Greenblatt, who are due in the region for talks this week, are expected to pitch the ideas to leaders in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, the report said.

Washington hopes that improving the situation in Gaza, where electricity and drinking water are meagre, will help calm the security situation, which has deteriorated into weeks of violent clashes

between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in the Strip.

In addition, the US hopes that plans to boost the quality of life in Gaza will create a positive atmosphere ahead of Trump presenting his peace plan, an event for which no date has yet been set, the report said.

Sources told *Haaretz* that a large part of the proposals for Gaza revolve around basing service infrastructure in northern Sinai, including, in addition to a power plant, a seaport, factories to manufacture building supplies, a water desalination plant, and a project to construct a solar energy site near the Sinai city of el-Arish.

The projects would be expected to create jobs for Gazans and also improve the security situation in northern Sinai, making it appealing to the Egyptians, who for years have been battling to suppress an Islamist terror campaign in the peninsula.

Deteriorating living conditions in the Strip have been cited by security officials as a major factor fuelling the violent clashes on Israel’s border, as well as a debilitating sense of desperation.

UK Jewish students blame Labour Party for campus anti-Semitism

STUART WINER AND TOI STAFF

British Jewish students are not applying to certain universities in the United Kingdom because of fears of anti-Semitism, which they say has increased as a result of the Labour Party’s failure to deal with the issue within its own ranks, the BBC’s Newsbeat radio show reported on Monday.

Allegations of Labour anti-Semitism have grown since Jeremy Corbyn, a pro-Palestinian socialist, was elected leader of Britain’s main opposition party in 2015. Some in and out of the party say Corbyn, a long-time critic of Israeli policies, has allowed anti-Jewish abuse to go unchecked.

The outgoing National Chair of Labour Students, Melantha Chittenden, told Newsbeat the party leadership had not made enough of an effort to confront anti-Semitic sentiments in the party.

“It’s stopping Jewish students from being able to go to the campuses they want to, or even engage in activities they want to

on campus,” she said. “That’s problematic, and I don’t believe Jeremy Corbyn wants that to be happening. He needs to challenge the problem head-on.”

Dave Rich, of the Community Security Trust, which deals with Jewish security, told

express them,” Rich said.

Corbyn, before being elected Labour Leader, once referred to members of the Hamas and Hezbollah terror groups as his “friends”. He has since said he regrets those comments.

Josh Holt, of the Union of Jewish Students, had no doubts that Labour’s issues with anti-Semitism had led to an increase in such sentiments on campus.

“I think that if you look at the situation with anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, it is clear there is a link – you are seeing more anti-Semitic incidents,” Holt told Newsbeat. “That’s because it’s more permissible. You can get away with acting in this way.”

The BBC radio show visited the northwestern city of Manchester, home to one of Britain’s largest Jewish communities, and spoke to Jewish high school students.

One pupil, identified only as Sam, said he discounted one university he would have liked to attend because of occurrences of anti-Semitism.

“That university had incidents in the past of anti-Semitism, and my parents said to me they wouldn’t feel comfortable with me

going, so I didn’t apply,” he said.

Others said that when selecting a university, they would take into consideration what support was available for those facing anti-Semitism on campus.

Karen Pollock, the Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, gave examples of open anti-Semitism on campuses this year, citing a university Facebook group chat that said, “Six million Jews ain’t enough”, and a university where during student orientation week, T-shirts were handed out with a slogan saying the Holocaust was “a good time”.

“It’s shocking that someone would write this stuff, and it’s shocking that someone would distribute it,” Pollock said.

Labour declined to be interviewed for the show, instead submitting a statement that read: “The Labour Party takes all complaints of anti-Semitism extremely seriously, which are fully investigated and appropriate disciplinary action taken in line with our rules and procedures.

“Labour’s new General Secretary Jennie Formby has made it her first priority to speed up and strengthen our procedures, and to develop a program of political education to create deeper awareness and understanding about all forms of anti-Semitism,” the statement read.



Photo: Victoria Jones/PA via AP

Newsbeat that anti-Israel campaigns on campus were an opening for anti-Semitism.

“They can create an atmosphere where Jewish students feel incredibly uncomfortable, and those people who do have anti-Semitic attitudes feel confident to

Rio mayor sings to raise funds for Holocaust memorial

MARCUS M. GILBAN

Thousands paid to watch the mayor of Rio de Janeiro sing at a concert last week in which the entire box office was donated to the construction of a Holocaust memorial in Brazil.

About 4 000 people listened to several gospel songs sung by Marcelo Crivella, who is a fervent Evangelical Christian and a long-time friend of the local Jewish community. Last year, he laid the cornerstone for the memorial.

“A Holocaust memorial is important to prevent and defend humankind from such barbarisms. Experience shows if we are not vigilant about the past, it simply returns. The monument will be an alert in the consciousness of everyone who visits it,” Crivella said after last Thursday’s concert.

The politician, who is an enthusiast of the Jewish state, announced the donation of the public area to build the memorial before about 2 000 Jews attending a Yom Haatzmaut celebration on 22 April. Crivella has reportedly visited Israel 40 times.

“It was really touching to see the mayor

sing ‘I am Israel’ with the whole audience standing up, surrounded by Israeli flags waving in the hands of several youths by the stage. It was a unique moment in memory of the Holocaust and glory of the Jewish state,” said Israel’s Honorary Consul Osias Wurman.

Crivella is the nephew of Edir Macedo, the founder of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of G-d about 40 years ago. He has also played a pivotal role in the church, gathering about 5.2 million followers at 13 000 temples across Brazil and worldwide. The church owns the second-largest TV station in Brazil, as well as a broad conglomerate of newspapers and radio stations.

In early April, the words “Holocaust Never Again” in Portuguese were projected on Brazil’s National Congress buildings in Brasilia, an unprecedented honour to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day in the country’s capital city.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil’s second largest city, is home to about 35 000 Jews. About half of Brazil’s 120 000-member Jewish community lives in Sao Paulo, the country’s financial centre. (JTA)

Ben-Gurion’s first ever soccer match leaves him unmoved

TOI STAFF

To mark the opening of the 2018 FIFA World Cup last Thursday, the Israeli Defence Force released archival material documenting Israel’s founding father, David Ben-Gurion’s, outing to watch his first-ever soccer game.

Made up of a record of conversations the Israeli leader, who was also the Defence Minister, had on the matter with Shimon Peres and generals Moshe Dayan and Meir Amit, the archive shows that although Ben-Gurion seemed to enjoy aspects of the beautiful game, it wasn’t an

experience he was in a hurry to repeat.

“For the first time in my life I saw a soccer game,” he said after watching the Israeli and French militaries play against each other to mark Israel’s ninth independence day on 11 May 1957. “They were fine at passing the ball back and forth to one another, but getting it into the goal – they failed. Our goalie was outstanding, he rolled over twice to catch the ball.”

Then Chief of Staff, Moshe Dayan, replied jokingly: “He could have done it once, but for the benefit of the crowd, he did it twice.”

Maj. Gen. Meir Amit told

Ben-Gurion that one of the reasons for the team’s success – the IDF beat the French 3:1 – was his presence at the match.

The premier’s response? “I will not go to that again.”

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‘Sperminator’ accuses Israel of banning his seed

STUART WINER

A Jewish American man who has fathered dozens of children through sperm donations has accused the health ministry of banning Israelis from using his seed.

According to the New York Post on Saturday, there are seven Israeli women waiting to use sperm donated by Ari Nagel, a mathematics professor, who has earned the tabloid nickname, “The Sperminator”.

Six samples have already been stored at sperm facilities in the country, but the prospective mothers are not able to use them due to ministry restrictions.

A seventh woman who in December paid for Nagel’s ticket to fly to Israel had her plans foiled when a private sperm clinic destroyed his sample shortly after he handed it over.

“There’s a ‘do-not-donate’ list, and I’m the only one on the list,” lamented Nagel, 42, who has three children within his marriage, and another 30 from sperm donations.

Nagel said an employee at the private Israeli clinic told him his sample was destroyed as they were not permitted to store it.

In a letter to the would-be mother, the health ministry explained that Israeli sperm banks were not allowed to collect Nagel’s sperm, and that all facilities had been alerted of this directive. The woman has sued for the right to use his sperm, and the case is to be heard by the High Court of Justice.

Nagel faces two bureaucratic hurdles in the Israeli system. Under Israeli law, sperm donation must be anonymous, with neither donor nor recipient knowing the other’s identity. Nagel’s notoriety makes him unsuitable, but the prospective mothers argue that his reputation is what makes him so sought after in Israel.

If the donor signs that he will co-parent the child, then the donor and recipients can be acquainted. Nagel had signed such paperwork with the would-be mother – as he did with the six other women who have frozen his sperm



Photo: Renee Glatz-Zand/TOI

in Israel at the cost of about \$1 400 (R19,288) a year.

But the health ministry said it did not accept Nagel’s claim that he is serious about being an active father. One of the women received a letter saying, “considering the number of women whom Mr Nagel impregnated with his sperm... it is our position that the claim of an intention to perform true joint parenthood with Mr Nagel is not sincere or reasonable”.

“They’re banning my sperm,” said Nagel, adding that the other six Israeli women waiting to use his samples “cry to me all the time”.

Most of his other donations were made in the New York area. Of his 33 offspring, seven children were born last year, and another 10 are on the way.

Sometimes, he has had sexual relations with the women. In other instances, he has provided sperm donations at the women’s homes, or accompanied them to doctors’ offices, IVF clinics, or cryobanks to produce specimens. There have even been occasions, as reported in the press, when Nagel has ejaculated into menstrual cups in public men’s restrooms and handed them to women who inserted them into their vaginas in nearby public women’s bathrooms.

It is not the first time that Nagel’s siring services have run into legal complications. In 2016, the New York State Health Department ordered Nagel to get a “tissue banking activities” license because of his donations.

INNOVATIVE DOCTORS AT SHEBA MEDICAL CENTER-TEL HASHOMER ARE INJECTING NEW LIFE INTO AILING PATIENTS

BY KEN STEPHENS

Some of the best doctors in the world are injecting new life into gravely ill patients of all ages at Sheba Medical Center (also known as Tel Hashomer) in Ramat Gan, Israel, where innovation is the essence of the hospital's daily DNA.

Sheba Medical Center is the largest and most comprehensive facility of its kind in Israel and the Middle East region, as a whole. It was established 70 years ago during Israel's War of Independence to treat wounded soldiers. As it has grown and developed with the State of Israel, Sheba Medical Center has transformed itself into an all-encompassing medical city. The Center is divided into two hospitals - acute and rehabilitation - which account for over one million visits annually and offers cutting-edge, multi-faceted care in nearly every discipline of medicine.

The current edition of Forbes Magazine's "Best Doctors in Israel" (Hebrew), named 188 medical professionals at Sheba Medical Center as being the best in their specific fields of medical expertise.

The government of Israel also recently chose Sheba Medical Center to become the nation's

first "City of Health", where revolutionary technological innovations will help improve the quality of life and longevity of the Jewish State's citizens.

"Israel serves as a global incubator of innovative ideas for a variety of reasons," said Dr. Eyal Zimlichman, Deputy Director General, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Innovation Officer at Sheba Medical Center. "First of all, it's in our genes. Secondly, there is the military aspect, where we are taught to improvise when necessary in the field. These things allow us to be naturally innovative. This has trickled down into the medical field, where we are offering the highest level of medical care."

Dr. Zimlichman recently unveiled Sheba's plans for its futuristic Innovation Center at a meeting for potential donors and investors in Manhattan.

Prime examples of Sheba Medical Center's innovative efforts revolve around combating potentially fatal diseases such as cancer with immunotherapy, oncology's new medical "magic bullet" and targeting hemophilia with a novel drug. Global pharmaceutical

and biotech companies routinely conduct hundreds of clinical trials at Sheba during the year because of the medical center's elite research and laboratory facilities.

Immunotherapy is a treatment that literally uses your body's own immune system to invade and destroy cancer.

CAR-T (Chimeric Antigen Receptor) and TIL (Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocytes) cancer immunotherapies are not universal cancer cures at this stage. However, on-going clinical trials (conducted for major pharmaceutical companies and America's National Institute of Health) at Sheba Medical Center's oncology unit, where "end stage" cancer patients are being treated with CAR-T, which specifically targets leukemia and lymphoma, and TIL that zeroes in on melanoma and ovarian cancer patients, have injected new hope into dozens of patients, who were only weeks or months away from certain death.

Seventeen cancer stricken people were treated at Sheba during an initial CAR-T trial, after all of these patients had displayed zero improvement in the wake of traditional chemotherapy treatments and bone marrow transplants. Of those seventeen, 75% had a complete response to the CAR-T treatment. One of those CAR-T patients, an 8 year-old girl from Bnei Brak, was the first child to achieve COMPLETE remission from childhood leukemia. A Sheba Medical Center oncologist boasted, "When we came to give her the CAR-T cells, she was very, very sick. She couldn't even get out of bed. When we came back to visit her three weeks later, she was going back and forth on her rollerblades!"

There have been equally incredible results in the treatment of hemophilia.





Recently, a 1 year old boy, became the youngest patient in the world suffering from both severe Hemophilia A and an unusual allergy to be treated at Sheba Medical Center with a novel drug that only recently was approved for use in the USA. The drug developed by a biopharmaceutical company in the USA, contained a "bispecific antibody" that was injected into the child. According to clinical trial results published in the renowned New England Journal of Medicine, the new drug has shown a 90% reduction in bleeding in children and a 70% reduction in adults.

"This is a new exciting era with many novel options for improved care and even complete cure of patients with hemophilia," boasted Professor Gili Kenet, Director of the National Hemophilia Center at Sheba Medical Center. "The child's mother is so happy with the new treatment. The child had experienced a head trauma, but required no further therapy at all. Usually, this type of injury with a hemophiliac patient would involve hours in the Emergency Room ER with repeated doses of intravenous coagulation factors. However, there were no complications as his hemostasis (blood factors) was completely normal!"

At Sheba Medical Center, a troubling diagnosis is never a reason to give up hope. With its talented doctors discovering and working with new therapies, Sheba Medical Center is providing patients with the prescriptions for long and healthy lives.

SHEBA – ISRAEL'S LARGEST MEDICAL CENTER

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Dancing to a tune of a different kind

NICOLA MILTZ

Dancer Londiwe Khoza might be thousands of kilometres from her beloved Cape Town, but she is dancing her dream with the best of them in Tel Aviv, Israel.

The 24-year-old classically trained ballerina is broadening her repertoire every day at the world renowned Batsheva Dance Company. Under the watchful eye of internationally-recognised choreographer Ohad Naharin, Khoza is taking dancing to new heights.

Naharin hand picked Khoza in 2016 to be his protégé as part of the much coveted Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. She was nominated for the initiative by Gregory Maqoma, the Director Founder of the Vuyani Dance Theatre in Johannesburg. After a thorough selection process, she was earmarked by Naharin to be his chosen dancer. Their relationship blossomed to the extent that now that the programme is over, Khoza has been contracted for another year with the Batsheva Dance Company.

“I am so grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with the finest in a country that continues to inspire me daily,” she told the *SA Jewish Report* this week from her Tel Aviv apartment.

When she arrived in March 2016, the shy dancer from Camps Bay, had no idea what to expect. “I was just so excited to be going to a new place to start afresh and see where the ride took me,” she said, adding that it was quite a shock to be so far from home.

“It’s not like you’re a half hour bus ride from home, it’s a ten hour flight away. It forced me to grow up quickly,” she said. She recalls the initial difficulties she encountered with the language, especially when it came to things like apartment hunting, going to the bank, or visiting the doctor.

Hebrew remains a work in progress, she admits with a laugh.

For Khoza, a graduate of the Cape Academy of Performing Arts who performed with the Cape Dance Company and Joburg Ballet, Israel is a

melting pot of cultures where she feels free to be herself among a global assortment of dancers from around the world.

“Tel Aviv is so multicultural. I love the enormous pool of cultures here. It’s just so refreshing,” she said. “I love to be in a place that has so many different people all with such diverse styles, energies and personalities.”

Khoza not only had to contend with settling down in a foreign country, she had to face up to immense new dance challenges which have stretched her beyond her wildest imagination.

Naharin developed the now well-known Gaga dance style, which was completely foreign to the South African dancer whose classical ballet training initially clashed with the unconventional movement language.

using imagery to guide their movement and self expression, by focusing their attention on specific body parts without the use of mirrors in the studio.

Gaga has been described as “playfully Idiosyncratic”, and a very immersive-style of dance.

The dance style becomes more familiar to her with each new day, always posing new challenges along the way, which keeps it exciting. she said.

Her advice to other dancers is “be yourself”. “Don’t change your beliefs, be true to your core, and don’t allow people to influence you to change. Always remember where you come from, and never forget why you started dancing in the first place,” she said.

“There are a lot of talented dancers out there whose bodies do crazy things, but the passion and the reason why they started dancing can be missing.”

Khoza started dancing at the age of five, when her mom took her to see a performance of *Swan Lake*. The dancers left her mesmerised.

“I was so inspired, so moved. I knew in my heart that I wanted to be able to move and inspire people in the same way one day. To make a real impact on their lives.”

She said the dancers who move her the most are the ones who have that rare ability to “tell a story with their body that hasn’t been written before”.

Her experience working with Naharin has been “incredible”, she said. “He has a wealth of knowledge and experience which I’m so fortunate to be exposed to. I feel like I’ve learnt so much, some of it not even related to dance, life stuff.”



“Gaga has opened me up to a whole new world of movement. It was very challenging in the beginning, and remains so,” said Khoza. She admits that it took courage, strength of character, and passion to unlearn her rigid training and open herself up to learning an entirely new dance language.

The Gaga way, she said, involves dancers

Honouring South African Jewish lifetime achievers

JORDAN MOSHE

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them,” wrote William Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*. The bard went on to qualify this statement: greatness of any kind is possible only if one strives for it.

People who commit themselves to a calling are those who achieve greatness. These are the people the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards’ Lifetime Achievement Award seeks to recognise.

“We want to recognise the most successful figures South Africa has produced,” says Howard Sackstein, Chairperson of the *SA Jewish Report*. He explains that this award is given to a Jewish person who has contributed to the country in an extraordinary manner over a long period of time. “This award is aimed at honouring people who have contributed greatly to the development, not only of our own community, but the country as a whole. A person who has left a unique mark on society.”

Originally known as the Lexus Lifetime Award, the award was renamed the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009, and dedicated to the late Helen Suzman at the same time.

“Helen Suzman continues to be a household name in our country,” says Sackstein. “Given that the recipient of the award would be [a person] of the highest calibre, it is unquestionably fitting that the award is named in honour of Suzman. When the history of South Africa is ultimately written, it will be abundantly clear that people like her embody the values that define South African Jewry and what it stands for.” Sackstein says that because the award recognises a lifetime of service and commitment, it

is aimed at someone at the latter stage of his or her career who has contributed to the community in a way that has stood the test of time.

“In his address at last year’s ceremony, the recipient of this award, [former Woolworths Chief Executive] Simon Sussman, shared an amazing thought that encapsulates what this is award is about. He said he had learned the principle that life is divided into three thirds. In the first, you learn. In the second, you earn. And in the last, you return.”

“He started as box carrier, built an empire in South Africa in clothing and then food, and went on to become a household name. More than that, his philanthropy and his chairmanship of the Stellenbosch Business School speaks to his character. He is an example of the well-rounded individuals we are looking for.”

Sackstein stresses, however, that the award is not concerned only with business acumen or philanthropic endeavours. “People who have made a tangible difference to our community over their lifetime are the ones we want to recognise,” he says.

“Where would we be as a country if Issy Kirsh of 702 had not devoted himself to building our nation?” Sackstein asks. “Or without the contributions of Phillip Tobias, who developed the human rights ethos of South Africa? Or Jules and Selma Browde, who as a couple fought for human rights in South Africa, with Jules representing Mandela, and Selma fighting to bring electricity to Soweto?”

“The Lifetime Achievement Award seeks to pay tribute to those whose lives are committed to something greater than themselves, and who therefore deserve our recognition.”

THE ABSA JEWISH ACHIEVER AWARDS 2018

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

THE RE-GENERATION

2018



The Lifetime Achievement Award - in honour of Helen Suzman

awarded to a Jewish person who has contributed in an extraordinary manner over a long period of time

Nominations close at 17:00 on 13 July 2018

Nominations are open to the public and all nominations should be sent via email to nominations@sajewishreport.co.za or visit www.sajr.co.za

Nominations must include:

- The nominee’s name, telephone number and email address
- The award for which the nominee is nominated
- A short motivation for the nomination

Jewish Report 2018 ABSA KIA Europcar LCC

World Refugee Day – then and now

TALI FEINBERG

Violence ripped through townships in the Western Cape 10 years ago, destroying the shops and homes of thousands of refugees, displacing many, leaving them nowhere to turn.

A total of 180 victims of these xenophobic attacks found themselves stranded outside the Caledon Police Station in the freezing rain. The Treatment Action Campaign approached the SA Jewish Board of Deputies Cape Council to assist them, and what followed had an impact both on the community and refugees for years to come.

“On Friday, 23 May 2008, I lit my Shabbos candles knowing that there

had been an increasing number of sporadic xenophobic incidents throughout the Western Cape that day,” remembers Judith Cohen. “As Provincial Head of the South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC], my week had been consumed with engaging with government, the police and security services, disaster management and community organisations preparing for a possible scenario of xenophobic violence. The Disaster Management Centre had set up a notification system, and as reports of xenophobia came through, we were notified by SMS.

“During Shabbos dinner, what began as an intermittent ping from my cellphone became increasingly more frequent. At some point, the



A mother and child, displaced by xenophobic violence in Cape Town, leave the shelter of a tent at a makeshift camp close to the city in May 2008

Photo: REUTERS/Mark Wessels



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pings ceased as the reports were too many. By the following morning, it was estimated that more than 20 000 non-nationals had been displaced in Cape Town.

“During the course of the weekend, the Caledon Square non-nationals were taken in and cared for by Jewish and Muslim communities. Fear had immobilised many people, and only after negotiations and assurances that they would be escorted by the police and SAHRC officials, was the group prepared to walk from Caledon Square to a mosque waiting to receive them in Bo-Kaap,” says Cohen.

She also played the role of mediator when tensions flared between Somali refugees and other groups in a refugee camp in Ysterplaat at the time. Police were too afraid to go in, so Cohen took it upon herself to do so. The police wanted to escort her in, but she refused. She went in on her own, sat on the floor with the groups, and mediated peace between them.

“This is but one experience from those intense tragic days. However, what stands out is how Capetonians across the religious and political divide came together to assist those who were vulnerable. From a Jewish perspective, there was a definite connection embedded in understanding the experience of being refugees due to discrimination,” she says.

“We rallied around the issue because of its Jewish association, in terms of knowing our history in this country, and as Jewish people. Immigration, discrimination, setting down roots – it really resonated,” recalls the current Vice-Chairperson of the Cape Board, Viv Anstey.

She and a group of Jewish women worked to raise funds and provide shelter and daily provisions for the Caledon Square group, which was housed in the Herzlia Weizman School Hall in Sea Point. “About 20 to 30 people literally put their lives on hold to help people who had nowhere else to go,” remembers Anstey.

“We did not want them to land up in camps, and we lobbied everyone who could help us. So much value came out of working with others in the nongovernmental organisation sector towards a common purpose. To this day, we have amazing contacts and allies. The crisis brought our community together [to realise] our obligation as active citizens. It was an opportunity to live our Jewish values.”

As the refugees crammed into the school hall, “it took people out of their comfort zones and helped us realise our privilege”, says Anstey. At the same time, many volunteers, including herself, remain traumatised by the stories they heard of child soldiers and escapes from oppressive regimes. “Everyone was there for a reason, and had run away from something.” Witnessing the group fight amongst itself, while others rose up as leaders, was both harrowing and enlightening.

“A huge indignity was that there was no record of who these people were. Their papers did not record their names and professions,” says Anstey. Challenges emerged as refugees tried to get back on their feet after a long line of setbacks. Some remained dependent on the community for years to come.

For Dr Corinne Abel, the crisis would have a lasting impact on her family, as it chose to care for a ten-year-old boy who it realised had nowhere else to go once the xenophobic attacks had ceased. The child attended Herzlia school and Habonim camp, and faced many challenges as he grew up, “but for us, it was worth it,” says Abel. “We were guided by the Jewish ethos that we, too, were once strangers in a strange land, and it is incumbent on us as Jews to remember that.”

Along with providing temporary relief to the refugees, the community was able to facilitate the repatriation of 20 Burundi nationals, raise funds for refugee camps in the region, organise the collection of food and essentials, as well as reintegrate the group back into society. These efforts

were recognised by an invitation to attend a seminar in Pretoria, hosted by the Human Sciences Research Council and the British Consul General, to review and discuss the crisis and its aftermath.

Ten years later, the Cape Board of Deputies is continuing to work for the rights of refugees. “On 20 June, World Refugee Day, we commemorate the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees,” says the Board’s Liza-Jane Saban.

“This year, World Refugee Day also marks a key moment for the public to show support for families forced to flee. In 1951, when the United Nations passed its Refugee Convention, six global Jewish organisations were present. They were there because they had helped craft the treaty. Right now, the Cape Board is fighting for the reopening of the Refugee Reception Office in Cape Town, an essential government facility which ensures rights to those seeking asylum in South Africa,” she says.

Without an office in Cape Town, asylum seekers must travel to Durban, Musina, or Pretoria every two to six months to renew their papers. This is a journey which must be completed with every member of a family seeking asylum, again and again, until their final status can be determined. This process takes an average of five years, and in some instances, up to 18 or 20 years.

Last year, the Supreme Court of Appeal ordered the Department of Home Affairs to re-open the Refugee Reception Office by 31 March 2018, and while the office is neither open nor functioning yet, Home Affairs says it is waiting on the Department of Public Works to provide suitable office accommodation.

“We continue to monitor the situation with our civil society partners as this is something which we cannot accept. Ensuring the treatment of the stranger within our city is a demand of history and tradition for us as South Africans, and certainly as Jewish people,” says Saban.

Camp Gan Yisrael: Activities include: Learning Torah through fun and song, arts and crafts, sport, mind-development games, team-building exercises, and lots more. Ages three to 12. Divided into nursery and primary school kids. Starts 09:00, with boys finishing at 15:15 and girls at 15:30. Kiddie camp ends at 14:00. Date: 2 to 13 July 2018 Cost: R900 per week, or if you register a child for both weeks, it is R1 250. (If you register two children for one week it is R900 per child). A full lunch and two snacks are offered each day. To register, go to www.cgijoburg.co.za or for more information, email camp@chabad.co.za, or call 011 440 6600.

Habonim Winter Day Camp: Every day, channichim are taken to a different fun destination, including adventure golf, ten pin bowling, Bounce, and Sci-Bono. Lunch and transport provided. From 9 to 13 July, 09:00 to 15:00. Contact 011 786 7046 or www.habo.co.za

Bnei Akiva Holiday Camp: The Incredible Winter Camp from 24 to 27 June at West Coast National Park for Grades 3 to 9. In Johannesburg, Gurim Seminar is held at Sanrock Resort from 29 June to 2 July for Grades 3 to 6. A winter camp for Grades 7 to 9 at a resort in Port Edward from 2 to 8 July.

This week is filled with fun activities including crazy water-sports, fun hikes, and inspiring techniot, all with the beach on your door step. A winter camp in Durban called Camp Snoopy from 12 to 15 July, which introduces children to the best that Durban and Umhlanga have to offer. Exciting day outings end with an inspirational Shabbat. For more details, call 011 485 1695, or email office@bnei.co.za, or sign up on www.bnei.co.za/signup.

Sydenham Pre Primary Winter Holiday School: Every day is a new adventure at Sydenham Holiday School. Monday is Rumble in the Jungle; Tuesday Nutty Professors; Wednesday Super Sports Day; Thursday Crazy Carnival; Friday Sydenham Bake-Off. From 2 to 6 July, 18 months to six years old. Cost: R780 per child for the week, or R180 per child per day. For two children, R1 450 per week. Contact 011 640 5011, or email hella@sypdreschool.co.za for more information.

Sandton Sinai Holiday School: Children will be entertained with

Sunday (24 June)

- Second Innings hosts Nikki Richards on saxophone playing Klezmer music. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting starts at 10:30. Venue: Arcadia. Entrance opposite Glenwood Lodge in Long Avenue. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors, includes tea and light refreshments. Contact Linda Fleishman 011 532 9701.
- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) opens its new exhibition, "Deadly medicine: Creating the master race" with guest speaker Michael Robertson on "Psychiatrists and national socialism". Time: 15:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100. Free admission. Donations welcome.
- Ongoing Nechama Growth From Grief support group. Time: Tea from 09:30. Group starts at 10:00, ends 11:30. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Men and women welcome. Contact Linda Fleishman 011 532 9701.

Monday (25 June)

- JHGC hosts guest speaker Michael Robertson on “Resistors to the Nazi euthanasia programme”. Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100. Free admission. Donations welcome.
- Chabad Seniors Club trip to *The Pied Piper* at 14:30, The National Children’s Theatre, 3 Junction Avenue, Parktown. To book, call 011 440 6600 or email reception@chabad.org.za

Tuesday (26 June)

- WIZO hosts Philipa Sklaar, “Women inspired — LOVE, LIES, ABUSE — my personal journey”. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Donation: R180 (including soup and bagels). Please call for venue details. To book, call: Joceline 082 441 4375; Lorraine 083 268 8016; Leslie 083 456 3911; or Jenny 011 645 2515/wizojhb@beyachad.co.za

Wednesday (27 June)

- Second Innings hosts an outing to the planetarium at Wits University. Bus departs at 10:00, show starts at 11:00. Meet in the parking below Golden Acres. Cost: R170, includes bus and show. Contact Betty Kowal 072 316 4394 and Fanny Baumann 083 470 2644.
- Jewish Learning Institute with Rabbi Ari Kievman. "Kabbalah of choice. Do we have free choice, or are we bound by fate?" Two options: 09:45 at Chabad House, 27 Aintree Ave, Savoy, or 19:15 at Sandton Central Shul, 8 Stella St. More information, www.jli.org.za or 011 440 6600.

What to do during the holidays

arts, crafts, snacks, and loads of fun. From 2 to 6 July, 18 months to six years old. Cost: R170 per child per day. Contact 011 802 1210, or email info@sandtronsinai.co.za

Tam Kids Holiday Programme: Activities such as baking, story time, arts and crafts, outdoor games, dress up, and music on offer. From 2 to 6 July. R250 per child per day. Contact 082 807 7100 for more information.

Aish Hatorah Holiday Programme: Fun and games, outdoor play, dress up, storytelling, music, and so much more. From 2 to 6 July, 18 months to six years old. Cost: R150 per child per day. Contact: Alexandra 082 413 3124 for more information.

Esti Cohen Holiday Workshops: Different workshops on offer including cakes, fondant, fashion, jewellery, T-shirt design, slime, and more. From 2 to 12 July. Ages six and up. 09:30 to 12:00. R250 per morning. Contact Esti on 062 595 2973 for more information.

King David Linksfield Pre Primary Holiday School: Activities

include baking, sports, and arts and crafts. From 2 to 6 July 2018 and 9 to 13 July 2018, two to six years old, 08:00 to 14:00. Cost: R265 per child per day or R1 250 for five days (including lunch and snacks). Contact: Belinda 084 980 5639 (week one) or Lara 076 090 7793 (week two).

Tinker School Kitchen Concepts Holiday Workshops: There are three different kitchen concept sessions a day: 09:00 to 11:00, 11:00 to 13:00, 13:00 to 15:00. The 09:00 to 11:00 session includes breakfast, art, and expression. The 11:00 to 13:00 session includes lunch, art, and expression, and the 13:00 to 15:00 session includes gardening, art, and expression. Cost: R200 to R500. Contact Pippa 079 151 9015 for more information.

Waverley Shul Winter Delight Holiday School: Activities include arts and crafts, baking and treats, moving and grooving, fun and games. From 2 to 6 July, two to eight years old, 08:00 to 12:30. Cost: R170 per child per day or R765 for five days. Contact:

Michelle 083 407 4044 for more information.

Nutty Scientists Holiday Programme: For those with a scientific bent, enjoy master of disasters (experimenting with volcanoes, tornadoes, lightning, snow, blizzards, and more) and crazy scientist investigators (hands-on experiments with states of matter, senseless senses, optical illusions, chemical reactions, and more). Five to 10 years old. From 08:00 to 12:30 at two different venues: Bryanston and Linksfield. Cost: R700 per child for two days. Contact: Kevin 083 675 8076, or go to www.nuttyscientists.com/southafrica for more information. 25 to 29 June.

Rimon Holiday School: Activities include arts and crafts, baking and treats, moving and grooving, fun and games. 25 to 29 June. Fifteen months to five years old. From 08:00 to 12:30. Cost: R170 per child per day, or R750 for five days. Contact: Kelli 082 492 0227 for more information.

For more options in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, check out www.sajr.co.za.

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EXPERIENCE AMAZING



A day of books and schmoozing

GUS SILBER

The second Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town was a bustling marketplace of ideas, insights, laughter, and learnings. And to make things even better, at the end of the day, it rained!

The sky above Cape Town was heavy with the promise of rain, the clouds wrapped around the heavens like a gift waiting to be opened.

Beneath the marquee in the courtyard of the Jewish Community Centre, site of the first shul in South Africa, volunteers hefted triangular heaters into place to help ward off the cold.

On a table covered with a wine-red tablecloth, a sign read: “Soup & Rolls. Complimentary.” The soup was barley, thick and hot, served from silver jugs. The line was long.

As I stood there, noshing my soup-dipped sesame-seed roll, my worry was that I would miss the first session because I couldn’t make up my mind which session to attend.

The one about jazz, astrophysics, and the quantum mechanics of storytelling? The one about *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, and the legacy of Jewish identity? The one with the panel discussion on poetry as a distiller of emotion?

There were four others to choose from, and I hovered for a while before sneaking in to see Steven Boykey Sidley, who was peering professorially over the top of his glasses as he spoke about the link between the cosmic riffings of Miles Davis, the saxophone-shaped mouth of the Big Bang, and the hidden hand of Albert Einstein’s first wife, Mileva Marić, in defining the theory of relativity. The link lay in an ancient human impulse that had drawn us in

droves to this venue today. The impulse to tell and listen to stories.

“My world has been entirely shaped, coloured, and saved by stories,” said Sidley, and it struck me that reading is not just a pathway to knowledge and enlightenment; it is a portal that sets us free from the weight of the world.

Later in the day, I watched Arthur Goldstuck talking about the famous moment in the early Middle Ages when Saint Augustine chanced upon Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, engaged in a solitary act that was shocking in its novelty. He was reading, in silence, to himself. Now, in our age of mobile technologies and universal networks, we find ourselves returning to reading as a shared social activity that connects



Janice Leibowitz, Howard Feldman, Mandy Wiener, Gus Silber, Nechama Brodie, Howard Sackstein and Alan Glass

Oliver Tambo’s quiet revolution within reach, says Albie Sachs

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

It was not the Constitution that stood in the way of land reform but fundamental policy failures, said former Constitutional Court Judge and ANC stalwart Albie Sachs at the Jewish Literary Festival. “We have to develop policies and completely reconfigure our approach to the matter, and get rid of state capture and the corruption that’s involved.”

In fact, he has pointed out, Section 25 of the Constitution, the property clause, lends itself to the redistribution of land.

Judge Dennis Davis, Acting Judge of Appeal in the Supreme Court of Appeal, was in conversation with Judge Sachs on his latest book, *Oliver Tambo’s Dream*.

The book comprises four lectures delivered at various universities in celebration of the life of former ANC President Oliver Tambo, who would have been 100 last year. As a trustee of the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation, Sachs felt it was appropriate for him to celebrate Tambo and the values for which he stood.

“Everyone admired [Nelson] Mandela and [Albert] Luthuli, but we loved Oliver Tambo,” said Sachs, who met Tambo in the early 1950s when Sachs was a 17 year old. “It was a surprise for many because he wasn’t a powerful speaker. He didn’t have a great presence.

“I thought I should try and convey a sense of his qualities that were dreadfully lacking in the country at the time. In the first lecture, I referred to him as the quiet, gentle revolutionary. He could be softly-spoken, and was caring about the details of others’ lives.”

Stating that “We talk great plans, but we don’t get there”, Judge Davis asked Judge Sachs why he was so confident that the land issue would be resolved. “The issue has been put on the table,” Sachs replied. “The government has acknowledged it as the original sin, and we have a president who’s a great strategist and gets everyone into the conversation.”

Judge Davis pointed out Judge Sachs’ admission in the book that when black people had spoken about land in earlier days, he hadn’t seen it as a priority. “Twenty-four years into democracy, white people still don’t see it,” Davis commented.

Explaining his optimism, Sachs said: “Our institutions are strong. Having people like you on the

bench and playing an important role in public life, not taking anything for granted, there are lots of Dennises around.

“South Africans speak their mind – these all give me a sense we can get there.”

Judge Davis commented that while many institutions such as the legislature, the executive, the National Prosecuting Authority, and South African Revenue Service had failed, the judiciary had succeeded. Paying tribute to his “wonderful” black colleagues, he said it had turned out to be “the best judiciary we’ve ever had”.

“The judiciary had to do a lot of the heavy lifting. I wonder if we’ve got the balance wrong – too much of a ‘juristocracy’ and too little of a democracy,” he pondered.

Sachs replied: “You were right when you advocated for the judiciary having more of a role many years ago. What is remarkable is that the judiciary has reminded Parliament of its work.

“The Judicial Services Commission has ensured that we have a pretty good series of judges,” he said.

“We sometimes place too much faith in what judges can do,” Davis countered. “It is sad,” Judge Sachs agreed, “because it shouldn’t all fall on the judges.”

In answer to a question why certain individuals were not yet behind bars, Judge Sachs replied: “Because we have the rule of law. You don’t want to destroy the legal system to get quick results to satisfy people such as yourselves.”

Asked what Tambo’s attitude towards Israel would be if he were president, Judge Sachs said he would have felt “very strongly against” the occupation of land as being “very unjust to the Palestinians. He would have been in favour of maximum negotiations”.

He would have advocated establishing the anxieties and fears of the people concerned, and presenting a vision that they could be comfortable with, he surmised.

“He saw whites as human beings trapped in a system of racism with his goal being to establish a country for all. He would bring to bear those values into that system,” Sachs said of the situation in the Middle East.

The power of media... or lack of it

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Mainstream newspapers are “almost uniquely awful” in South Africa today, with opinion passing for story, rumour passing for fact, and an absence of fact-checkers. So said author Steven Boykey Sidley at a session titled “Journalists as agents of political change” at the Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town last weekend.

Sidley was in conversation with journalists John Matisonn, Richard Poplak, and Mandy Wiener.

Matisonn insisted that there was some “fantastic” investigative journalism, exemplified by *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane*, the *Sunday Times*, and *Mail & Guardian*. He also believed there was world-class opinion writing. He agreed, however, that general news stories were “appalling” and lacking in “quality control”.

On the perception that journalists had brought about regime change in the country, Poplak was unconvinced. “Did the Gupta Leaks bring down the Zuma regime? My interpretation was

that they didn’t. [ANC Deputy President David] ‘DD’ Mabuza brought it down.

“The Gupta Leaks were massively transformative for this country. I would love to think we shake the world all the time, but we have to be realistic,” he said.

“A lot of us have relaxed now that [President] Cyril [Ramaphosa] is in charge, and that is enormously dangerous,” he warned. “Lots and lots of bad things” were happening. Ramaphosa was accumulating “more and more” executive authority and a super-presidency would be left to someone like Mabuza.

“The mainstream press have done a terrible job of criticising Ramaphosa. It is our job,” he stressed.

Matisonn viewed journalists as links in a chain which started with whistle-blowers. “Then journalists do a great job. Once they’ve done it, NGOs and opposition politicians take it to court. The judiciary has come through fabulously in South Africa.”

Wiener believes that it is idealistic to think that journalists are agents of change. “A lot of the time journalists do

Continued on page 15>>



Children’s literature contains essential life lessons

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

It’s essential to read to children or tell them stories from birth, said clinical psychologist Judith Ancer at a session titled, “Using literature to help children grow and heal” at the Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town, co-presented with her brother, author and journalist, Jonathan Ancer.

“To infants, even before cognition, it’s about connection, attachment, belonging, safety, and security,” she said, mentioning a programme at Tygerberg Hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit that encouraged moms, who often felt powerless, to read to their children, making reading the emotionally connecting experience it should be.

“Books need to be not precious in a way that children can’t engage with them,” Judith said. Being read to from a young age enables children to learn about language, rhythm and rhyme, and different sounds. They also learn that books are a source of

knowledge, not just Google.

Children’s literature can be oral, she said. “I encourage parents to tell their stories, about their cultures, their lives, their values – they share what is to be expected, and what isn’t.”

Fairy stories are often frightening but important because they tell a truth to kids that the world is not so fair. “It’s a warning – telling you to be careful, to use your wits. They’re important life lessons, helping kids in symbolic form to face what is difficult,” Judith said.

Using the example of the story of *Hansel and Gretel*, Judith noted that in most of the fairy stories, the majority of “active, engaged” heroes were girls.

The fairy godmother and wicked stepmother are different versions of the same person, according to psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, and give children a way to process a loving, nurturing mother who sometimes behaves differently.

“Although the stories are unreal, they’re



Judith and Jonathan Ancer

not untrue. Bad things do happen, and we have to face them. If we whitewash the stories, we do them a disservice,” she said.

Picture books allow children to identify and process feelings, Judith said. “The best books allow children to deal with their unacceptable parts – such as greediness or messiness – and process them.”

In Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, for example, when Max is facing wild things, he is facing parts of himself. “All children have wild, dark, and tumultuous feelings,” she said.

Books stimulate creativity, and help children to understand different perspectives. *The Velveteen Rabbit*, for example helps them understand that they are fundamentally worthy.

Subversive books, such as those by Roald Dahl or Judy Blume, challenge convention. “Some help kids to have a frame of reference, and give them the courage to think differently,” Judith said.

Nice girl delves into shady underworld

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

“How does a nice girl like you end up in a place like this?” So Adjunct Professor of journalism at Wits University, Anton Harber, asked author and radio journalist Mandy Wiener at the second Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town on Sunday. They were discussing her latest book, *Ministry of Crime: An Underworld Explored*.

Wiener replied that she always knew that she was going to be a journalist. She had grown up in a home where the radio was always on, newspapers were read, and she had always been quite aware of the news.

“Because of [her first book] *Killing Kebble*, I became a specialist in the underworld, with these compelling characters who are quite charismatic – even fascinating,” she said, describing them as “regular people with alter egos”.

“I try to be non-judgemental. I’m not out there to criticise or hold them to account.” For this, she has been criticised on radio by forensic investigator Paul O’Sullivan for giving them a platform. Asked by Harber if there was a risk she was being used to spin a tale, she said: “Certainly, I think journalists are often used. I put all the different versions [of a story] on record in the book, and let people decide for themselves.

“I’ve realised objectivity is a complete myth. Some things you just cannot be objective about.”

But, Harber continued, was it not the journalist’s job to test and verify, and not put out different versions? “Yes and no,” said Wiener.

She gave the example of the Lolly Jackson murder, where journalists had been putting out an untested version of the story for years, until George Luca said he had taken the fall for Radovan Krejcir. The journalists’ attitude was, “Paul O’Sullivan told us, so it must be true.”

Wiener said that journalists did not have the power to test different versions. “That is up to the criminal justice system. I still have faith in it.”

Noting that Wiener had been accused of being Krejcir’s number-one fan, Harber asked her if she was an O’Sullivan fan. “Paul is very complex,” she replied.

“He performs a very important function. He fills the void left by a crippled police force and justice system. He collected a lot of the evidence that brought down Jackie Selebi and Radovan Krejcir.

“But his methods are dubious. There are a lot of allegations against him though he’s never been convicted of anything.”

Asked what she believed his motivation was, Wiener said: “I think it’s ego. He likes to be seen as the person who brings down the bad guys.”

Referring to a deliberate campaign to eviscerate the National Prosecuting Authority, the South African Revenue Service, the Hawks, and Crime Intelligence, she said the net result was that several law-enforcement agencies were not capable of fighting organised crime.

Harber noted that the picture presented in the book was of a police and prosecutorial system that was “rotten to the core”.

“I would never say we are losing the fight against crime,” said Wiener. “There are still police officers and prosecutors who are doing fantastic work. But the capability to deal with very complex commercial crime is not what it should be.”

She appealed for “active citizenship”, saying that time and time again, civil society had turned things around.

Asked if she had been threatened by any individuals who were not happy with what she had published, Wiener quipped: “I’m a little disappointed to say no.”



Stephanie Urdang and former Glamour editor Pnina Fenster



Lisa Chait and Mark Gevisser



Children's author Nicole Levin and children at the festival



The power of media... or lack of it

>> Continued from page 14

it for ego, not because we want to change the world.”

The late journalist Mandy Rossouw’s “sniffing out” of the Nkandla story had led to several attempts to bring about votes of no confidence in [former President] Jacob Zuma, and had greatly influenced public perception, she said. Matisonn agreed that breaking big stories did not change things overnight but, as in the case of the Broederbond exposures, they did have an effect on events in the long run.

As for the next year’s national election, Matisonn predicted that the ANC would win by “a big margin”, while the DA had “shot themselves in the feet, and the EFF had reached its ceiling”.


Wiener felt the country was optimistic about Ramaphosa because he was “the complete foil” to Zuma. “He’s always been

the great white hope because he represents ‘the good black.’”

All three expressed optimism about the country’s future. “I’m very positive,” said Wiener. “My whole family lives overseas, and I’ve chosen to stay here. We’re not doing worse than anywhere else. There’s not enough good news that comes out,” she said.

Matisonn cautioned that one should not understate the events of last year. “The country was hopefully salvaged in the nick of time – it could have gone the other way. I think you’re going to see great improvements. South Africa was saved by a combination of civil society, the judiciary, and the Constitution.

“You’re seeing a steady clean up. To think Ramaphosa could have done a huge amount more in the time is not realistic.”



בס"ד

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In Tel Aviv’s African neighbourhood, asylum seekers strive for normal life

BEN SALES

The Sudanese pizza restaurant is nearly empty on this weekday afternoon, but that doesn’t seem to bother its owner, Yakoub Al-Aldoum, who happily cooks goulash in a small, square kitchen.

Pizza, his speciality, will go into the oven in the evening, Al-Aldoum assures me repeatedly. He makes a regular crust with tomato sauce, then covers it with Sudanese staples like beans and lentils, or beef or tuna.

Al-Aldoum picked up pizza baking in a large restaurant in his home country Sudan, then took the craft with him to Libya when he fled, seeking asylum.

Eleven years ago, he arrived in Israel. Like tens of thousands of other African asylum seekers, he settled in the South Tel Aviv neighbourhood of Neve Shaanan, next to the city’s grimy bus station, and found work in restaurants. He draws Sudanese customers, but also neighbouring Eritreans, local Israelis, and others.

Adjacent to the restaurant is a bar that’s easy to miss from the street. Its entrance is through a blue metal gate, cordoned off by a tarp and barbed wire. The only way you would know it was there is by a rectangular sign above the gate showing a smiling woman exhaling smoke



from a hookah. The entrance leads into a dim courtyard covered by a tent.

A few African men are sitting on plastic armchairs drinking coffee and smoking hookahs, while a handful of others sit at a table with a red-and-white checked tablecloth. Everyone is watching three TV screens showing, respectively, a pro wrestling match, a soccer

game, and an action movie that looks like *Top Gun*, but isn’t.

Photos are not allowed. The owners do not give interviews.

Openness and suspicion, multiculturalism and insularity. These are two of the many contradictions that define Neve Shaanan, Tel Aviv’s diverse, underprivileged, and vibrant neighbourhood of asylum seekers, Filipino foreign workers, working-class Israelis, and others.

If Israelis hear about Neve Shaanan, it’s probably because of the debate over African asylum seekers that has occupied the country for years. By 2012, more than 60 000 people, mostly from Eritrea and Sudan, had entered Israel illegally through its border with Egypt. They say they are refugees seeking asylum from war and brutal dictatorships at home. But the Israeli government contends that they are economic migrants seeking jobs and a better life in a developed country.

Since 2012, the Israeli government has tried to keep out asylum seekers and remove those already in Israel. It has erected a fence on its southern border, placed thousands of asylum seekers in a detention facility in southern Israel, offered incentives for them to leave, and tried to negotiate deals with third-party countries to absorb them. By 2018, about 37 000 asylum

seekers remained in Israel.

This year, the government struck a deal with the United Nations to transfer half of the asylum seekers to other developed countries, while affording the other half legal status in Israel. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu abruptly backed out of the deal amid objections from Israeli residents of South Tel Aviv, who

have portrayed the asylum seekers as a threat to their safety and culture.

The changes in the neighbourhood have been jarring to some of the older Jewish residents who have seen groups of young Sudanese and Eritrean men move into apartments once occupied by Jewish families like theirs.

Although foreign residents, mostly African asylum seekers, make up the majority of residents of Neve Shaanan and its surrounding area, they accounted for less than a third of the crime rate from 2015 to 2017. Police have also beefed up their presence there. The station responsible for Neve Shaanan’s area grew from eight police officers in 2010 to nearly 200 last year – plus 50 border police officers.

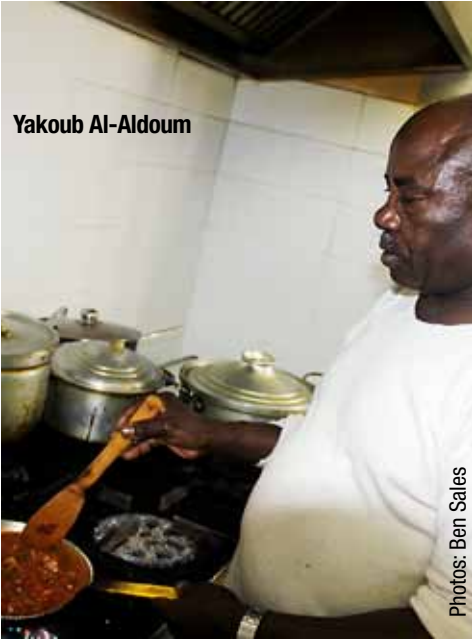
Neve Shaanan exists in the shadow of Tel Aviv’s Central Bus Station, a concrete behemoth that seems like it was designed by MC Escher on an off day. The neighbourhood’s streets are shaped in semicircles, intended to look like a menorah on the map, and combine small storefronts with crowded, dilapidated apartment buildings and some new gentrified developments.

They are also dotted with unlicensed bars like the one next to the pizza place, called hamaras, that police have been trying to shut down. A large, relatively well-maintained park is across the street from the bus station, where children play on a swing set and drug addicts lay by the curb.

According to Tel Aviv’s official statistics, Neve Shaanan has about 5 000 residents, part of a larger South Tel Aviv district with a population of 30 000. But the real number is much higher. An Israeli Knesset report from 2016 said that anywhere between almost 15 000 and 30 000 African asylum seekers live in South Tel Aviv – most of them in and around Neve Shaanan.

“The neighbourhood is very crowded,” said Haim Goren, who has lived in Neve Shaanan for 11 years. “It’s a neighbourhood where 20 000 people live, where 30 years ago it was 5 000. There’s friction when you have tons of people in a small area.”

The neighbourhood was founded in 1921 by another set of refugees – Jews fleeing anti-Semitic violence in the adjacent Jaffa. Funded by foreign Jewish philanthropy, they eventually built a row of orchards that supplied Europe with fresh Jaffa oranges. In the 1920s, Tel Aviv incorporated the neighbourhood and established its central bus station there in the 1940s, filling the streets with noise and pollution, and driving out anyone who could



afford to move. So another set of refugees – recent immigrants to the new Jewish state – filled it up.

“Throughout the years, a disadvantaged population remained here,” said David Cohen, a guide who does historical and culinary tours of Neve Shaanan. “By the ‘60s this was one of the most severe neighbourhoods in Tel Aviv. Many of the apartments were empty, without renters. A lot of businesses closed, and that drew a lot of crime organisations.”

It was still a bad neighbourhood in the early 2000s when asylum seekers began arriving from Africa. Because Neve Shaanan was next to the bus station and so neglected – with abandoned apartments and few police patrolling the streets – it was an easy place for illegal immigrants to settle. Asylum seekers filled the neighbourhood. More than 40 000 came between 2010 and 2012.

They have consistently faced racism from locals, as well as national politicians. In 2012, a mob attacked African residents of South Tel Aviv. Miri Regev, now Israel’s Culture Minister, called them a “cancer” (she later apologised). Official government documents refer to them as “infiltrators”.

“We are not living here, we are surviving,” said Teklit Michael, an Eritrean asylum seeker who came to Israel in 2008 and has since become an activist, serving as a spokesman for his community and helping fellow asylum seekers secure their rights. “You don’t know what’s going to happen the day after right now. You have to live as you can, to be safe for the day.” (JTA)

Letters

IF YOU HAVE NOTHING CONSTRUCTIVE TO OFFER, HOLD YOUR TONGUE

In addition to blaming Israel, and not mentioning Hamas even once in his letter, Ben Robert Horowitz makes several sweeping statements that beg a response. For the sake of brevity, I will address only two of his remarks.

The first is his accusation that “snipers using hi-tech weapons and shooting to kill unarmed protestors on the wrong side of the fence is inhumane”. I’m so tired of people claiming that these protestors were innocent, unarmed, and peaceful, and that Israel trying to stop them from penetrating its border fence was somehow inhumane and immoral.

There were several Gaza border protests, each involving between 10 000 to 40 000 protestors. If Israel wanted to kill as many of the protestors as possible, there would have been exponentially more casualties and fatalities on the Palestinian side. Imagine tens of thousands of belligerent “protestors” trying to breach the border of any other country. What would that

government’s response have been? No. Israel was not trying to kill as many Palestinians as possible during those weeks of protests. Many more would have been killed if that were the case.

Further on that point: Protestors throwing stones and Molotov cocktails (also known as petrol bombs) are not “unarmed”. I am reluctant to distinguish between these basic, unsophisticated weapons and hi-tech weapons if they both have the ability to maim and kill.

The second point made by Mr Horowitz is his admission: “We do not have to offer solutions to the crisis.” It is so easy to criticize. But criticism alone is rarely helpful. If all you can do is point fingers and make accusations against Israel from way down here in South Africa, it is simply counterproductive and undermines your credibility. The bottom line is, if you have nothing constructive to offer, please be quiet. – **Michele Engelberg, Johannesburg**

WALKING OUT THE BACK DOOR WAS COWARDLY

So, the Jews of Jo’burg surrendered. Did we not see the same thing in Nazi Germany? This time it was in Jo’burg, at a photographic exhibition.

As a former Israeli combat soldier, I am horrified by the way the Jews of Jo’burg capitulated. And, you had the Community Security Organisation (CSO) and police to protect you. Spare me the excuses.

Shimon Peres said that one of the main reasons he pushed for the Entebbe raid was not to give in to terrorism. He said that if we gave in, terrorists would become emboldened. You have emboldened the enemy. They now know that they can scare you.

You walked out the back door. Let me repeat that, you walked out the back door. Are you not ashamed? In my eyes and in the eyes of every Israeli combat soldier, you are a bunch of cowards. We are ashamed of you.

If the CSO could not protect you, what do we need it for? – **Sonny Myerson, Cape Town**

SIFRIN ARTICLE PROVES EXISTENCE OF LOONY LEFT

The article by Geoff Sifrin in the edition of 8 June 2018 refers.

No United States President has been a better friend to Israel than Donald Trump, yet Mr Sifrin refers to “the buffoonery” of President Trump. President Trump is proving to be a great president, whose accomplishments are far too long to detail in this letter.

Mr Sifrin’s ad hominem attack on President Trump is deplorable. Israel and the Jewish people owe President Trump a debt of gratitude. – **Gordon Solomons, Cape Town**

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not reflect the views of the *SA Jewish Report*. The editor is not obliged to use every letter and will not publish vitriolic statements or any letters with inappropriate content. Letters will be edited and – if need be – shortened.

Guidelines: Letters are limited to 400 words. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. Letters should be e-mailed to editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

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Assault on freedom of expression doesn’t end with Israel

Jewish South Africa are not the only ones feeling the pressure. South Africans across the rainbow are angry and intolerant, and no one is being spared the wrath of our frustration. Earlier this week, Ferial Haffajee, Editor-at-large of the South Africa Huffington Post, wrote a column about the pressure, intimidation, and death threats she has received as a result of expressing herself.

Haffajee had committed the social-media sin of challenging Economic Freedom Fighters Leader Julius Malema’s racist contention that the majority of Indians were racist. The response she received was violent, aggressive, and included death threats.

Haffajee is not someone I see eye to eye with on matters concerning Israel, and we have had more than the odd Twitter spat on this very issue. In fact, I find her views on Israel to be limited and objectionable, and have engaged with her on this, never to a reasonable conclusion.

But it is her opinion. She is entitled to it, as I am entitled to disagree with it.

What makes the Haffajee story more interesting is when it is juxtaposed with the treatment of Shashi Naidoo on social media. Naidoo, a well-known South African celebrity

took to social media to express a positive view on Israel. She questioned Hamas’ behaviour, and gave context to the conflict. Context that was not along the scripted lines of an anti-Israel media bias.

Social media exploded. She was personally attacked, and as much as I tried to get people like Yusuf Abramjee to debate the issue, not the person, there was little in the way of real dialogue. The result was that Naidoo received ten death threats and did significant damage to her brand.

Her teary eyed apology portrayed a broken person who had been figuratively beaten into submission. It was a confession of the tortured, and one could only feel tremendous sympathy for her. It was heartbreaking to witness.

The media briefing that followed exacerbated the situation. It sent a clear message that no view that is different to that of the BDS will be tolerated.

Naidoo paid a terrible price for using her voice. And, whereas it is always positive to read a balanced perspective on Israel in the media, I am sorry that she did so. I wish for her sake that she hadn’t.

Much like Democratic Alliance MMC Mpho Phalatse, who was suspended for saying that

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



Johannesburg is a friend of Israel.

Much like Gareth Cliff, who has been lambasted for voicing his view. Much like Black Coffee, who proudly performed in Israel. Much like Mmusi Maimane after his visit to Israel. Much like Lionel Messi, who received worse threats “than Isis”, according to the Argentinian Foreign Minister.

Or anyone else who dares to say something positive about a country that the bullies need you to see as only negative.

Protestant pastor Martin Niemoller emerged as an outspoken critic of Adolf Hitler. He is remembered for the quotation; “First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one to speak out for me.”

Ferial Haffajee is in a difficult position.

Because, although she might detest the views of the above people, although she might hate every word that Naidoo wrote, it was her duty to stand by them and defend their right to speak. As it is each of ours to defend Haffajee’s right to say the very thing we hate most. If she did not do so, then she has little room to be outraged at the treatment that she received from those who stand with the EFF.

What is painfully clear is that unless South Africans make a significant effort to protect our constitutional right to freedom of expression, we risk losing this tenant of democracy. It might begin with anti-Israel bias, but it will end with the loss of the very thing that South Africans paid dearly to achieve.

It is meaningless to protect the notion in law alone. There is no value in having a constitutional right that exists in theory, but not in practice. It doesn’t help to have a Constitution that gives people freedom of expression if we bully them into silence. What this means is that it is important to be as vigilant in our protection of the rights of others when they express a view that is not our own, as it is when we agree with them. If we don’t do so, there will quite possibly be no one left to speak out for us.

Cry the beloved State Theatre

If an overseas visitor wanted to understand some of the reasons people want to leave South Africa for Israel, the United Kingdom, or other countries, he or she might visit Pretoria’s State Theatre.

This huge complex was built during apartheid in 1981 by the government in the brutalist architectural style of the times, and contains theatres and auditoria equipped with facilities for major productions. Its shows were never radical like the Market Theatre’s protest shows in Johannesburg, but in the euphoria of Mandela’s becoming president in democratic South Africa, expectations rose.

Today, it is in a state of such disgraceful decay, you would be ashamed to bring overseas visitors there. Upon arrival, you enter the underground parking, which is so confusing, you have ask a security guard where the entrance to the actual theatre is, and he must come with keys to unlock the filthy doors. There are long stairways to be climbed, and no wheelchair access. When you pay for your parking, the guard stands alongside you at the machine, and when your R5 change comes out, he turns into a beggar, holds out his hand, and says, “For bread please?”, implying that if you don’t hand it over, your car might not be looked after. Most of the complex is closed and unused, like a morgue. Yet, incredibly, within this awful mess, a brilliant play was performed last week in one of the smaller spaces, called *The Fall*, about the students’ movement to remove Cecil John Rhodes’ statue from Cape Town University campus.

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



inspired that if South Africa contains such talent in its youth, all will eventually be well.

Then you return to the dirty corridors and tunnels back to the underground parking, and into the street, where you are pounced on by beggars at your car window. The emotions of the evening’s experience fight with each other.

At dinner parties among white South Africans, conversations often turn to which country to emigrate to. Canada? America? Australia? Israel? The criterion is that whatever country is chosen, it must actually “work”. A place where the government does what it’s supposed to do. The streets are clean, the bureaucracy functions. Many people have children or friends living elsewhere. The topic turns to the last Skype conversation with them, and the sadness that most will never return to this country. The families they left behind will die here, lonely.

All the countries listed above have problems. America has Donald Trump, and his support from hard-right evangelists. European countries have dangerously increasing anti-Semitism.

And Israel has its interminable political and security crisis, continuing to tear itself apart in arguments over occupation of the Palestinian territories, flaming kites from Gaza, and Netanyahu’s increasingly authoritarian rule over the country. But nevertheless, it feels like a country on the “upslope”, not the down, its economy booming, and people flowing in.

Does one continue to be optimistic and believe that South African politicians have the best interests of the country at heart and the looting of state coffers will stop? Or that Ramaphosa will turn the country around after the Zuma nightmare?

South Africans are desperately seeking assurance that things will turn out okay. The State Theatre is a metaphor for the country’s best and worst. If the government turned two thirds of it into a hospital, but kept a small theatre for brilliant productions, it would be better than letting it rot. It’s about the difference between despair and hope.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Threat to Indian community is a threat to Jews

No-one can say for sure who coined the aphorism “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom”, but its fundamental message remains as relevant as ever. This is especially true of countries like our own, where democracy is of comparatively recent origin. Events on the local front this week underscored once more how the freedoms we all enjoy can never be taken for granted.

Further slurs have been levelled against the Indian community by the Economic Freedom Fighters, this time by party Leader Julius Malema.

The nature of the rhetoric against South Africans of Indian origin is disturbingly similar to that routinely levelled against our own community. One finds the same themes of alleged economic exploitation, underhanded business practices, undeserved privilege, and suggestions that Indians do not really belong in South Africa.

While the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ core mandate is to protect Jewish civil liberties, including combating anti-Semitism, we cannot afford to remain silent when other communities are threatened in this way.

Alana Baranov, the Board’s representative on the Hate Crimes Working Group steering committee, was our spokesperson on the issue. In media interviews, she described singling out any minority for abuse as “irresponsible, counter-productive, insensitive, and a threat to fostering mutual respect and understanding”.

Racially divisive rhetoric was dangerous because it fostered an environment in which hate and discrimination was able to flourish and become socially acceptable, she said. Political leaders needed to be particularly careful not to inflame tensions in this way.

The lynching-by-social-media of any public figure that comes out in support of Israel also continues apace, with TV personality and model Shashi Naidoo this week becoming the latest victim of that distasteful phenomenon.

For hard-core haters of Israel, it would appear that merely defaming and demonising the Jewish state is no longer enough. Now, anyone who dares to challenge their bigoted narrative must be punished and silenced, thereby, of course, causing other potential “heretics” to think twice before sticking their heads over the parapet.

In Naidoo’s case, the abuse and intimidation to which she was subjected included multiple death threats. It was, we observed in our statement in support of her, just another indication of how flagrantly

the right to freedom of expression was being abused when it came to the Israeli-Palestinian question. So far as Israel was concerned, it was a case of “anything goes”. Those who hated it had carte blanche to express themselves in the most virulent, over-the-top terms imaginable, without fear of harassment. Those who expressed a contrary view, particularly when they had a public profile, received very different treatment.

One does not have to be a supporter of Israel to deplore the fact that extremists are hijacking the conversation with a view to ensuring that only their side is heard. It is something that South Africans across the board need to condemn, not only as a threat to fundamental democratic freedom, but as an affront to common decency.

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

If an overseas visitor wanted to understand some of the reasons people want to leave South Africa for Israel, the United Kingdom, or other countries, he or she might visit Pretoria’s State Theatre.

The complexity of the struggle to “decolonise” South Africa is portrayed with such brilliant directing and choreography that one leaves vibrating with the performance and

Marlene Bethlehem re-elected global ambassador of Jewish culture

South African Jewish communal stalwart Marlene Bethlehem was this week re-elected President of the global Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (MFJC) for a second two-year tenure.

For 52 years, this foundation has been promoting the global regeneration of Jewish culture by supporting, developing and connecting the next generation of scholars and leaders in Jewish communities around the world. Based in New York, the foundation has supported 14 000 scholars, artists, filmmakers, rabbis, and Jewish communal leaders since it launched in 1965.

Bethlehem, a past Chair and President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), was nominated and appointed unopposed for the prestigious and influential position.

She said she was honoured to be re-elected to fulfil the “sacred task” of “training Jewish people between the ages of 25 and 40 to provide social capital for the Jewish world” through the foundation’s Nahum Goldmann Fellowship (NGF).

Bethlehem has been associated with the foundation for many years, and was instrumental in fostering close and mutually beneficial relationships with the SAJBD, which she represented. She has a long history of communal leadership, including being Chair and President of the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society, Chair of Jewish Social Services, and Chair of the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre.

“Over the past two years, there have been enormous changes in the ideology of the organisation,” she said. “We decided to be far more public and, to this end, I spoke in Germany, not only on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, but I also addressed the Lower

Saxony Parliament. “In August, we will be holding the NGF programme in Hanover, Germany. There are now more than 100 000 Jews in Germany. My plan is to carry a message of reconciliation to them, while acknowledging efforts to repair treacherous acts of horrifying history.”

At the opening address of the Foundation in New York last weekend, Bethlehem said: “The dreams of our great founder Dr Nahum Goldmann have been realised. His most cherished goal was to enhance the Jewish cultural background of the community’s most gifted young leaders for future leadership roles in the community.”

And, having assisted more than 14 000, “these scholars from many disciplines serve the communal needs of the Jewish people on six continents”.

She spoke of the NGF, the flagship of the Foundation, as having become “the crown in our efforts at creating a very unique bonding, known as Klal Israel”.

They have held 29 international and mini fellowships over 52 years.

Bethlehem quoted Professor Steven Windemeuller of the Hebrew Union College of Religion in Los Angeles after taking part in three NGF programmes as a faculty member.

“The Nahum Goldmann Fellows may represent the single most important global Jewish network that exists today.”

Bethlehem warned that the Foundation shouldn’t rest on past achievements, and “must strengthen efforts for the future, to continue to grow the social capital of our people around the world”.



Marlene Bethlehem

Sticking it to the dads at Sydenham Preschool

Sydenham Preschool paid tribute to dads last week with a “Pegs ‘n Sticks STEM Hour” in which fathers and children were encouraged to build structures out of ice cream sticks and wooden pegs, with imagination their only limitation. The jury is out as to who enjoyed the evening more – fathers or children!



Loving their time together are (left to right): Danny, Philip, Jake, and Raph Kalinko (in front)

Environmental Awareness at Yeshiva College Primary School



Hugo’s Greenhood Heroes came to educate Yeshiva College Primary School pupils last week about the importance of recycling.

Hugo’s Greenhood, aimed at improving the lives of men who collect garbage for recycling, was initiated by the late 14-year-old Hugo Paluch. The project has since been continued by his parents and the wider community, along with a parallel effort to encourage the Jewish community to recycle its waste.

Sylvester and Didi – two Johannesburg recyclers – showed the children which items could and could not be recycled, and how valuable each item was to them.

They were taught how important recycling is for our environment, as well as for the recyclers, for whom it is a primary source of income.

King David Grade 11s commemorate 70th birthday



In commemoration of King David’s 70th birthday, Grade 11 pupils from King David High School Linksfield’s seven committees (awareness, arts and culture, eco, outreach, Judaica, sport and SMACC [sound, media and communications]) painted a vibrant 16m mural at the entrance to the school. The mural depicts the committees in a colourful and expressive way, connected by a ribbon, ending in the King David 70 years logo.

The magnificent mural will serve as a reminder of King David’s 70 years of success for many years to come.

Cayla’s artwork wows international judges

Cayla Dembo, from King David Victory Park Primary School, came third in the North America, Australia and South African category of the Beit Hatfutsot Museum’s Manuel Hirsch Grosskopf International Competition on Family History in Tel Aviv on 7 and 8 June.

She and Avigal Rogoff, from Yeshiva College, were among 58 finalists from 24 countries who gathered for the 23rd such competition in the museum’s history.

Cayla’s project was *Author’s in the Family*, as both her grandfathers are authors. She created her display out of pages from their books, along with her own book filled with wisdom from her ancestors.

The finalists gathered for two days of learning, meetings, and international gatherings at Beit Hatfutsot’s Museum of the Jewish People. Participants toured the museum, described the stories

behind their projects to their peers, joined international workshops, and attended the final awards ceremony.

My Family Story, a far-reaching educational initiative, is one of Beit Hatfutsot’s most innovative programmes.

Cayla Dembo



King David students excel in Wits Mathematics Competition

King David students from Grades 6 to 12 participated in the first ever Wits Mathematics Competition last month, producing exceptional results across the board.

The competition aims to drive mathematical development and improve standards across the country. In its inaugural year, it attracted 836 students from schools across Gauteng.

King David Schools including King David Linksfield, Victory Park, and Sandton entered 10 students per grade (from Grades 6 to 12) in the demanding written-paper competition.

In the individual category for Grades 6 to 7, five out of the top 10 students were from King David Schools. In the Grade 8 to 9 category, King David students occupied two of the top 10 positions, including a first place for Daniel Strous, who achieved 85% in this category. In the Grade 10 to 12 category, one King David Student was placed in the top 10.

In the prestigious School Awards Grade 6 to 7 category, participated in by 24 schools across Gauteng, King David Sandton came first, King David Linksfield second, and King David Victory Park fourth. King David Linksfield came second in the Grade 8 to 9 category, with 41 schools participating. King David Linksfield came fifth, and King David Victory Park seventh, in the Grade 10 to 12 category, with 71 schools participating.

“One of aims of King David schools is to lift the general standard and capability of every student to think more deeply about maths concepts,” said Leigh Pleass, Master Teacher of Mathematics at King David Schools. “We have received a clear indication that we are on the

right path to achieving this objective.” Pleass said that one of the objectives of the Wits Mathematics Competition was to identify talent for the International Maths Olympiad. “As can be seen with these phenomenal results, King David Schools are producing ‘thinking’ pupils with dedicated teachers embracing changing methodology and focusing the students on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills,” she said.

Coffee plus rugby equals Father’s Day at Mina Lopato

Father’s Day at Mina Lopato last week wasn’t just about coffee and icing biscuits. Socialising and a spontaneous, friendly game of rugby made it a fun morning for everyone.



Mark and Joshua Garfinkel and Ashwin and Africa Willemse

King David Victory Park mentors Kliptown community

King David High School Victory Park regularly visits Kliptown Community Centre in Soweto to assist primary and high school children with their school work. The school has also donated an English Oxford Dictionary, a set of Encyclopaedia Britannicas, and stationery to the centre’s library to help resource it sufficiently to keep the children motivated.



Danielle Abrahams tutoring students from Soweto

Cry of ‘Syddie, Syddie, Syddie’ still not forgotten

JACK MILNER

As I watched a replay of the second Test match between the Springboks and England last Saturday night, I was stunned to hear the announcement of a minutes silence for Syd Nomis, who had died earlier that day of a heart attack.

He was one of the Jewish Springbok minyan and, for many, he was the greatest. Nomis was one of the Boks’ greatest wings, although he was first selected to play as a centre, which he did in his first three Test matches played for South Africa.

Nomis played in the days when communication was not as geared up as it is today, so when he made the team in place of John Gainsford who had played 33 Tests, he heard it first on the radio. Being the gentleman Gainsford was, he sent Nomis a telegram which read: “Like I’m sad, man, like I’m glad, man. Congratulations. Have a great game.”

Nomis went on to play in the next 25 Tests, and was on the winning side in 19 of those matches, while two of them were drawn. Nomis scored six tries, including two against Australia at Ellis Park in 1969. His first Test try was against the British and Irish Lions in 1968.

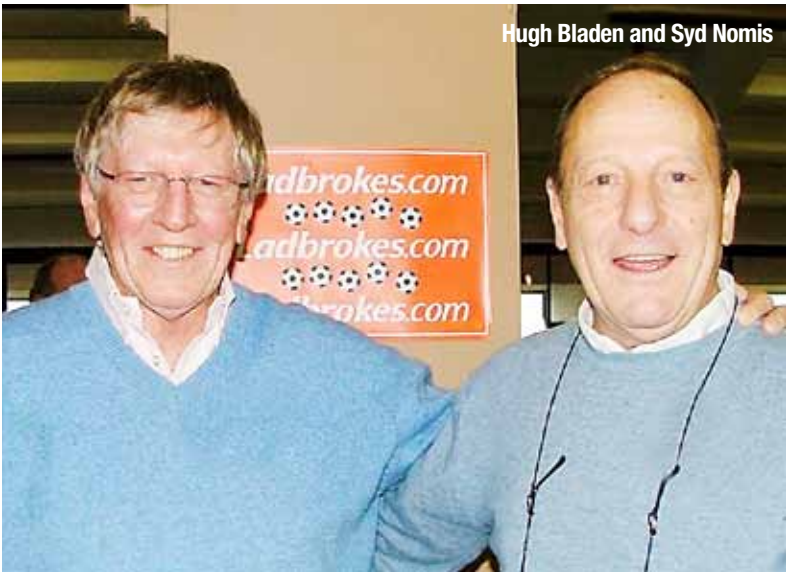
of South Africa’s most memorable radio commentaries, as Afrikaans commentator Gerhard Viviers accompanied his progress with cries of “Syddie, Syddie, Syddie” as Nomis scored under the posts.

Nomis was the ideal wing – fast, courageous, determined, and totally dedicated to his team.

He was inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame in 2000. The ceremony took place in Israel during the 2001 Maccabiah. At the same time, South Africa were playing a Davis Cup tie against Israel at Ramat Hasharon, and I was in Israel to cover both events.

The South African team, the Nomis family, and I ended up at the same hotel, and we spent some time together. On the middle Saturday, when there is no play in the Maccabiah, Nomis and his family came to watch the tennis, and I organised a ride on the players’ bus to the stadium.

The players, who included Neville Godwin and Marcos Ondruska, took to Nomis immediately, and we had great fun on the bus. We were also in the middle of the Tri Nations Rugby series, and were due to play the All Blacks on that day. A few days earlier, I asked Nomis who he thought would



Hugh Bladen and Syd Nomis

win, and he said, “They are going to give us a big klap.”

I was working for the South African Press Association (Sapa) at the time, so I sent back a story about Nomis’ induction into the Jewish Hall of Fame, and included his comment on the upcoming Test against New Zealand.

As Sapa sent its copy to all the newspapers in South Africa, *Beeld* decided to run the story on Page 1 with a big picture of Nomis with the comment. “Syd: Ons gaan a klap kry” was on posters all over town.

Early that morning, Nomis received a call from Springbok Coach Harry Viljoen, who had a full go at him for his remark. As we climbed on the bus to go to the tennis stadium, he turned to me and said, “Did you land me in the kak?” I had to handle a string of (good humoured) expletives from him the whole day.

Needless to say, he was right about the result. South Africa lost 3-12 at a wet Newlands.

In 2010, while on holiday visiting his son in Switzerland, he developed a blood clot in his left leg. In a Zurich

hospital, he got a leg infection which turned gangrenous. The doctors were left with no option but to amputate the leg above the knee. Despite the setback, the smile was still on his face whenever you met him.

A year later, a benefit was organised in his honour which was attended by all the rugby greats and many members of the Jewish community.

His relationship with former player and commentator Hugh Bladen was legendary, and the pair had many stories about their exploits, most of which included an abundance of alcohol.

Sydney Harold Nomis was born in Johannesburg to Joseph and Mae Nomis. His father was a dentist. He went to school at Marist Brothers College in Observatory. He left school and joined Wanderers in Johannesburg. In 1964, he was first chosen for Transvaal, and played for the team 54 times until he retired in 1973, scoring 26 tries.

He is survived by his wife Annie, son Gary, who played for Transvaal at Craven Week, and daughters Joanne and Romy, who both played hockey for South Africa at the Maccabi Games, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

In World Cup first, Iranian women protest ban from soccer stadiums at home

TOI STAFF AND AFP

With the eyes of soccer fans worldwide focused on the World Cup, Iranian women held posters during their country’s opening game in Russia last Friday in protest against Iran’s ban on women attending soccer games.

Women in Iran have been barred from attending soccer games and some other sports events since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with officials saying they must be protected from the “vulgar atmosphere”.

During the match, which Iran won 1-0 against Morocco, a number of women held up banners inside the stadium in St Petersburg calling for an end to the ban.

“Iran doesn’t want to see happy women in the stadium,” said Sara, who did not give her last name for fear of being arrested when she returns to Iran. “They’re worried about what else we’ll want.”

Sara, who belongs to an organisation in Iran working to lift the prohibition, concealed her face during the protest, and wore a hijab so she would not be recognisable.

“It was amazing to see how many people reacted positively, taking pictures” of the posters, she said.

Maryam, who wore sunglasses and a visor while holding up a protest banner during the game, said the

Iranian ban was made worse by the recent lifting of the same prohibition in Saudi Arabia, Iran’s regional rival.

“That’s humiliating to us,” she said.

She also criticised FIFA for not taking action against the ban. “FIFA shouldn’t take sides, but apparently it does,” she said.

In addition to the ban in Iran on women at soccer matches, Iranian authorities announced on Friday that planned open-air screenings in parks and Tehran’s largest stadium had been banned without explanation.

Many were excited about watching the match at Azadi (meaning “freedom”) stadium because it would have been the first time since the Islamic Revolution that men and women could attend a sports event together.

Instead, with no bars, and mixed signals from police



At the 2018 Soccer World Cup

about whether cafés could screen the games, many of the city’s soccer-mad population turned to cinemas to vent their passion.

Supporters thronged the steps of one multiplex in central Tehran ahead of the match, chanting and deafening passers-by with blasts from vuvuzelas.

There was a notably even split between men and women. Soccer is particularly popular among Iranian women, in part because they are banned from attending live matches, lending it an illicit air.

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PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

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ED FEINSTEIN

Ed Feinstein is senior rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California and instructor at the American Jewish University. An engaging presenter and storyteller, Feinstein unites the ancient Jewish love of ideas with the warmth of Jewish humour. He was ordained a rabbi and earned his doctorate at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Feinstein is the author of four books, father to three children, and husband to Nina (also speaking at Limmud), with whom he bakes brownies every Friday afternoon from a recipe revealed to his ancestors at Mount Sinai.

Sessions include:

- *A World of Wonder: The Religious Vision of Abraham Joshua Heschel*



- *A History of Chutzpah*
- *The Secret to Jewish Survival*



RITUAL LORE AND SPOKEN WORD

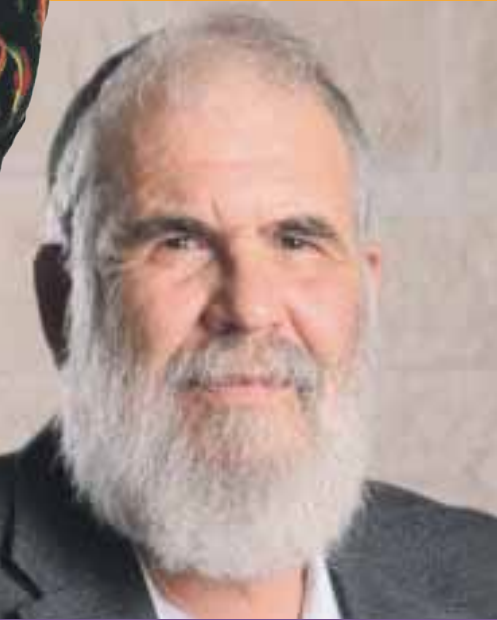
RACHEL ROSE REID

Rachel is a storyteller and Kohenet. She is the first woman from beyond North America to be ordained by the Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute.

The institute educates women to learn, reclaim, and renew Jewish feminine spiritual practice and ritual leadership.

Rachel has also been chair of the pop-up High Holy Day community Grassroots Jews. As a storyteller she has performed on BBC Radio 3 and at the City of London Sinfonia, Burning Man and Glastonbury.

Sessions include: *Songlines through a vanished city and Sing the Night In*



HALACHA FOR HUMANS

DAVID BIGMAN

David is Rosh Yeshiva of Ma'ale Gilboa, where he fosters a learning environment committed to Torah study and intellectual openness.

Influenced by the teachings of Rabbis Aaron Soloveichik, Aryeh Leib Bakst and Yisrael Ze'ev Gustman, Bigman is proactive on issues pertaining to society and halacha, agunot (women and divorce), and dialogue between secular and religious Israelis.

He is also part of Maaglei Tzedek, a religious organization which looks at issues of social justice and ethics in society.

Sessions include:

- *Rachel's Cry, Give me Children: Halachic and Communal Responses to Single Women and Childbirth*
- *Rebbe Nachman's Response to Heresy: Reconstruction or Rejection*



SEXUALITY AND SANCTITY

NECHAMA GOLDMAN BARASH

Nechama is an educator at Machon Pardes and Matan in Jerusalem. She teaches classes in rabbinic text, women and Judaism, medical ethics, and contemporary Jewish law. She made aliyah from Philadelphia over 20 years ago after graduating from Stern College. She has a Master's degree in Talmud from Bar-Ilan University. She also provides halachic education and counseling for women seeking to use the mikva as a way to sanctify sexual intimacy.

Sessions include:

- *Rupture, Reconciliation and Falling off a Roof: Stories on Erev Yom Kippur*
- *Sexuality and Sanctity: Building a Jewish Sexual Ethic*
- *Mirror Mirror on the Wall: What Can We Find Through Our Own True Reflections?*

BUKHARIAN PRINCE OF QUEENS

MANASHE KHAIMOV

A fourth generation community organizer and Jewish educator. Manashe was born in a city along the Silk Road, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where his ancestors lived for over 2000 years, which makes Manashe's Jewish identity simultaneously Bukharian, Sephardic, Mizrahi, and Russian.

An adjunct professor of Jewish Studies at CUNY, Queens, with a specialty in the History and Culture of the Bukharian Jews. He is founder of the Bukharian Jewish Union Inc, and Jewish Silk Road Tours.

Sessions include:

- *Who are Bukharian Jews? The Bukharian Jewish Culture.*
- *The untold story about Bukharian Jews during WWII*



FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

YISCAH SMITH

Yiscah is a Jewish educator, spiritual mentor and public speaker, addressing the spiritual dimension of authentic living. She employs her own story of the joys and struggles with her spirituality, emphasizing the importance of remaining faithful to one's inner being. As one who transitioned from a Chabad man to an observant woman, she presents topics in Jewish spirituality in an accessible and vivid style. Yiscah teaches at Pardes and the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Sessions include:

- *Forty Years in the Wilderness: My Journey to Authentic Living*
- *"It is not Good for a Person to be Alone." Really? Then Why Were We Created this Way?*



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ARTS AND CULTURE



FEARLESS MUSICAL ADVENTURER

AVIVA CHERNICK

Aviva is an award-winning musician who brings her voice and presence in performance and prayer to audiences and congregations in North America and across the globe. Her music is inspired by her decade as the lead singer of twice-Juno nominated World Fusion band Jaffa Road, by her work as a Ba’alat Neginah (leading prayer)

and by her study of the Balkan Judeo-Spanish tradition. Aviva is certified as a Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality.
Sessions include:
• *Aviva Chernick in Concert: Inner Landscapes, The Voice; Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World, One Sigh at a Time*



LATTER DAY JEW

H. ALAN SCOTT

A writer and comedian based in Los Angeles. He is the subject of the forthcoming documentary film *Latter Day Jew*, which tells how he was raised Mormon, followed his dream and went to Hollywood, got diagnosed with cancer and decided to become a Jew. He has appeared on The Ellen DeGeneres Show, Jimmy Kimmel Live, CNN, MTV, and Fusion. He has written for VICE, Esquire, Newsweek and OUT Magazine. He hosts two podcasts “Out On The Lanai: A Golden Girls Podcast and “You’re Making it Worse”
Sessions include:
• *Jewish Divas: The Role Jewish Women Play in Defining LGBT Culture*
• *Latter Day Jew*

PORTRAITS OF VIOLENCE

VIVA LA JUIF



LEORA KAHN

Leora is the executive director of PROOF: Media for Social Justice. Leora has worked with Amnesty International and the United Nations.
She teaches about human rights and photography at Yale and Clark University. Leora has documented rescuer behaviour in Rwanda, Cambodia and Bosnia, Sri Lanka and Iraq.
Her current focus is gender-based violence, refugees and forced migration.
Sessions include:
• *My Body is a War Zone: From Victim to Activist*
• *Witnessing: The Ethics of Representing Refugees*



LISA LEFF

Lisa Leff is Professor of History and Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at American University in Washington, D.C. She is a scholar of French Jewish history. Her 2015 book, *The Archive Thief*, tells the story of Zosa Szajkowski, an influential Jewish historian who stole tens of thousands of documents from French archives and sold them to libraries in the United States and Israel. It was awarded the 2016 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish literature, and was a finalist for a 2015 National Jewish Book Award.
Sessions include:
• *Napoleon and the Jews*
• *The Archive Thief: The Man Who Salvaged French Jewish History in the Wake of the Holocaust*

(Visit made possible by the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town.)

WHERE, WHAT, WHEN AND WHO TO CONTACT

JOHANNESBURG
Indaba Hotel, Fourways
Friday 3 to Sunday 5 August 2018
Full weekend including two nights at the Indaba Hotel, all meals and child-care.
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Sunday only: 8.00am to 5.45pm including meals and child-care.
Call 083 451 9176

DURBAN
The Durban Jewish Centre (DJC)
Thursday 9 August 2018 (Women’s Day)
9.30am to 5.30pm
Includes lunch, Young Limmud and child-care
Call 084 446 6362

CAPE TOWN
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