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PROGRAMME

9am *Coffee and Snacks*

9:15am *Session One*

ROOM 1 **Open Soul Surgery**
Rabbi Yossi Paltiel

10:15am *Session Two*

ROOM 2 **Doing More by Being Less**
Rabbi Levy Wineberg

ROOM 3 **From Exile to Redemption**
Rabbi Noam Wagner

ROOM 4 **Nothing is More Whole Than a Broken Heart**
Mrs Simcha Youngworth (Women Only)

11:15am *Session Three*

ROOM 2 **Chassidus: Spiritual Strategies to Overcome Stress**
Rabbi Ari Shishler

ROOM 3 **The Call of the Shofar**
Rabbi Nesanel Schochet

ROOM 4 **Regret & Renewal: Transforming my Past into a Better Future**
Rebbetzin Estee Stern (Women Only)

7:15pm *Evening Session*

ROOM 1 **Chassidus Unplugged**
Rabbi Yossi Paltiel and Friends - "FARBRENGEN"



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painted panel
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using oil-based paints
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Christians march to Union Buildings, shouting “Viva Israel!”

NICOLA MILTZ

Thousands of Christians took to the streets in Pretoria on Wednesday in a solidarity prayer rally for the State of Israel.

Their message to the government was loud and clear: No Israel, no vote.

“Enough is enough. The government has pushed us too far.” These are the words of Masindi Mmbengwa, leader of the Unity Fellowship Church, who expressed his Christian movement’s support for Israel. He said millions of South African Christians were opposed to the government’s continued plans to sever ties with Israel, adding that it was time the government “took notice”.

“We are going to retaliate... this march is the beginning of the real war and we are going to say NO!” he said.

A petition with over 40 500 signatures was handed to a government official at the

The event was almost called off following the late-notice and unexpected cancellation of the venue hire by Freedom Park, where the rally was scheduled to take place (see page 2).

The singing, chanting and toyi-toying crowds made their way slowly to the Union Buildings carrying placards with slogans saying: “No Cutting Ties”, “Send back the SA Ambassador to Israel”, “No to Downgrade” and “I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.”

Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, leader of the African Christian Democratic Party, roused the crowds with messages to the ANC, Hamas, the Palestinian Authority (PA), Iran, the people of Israel and fellow South Africans.

He said the ANC had allowed Hamas to inform them and influence them. “This was a mistake. Instead of listening to Hamas, listen to us Christians. We are here representing millions of South Africans and we want the relationship with Israel to be

Israelis teach their children to love, to be innovative.”

He challenged the PA to encourage the use of iPads and computers instead of knives and guns.

To fellow Israelis he said: “In spite of how the rest of the world treats you, there are millions in South Africa who love you.”

Speaking to journalists earlier, Meshoe

present at the rally not to take sides in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but instead, to listen to both sides and encourage everybody to come together.

“Some organisations are determined to use our country as a platform to attack Israel, he said. “We are not here to tell Israel what to do. We are friends of Israel.

“There are many faiths in South Africa.



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver



Union Buildings, calling for the government to cease efforts to sever ties with the State of Israel and to reinstate South Africa’s ambassador to Israel.

Signatories to the petition included members of civil society, political parties, religious institutions, schools and student groups from across South Africa, who declared their support for continued relations between Israel and South Africa.

strengthened.”

He reminded the government that Hamas was not going to be here to vote for them at next year’s elections.

His message to Hamas was simple: “We regard Israel as our friend; don’t come here and mess up that relationship.”

His message to the PA was to teach children to love instead of hate. “You teach your children to hate Israelis. It is wrong...

praised Israel for the assistance it provided around the world, including Syria.

He said government had double standards when it came to Israel. “The loss of life is always regrettable, but where is South Africa’s voice when thousands of Christians are being killed by Islamist militants? They are silent.”

Mosiua Lekota, president of the Congress of the People, urged those

We took the decision in South Africa not to adopt one faith. Therefore, we must respect each other’s beliefs and faith. We want peace in South Africa and in the whole world; therefore, we must respect each other.”

In thanking all who came in support of Israel, Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein moved the crowd with a blessing for peace. “From the depth of my heart to all of you gathered here, thank you so much, we love you,” he said.

“As we see the Union Buildings, we say to government on behalf of millions of South Africans, the majority of whom love Israel; we say this is a democracy – the government must listen to the people. We want the bond of love between South Africa and Israel to be close. For South Africa to love Israel and for Israel to love South Africa.”

Nkosi Bishop Phakama Shembe, head of the Shembe Church, said the government was arrogant and when it started to listen to the people, the people would vote for it.

According to The South African Friends of Israel (SAFI), the group that organised the peaceful rally, the event on Wednesday was supported by the Nazareth Baptist Church, the Council of Churches South Africa International (COCOSAI), the Christian Ministers Council of Southern Africa (CMCSA), the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), Reconciliation in Christ Ministries, City of Mercy Tabernacle, and the Naturena Baptist Church.

Bomb scare at venue that reneged on SAFI rally

NICOLA MILTZ

Freedom Park received a bomb threat on Wednesday afternoon, around the time the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) were meant to be holding a mass Christian prayer rally in support of Israel.

However, at the last minute the government-owned and run Freedom Park management cancelled the event and refused to allow the highly publicised rally at their venue because it was a pro-Israel event.

SAFI was left scrambling to make alternative plans so the mass rally, arranged weeks ago, could take place as planned.

“Someone obviously did not get the memo on the venue change,” says Mark Hyman, SAFI co-chairperson.

“I don’t know who called in the threat, or if we knew anything about this. It was news to us. The reality is that Freedom Park did refuse us the venue.”

He added: “Given what’s going on in South Africa with the mosque attacks, any threat against a religious or state facility is totally unacceptable and is taken seriously.”

Freedom Park events co-ordinator Pamela Singh confirmed the bomb scare on Wednesday afternoon, saying that staff had been evacuated and some of them were left traumatised.

Freedom Park CEO Jane Mufamadi told *IOL* news that they had received calls from a person who said they had planted several bombs inside the premises.

“We cannot take chances with people’s lives,” Mufamadi said. “When we get a bomb scare, we react. We can’t just take it lightly.”

Following Freedom Park’s refusal to host the rally – after initially granting permission and accepting a deposit – SAFI called an urgent press conference on Monday.

The emailed retraction from Freedom Park’s management was received a week before the scheduled event. In it, event co-ordinator Singh wrote that the venue was “an agency of government, and government has taken a formal decision regarding Israel, hence we have to abide by government’s decision”.

Freedom Park, the 52-hectare park overlooking Pretoria, was originally established as the South African government’s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to honour those who sacrificed their lives to win freedom. Its website describes it as a place that “celebrates the ideals of liberty, diversity and human rights... and celebrates and explores the country’s diverse peoples, and our common humanity”.

SAFI is currently considering its legal options in light of Freedom Park’s refusal to host the prayer gathering in solidarity with

Israel, said SAFI board member Benji Shulman. “The reasons stated for this about-face are questionable, and point to political meddling and interference in the management of a national monument and public facility,” he said.

“Given what’s going on in South Africa with the mosque attacks, any threat against a religious or state facility is totally unacceptable and is taken seriously.”

In a statement this week, SAFI said that Freedom Park was not only directly contradicting its own mandate but also the provisions of our Constitution. “This amounts to a political assault on Christian rights in South Africa,” the statement said.

Shulman said the interfaith prayer event was intended to be a peaceful and civil event, supported by various Christian and other faith groups to pray and pledge solidarity to Israel – it was not a political gathering.

Freedom Park management told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that in light of the fact that SAFI was considering legal options, it would not comment on its reasons for cancelling the event. Public relations officer Naomi Madima said: “Freedom Park received a formal notice through their [SAFI’s] attorneys of record, Werksmans Incorporated, that they are preparing court papers for an urgent court application. We deem it proper that we allow the court process to follow a natural course so that we give the

process the respect it deserves. To this end, we will address substantive matters at the appropriate time and forum.”

However, management told SAFI that it reserved the right to refuse an event which “contradicts its fundamental principles of nation-building, social cohesion, reconciliation and environmental integrity”.

According to SAFI’s co-chairman, Ben Swartz, the decision to cancel the rally is “unconstitutional, irrational and arbitrary”.

Terence Corrigan, project manager at the South African Institute of Race Relations, said: “It seems thoroughly bizarre to me that a forum supposedly existing to enhance and extend the ideals of liberty, diversity and human rights seems to regard it as appropriate to abridge their exercise.”

He added that Freedom Park management’s refusal seems to indicate that it cannot allow a pro-Israel event because of a decision taken by the government. “It seems to me that a central part of freedom is precisely the right to oppose decisions of government. Take this away and you’ve gutted the very idea of democracy.

“The situation in Israel and Palestine is one that evokes great passions around the world. It is surely the essence of democratic diversity that

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AUTO AFRICA

Torah thought of the week

Can we comfort Sergeant Levy’s mother?

No amount of downed Syrian jets on the northern border of Israel this week are any comfort to the family of Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Sergeant Aviv Levy. He was killed on the southern border last Friday and laid to rest on Am Yisrael’s national day of mourning, Tisha B’Av, on Sunday.

“There is no nechama – comfort” said President Ruvi Rivlin when visiting the grieving family during the Shiva call that he paid to them on Monday. “The entire nation is embracing you during this difficult time.”

So then, what are we to make of the message this week, being Shabbat Nachamu – reflecting the haunting words of comfort that Hashem tells the prophet in the Haftorah: “*Nachamu nachamu, ami*” (Comfort, oh comfort, my people”? Is there no comfort for the Levy family?

The question

also arises from the heart of the Parsha itself (providentially read on Tisha B’Av as well), where we read the horrifying words of the tragedies that would yet befall us: “For you will not live long years on the land that I will give you...” It’s a prophecy striking far too close to home for Aviv’s parents. So, what is the Nachamu?

Perhaps, perhaps, their comfort lies in the knowledge that they are not alone in their quest for better times and prayers still unanswered;

The Parsha opens with Moshe begging and being denied the chance to see the land of Israel. He is perhaps the first casualty in our quest for settling the land with eternal peace.

Hashem still tells him “*Nachamu nachamu*” – a double comfort.

The first comfort is that while you, Moshe, won’t enter the land, your children will. True, it won’t be miraculous the way you would have done it. But each of them will play their vital role as partners, a role they wouldn’t have played had you done it all for them.

And they will settle the land. First Joshua, and the prophets, and then the kings, and the

sages, and their students, and the young souls of the IDF, especially those who are the ultimate partners, investing their very lives in this endeavour.

But that’s only one comfort.

And the second comfort? That’s when you, Moshe, will come in to the land as well, for an eternal comfort, and you will settle the land forever.

We are on the threshold of this second comfort, the arrival of Moshiach and the ushering in of the final era of universal peace.

But that’s not good enough.

“I only want that my son should be the last one to fall,” Aviv’s tearful mother, Perla, told President Rivlin this week. And we owe that to her. We need Moshiach now.

Please take a moment to do that extra last mitzvah, the charity in money or spirit, the word of Torah, the good deed, and live a life a little closer to that vision of a world perfected and redeemed. May it be realised speedily in our days.



Rabbi Asher Deren The Shul of Blouberg – West Coast

South African Jewish Report

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Heartfelt apologies for anti-Semitic comments accepted

NICOLA MILTZ

“So guys please don’t hate on them, they are sorry so let’s open them with big arms and let them say sorry [sic].” These are the words of King David Linksfield teenager Jordan Landsman, 16. Just last week, he came face to face with two Muslim teenagers who had made threatening and anti-Semitic comments on a WhatsApp group he administers. After removing Muhammad Hattia, 19, and Tameez Seedat, 19, from his Sneakerheads WhatsApp group for writing hate-filled posts, he asked members of the group to re-invite them and accept their apologies. This followed a meeting, held last Wednesday, where the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) withdrew criminal charges against the two teenagers, following a settlement agreement between the parties. “I felt they were genuine,” Landsman told the *SA Jewish Report*. The attorney representing the Board, Ian Levitt, told the *SA Jewish Report* that the “settlement was necessary and important”.

“I’ve learned a lot from this. I was expecting horrible people who didn’t care. But when we came face to face I could see they did care.”

He said: “I had to prevent a tit-for-tat laying of criminal charges and the potential outbreak of what could have been a very dangerous situation and a further flare-up of tensions in the Jewish and Muslim communities because of what was posted by various sides of the dispute on social media platforms other than Sneakerheads.” The anti-Semitic posts were the culmination of numerous racial slurs on various social media platforms. These followed racial tension in the wake of the recent Gaza violence and the incident of TV personality and model Shashi Naidoo, who was forced to apologise after calling Gaza a “shithole”. As soon as Hattia was re-introduced to the Sneakerheads group, he

posted: “Hey guys my names [sic] Muhammad Hattia. I said some really disgusting and disgraceful things a while back and I really regret. I just wanted to formally apologise for all the fear and hurt I may have caused to all of you.” Seedat posted: “Hi to everyone here, I’d just like to take this opportunity to apologise to everyone that had to see the comments I made about a month ago, was really insensitive of me to do so and I honestly mean no harm to anyone, I hope you all have it in you to forgive me for my mistakes. And to Jordan @Jordan Landsman, it was nice to finally sit down and meet you and your family, was a great experience bro.” Their posts were followed by several others on the group accepting their apologies, and thereafter moving on with their usual takkie talk. But while charges have been dropped and apologies have been made and accepted, all three teenagers have walked away completely changed young men. They spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* this week. Seedat, of Bedfordview, said he is “filled with regret and shame” for what he had done. “What happened was so uncalled for, so unnecessary... out of emotion. I interact with Jewish people every day at work and I had to explain to them. I have no hate. My parents were so disappointed in me, but I was more disappointed in myself.” He said the meeting last week was “very inspiring, everyone was so nice and polite and we all expressed ourselves and told our sides”. Hattia, who is studying law at the University of the Witwatersrand, told the *SA Jewish Report* that he couldn’t sleep at night, he felt so bad. “It was a very big mistake on my part and one that is going to stick with me forever. I realise it is completely unacceptable and I am very ashamed. My parents have never put into my mind any form of hate; our religion doesn’t teach us to be hateful.” He said going forward, he wanted to help others become aware of the dangers of social media. “Social media can be very dangerous. It is easy to be misled. One has to be careful about what you read. Certain writers speak with so much passion, it is important

to see both sides and hear from multiple people’s perspectives.” He said he wished he could go back in time and “stop myself from saying those awful things out of raw emotion. I feel really, really ashamed.” The national director of the SAJBD, Wendy Kahn, described the encounter last week as a “career highlight”. “The young men were genuinely remorseful for what happened and wanted to make amends. Their family members showed a sincere desire to address whatever harm had been done and move forward in a spirit of peace and reconciliation.” After meeting Seedat and Hattia, Landsman told the *SA Jewish Report*: “I believe they were genuine. Their fathers were very sad; one even cried. “I’ve learned a lot from this. I was expecting horrible people who didn’t

care. But when we came face to face I could see they did care.” He said he was particularly moved by one of the fathers, who told those at the meeting that he had previously worked for a Jewish family for many years. “He was even a pallbearer at his employer’s funeral and would start his working day by having tea and breakfast with his boss’s wife every day.” He added that the man cried at the meeting and said he was disgusted by what had happened and didn’t know why his son would do such a thing. “People say such terrible things behind a screen, but when you see them they are completely different,” said Landsman. He also admitted to expecting to meet “horrible, nasty people”, but in reality they were teenagers just like him. “I have no regrets for accepting

their apologies.” Members of the community were quick to criticise the SAJBD for what they believed was a weak response to the hate-filled attacks. Heavily criticising the Board on its Facebook page, some said it had failed the community by not making an example of the two men and not following through with legal action. Some described the Board’s response as a “pitiful, shameful, weak response”, using words like “disappointing, cowardly and insulting”. Said one: “This was one time the Board should have prosecuted to the full to send a clear message that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated.” The Board countered by saying the community was “better served with actions that bring about change”.

Continued on page 12>>

Shashi banned from Israel for 10 years

PAULA SLIER

In what appears to be a tactical public relations coup for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions South Africa (BDS-SA), local celebrity Shashi Naidoo was refused entry to Israel on Wednesday. She was stopped as she tried to get into Israel from Jordan. Speaking from Jordan, Naidoo said she had been interrogated at the border and her passport was stamped, preventing her from returning for a decade. She was flying home that evening. Naidoo said she was hurt and frustrated, and re-iterated that her intentions had not been to hurt Israel but to come with an open mind. “I’m not anti-Israel and I’m not anti-Jewish,” she said. Israel’s Minister of Strategic Affairs, Gilad Erdan, acknowledged that after assessing that Naidoo’s visit would be used to delegitimise Israel, officials denied her entry as part of Israel’s policy in fighting BDS. Her visit was proposed and supported by BDS-SA, which held a press conference for Naidoo to publicly apologise for her social media support for Israel. Naidoo hit the headlines when she posted her support for Israel on Instagram. She criticised Hamas and its rule of the Gaza Strip, saying there was more than one side in the conflict and that the country was the opposite of apartheid. The postings sparked an outcry from the anti-Israel lobby. Naidoo then recanted her statements and issued a tearful apology on social media after receiving death and rape threats. At the press conference, Naidoo said she would visit the region with BDS to “re-educate myself about the situation”. Last week, the *SA Jewish Report* told of how Israel’s deputy

Shashi Naidoo



ambassador had met with Naidoo, telling her not to go to Israel as she would be turned away. In a press statement, Erdan said that because of her pro-Israeli statements, Naidoo received a harsh backlash and was now trying to recover from damage caused by BDS organisations. But he pointed out that her planned tour and its “re-education” aspect was seen by the ministry as a cynical form of “compensation” for BDS-SA through which it would then utilise Naidoo’s public profile for its own ends. “It is sad that in today’s South Africa, expressing support for Israel in its struggle against terrorism leads to death threats against those who expressed their support,” Erdan said. “This is the same intimidation and coercion which we saw used against the Argentinian national football team, when BDS organisations threatened the players and their families who planned to visit Israel. In these unfortunate circumstances, we cannot allow her to enter the country. “I personally invite Ms Naidoo to visit Israel on her own accord and experience the reality on the ground. She will soon discover that what she tweeted was true and accurate.” BDS-SA said refusing entry to Naidoo was a clear indication that Israel did not allow freedom of movement, expression and association. “This behaviour by Israel infringes on our diplomatic relations and is a further indication of the need for South Africa to implement the ANC’s resolution for the immediate and unconditional downgrade of the South African Embassy in Israel. There can be no doubt that Israel is a hostile state to South Africa.”

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Chrissie Hammer 082 568 0440 | 011 880 3550



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Linksfeld - Inviting buyers from early R5 Millions
Kallenbach Dr. Your glass castle in the most tranquil setting. Views Galore. 4 Beds. 3 baths (mes). Study. Guest suite. Pool, deck area. Multileveled garden. Description does not do justice. Viewing essential. Web Ref: 130505

Directions: Follow pointers from Kloof Rd (just before Sylvia's pass) into Kallenbach Dr.
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229 | 011 622 1820



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel - Inviting buyers from R1.899 Million
Nova Place. 3 Bedroomed townhouse, 2 bathrooms (main en-suite), reception rooms onto open private walled garden. Hurry will be sold soon. Asking more. Web Ref: 124333

Directions: Jawitz pointer along Norhfield Avenue becomes Avon Road into Nova Place.
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco Biagio 082 048 2644

Tackling lies about the Arab-Israeli conflict head-on

JORDAN MOSHE

The misinformation around the Arab-Israel conflict abounds, not least of all because we live in an age of social media where anyone can disseminate anything, irrespective of facts.

This is where HonestReporting comes in to tackle misrepresentations head-on. This team does so for its 140 000 subscribers worldwide who want to be able to sift through the biased reporting, skewed facts and fabricated news to get the truth about this conflict.

HonestReporting is one of the largest grassroots organisations devoted to media monitoring in the world. Unaligned to any political party or government, the organisation monitors media outlets for any signs of bias, inaccuracy or other failures to adhere to journalistic standards in their coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although the greatest number of its supporters are based in the United States, the organisation is

supported by people from around the globe, including the UK, Canada, Australia, Israel and even South Africa.

Created in 2000, the organisation was founded during the Second Intifada by a group of students in London. “These students were fed-up with the media and its grossly biased portrayals of Israel,” explains Simon Plosker, HonestReporting’s managing editor.

“So, they set up a mailing list to alert their friends and family members to any anti-Israel media bias which appeared in the news. They also called on their subscribers to direct complaints at media outlets for any false reporting.”

The organisation upholds this commitment, devoting itself to ensuring that Israel is fairly represented across the media spectrum. “We do everything we can to hold every media outlet to account,” says Plosker. “Combing through news from across the globe, we establish the accuracy of every anews segment or report we come across and identify anything which is less than truthful.”

Once an inaccuracy is discovered,

Plosker says, “we often approach the outlet from which it originated and demand that they acknowledge the misinformation, which they have shared, and correct it.

“Additionally, we are able to educate members of the public about unfair media coverage and empower them to respond effectively.”

The organisation also focuses on education, which Plosker says “is crucial” in an endeavour like this. “We aim to ensure that the public is equipped to consume what the media produces with consideration and thought, questioning what they see and establishing its veracity.”

HonestReporting provides tools to respond to false reporting. Through its Israel Daily News Stream, the organisation offers a daily round-up of every news segment the media is covering in Israel to give as broad a perspective as possible.

It also offers the public numerous opportunities to participate in missions to Israel, offering them unique opportunities to engage with politicians, academics and media personalities involved in the situation on the ground.

HonestReporting is equally involved in working with the media. “Having dealt with the media for some time now,” says Plosker, “we’ve learned that while the necessity of honest reporting is a stick with which to keep outlets in line, we need to offer them a carrot as well. We therefore created Media Central, an arm that works with journalists from across the media and helps them gain access to information which is unbiased and unfabricated.

“The truth is that Israel’s story, the real story, is compelling enough without any twists or blurring of truths. One doesn’t need an angle or an agenda to make the story interesting. There is enough genuine news emerging from Israel to make the situation beyond gripping.

“Core supporters of Israel know this and make use of our coverage and material in their work as advocated for Israel. However, the majority of people have no access to a truly unbiased view, and it is vital that we reach them and not only supporters.

“Even when the public at large is not looking for the genuine information we share, we can still offer them a piece of truth that can enter their everyday exposure to the media and encourage them to think differently about the news they see.”

When it comes to measuring their success, concrete statistics alone are not enough. “We could base the rate of our success on the number of media corrections we’ve pursued,” says Plosker, “but this is not the full picture.



Simon Plosker

“Yes, we can establish how many people are viewing our site and its content, but the real indicator of success is the degree to which we’ve encouraged people to reconsider how they receive and consume news.

“Realistically, we know that we will never eradicate false news. It’s like

“The truth is that Israel’s story, the real story, is compelling enough without any twists or blurring of truths. One doesn’t need an angle or an agenda to make the story interesting.”

crime: no matter how low the rates may be, we will still employ a police force to keep an eye on it. There may not always be a fire burning, but we still keep firemen on duty.”

Fortunately, the number of instances concerning news which is entirely false is still rare in the mainstream media, but incidents do occur. Plosker cites an example: “Over Tisha B’Av, a record number of Jews visited the Temple Mount. According to the *International Business Times* (IBT), ‘raids’ on Al-Aqsa Mosque increased by 200%. This is a staggering statistic, but it turns out that the IBT had drawn the information from the Hezbollah media outlet and similar Palestinian sources known to lack credibility.

“These outlets had simply counted every single non-Muslim visitor to Al-

Aqsa, including tourists. We pointed this out to IBT, they apologised and withdrew the piece.”

He continues: “As frustrating as they may be, there is nothing to be gained from engaging with media outlets steeped in lies and looking to influence others. Iranian Press TV and similar outlets do not care about proper journalism, and though they may have journalists of integrity, they are editorially not bothered in the least about reporting lies. They are state-run, and therefore directed by political agendas. Thus, they have no credibility whatsoever.”

Plosker concludes: “We need to learn how to adapt to different types of media stories and how to treat them individually. People need to understand that we are not the Israeli government’s mouthpiece, and that while bad news may come from Israel, we don’t necessarily have to defend it or justify it, but must know how to explain and understand it for what it is.

“Organisations like ours must be capable of bridging the gap between the communities of the diaspora and those within Israel.

“We must learn how best to reach out to younger people who are less enamoured of Israel because of the coverage they are shown, and show them that they have based their opinions on false news that must be recognised and dealt with.”

• Simon Plosker will be presenting sessions and talking on panels at Limmud SA next week. Limmud Johannesburg is 3 to 5 August, Limmud Durban is 9 August and Limmud Cape Town is 9 to 12 August.

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Bomb scare at venue that reneged on SAFI rally

>>Continued from page 2

these be aired. Personally, I find it difficult to attribute the refusal of Freedom Park to make its facilities available to supporters of Israel to much beyond political preference.”

Meanwhile, at the urgent press conference held on Monday, several Christian representatives said they would consider changing their vote if the government was not prepared to listen to them.

Masindi Mmbengwa, leader of the Unity Fellowship Church, said: “Christians are prepared for continuous mass action and will pray until the government collapses.

“They [politicians] all flock to our churches when they want our vote. Now they want to terminate our livelihood –

Israel is our livelihood.”

He said those who were against Israel had been “captured” by an alternative agenda, adding that South Africa must not terminate relations with Israel: “Not in our name. As proud Christians, we say enough is enough.”

He described the South African government’s negative stance towards Israel as “a demon-possessed mentality”.

An impassioned Apostle Linda Gobodo said proudly: “We are friends of Israel, we support Israel. We are against the downgrading of the embassy, which will negatively impact the lives of all South African Christians.”

She said the sooner Christians put pressure on the South African government, the better.

Bo-Kaap battle could inflame Muslim-Jewish tensions

TALI FEINBERG

In the hotbed of issues around affordable housing, spatial justice and gentrification in Cape Town, simmering tensions are nearing boiling point in the Bo-Kaap. In this area, the heart of the Muslim community, property developers – some of them Jewish – are seen as a threat to the way of life.

With its colourful houses, cobbled streets and proximity to the city centre, the Bo-Kaap has drawn tourists, young professionals and property developers to the area. This has led to families living there for decades no longer being able to afford the skyrocketing property prices.

Over the past year, protests from this Muslim community have become extreme. In the last week of Ramadan, tyres were burnt, traffic was blocked and visibly angry youth made their presence felt. Bo-Kaap activists have likened the struggle to retain the area’s heritage to the Palestinian struggle.

The late president Nelson Mandela’s grandson, Mandla Mandela, addressed Bo-Kaap Youth group of protesters on 8 June, saying: “The Bo-Kaap Youth can make us proud by making this area a no-go zone for all Apartheid Israel products... let us fly a Palestinian flag on every street of Bo-Kaap, if not on every home. When the world comes here to see the historic Slave Quarter, let us make them aware and tell them that our Palestinian brothers and sisters are still being subjected to occupation, brutality and genocide by Apartheid Israel.

Tensions came to a head a few weeks ago when Judge Robert Henney granted an interdict prohibiting anyone from going near the Blok development site. The property development

Flags in the Palestinian colours flutter above the streets of Bo-Kaap



company is owned by Marco, Jacques and Lior van Embden, a Cape Town-based Jewish family. Marco is a community leader and a donor to many meaningful causes.

The interdict cited violent acts committed by civic organisations, including a petrol bomb at the construction site, as part of the reason for the interdict. Bo-Kaap Civic Association chairperson Osman Shaboodien insisted that Blok was infringing on their human rights.

Bo-Kaap resident Ebrahim Christian, who was specified in the interdict, said: “The community is angry. It’s not touching one person but the entire community... It’s not going to work; it’s an old apartheid tactic.”

After the interdict was granted, the Bo-Kaap Youth, who are leading the protests, wrote on their Facebook page that they are “declaring war” on the Blok company: “The entire Bo-Kaap community has been interdicted by Blok property developers from preventing their cranes from coming into the area. They have employed an Israeli security company to secure

their sites,” wrote Bo-Kaap Youth, whose slogan is: “The fire within – to exist is to resist.”

“This same security company has members who’ve served in the Israeli Defence Force and brought untold pain and hardship on the Palestinian people. Bo-Kaap is our Aqsa. We call on our Ulema (body of Muslim or religious scholars), our freedom fighters and each and every one who values the area, as well as its contribution to the history of Cape Town and South Africa,” the post continued.

“We take the defence of Bo-Kaap as our Jihad and call upon people with conscience to join us. Join us as we occupy the developments currently taking place in Bo-Kaap. We dare Blok to unleash the Israeli occupying security firm PPA on us. Show Blok and their security teams that we the people of this beautiful South Africa know resistance. Amandla!!! #defendbokaap #joinusforbokaap #occupybokaap.”

In a post on the Bo-Kaap Youth Facebook page, a woman wrote: “An example to the people of Woodstock who have being forced out

of their homes for years by these rich bullies... guess who is behind it, the Jews.”

It is this anti-Semitic perception that could lead to increased tension between the Muslim and Jewish communities in Cape Town. The woman is referring to a previous incident, when Blok sought the evictions of residents in Woodstock. In addition, the Jewish community was pulled into the battle over the Tafelberg site, which was sold by the City to the Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School.

Activists want it to rather be used for affordable housing, and currently the sale has been stopped by a court order. In addition, Lior van Embden was condemned for evicting a family from a block of flats that her family owns in Sea Point.

With this history, the danger in the Bo-Kaap situation is that Jews are being perceived as “enforcers of apartheid” and “destroying a way of life”, even though this is not the reality.

But the perception may already be there. Rabia Parker, a member of Bo-Kaap Rise (a different organisation to Bo-Kaap Youth) who grew up in the area, wrote in the *Daily Maverick* on 8 July: “They break us down while trying to act as though they are building us up. We have called Bo-Kaap our home and we will resist the forced removals as a result of these developers.”

Blok chairman Marco van Embden says that from his perspective, “there have so far been no attacks on our person or Jewishness”. However, he added: “We are sadly the victim of attacks against the City and the DA – we are fodder. There are three other developers being tackled. The big issues are actually with the City. We are in the middle.”

The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies chose not to comment.



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south african

Jewish Report

Standing by the values we hold

It was heart-warming to witness a sea of South African faces as far as my eye could see, as I watched the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) march to the Union Buildings this week. I was watching the march as it was being livestreamed on Facebook from Pretoria, as we put this newspaper to bed on Wednesday. I was choked up to see the huge support Israel has in South Africa.

On the flip side, we are all well aware of how fashionable it is to be anti-Israel in South Africa, but I had no idea it was government policy to prevent South Africans from supporting the Jewish State.

Apparently it is, according to those who run Freedom Park for the government. SAFI had initially secured Freedom Park for a mass Christian Prayer rally in support of Israel, scheduled for Wednesday. It was all systems go for the rally this week and more than 5 000 people were expected from around the country.

However, just one week before the event, SAFI was notified that they were no longer free to use Freedom Park because “the government has taken a formal decision regarding Israel, hence we have to abide by government’s decision”. This, according to an email that Freedom Park’s events co-ordinator, Pamela Singh, sent to SAFI, when she cancelled the event with immediate effect, leaving SAFI high and dry.

Freedom Park is indeed a government establishment, and ironically, its mandate is to uphold the values of tolerance and diversity, among others. Amazing for an entity that is run by people who are so clearly intolerant of diversity, and especially of South Africans who choose to support Israel.

The vision for Freedom Park is to be a leading national and international icon of humanity and freedom, according to its website. Astonishing! Just how humane is it to refuse to allow people to hold a prayer meeting, and exactly what freedom are they talking about? To me, it looks like the park’s management were trying hard to prevent freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, etc. I could go on and on. And on their website they do go on and on about these beautiful ideals they support and stand for. Clearly, these are only words...

This park falls under the ministry of arts and culture, and so Minister Nathi Mthethwa has executive authority over the park. I wonder if he supports this outrageous behaviour.

I don’t have a problem with people taking a stand; I do it all the time. I do have a problem with people standing for one thing and then changing their standpoint when it suits them.

In this case, it was certainly a good thing they put it in writing because no sooner had SAFI questioned them from a legal standpoint, they backtracked and found another, very tame reason to refuse the prayer rally. Why, you may wonder.

Yuck, it leaves a bad taste in my mouth. It is about integrity and honour and inclusivity and freedom – clearly, these are values those who made this decision do not espouse.

SAFI, however, would not be cowed and would not – as I guess the Freedom Park folk were hoping – just go away. No, if there is one exceptional lesson we have learned from the Jewish State, it is that no matter how many people want it to disappear, Israel just gets stronger and stronger.

In the same way, SAFI simply changed the tactic from being a controlled, insular mass prayer meeting – where people who didn’t want to see them, didn’t have to – to a bold march to Union Buildings.

Kol Hakavod to SAFI!

Do not do to your neighbour

While we clearly do have friends, we also have many people who don’t like us. This is all too evident on social media. The SA Jewish Board of Deputies are quick to take up these slurs and deal with them. So it did with the WhatsAppers we write about on page 3.

I have made it clear, though, that I don’t believe that anti-Semitism as such is growing at a pace, but rather, racism is. I am seriously distressed by the ugly racial comments coming from Jews about other races.

We cannot be racist and expect others not to be racist towards us. We cannot swear and demean other people for their beliefs, if we don’t want others to do that to us.

I am 100% behind rooting out anti-Semitism, but I am also for rooting out racism.

We can’t stand up and fight hate speech and be perpetrators of it. It reminds me of the Talmudic story of Hillel and Shammai, in which Hillel explained that the Torah was based on this precept: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour.” Whether you agree with Hillel or not, the essence of Judaism is to be a light unto the nations, and we cannot behave in a way that is the antithesis of how we want to be treated.

We go back to social media, a platform where people love to vomit out hatefulness. It is so easy, but so unacceptable. We are all individuals, and each one of us has the right to do whatever we wish within the law. I get that, but we cannot take people to task on the one hand for their hateful vitriol about us, if we are doing something similar.

Is it really acceptable to be so hateful? I am no angel and I don’t expect anyone to be perfect, but before we run down other people for their religion, race or way of life, we need to think twice.

Consider how we would feel if someone said the same about us. Let us try our damndest to be better than that. Let’s set our personal moral bar higher. I am going to try.

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Déjà vu to the last Gaza war... and then it stopped

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



Last Friday night, it looked as if another Gaza war was upon us. Israel launched a massive airstrike, hitting more than 60 Hamas targets, including three battalion headquarters. Four Palestinians – of which Hamas acknowledged three as its fighters – were killed.

A few days earlier, the air force had already conducted its largest assault on Gaza since the last war between the sides in 2014. It was with a strong sense of déjà vu that journalists were rushing to the Israel-Gaza border. But by midnight it was over.

The flare-up was eerie. A Friday deadline for Hamas to cease flying arson kites and balloons into Israel had come and gone, with no let-up in the provocations. Somehow the massive air response seemed too strong a punishment.

At about 18:00, a journalist from Gaza phoned to ask me what Israeli media were reporting about an Israeli soldier who had been badly injured. The answer was nothing. And yet in Gaza rumours were rife that a soldier had been hit.

I couldn’t shake the feeling that something had happened, especially as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Tel Aviv holding two emergency meetings with his top political and security brass.

Hours later, the army issued a statement.

Israeli aircraft strike sites in Gaza after rockets fired

Indeed, the Gaza rumours turned out to be accurate. A 21-year-old infantry soldier, Sergeant Aviv Levi, had been shot by a Palestinian sniper and declared dead on arrival at hospital. His parents and two siblings had been holidaying in Italy and it took a while to notify them before details could be made public.

Levi was the first IDF fatality on the Gaza front since Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

And yet despite the initial hard-hitting airstrikes, for now, war seems to have been averted.

Hamas was quick to accept an Egyptian and United Nations-brokered midnight ceasefire and the border has been quiet this week. But in reality, the circumstances that provoked that flare-up have not changed and the status quo was simply reinstated.

Israel and Hamas have already fought three wars in the past decade and neither wants another full-blown confrontation. There isn’t much either side will gain and both are aware of the risks of the situation escalating out of control.

Had Israel been gunning for war, it would have targeted senior Hamas officials in its airstrikes and not only bombed battalion headquarters. Had Hamas wanted one, it would have launched rockets at Israel even after coming under fire.

As it was, Hamas fired three projectiles before the airstrikes began.

Hamas told mediators it would act to reduce the

kite bombs, but claimed this would take time since some of the launchers belong to groups who do not take orders from them.

Israel disputes this and points out that during one of its attacks last week on a cell launching kites, a member of Hamas’s military wing was killed. This showed Israel that Hamas both encourages and participates in the arson strikes.

But there are indications that the sniper who killed Levi was not initially sanctioned by Hamas because Ismail Haniyeh, who leads the group’s political wing, was near the border when the army retaliated and Hamas fighters were in their operational centres. Had they anticipated the death of a soldier and the obvious Israeli reaction, they would presumably have gone into hiding.

But still Hamas later released a picture of the sniper who killed Levi – claiming he was a member of their armed wing. The group seems to have caught itself in a bind.

The international support for its popular protest over the past three months in part relied on claims that Palestinian protesters coming under fire from Israeli soldiers were unarmed. For some, the group has now lost that advantage by introducing snipers into the fold.

Those protests were important for Hamas because they kept Gaza in the consciousness of the international – and Israeli – communities. But as part of the ceasefire terms Hamas agreed to, it has to stop the demonstrations from continuing. We’ll see this Friday if that happens or not.

Hamas is also fighting for political legitimacy from among its own population and its traditional backers. Confronting Israel like it has done in the past few weeks keeps it relevant.

It has increasingly lost support in the Arab world. Qatar, a traditional Hamas supporter, faces accusations that it supports radical Islamist terrorists. The Gulf States ceased their support of the group a long time ago and Egypt sees Hamas as an ally of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which it opposes.

This has left non-Arab countries offering support, like Turkey and Iran, which has only further complicated Hamas’s relationship with Arab states.

At the same time, Hamas has failed to provide basic services like water and electricity to its population in Gaza, instead focusing its money and resources on strengthening its military wing. This has caused the Palestinian Authority, headquartered in the West Bank city of Ramallah, to reduce funds to the enclave and to view Hamas as an enemy.

Add to this the new restrictions Israel imposed on Gaza earlier this month when it closed Kerem Shalom, the only commercial crossing between Israel and Gaza (and which it partially re-opened on Tuesday) in response to the arson kites and balloons.

That served to further tighten the economic noose Gazans are facing, leaving Hamas looking for ways to put pressure on Israel to strengthen its own standing. The easy answer that always comes up is to attack the Jewish state in some form or another. But not so that it leads to war.

And so Hamas and Israel remain in a dangerous paralysis. The very issues that caused Hamas to escalate tensions in the first place – Gaza’s isolation and faltering economy – are still in place, with no solution seemingly in sight. This means the conflict could flare up at any time.

Sadly, it isn’t a question of ‘if’, but ‘when’ that will happen, because for as long as the status quo remains, and for as long as there is no significant change in the dismal reality of Hamas-ruled Gaza, despite the best mediation efforts, journalists will again be rushing to the Israel-Gaza border.

India-Israel tech co-operation: a model for BRICS countries?

OPINION

Vijeta Uniyal



The BRICS group of countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – are meeting in Johannesburg this week for their annual summit. BRICS is a formidable international geopolitical bloc, representing almost three billion people – which translates to over 40% of the world population – and covering almost 27% of the earth’s surface.

In contrast, the State of Israel, with its relatively tiny population of eight million, appears more like a statistical rounding error. In size, the country is even smaller than the Kruger National Park.

Counter-intuitive as it may sound, partnering with the Jewish State could help BRICS countries manage some of the pressing challenges knocking at the horizon.

Israel has been ahead of the curve when it comes to tackling some of the issues faced by South Africa, India and the other BRICS countries. These include shrinking arable land, receding water-tables or the gaping digital divides between the developed and the developing world.

Take emerging technologies, for instance. As the global economy marches towards automation and digitisation, technology is once again dividing the winners and the losers of today’s post-industrial age.

According to the world-renowned Israeli author and Hebrew University history

professor, Yuval Noah Harari, we are once again at a watershed moment in human history. We have a handful of countries leading today’s technology revolution and the rest lagging behind.

“When the Industrial Revolution began in the 19th century, a few countries such as Britain, France and Japan mastered the new technologies of steam engines, trains and telegraphs. Most countries, such as China, Korea and India, remained far behind,” says Harari.

“It took countries such as China, Korea and India almost 150 years to close the gap that opened in the 19th century,” he adds, concluding that those left behind this time may “never get a chance to close the gap”.

As sobering as Harari’s premise sounds, it is not a call for pessimism.

The rise of India’s information technology sector in the 1990s shows how a developing country can leverage technology to overcome structural deficits created by lack of infrastructure and poor governance. India’s IT sector contributes \$130 billion (R1.7 trillion) in revenue and contributed 40% of the country’s total exports between 2010 and 2015.

The sector has also emerged as a big job creator, employing 3.5 million Indians.

In a rapidly changing world, it is not enough to rest on past laurels. Despite impressive growth, rural areas in BRICS countries remain persistently behind in

mobile and internet penetration.

Internet and mobile-based technology create global disparities, while carrying the promise of improving lives for millions of people living in rural, poorly connected or remotely accessible regions – from providing micro banking to directing disaster relief.

Today’s smartphones pack more computing power than all of US space agency NASA did when it put the first men on the moon in the late 1960s.



In South Africa, more than 20 million people, or 40% of the population, have access to the internet, mostly on mobile devices. The number of internet users in India has crossed 500 million, nearly half of the population.

The spread of mobile and telecommunication networks open new possibilities. These are not just in commercially viable retail or finance sectors, but also in direct democracy, public administration and e-governance.

Technology has been the driving force behind the growing trade between India and Israel. Bilateral trade between the two countries has grown from about \$200 million (R2.7 billion) to nearly \$5 billion (R67 billion) since diplomatic ties were fully restored in the early 1990s.

Looking ahead, the India-Israel partnership in the start-up sector alone has a revenue potential of \$25 billion (R337 billion), according to The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), the association of Indian IT firms.

Israeli and Indian innovators and entrepreneurs have joined forces to create healthcare solutions for rural India, a low-profit segment often overlooked by the big pharmaceuticals.

Mumbai-based Reliance Industries is hoping to rope in Israeli know-how and talent to create services and solutions for a 100 million to 200 million-strong potential customer base spanning across India.

In a world veering away from a manufacturing-based economy towards a technology-based one, South Africa and other BRICS countries need to create shared technology ecosystems to bring their best and the brightest together. The emerging partnership between India and Israel offers a model for emerging BRICS economies.

• Vijeta Uniyal is an Indian journalist based in Germany.

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A critical look at why the Nation-State Law is unwelcome

JUDGE DENNIS DAVIS

The introduction of the Basic Law on Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People prompted widespread controversy for good reason. The problem with the new legislation is best illustrated by a petition brought before the court by members of the Druze community. They argue that this Act violates their basic rights, such as a right to equality, and deems that non-Jewish minorities have little status in Israel. In their petition, they contend that not only does the law define the role of the State with an emphasis on its Jewishness, but it “enshrines the collective rights of the Jewish majority”. The Arab minority, which constitutes 20% of Israel’s citizens, receives no recognition at all of its collective rights. And beyond that, “it does not even win recognition as a minority in Israel”, according to the petition. There is also an argument that the clause that encourages the establishment of communities for Jews only contravenes previous High Court rulings. Particular reference is made to a decision in 2000 of Ka’adan versus The Israel Lands Administration. In this case, five judges decided that the State could not allocate land to entities which established communities for Jews only. The fact that the High Court is unlikely to strike down a Basic Law is beside the point. The key question concerns the contents of this legislation and its



implications for Israel going forward. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has argued that “in the Israeli democracy we will continue to protect the rights of both the individual and group; this is guaranteed, but the majority has rights too and the majority rules”. Majority rule is not unqualified. Readers who understand South African democracy well know that our Constitution places certain basic rights beyond the reach of the majority. While Israel does not have a written Constitution, various basic laws hold legal implications beyond that of ordinary legislation. Central to the idea of a constitution, and even a basic law, is that certain rights are placed beyond the reach of a majority. If the argument that the majority rules applied in South Africa on a simple majority, then Section 25 of our Constitution, the property clause, would probably be repealed. So would many other protections granted to a range of minority communities. The rights of dignity, equality and freedom should not be placed at the mercy of a transient majority. It is instructive that this legislation was passed by a small majority. A more than 20% minority group now finds its language, which prior to

this legislation was an official language, is downgraded to a more ambiguous “special status”. This clearly fuels legitimate perceptions of a discriminatory practice. So does this clause: “The State sees the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.” In effect, this promises a group areas system in which Jewish settlement will take place, to the exclusion of other communities who claim to be citizens of the country. Doubtless, these groups will also feel that the provision that the Hebrew calendar is the official calendar of the State – although the Gregorian calendar will still have official status – reflects a clear change in emphasis of the country’s political practice. In a global world, one might ask what purpose is served by this change. Since its creation, Israel has grappled with seeking to achieve a balance between being the homeland of the Jewish people and a democracy. In broad terms, this reflects the core tension between the universalism and particularism within Judaism. This new legislation puts an end to the argument. The democratic component has given way to the hegemony of the Jewish element. Israel’s founders desired to create a democracy in which all who lived in the country would be recognised as full citizens, whether Jewish or Arab. By so firmly rejecting any attempt to reconcile both elements, Israel has now set itself upon a path in which it would be far more difficult to claim that it is truly a democratic State. That is the tragedy of this legislation. To those who, doubtless, will attack critics of the legislation, it should be remembered that the law passed by 62 votes to 55. There is a very significant body of Israeli citizens who wish to live in a democratic State. Sadly, this wish is unlikely to be fulfilled as long as this legislation continues to operate. And with it, an increasing criticism will draw closer analogies between Israel post this law and apartheid South Africa.

• *One of South Africa’s most respected legal minds, Judge Dennis Davis was appointed to a personal chair of Commercial Law in 1989. In 1998 he became a Judge of the High Court, and the President of the Competition Appeal Court in 2000. In 2013, Davis headed a committee that was appointed to review South Africa’s tax policy framework.*

Israel has the right to define and protect its own democracy

DAN DIKER

Israel’s recent legislation of the Nation-State Law provided another relished opportunity by Israel’s adversaries and enemies to delegitimise the country’s Jewish-majority democracy’s character. The Jewish State legislation has been fundamentally misunderstood. It has been slandered by some in South Africa, Europe and the United States, whose own majority characters include similar official languages, symbols and holidays which, when applied to Israel, are branded as “apartheid”. As in any viable democracy, Israel’s national state law protects the civil, religious and human rights of its non-Jewish minorities. However, after 70 years of statehood, it belatedly enshrines in law its democratic majority’s national character as the nation state of the Jewish people. Here are the facts of the Nation-State Law. It does nothing to compromise, prejudice or diminish the legally protected and equal civil and religious rights of Israel’s minority populations. The law merely enshrines what was clearly stated in Israel’s 1948 Declaration of Independence. This was affirmed some 36 months after the German Nazi regime had completed its massacre of more than six million Jews. It was only months after the British government refused to allow tens of thousands of Jewish survivors to take refuge in Israel. Israel’s national state law does nothing to change or amend its Declaration of Independence, which states that: “...(Israel) will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions...” “We appeal – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the building of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.” The Jewish State Law supplements Israel’s Declaration of Independence that did not enshrine Israel’s Jewish character – the Menorah – as its national symbol, the Jewish holidays as official state holidays, and Hebrew as Israel’s 3 800-year-old national language. Israel’s Jewish State bill legally codifies the Jewish people’s right to national self-determination, which it deserves as any unique people do, and which the US and European states embrace as the basis of their liberal democracies. Some European countries which have official churches, such as the Church of England, have not aroused the human rights activists. Eugene Kontorovich, professor of International Law at Northwestern University, pointed out recently in the *Wall Street Journal* that: “The Slovak constitution opens with the words, ‘We the Slovak nation’, and lays claim to ‘the natural right of nations to self-determination’. The Latvian constitution opens by invoking the ‘unwavering will of the Latvian nation to have its own state and its inalienable right of self-determination in order to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture

throughout the centuries’. It is notable that Latvia has a 25% Russian population. Charges that the Jewish State Law discriminates and downgrades the Arabic language from an official language to a special status language lack merit. Nothing has changed in the special protected status of the Arabic language. It is included on all Israeli products and instructional booklets, and it is spoken as a lingua franca in Israeli public institutions, hospitals, schools, government offices – not to mention hotels, restaurants and commercial agencies, many of which are managed and staffed by Arabic-speaking Israelis. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Jewish State Law is its determination that “the state views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation”. Let’s be clear. The Jewish people have lived in the land of Israel for some 3 800 years. Jews were murdered, tortured and exiled from virtually every country in the Arab lands of the Middle East and Europe in which they were loyal citizens. The land of Israel is the only small corner of the world where Jews can live and defend themselves. The thousands of Jews killed and maimed by Islamic and Arab terror in the land of Israel bolsters the need for Jewish settlement and self-defence. Ironically, the Jewish State Law might never have come into being save for two threats to Israel’s existence as a democratic national state of the Jewish people. Many of Israel’s 18 elected Arab representatives in parliament have actively worked to subvert, demonise and delegitimise any Jewish connection or right of the 80% Jewish majority to self-determination. For decades Arab members of Knesset, very well and as equally compensated in line with their Jewish parliamentary colleagues, publicly encourage and justify radical Islamic and Palestinian terror groups such as Hamas, Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad and Tanzim to act against Israel. Arab legislators have publically pushed for Israel to be disbanded as a Jewish majority state and reconfigured as a 23rd Arab Muslim majority state. Palestinian Leaders in the West Bank have done the same. Palestinian Authority (PA) and PLO founder Yasser Arafat, and current PA leader Mahmoud Abbas never accepted a Jewish sovereign entity anywhere in the Middle East in any borders. Period. Both Palestinian heads of the PA have paid hundreds of millions of international donor dollars to Palestinian terrorists and their families to incentivise them to kill Israelis. The Jewish State Law, therefore, sends an important message that these ongoing efforts to cause Israel’s implosion from within, and its destruction by external enemies, will fail. Israel’s majority character as the nation state of the Jewish people, together with protected minorites, will continue to succeed. Sometimes it requires putting it into law to make the point.

• *Dan Diker is a Fellow and Project Director of the Program to counter BDS and Political Warfare at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He has lived and worked in Israel since 1990.*



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JORDAN MOSHE

Although he has only recently taken up the position, he is determined to make a positive contribution in line with

Born and raised in Cape Town, Fried earned a bachelor's degree in commerce

He has served as a partner at McKinsey & Company in New York, worked as the chief operating officer and chief executive at Investec UK, co-founded a private equity firm, and has served as a non-executive Director of the Court of the BoE since 2012. He has lived in New York and London, where he currently resides with his wife and children in St John's Wood.



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As he explains: “Getting the role [at BoE] is not the real achievement. Rather, performing it with distinction over time to come will be the achievement, possibly one day worth another Jewish Achiever nomination. I have some serious work ahead of me in a global environment that is filled with challenges. The first step is to navigate those.”

Creating a powerful path for women in orthodoxy

JORDAN MOSHE

Rebbetzin Nechama Goldman Barash – who is winging her way to our shores for Limmud next weekend – has spent much of her adult life working for women’s rights in Orthodox Judaism.

"I'm a feminist, and I grew up believing strongly that women have a role to play," says Barash. "Outside Judaism, the momentum gained by the feminist movement is considerable. Inside, it appears far more limited as there are defined roles, structures and practices in place. However, the place of women within Judaism is progressing, and people are realising it."

While she believes tradition is the essence and structure of Judaism, she won't accept arguments aimed at protecting it against movements of the modern age that are well founded, measured and comprehensive. She insists that attempts to defend tradition by invoking "the slippery slope" arguments are not only poor, but these attempts shut down an engaging and oftentimes necessary conversation.

Barash made aliya from Philadelphia, and after an initial stint as a freelance writer in bio-tech issues, she studied for three years at Matan's Advanced Talmud Institute and completed a Master's degree in Talmud at Bar-Ilan University.

Despite never having contemplated a teaching career, she realised that she had much to contribute to the discussion



Rebbetzin Nechama Goldman Barash

of the role of women in Judaism. She also realised that she could ensure women were afforded access to discussions of which they were never a part.

"I grew up in a frum home, but whatever texts my father studied with my brother, he would study with me," she explains. "There was no limitation where my education and role as a woman was concerned. I suppose this gave me the confidence to give voice to an issue that Jewish women face and help them engage in new ways."

To this end, Barash took up teaching at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. She teaches Rabbinic Literature, Women and Judaism, Medical Ethics and other such subjects.

To further enhance her learning, she also enrolled in the Nishmat institute's ground-breaking Yoatzot Halacha programme, a halachic studies programme for women that includes in-depth study of *Hilchot Niddah* (laws around women's purity), as well as supplementary studies in women's medicine and halacha.

Her learning, she says, enables her to bring something unique to the subject of women in Judaism: “I felt I could offer a different approach to the topic, both as a feminist and an educator. The increasing value placed on the education of women in the last 30 years empowers me.

“This move is transformative for both communal and educative spaces in Judaism. We are now witnessing women entering spaces such as rabbinic courts and playing active roles there. There are new dimensions being offered to women.”

However, delays and setbacks do still occur. “The expression ‘three steps forward, one step back’ is very accurate in this area,” she says. “When certain people take a step back and look at women’s progress, they say, ‘Wow, women have got too far! We need to slow it down a little.’ This was illustrated when the Orthodox Union issued its report against the ordination of female rabbis. Various motivations lie behind such arguments, and they range from pure fear to stigma.”

Judaism is not unique where the upheaval caused by the

growing role of women is concerned, says Barash. According to her, all traditional faiths are experiencing the same issues, and expressing concern over changes they face. "Gender binary is an indisputable part of Judaism," she says. "It's hard to ignore it when discussing an issue like this. Judaism defines certain roles for certain people.

"I'm less angry about the issue today than I was 30 years ago," she laughs. "We can't overlook the fact that the place of women has improved drastically in education, but we cannot forget that we must consider a future goal before we get there."

The journey for women's enfranchisement is fraught with frustration, she explains. One of the issues she identifies is that of the *Aguna*, a halachic term for a Jewish woman who is "anchored" to her marriage (most commonly when her husband is missing or lost) and cannot be issued with a divorce document from her husband.

“The shuls are not doing enough to address these real issues,” says Barash. “The discussions have been clamped down on and no reforms are being considered. Of course, it’s a delicate matter as we don’t want to gain the support of women while losing men. Both men and women need to be involved, working together to improve circumstances and realities.

"It's sad to me that I represent something so astonishing to people outside the US and Israel," she adds. "The mission I pursue is unheard of in many places, and other countries

are extremely slow in moving forward. While progress is not uniform everywhere, things are still moving, and the world is making steps towards a different future.”

The key to achieving this, says Barash, is to increase education amongst women. "The more educated women are, the better they are equipped to fight for their seat at the table. The process begins at the level of teaching, and both men and women need to engage."

Barash has yet to encounter marked resistance to her pursuit, receiving

largely positive feedback from both men and women. She explains that she is cautiously optimistic about the future progress of the movement, and stresses that people must realise when certain battles are worth fighting or have been lost.

One of these is the battle of rabbinic ordination for women. “It was obvious to me that the movement would head in this direction,” she says. “Of course, if you open the door to Talmud and then to halacha, ordination will have to follow. In truth, the battle over ordination is now irrelevant – it has been lost. Screaming and kicking won’t help, and neither will arguments about it being a slippery slope to becoming reform.

“Of course, this change does need to be carried out with the halachic restrictions borne in mind. Women cannot be counted in a minyan, nor read from the Torah in shul. But if people want to challenge it, they need to use genuine arguments, not excuses. Are they taking it up because of a pure reaction, or are they driven by fear or an agenda?”

“Arguing that we ‘just can’t’ or that we are ‘spiralling downwards’ try to shut down the discussion. There is no problem with the concept of a woman rabbi, and this discussion needs to involve proper arguments if people want to discuss it.”

What matters most to Barash, however, is the new status women have achieved within Judaism. She concludes: “Women are today considered addresses for questions that they would never have been asked 30 years ago, not just regarding matters of sexuality. They are approached for opinions on halacha, kashrut, Shabbat and religious counselling – avenues never open to them before, and because of education, they have an opportunity to share in these roles and offer informed guidance.”

- *Nechama Goldman Barash will be presenting sessions and talking on panels at Limmud SA next week. Limmud Johannesburg takes place from 3 to 5 August, Limmud Durban is on 9 August and Limmud Cape Town takes place from 9 to 12 August.*

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SPEAKERS

Tracing the steps home of Mandela’s first white friend

JORDAN MOSHE

The late Nat Bregman was so much more than just former president Nelson Mandela’s first white friend – according to Madiba’s autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*.

He was a staunch communist, a top lawyer, a stand-up comedian, a sportsman, a Lithuanian immigrant and a family man, according to his daughter Adina Bregman, who spoke about him at an event hosted by the Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa at the HOD on Sunday evening.

Sitting in the office he shared with Mandela at law firm Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman a long time ago, Bregman unwrapped his sandwich and held it out to Mandela, his fellow articulated clerk, saying: “Nelson, hold the other side,” according to Adina. He then told Mandela to “break” and, after Mandela had done so, Bregman said: “Eat.” As they both began eating, Bregman said: “Now that’s the philosophy of communism – we share everything that we have.”



Nat Bregman

Adina retells this story she knew so well growing up; it encapsulates her father’s passion for life and his beliefs.

Born in Lithuania in 1923, Bregman arrived in South Africa at the age of four in 1927 with his mother, sister and brother aboard the Union Line ship, the Gloucester Castle. His father had arrived shortly before them, setting up home in Amersfoort, a small town in Mpumalanga. The life that this young boy would go on to lead would prove to be exceptional and would compel his daughter to return to his place of birth in a journey to retrace his history.

Adina, an accomplished architect, not only described the man her father was, but also recounted how she had

ventured to Lithuania last year in an attempt to better understand his roots.

Bregman passed away in 2011 at the age of 88, having involved himself in various endeavours throughout his life. “People knew of Nat the lawyer, the sportsman, the politician, the communist and even the comedian,” says his daughter. “He moved to Johannesburg at the age of 10 when his father died, left school at 15, studied at night to get his matric while working, and went on to become a qualified lawyer who devoted himself to his work for 57 years.”

Adina relates how, despite never being a religious man, her father was afforded the unique opportunity to meet the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose words he took to heart. “When he was in his 40s, my father, along with his four children, went to meet the Rebbe,” she says. “At one point during their conversation he said to him: ‘Nat, you must never retire. Try to work every day of your life.’ My father must have internalised these words, because that’s precisely what he did.”

The undertakings that Bregman devoted himself to were diverse and numerous. A keen sportsman, he was an avid snow-skier and achieved a black-belt in karate “He used to surprise us with karate chops and kicks all the time, saying we should always be ready,” laughs Adina. Moreover, Bregman had been a renowned comedian in his youth. He was the resident comedy performer at the Plastic Theatre in Northcliff for four years. He even tried his hand at

politics, joining the progressive party at about the same time as Helen Suzman.

Sharing a close connection with Madiba, Bregman served his articles alongside him, says Adina. “He also opposed strongly what the government was doing at the time. When completing the ‘race’ section of any official form, he would write ‘human being’ in the space. That’s the type of person he was.”

The Nat she did not know, however, was the four-year-old who had been born in the little Lithuanian village of Grinkishek. Determined to explore her father’s birthplace, Adina travelled last year to Lithuania to explore his history. “Lithuania has a tragic and chequered past,” she says. “Occupied and ruled by the



Nat, Rosa and Adina Bregman with former President Nelson Mandela

Russian empire, the Nazis and the Soviet Union, it did know times of independence. Still, being caught between two superpowers meant it was always threatened.”

Before her father and his family left the country, the life they enjoyed in Europe seems to have been idyllic and memorable. “Nat’s mother, Chana, was one of four children born to Feitel Sidelsky. She was the product of Feitel’s fourth marriage and came after he had already had more than 10 other children. Of course, this means that I have a lot of relatives to keep track of,” she laughs.

Pointing to a number of photographs she has uncovered, she says: “The places in which they spent their early years are beautiful, and it’s tragic to think of what happened there.”

While her journey brought her much joy, it was marked by a sense of sadness. “The reality of the annihilation that the Jews experienced in the Baltics made a joyful experience a very painful one,” she says. “We experience journeys like this and only then do we realise how

lucky we really are that our families left these places and enabled us to be born.

“We can understand so much about our community here in Johannesburg when we see where our relatives came from, and appreciate it more than before.”

“The reality of the annihilation that the Jews experienced in the Baltics made a joyful experience a very painful one.”

This was made particularly apparent when she arrived in Grinkishek. “This village is outlying and very rural,” she explains. “When you see it, you immediately understand why our ancestors settled in places like Ermelo. They wanted to replicate the homes they had known in Europe.

“My husband and I sat together

under a tree, contemplating the idyllic scene before us. While I felt I was completing a circle, I also wondered: Am I seeing more of Grinkishek than Nat ever did? When he was in South Africa during the war, did he know what was happening to his community and the town in which he had been born? Did he realise what a nightmare they were experiencing, and did he know how he had been saved from it? Perhaps it’s better that he didn’t, but that I could discover it all instead.”

Adina stresses that the rich culture that the Jewish community in South Africa enjoys is not merely a replication of what once existed in Europe, but is part of the very same story and the continuation of a tradition.

“The history of the Jews of Lithuania is here with us every day,” she says. “From the gefilte fish to the Yiddish language, these things define us and connect us with the rich heritage of our ancestors. This history surrounds us here, and we need to appreciate it every moment we can.”

Heartfelt apologies for anti-Semitic comments accepted

>>Continued from page 3

The Board maintained: “There was nothing flippant about the engagement. There was nothing but sincerity and genuine contrition in that room. Those boys followed the official apologies with heartfelt words. We are not a community that rejects genuine remorse.”

In the letters of apology, both men acknowledged that the comments they posted constituted racist defamation and incitement to cause harm against Jewish people. They apologised unequivocally to the South African Jewish community and, in particular, to the members of the Sneakerheads WhatsApp group. They agreed that “nothing justified what was said”.

Kahn, who has spent many years fighting hardened, unrepentant anti-Semites, said she honestly believed that the young men were “sincere and genuine and remorseful”.

In response to complaints on Facebook, she said that

while many people had welcomed the resolution, some had reacted with “cynicism and anger.”

“They were not in the room where the humiliation and anguish was visceral and present. It was a difficult thing to witness, people having to own up to awful acts.

“An apology is not an easy action. It should never be underestimated how hard it is to take responsibility for your actions and to face those you have harmed. It is even harder in that the situation is so public.”

Kahn said the animosity that sadly exists between sections of the Muslim and Jewish communities “complicates the situation further”.

Yet despite this, she said, they went ahead with their apologies, with their fathers both supporting and adding to the sincerity of the engagement.

The young men will soon be spending time at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

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The many lives touched by SHAWCO

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Pearl Selibowitz, who taught Jewish studies around the country for 50 years, was inspired to become a teacher through her contact with SHAWCO, the Students’ Health and Welfare Centres Organisation – a student-run, non-profit community development organisation based at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

From 1958, Selibowitz taught literacy in District Six every Saturday morning for three years, first as a high school student and later while training to be a teacher.

Memories of those far-off days came flooding back as she wandered through the exhibition, *Touching Lives: The SHAWCO Story, 1943-2018*, currently on at the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town. The exhibition will run until the end of September.

SHAWCO had its beginnings in 1942, when UCT medical student Andrew Kinnear spent his vacation driving an ambulance in Windermere (now Kensington) to pay for his studies. He was appalled by the poverty and the lack of hygiene and medical facilities in the area, and was determined to do something about it.

Kinnear asked Dr Golda Selzer of the Pathology Department at Groote Schuur Hospital to assist him in establishing a clinic there. “I said: ‘Sure we will,’” she recalled later.

So, on a winter’s night in July 1943, the first eight UCT medical student volunteers saw eight patients. Kinnear remembers: “The effort and sacrifice of these students was incredible. The only financial aid was £100 worth of drugs. The students used their own instruments and initiative, helped by a few doctors who shared their keenness.

“Dr Selzer was one of these, and it is very

much due to her faith in the students, and her advice and criticism, that the clinic became established.”

Selzer became a co-founder of SHAWCO and remained its honorary life president until her death in 1999. Having graduated from UCT in 1932, she had married legendary physician Professor Frank Forman in 1934.

The couple visited Israel frequently and relocated there in 1971 after retiring.

“The unique feature is that the entire project, since its earliest days, has been the responsibility and achievement of students of the University of Cape Town,” said Selzer in 1963. Students have kept it viable since World War II, as well as during apartheid and post-1994.

As a member of the Union of Jewish Women (UJW), Selzer enlisted its support as one of SHAWCO’s first partners. In 1941, the UJW established a milk depot for mothers and children at Windermere.

The next year, it founded the Kensington crèche, which was to become one of its largest and longest-lasting projects. It was established “for the children of non-European working mothers”, securing donations of food and clothing, while SHAWCO member Dr Dorothy Chanock attended to the needs of the children.

Within two years, an inspector from the Department of Social Welfare described the crèche as “a veritable oasis amidst the surrounding squalor and dirt”. Its success led the UJW to establish a further three crèches: in Elsies River (1973), Manenberg (1984) and Khayelitsha (1990).

As a child, former finance minister Trevor Manuel attended the Kensington crèche, which

remains a UJW project to this day.

Gavin Morris, director of the South African Jewish Museum, said the idea behind holding the exhibition was to extend the museum’s reach into the wider community, so as to include a broader demographic. “One of the things we want to do is to bring many different people into the museum to hear our story. SHAWCO is a perfect opportunity because



Dr Golda Selzer with some of the children in SHAWCO’s early days.

it’s an organisation that’s not Jewish, but has massive Jewish connections from its origins until today.

“It’s an opportunity for the museum to open its doors to a lot of people who may not have chosen to come here but have an affinity with SHAWCO – and they’ll have the opportunity to learn about our community.”

Gavin Joachims, the director of SHAWCO, knows first-hand about the organisation he leads, having spent much of his childhood at the Elsies River crèche as a “SHAWCO kid”.

“It never crossed my mind, all those years ago, that one day I would be the director,” he told the *SA Jewish Report* prior to the opening of the exhibition.

Joachims describes SHAWCO today as “a very different animal”, operating in the fields of health, education and social entrepreneurship. The health programme, still its flagship programme, services about 5 000 patients a year in the Cape Town metropole and the rural Eastern and Western Cape.

Its mobile clinics provide primary healthcare services, including vaccination, pap smears, health promotion and free basic medication.

Its education programme provides services to 1 300 children from Grades R to 11, at 14 sites throughout the Cape Town metropole. This includes homework support and a structured curriculum focusing on numeracy and literacy, on a daily basis after school and on Saturday

mornings. The children also have exposure to leadership development, sport and cultural activities, he says.

An academic intervention programme focuses on tuition for pupils in Grades 10 to 12 in the subjects of maths, physical science, accounting, English and life sciences. The programme is attended by more than 500 pupils, and is presented at UCT every Saturday morning by top educators.

All of which must surely have been beyond the wildest imaginings of SHAWCO’s early founders.

Using dance to bridge the divide

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

When the Indoni Dance, Arts & Leadership Academy won a Gold Impumelelo Social Innovations Award in November last year for its contribution to the development of South Africa, it was clear that this dance school was unique.

The Impumelelo Social Innovations Centre is a leading awards programme in South Africa that rewards innovators who find creative solutions to public problems.

“The academy is a bridge,” says its co-founder, Balu Searll Nivison. “We use dance as a vehicle for transformation and healing, and as a bridge to something more.”

Based in Cape Town, the academy offers a three-year post-school professional training programme for dance and integrated arts, including music, drama, and visual arts. Indoni currently has 30 students on board for the three-year course, all school leavers from poor and marginalised communities in Gugulethu and surrounding townships.

“A lot of them are living in child-headed households, unable to afford transport or feed themselves,” says Searll Nivison. “Each student has their own mentor, who meets with them on a monthly basis. These mentors have a wide range of expertise and do a fantastic job of guiding and caring for their trainees.”

Indoni was launched in January 2015, with nation building, honouring the heritage of South Africa and rekindling hope as part of its mandate. It is drawing support from South African expatriates eager to give back to the country of their birth.

The seeds were sown when Searll Nivison, who had worked with academic and anti-apartheid activist Dr Mamphela Ramphele during the formation of her political party Agang the year

before, got “very involved” in township life.

At the time, her old colleague Jenny van Papendorp suggested that she come and see the work that Sbonakaliso Ndaba, a former colleague of theirs, was doing with some dancers who had attended the Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School in the Western Cape township of Khayelitsha.

In 1986, dancers Searll Nivison, Van Papendorp and Sonwabo Masepe were behind the first black-and-white dance company in the country, Abamanyani.

Recalling her visit to the dance classes in Athlone, Searll Nivison says: “I was absolutely blown away. Sbo was funding it out of her own pocket and, when she could, was paying for the dancers’ food and transport.”

Searll Nivison was shocked to discover that of the 100 students who graduated from

Continued on page 15>>



Balu Searll Nivison

Photos supplied



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What grandfather name fits...

I honestly had no idea how challenging it would be to choose a name for our new granddaughter to call us. We are certainly not the first people in the world to have a grandchild and it seemed to me that others slipped into the names with enviable ease. Why this would turn out to be so darn difficult, I genuinely have no idea.

Perhaps it's because we were given the rule that my wife and I had to match. If I was Ying, then she had to be Yang. If I was Stan then she had to be Pete, me Salt to her Pepper, and so on. There would be no mixing of styles and languages, and although we could choose anything we fancied, this was one rule that we needed to abide by.

So, what's the big deal? The big deal is that we are not the Bobba and Zaida type in that we are still in our forties (at least I will be for a few weeks). My own Zaida was the kindest, most gentle man in the whole world. But he was also the oldest. I adored him, but I never imagined being him. Saba and Safta are nice, but it just feels like I am trying too hard. I am a staunch Zionist. I am just not a Hebrew.

I wanted to go with "Pops", but my wife wasn't happy to be Lolly. And I get that. I imagine that Lollies are completely daft and will definitely always forget to fetch the kid from school on Tuesday when it's her turn to collect her, give her lunch and take her to "modern". Lolly is genuinely

a sweet person but as mad as a hatter, and doesn't inspire the confidence that a working mom requires from her mother-in-law. Just saying.

I didn't mind Mkulu and Gogo, but what about future grandchildren who might live in Israel or Singapore or Christchurch? I also am a bit fearful about cultural appropriation. I would hate for Twitter to decide that we have not only stolen the land, the minerals and all the best holiday homes, but now also the language. It's probably best to leave that one well alone.

Opa became a viable option, at least for me. My mother's father was very Germanic – and a little difficult and sometimes unpleasant one. Which turned out to be the problem as I apparently have enough "Opa-like" tendencies which no one wants to encourage. Least of all my wife, who has dreaded me becoming my Opa for the past 27 years of our marriage. So, that option was removed off the very neat and tidy table, and we landed back to square one.

The "Insta" teenage crowd tried to convince us to go the celeb route. Apparently, "Glammy" is "on fleek" right now. But that made my wife think of tight leather trousers, botox, fillers and magnificently puckered lips. Impressive, but our granddaughter will be unlikely to attend Saheti.

I opened it up to my Morning Show listeners, who assisted us in arriving

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



at the answer. I gave them the rules. I explained the issues and asked for help. It is true to say that they know me and understand me, and they would never lead me astray. I believe it was "Fay" who started the process that would end in the decision. "What about Grumpy and Happy?" she asked. Sadly, I didn't need to question who she thought was which.

I told the family what Fay had suggested, but my wife said that she would not be known forever as a dwarf. She seemed to have no issue about the fact that my listeners didn't consider me all sparkle and sunshine. I have to say it hurt a little.

But she thought about it and reverted with the edict. From henceforth, and from now on (assuming it doesn't mean the same thing), he and she, grandfather and grandmother to this new little person, and please G-d to future grandchildren, even those in Christchurch, will be known as Grumpy and Granny. It's simple, it's descriptive and most of all, it matches.

"But what happens if I am not always Grumpy?" I asked tentatively. "Well," she said after thinking about it, "if you become a little more cheerful... then we can always call you Opa!"

Using dance to bridge the divide

>> Continued from page 14

the Chris Hani School, only four went on to further their studies in dance, music and/or drama, largely due to a lack of funds.

It was then that she came up with the idea of establishing a post-matric academy for students. Part of the vision of Indoni, Searll Nivison explains, was to nurture the pool of talent in a country so rich in culture like ours, that was not being celebrated sufficiently.

She kickstarted her plan of action at the end of 2014 by turning her Claremont clothing shop into a theatre to showcase works by Ndaba's students. Ramphele was the keynote speaker.

The performances sold out. In the audience was Suzanne Ackerman, who invited the group to perform at Pick n Pay's Christmas party that year, and her mother, Wendy, donated R50 000 towards the launch of the academy.

And so, in 2015, Indoni Dance, Arts and Leadership Academy, a non-profit organisation, was born. Searll Nivison, Ndaba, Van Papendorp and Ramphele, who is chairperson of the board, were its four founders. Auditions were held and 10 students were accepted, but the academy needed funds.

It was calculated that R1 000 per month would cover food, transport and basic toiletries for each student, so Searll Nivison started the BMI (benefactor, mentor,

investor) initiative, asking friends and family to sponsor one student for a year. "Everybody said 'yes'," she recalls. "Almost my entire family is involved!"

The group started performing "almost immediately" and have since danced locally and internationally, says Searll Nivison.


They performed at the Out of Africa festival in Perth and impressed audiences in their show in Sydney.

All that is required for admission into Indoni is commitment and passion – everyone is accepted, unless there is a valid reason for them not to be, such as persistent non-attendance.


While it costs the students nothing to attend the academy, they receive a share of the profits from large performances.

To address the leadership component of Indoni, Active Citizenship Teacher Training has been initiated for all the students. The leadership training programme encourages critical thinking by tackling subjects such as active citizenship, human rights and issues that affect the students' lives.

"In a way, it's starting a movement which is much greater than just a dance school. It's a movement about dignity, personal development and bridging the divide by bringing people together who wouldn't normally interact."



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Lavender power: Israel’s tinder box?

Furious protests currently going on in Israel, with people demanding LGBTI rights and the option to surrogacy, bring the spotlight home to what it was to be gay in apartheid South Africa. This was for many years illegal, punishable by fines and jail terms. Same-sex marriage, of course, was totally unimaginable at the time. With worldwide shifts in social mores, how do things stand?

Same-sex marriage has been legal in South Africa since 2006. Our Constitution was the first in the world to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation, and South Africa was the fifth country to legalise same-sex marriage. Couples can adopt children and arrange in vitro fertilisation and surrogacy. Other countries allowing same-sex marriage include Belgium, Canada, Argentina, England and Wales, and the United States.

But legal legitimacy doesn’t automatically translate into gay acceptance, particularly in black rural areas and townships. Even before the question of same-sex marriage – let alone surrogacy or children – comes up, black lesbians face the horror of so-called “corrective” rape. Rapists believe they can “fix” women not conforming to conservative gender norms. South Africa has one of the highest rates in the world of violence being inflicted against women because they are lesbians.

But it is not just in South Africa, and not just a contemporary issue. In the US during the Cold War in the 1950s, Republican senator Joseph McCarthy led the Federal government to target gay men and lesbians, accusing them of endangering public morals and linking them to communists. In a movement known as the Lavender Threat, hundreds of people were persecuted, bullied and lost their jobs because they were suspected of being homosexual.

What about LGBTI people in Jewish communities? When the US Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that same-sex marriage was to be legally binding in all 50 states, American Jews celebrated. Surveys showed some 77% favoured its legitimacy. The Reform,

TAKING ISSUE



Geoff Sifrin

Reconstructionist and Conservative Jewish streams – which together constitute most religiously identified US Jews – supported it.

Among South African Jewry, which has traditionally been a conservative community, greater acceptance of gays is apparent in recent years. Prominent community rabbis have welcomed gay people in their synagogues, without explicitly condoning homosexuality.

Rabbis still refrain from conducting same-sex marriages, however, either because of personal reservations or because the policy of their Jewish stream does not allow it.

The Jewish community has shrunk by half since its 1970s heyday to only some 60 000 people, and it lacks diversity compared to the five million-strong American community. In the US, Jews wanting to remain in the Jewish fold have numerous options, such as egalitarian minyans, similar to the Orthodox shtiebls which have sprung up in South Africa, but with a more liberal slant.

Back in Tel Aviv, touted as one of the world’s most gay-friendly cities, legalisation of same-sex marriage and surrogacy seems, ironically, a long way off. That is despite the protests and the festive gay pride parade of 250 000 people earlier this year, for which the city closed major roads.

Civil marriage is absent. All Jewish marriages must go through the Orthodox-controlled rabbinate, which follows the halachic injunction against homosexuality.

The Haredi parties’ political and religious power, however, rests on key positions in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Cabinet. Will the gender rights protest be the tinder box that ignites a new direction in Israel’s politics?

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

The challenges involved in dealing with anti-Semitism

Last week, the Board sent a letter to the Jewish community and also issued a general press statement, reporting that a settlement had been reached in the matter of certain anti-Semitic comments that had been posted on a WhatsApp group on 19 June.

The terms of the agreement were formally concluded at a meeting between the parties and their respective legal representatives, held at the offices of Ian Levitt Attorneys. In terms of the settlement, the two young men who had posted the offending comments would apologise in person to the complainants, sign a letter of apology that would afterwards be made public, and undertake within a designated period to participate in a sensitivity training course at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

On this basis the Board, together with the administrator of the WhatsApp group who had been personally attacked, would withdraw the charges of crimen injuria and intimidation that had been laid.

Going into the meeting, we were not sure what to expect. While we did not anticipate any real difficulties in terms of confirming the practical aspects of the agreement, we were not at all sure what the attitude would be of those we would be

meeting across the table. Would the guilty parties display sincere contrition, or would it emerge instead that they were simply backing down under duress? Would we see an unequivocal acknowledgment that what had been posted was unacceptable, or would it be a case of, “Yes it was wrong, but...”?

As it turned out, we were genuinely affected by the obvious remorse displayed by the young men concerned, as well as by the distress over what had happened displayed by their fathers and legal representatives.

One of the themes that emerged in the discussion was that we must not allow incidents of this nature to sour relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities, and indeed, to remember how much Jews and Muslims have in common in terms of their respective religious heritages. It was in this spirit that the meeting was conducted, and which enabled us all to walk away as friends.

In approaching this case, the Board took a decision to seek maximum publicity for what had happened and what it was doing in response. Our intention in doing so was certainly not to create the impression that Jews



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

were victims, but on the contrary, to send out a strong message that our community’s rights cannot be violated with impunity and that, if necessary, those guilty of such conduct will be made to answer for it.

This may involve dealing with once-off, impulsive incidents of anti-Semitic behaviour, as was the case with the matter dealt with above, or more serious cases of persistent hostility on the part of those clearly bent on pursuing an anti-Semitic agenda.

The challenge we always face is to assess which cases require our response, and what kind of outcome we want to achieve in the matter that we do decide to take up.

Realistically speaking, it is not possible to respond to every single instance of anti-Jewish bigotry that comes to our attention (today, overwhelmingly originating in the social media space).

However, when we do take action, we make sure to see it through, no matter how long it takes or how many practical difficulties we are confronted with along the way.

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

Letters

INSTEAD OF JUDGING THE LESS FORTUNATE, HELP THEM

The Torah teaches that all people are created in the Creator’s image and deserve our respect, even if we believe they are different.

Scans show that part of the brain lights up when we do a kind act. We often experience a sense of euphoria when doing so. Shortly before his final stroke, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was asked by CNN what his message to the world was. He said people should increase acts of goodness and kindness.

All the world’s religions are united in emphasising the importance and spiritual power of being charitable. The Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) tells us that every time we do a kind act, a beautiful angel is created. If we could (in this world) see how beautiful it is, we would want to spend all our time doing good things.

Unfortunately, when we experience hardships we might become hardened and lose our capacity to empathise with people.

Not only does this make us unhappy, it also reduces our interest in helping others, resulting in our avoiding our Divine mission of improving the world. Fortunately, others gain an enhanced ability to empathise as a result of suffering.

In this country there are extremely high levels of poverty and unemployment. Some have resorted to crime to fill their stomachs.

Others, who are unwilling to steal, wash windows at robots. Before condemning these poor souls, remember that they are attempting to offer a service. It cannot be easy to stand all day, in all weather conditions, while dodging vehicles in an attempt to eke out a living.

They also need to be fairly skilled to quickly clean the windows before the lights change.

Unfortunately, some of them are so fed up that they have become rude, but most are pleasant, especially when we are not hostile to them.

Even though they are wrong to invade our space, do we have the grace not to get worked up? Let us rather rise to the challenge and help sometimes. – **Martin Zagnoev, Johannesburg**

WHY WOULD THERE BE VICTIMISATION?

I write in response to the article, Cross-racial adoptions in Jewish families (20 July), about Jewish families who have adopted black children (Page 10).

If such families really have reason to fear victimisation, as stated in the feature, then we are a very sick Jewish community. – **David Grinker, Johannesburg**

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

COLLEGE PRINCIPAL
Masada College
(Sydney, Australia)

Masada College bases its ethos on three things; being Jewish, on being Australian and being nurturing. Every year our graduates emerge with the highest academic achievements and move into various fields of tertiary study.

The College Principal:

- Early Learning Centre to Year 12
- Provides educational vision, strategy and direction, whilst ensuring the College is managed and organised to meet outcomes on an ongoing basis.

Role Responsibility

- Reports and is accountable to the Board of Management and reports directly to the President of the Board of Management (the President).
- Establishes a culture that promotes educational excellence in a nurturing environment, adhering to the values and principles of the Modern Orthodox Jewish tradition.

- Establishes high quality education through effective management of teaching and learning.
- Working with the College Executive and other staff, is responsible for evaluating the College’s performance, identifying areas for improvement, raising standards, developing and implementing policies and procedures, and allocating resources so that the College achieves its current and longer-term objectives.

Attributes

- High energy levels
- Strong communication skills
- Experience in leadership roles
- Flexible, proactive team player
- Strong organisational skills
- Willingness to adopt new approaches and develop new initiatives
- A strength in technology is an advantage

Special Requirements

Variable Duties/Hours. The nature of the position is such that this role requires the successful candidate to be available outside the “normal” School hours.



Masada College



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Acts of *chesed* on Mandela Day



Yeshiva pupils prioritised education on Mandela Day by reading with their peers, and each donated their favourite book to a school in need.



King David Victory Park Coach Keifer Govender and Grade 7 pupil Megan Restall join the Grade 7s in cutting vegetables in order to prepare soup for the homeless. The initiative coincided with the school's annual observance of "9 days of KD'ness" where children are encouraged to use small acts of kindness to change the world.



Sydenham preschoolers make sandwiches to distribute at the Alexandra Community Centre. From left, Jade Kushner, Danya Zwick, Jesse Kaveberg, Danni Leviner and Lisa Kahn



Grade Rs of King David Pre-Primary School Linksfield with their sandwich packs ready to be handed out to the needy.



Adina Sender, Noa Raz and Sabrina Molitano with their blessing bags. More than 300 bags were assembled and donated. Each contained bottled water, tinned food, toiletries, treats, gloves and beanies. Some 5 000 sandwiches were also distributed.



King David Senior Primary Linksfield pupils Zach Taitz, Michael Heymann, Jamie Class, Ryan Zaslansky, Zach Behr and Jonty Hirschson make sandwiches for staff at King David's outreach partner school Summerwood. They arranged activities, including a Mandela treasure hunt and making a Mandela message board, for the younger grades.



Pupils at King David Junior Primary School Linksfield brought Mandela Day bags to celebrate Madiba's spirit of generosity and caring. The bags, filled with items to reuse and recycle, were distributed to those in need in our community.



Mina Lopato Nursery School pupils made over 200 sandwiches for the less fortunate.



Like all their Sandton Sinai peers, Naomi Benjamin, Zara Karp and Elisheva Marcow made their own sandwich, placed it into a bag with a fizzer, and handed the bags out to the needy.

Friday (27 July)

- Shalom Masorti Seniors Club hosts Dr Judy Jaye on *The Value of Positive Thinking*. Time: 14:30 for 15:00. Tea will be served, and there will be a selection of board games to play, cards and a friendly atmosphere. Cost: Donation of R15 will be appreciated). Contact: Esther on 011 485 5619 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings, from 08:30 to 12:30 for more information.

Sunday (29 July)

- Second Innings hosts Victor Gordon on *The Start-Up Nation – Reasons Behind Israel's High-Tech Success*. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting starts at 10:30. Venue: Arcadia, entrance is opposite Glenwood Lodge in Long Avenue. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors includes tea and light refreshments. Contact: Linda on 011 532 9701.

- JHGC hosts guest speakers Professor Steven Robins and Dr Handri Walters to discuss *Spectres of Racial Science: Understanding Eugenics as a Travelling Science*. Time: 15:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or phone 011 640 3100. Free admission, donations welcome.
- Open Ongoing Nechama – Growth From Grief Support Group. Time: Tea from 09:30, group is from 10:00 to 11:30. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Men and women welcome. Contact Linda Fleishman on 011 532 9701.

Monday (30 July)

- UJW hosts Janice Honeyman, writer and director of theatrical productions, on magic on the stage. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office on 011 648 1053.

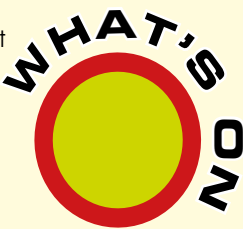
Tuesday (31 July)

- Chabad of Sandton presents *Trust Us, They Will Ask!*, an interactive panel discussion in answering your child's toughest questions (on sex, death, G-d and illness). The panel will include: Carin Marcus, Rabbi Eitan Ash and Adene Davis. Time: 19:30. Venue: Chabad of Sandton Gallo Manor, Hampton Court Road. Cost: R100 per person, refreshments will be served. Contact: Book by emailing school@chabadofsandton.co.za or calling 011 803 5787.

Wednesday (1 August)

- JHGC hosts guest speaker Edyta Gawron on *Beyond Schindler's List: The Known and Unknown Story of Oskar Schindler*. Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or phone 011 640 3100.

Thursday (2 August)



- Pine Street Shul and the Chazones Club invite you to meet Richard Shavei Tzion, choirmaster of the Ramatayim Choir in Israel. Before making aliya 30 years ago, he was Pine Street Shul and the Bnei Akiva choirmaster. Time: 20:00. Cost: R30 per head. Contact: Ashley Lazarus on 011 728 6366.
- Join WIZO every Thursday for a *Lunch and Learn* Shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz. Time: 13:00. Venue: Beyachad. Contact: WIZO office at 011 645 2515.
- The next meeting of Hebrew speakers is at 10:30 to 12:00. Venue: Second floor of Beyachad building.

KD principals attend Global Education Summit in Israel

Three King David School principals attended the first Global Education Summit in Jerusalem earlier this month. The summit was hosted by Israel's ministry of diaspora affairs, its ministry of education, The Pincus Fund for Jewish Education and Matach (the Centre for Educational



Sheva Messias, Caron Levy and Sally-Ann Knowles standing at the back

Technology).

Caron Levy (KD Rosabelle Klein Nursery School in Waverley), Sheva Messias (KD Pre-Primary School Linksfield) and Sally-Ann Knowles (KD Ariel) were among 200 dignitaries from 31 countries around the world.

The aim of the summit was to create a global network for Jewish educators to share ideas, discuss challenges and access educational materials.

The summit addressed Jewish education issues and ideologies around the world. Education Minister Naftali Bennett and Dvir Kahane, director-general of the diaspora affairs ministry were some of the dignitaries at the conference.

Ideas about how to maintain Jewish identity in children and create a long-lasting sense of belonging to the

Jewish community were discussed. It was emphasised that there needs to be a partnership between the eight million Jews living in the Diaspora and the Israeli ministries.

Said Levy: "The Ministry has promised us its support, and the partnerships we established must be maintained."

Said Messias: "The mission that we have as educators for the next generation is essential in guaranteeing the future of the Jewish people. There will be no Jewish people without a Jewish education."

Added Knowles: "As part of the inaugural summit, we are seen as the core group, with the intention to expand and empower additional Jewish educators through this network."

Young footballers score in Joburg and Cape Town

Boys and girls from various schools – including King David Linksfield and King David Sandton, and Alon Ashel (Weizmann) in Cape Town – took their football skills to the next level. This as Tyson Properties extended its Cape Town sponsorship of Soccer School to Johannesburg by teaming up with Ballers Soccer Club.

The company co-sponsored a soccer clinic at the Pirates Club in Greenside for boys and girls in the Under-6 to Under-12 age groups. The five-day soccer camp provided an opportunity for young players to get expert coaching.

The Cape-based Soccer School runs year-round training for children in the Under-4 to Under-14 age-group categories. Owner and founder Liam Shirley explained: "It's designed to instil confidence in youngsters' soccer ability by providing an all-inclusive programme for children of all abilities."



Pro soccer player Matthew Carelse (centre, in the blue-and-white tracksuit) visited the young players for their prizegiving event

Love in abundance for the young and the elderly

Mandela Week was one of love, giving and celebration at Yeshiva College.

Yeshiva College Shul members collected blankets for the elderly and the less fortunate of Katlehong township to honour the centenary of the birth of former president Nelson Mandela. Under the leadership of the shul's associate rabbi, Rabbi Alon Friedman, and his wife, Dani, a total of 107 blankets were handed out.

On the same day, the Yeshiva College pupils celebrated the 60th birthday of Rosy Mthembu, the founder and director of Fountain of Love. Yeshiva College and its pupils have a long-term partnership with the Fountain of Love Orphanage Centre, a home for Aids orphans in Katlehong.

Mthembu started the centre in 2003 when a little boy was left abandoned on the doorstep of her house in Katlehong. He had been abandoned because he

was infected with the HI virus. Mthembu took him in and went on to found the centre.

Fundraising was then spearheaded by special individuals from The Readucate Trust, a non-profit organisation which focuses on education and literacy, as well as by Marcia Tanzer, the former principal of Yeshiva College Girls' High School, and her pupils.

Sponsorship was actively sought out, and as a result, for the past 15 years Nashua has been staunchly supportive of the orphanage. Woolworths also came on board, supplying free vegetables and fruit. Other sponsors have included Bravura, Powafix, Siyahamba Engineering, Tiger Brands, Chevron South Africa, Longridge, SAPS Katlehong North, Kido and Smanga Event Organisers.

Today Mthembu has 45 Aids orphans living in her home. Some of them

have been nurtured since infancy, like 11-year-old Xolile. She was two weeks old when she was found wrapped in a plastic bag on a nearby dump site. She has been loved and cared for by Mthembu ever since. The children's ages range from a few weeks' old to late teens.

Mthembu also provides lunch for 200 elderly pensioners twice a week in the local church hall.



Rosy Mthembu with Xolile

The kindness of Klerksdorp's Jewish women



A small group of Jewish women in Klerksdorp used a monetary donation to pay it forward in anticipation of Mandela Day on 18 July.

They bought wool with the money they'd received and distributed the balls of wool among themselves in order to knit blankets. A total of 36 warm blankets were created.

On Mandela Day last week, these women took the blankets

to the Daphne Lee Centre for the Disabled. So thrilled was one of the centre's residents, he could not stop hugging his newly acquired blanket.

What a special mitzvah this was for the group.

In addition to handing out the blankets, the women made sandwiches out of 40 loaves of bread and handed them out to needy people around town.

New playschool opening



Teeny Dreamers will be hosting its official launch party on the 5th of August from 10am to 12pm in Morningside, Sandton

Please join us for some fun and snacks while we show you around our little school. Age groups: 20 months to 3 years.

Offering half and full day (kosher meals inclusive). Special offer: All enrolments at the launch will receive a 50% discount on the enrolment fee.

For more info please call Avril 083 262 2026 or email gien@iafrica.com
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South African Board of Jewish Education
ועד הוראה וחינוך ישראלי

Another victory for 'boxing' Nathan

Chalcking up another victory for Joburg-based boxing trainer Colin Nathan, Simphiwe Khonco successfully defended his IBO mini-flyweight title for the third time against a determined Toto Landero of the Philippines on Sunday.

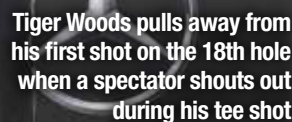
Khonco delivered a spectacular performance at Walter Sisulu University in his home town of Mthatha, earning a unanimous points win – 117-112, 116-112, 116-112.

Nathan, his trainer, is thrilled at yet another win, as Khonco is the second of his protégés to clinch a world championship in two months. Named Trainer of the Year for 2017 by Boxing South Africa, Nathan has

also been the only person in Africa to be nominated to sit on the World Boxing Council Training Committee.

Although Nathan was heard urging Khonco to change his strategy during his match against Landero, barking: "Let your hands go! Let your hands go!", he needn't have worried. Khonco walked out of the ring triumphant, notching up another triumph for Nathan and South African boxing.

In May, Nathan travelled to Japan with his other champ, Hekkie Budler, to watch him square up against previously undefeated Japanese boxer Ryoichi Taguchi. Budler emerged victorious from this match with a score of 114-113 to become the first South African boxer to hold three junior-flyweight titles.



It was during the moments of silence, as Tiger Woods started his backswing for his tee shot on the 18th hole, that a fan shouted: "Free Palestine." This, while the US golfer was competing at The Open at Carnoustie Golf Links in Scotland on Sunday.

Woods – who was bidding for his first major win since 2008 – hit out at the heckler who attempted to put him off his shot. The 42-year-old, who had led midway through his final round, dropped his club and shouted out “No” when the fan yelled at him during his final tee shot.

Woods is probably one of the most intense golfers on the tour, so this was bound to put him off. The spectator, who was sitting in a hospitality box, was ejected from the course after repeating his “free

“Unfortunately, that’s part of what we have to deal with in today’s game. People are trying to yell out things to try to be on TV or be in social media or whatever it may be. But that was too close to affecting the game of play.”

Woods finished three shots behind champion and playing partner Francesco Molinari, though he is still in the world's top 50 after finishing the weekend's tournament in joint-sixth place .

Despite the incident, Woods was pleased overall with a return to form that he believed allowed his two children to get to see what all the fuss about their dad's game is about.

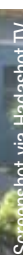
Daughter Sam, aged 11, and son Charlie, nine, had been too young to see their dad in his heyday and they greeted him with a hug behind the 18th green.

Chess champ, 7, can't compete in Tunisia as she's Israeli

Liel Levitan, a schoolgirl from Haifa, is unable to accept an invitation to play in the World Chess Championship because host nation Tunisia will not allow Israelis to compete, it was reported recently.

This is not the first time Israeli chess players have been denied the opportunity to participate in international tournaments because of their nationality.

Israeli athletes often face difficulties when competing in the Middle East or against Middle Eastern countries, because of hostility



towards the Jewish state.

“Just a few months ago, a World Chess Championship was due to take place in Saudi Arabia,” chess player Lior Aizenberg told *Hadashot* news. “It was clear to everyone that outstanding Israeli chess players

would not be able to participate.”

Aizenberg has instead founded the World Alternative Championship, which takes place in Israel and extends competition invitations to players from across Europe and the Arab world.

Liel has also been invited to the competition, which counts outgoing chairman of the Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky and American pro-Israel group Stand With Us among its supporters.

"The time has come to put an end to discrimination against Israelis in chess, in sports and in every field," said Aizenberg. — *Times of Israel*

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SPEAKERS



Rabbi Yossi Paltiel

Rabbi Yossi Paltiel is a popular teacher of Jewish philosophy, mysticism and Chassidism. He currently teaches at Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch / Chovevei Torah, Machon L'Yahadus Women's Yeshiva, and at the Beis Midrash L'Nashim in Brooklyn, NY. Rabbi Paltiel lectures at various Jewish events in New York and travels to speak in Jewish communities throughout the world. His popular website filled with thousands of audio classes is www.insidechassidus.org and www.theyeshiva.net. Rabbi Paltiel has visited South Africa several times and has inspired so many both here and abroad. We welcome Rabbi Paltiel to South Africa and invite you to learn from this exceptional teacher.

Rabbi Levy Wineberg

Rabbi Levy Wineberg - Dean of the Hamaor Centre and The Kollel Beis Mordechai, has educated and inspired two generations of students of Talmud, Halacha and Chassidic studies. With a gift for simplifying complex subjects he has pioneered, since the 1970's, innovative projects to bring Torah to an English-speaking audience through radio and press. He has positively "infected" thousands around the world with an enthusiastic love for Torah.



Rabbi Nesanel Schochet

Rabbi Nesanel Schochet is the Rabbi of the Chassidim Shul in Johannesburg. Born in Toronto and part of a large family of exceptionally gifted Rabbis and scholars, Rabbi Schochet shares his knowledge, insights and depth of understanding, with his many students both at The Torah Academy Boys High School, where he has taught for several years, as well as in his many classes and shiurim for adults.

Rabbi Ari Shishler

Rabbi Ari Shishler is the Rabbi of Chabad of Strathavon. He has lectured around the world on Jewish history, personal growth, Talmud and Chassidus. A passionate teacher, Rabbi Shishler has a weekly radio show on Chai FM and writes a regular column in the Jewish Life Magazine. His articles have appeared on Chabad.org and in the Jewish Report, Jewish Observer and Nshei Chabad publications.



Rebbetzin Estee Stern

Rebbetzin Estee Stern was born and raised in Johannesburg, and in 2007 she was appointed as the Associate Rebbetzin of the Sydenham Shul. Estee is a popular teacher and lecturer, primarily focusing on the important role of women within society. She has lectured in Australia, USA and Israel, and locally her regular ladies classes attract large crowds from a wide spectrum of the community.

Rabbi Noam Wagner

Rabbi Noam Wagner, hails from a long line of extremely learned Rabbinical scholars. He grew up in Toronto Canada, was ordained by the famous Rabbi Hirshprung in Montreal and is currently Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva Gedolah Lubavitch in Johannesburg. Rabbi Wagner's vast knowledge and unique perspective on Chassidic philosophy have enabled him to connect with and inspire students around the world.



Simcha Youngworth

Brigitte (Simcha) Youngworth was born in Rhodesia, lived in the Belgian Congo and moved to South Africa in 1975. She matriculated at King David VP and is a graduate of UCT. After a long search she was exposed to Chabad Chassidus, where she discovered the great positivity, warmth and spiritual depth of Judaism. She teaches mikvah lessons to Jewish brides and has written several children's books.

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