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Chief rabbi slams Anglican Church's support for BDS

TALI FEINBERG

Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein has condemned the Anglican Church of South Africa (ACSA) for its resolution to support “well-directed Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) actions” against Israel.

The Anglican Church, which has about three million followers across southern Africa, last week voted to support “non-violent action to end Israel’s military occupation of Palestine”.

It also condemned “all forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the strongest terms”, and said that “Palestinians and Israelis both deserve to live in peace and harmony”.

The chief rabbi condemned the resolution as “morally offensive, and based on a complete distortion of history”. He pointed out three particularly questionable elements. First, an accusation that “there are possible similarities between apartheid in South Africa and what is happening in Israel and Palestine, and that in some respects, the situation there can be described as worse than apartheid”.

Said Goldstein, “This is a lie, and it insults the victims of real apartheid.”

Second, he said the BDS movement had been declared by the United Nations as anti-Semitic, and therefore the resolution’s support for BDS was anti-Semitic in terms of international law.

Third, he was horrified at the following resolution: “The current political nation state of Israel and Israel in the Bible should not be confused with each other, and neither should the ideology of Zionism and the religion of Judaism be conflated.”

“This is beyond the pale. The audacity to make pronouncements on what Judaism is and is not is beyond their right,” said the chief rabbi.

“The modern Zionist movement is a natural expression of the fact that, for 2 000 years,

we had a dream to return to the land of Israel. The connection to Israel and Jerusalem is inseparable from Judaism. The Anglican Church has crossed serious red lines with this.”

The chief rabbi said he had discussed this at length in a telephone conversation with Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, and they agreed that delegations from the Jewish community and the Anglican Church would meet soon.

The chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, Rowan Polovin, said: “It’s disturbing that medieval Christian anti-Semitism has resurfaced in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, placing it at odds with an international Anglican Church community that has worked to reject all forms of anti-Jewish prejudice.

“The statement uniquely singles out the Jewish state for censure among the nations of the world, and proposes actions that are targeted towards its harm.

“Tellingly, it fails to stand up for the safety and security of Christians inside Palestinian territory. Meanwhile, they thrive under the democratic protections afforded in Israel. There is nothing helpful or constructive in the resolution. It’s another poor attempt to hide anti-Jewish ideology behind the thin veil of anti-Zionism,” Polovin said.

Many members expressed their disappointment with the resolution in the comments section of the Anglican Church’s website.

Reverend John Atkinson said it was a sad day. “People who forget their own history are doomed to repeat it. No acknowledgement of centuries of anti-Semitism and violent acts against Jews in Europe by the church. No acknowledgement of the rise of anti-Semitism in contemporary society. This resolution is one-sided and ill-informed – the very thing it calls for others to avoid.”

Another church member, Quentin Leeds, said he was shocked but not surprised. “I have been to Israel, have spoken to Arab Christians, have travelled through the West Bank and interacted with Christians and Jews who live in Israel. I have seen Palestinians and Jews working side by side in harmony in Jerusalem. This doesn’t make me an expert, but it has opened my eyes to a misreported situation. I’m dismayed that the ACSA should rely on a political view of our government to inform it, and chooses to support the BDS movement. This smacks of politicking, and should have no place in the affairs of G-d.”

Thea Haller wrote, “I strongly disagree with the above statements which in my mind are contradictory to your statement of anti-Semitism. As long as Hamas – which effectively controls the Palestinians and has been responsible for the systematic killing of Christian Palestinians – remains, there will be

no peace.”

In the resolution, which was unanimously supported, the church claimed among other things that Israel continued to support the apartheid state in South Africa “until the very end”, and that “Jerusalem should not be for the exclusive use of one group over another”.

It resolved to “encourage every diocese [district] within ACSA to pass this or a similar resolution; educate and inform ourselves as much as possible on the daily reality of the situation; support any non-violent action, especially well-directed BDS actions against the Israeli state, until it ends its military occupation of Palestine; and respectfully request that ACSA appoint a Palestinian study group to prepare and disseminate study material [...]”.

It also called on members to say the following prayer for Palestine: “God bless Palestine, free all from oppression; and bring justice and peace. Amen.”

Many hands make sukkah mural work



See page 22

Photo: Dovi Rabinowitz

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Ancient metropolis discovered under highway

Archaeological excavations in northern Israel in preparation for a highway interchange to the new city of Harish have uncovered a 5 000-year-old city that was home to as many as 6 000 residents.

It is one of the first and largest early Bronze Age settlements excavated in Israel, according to the Israel Antiquities Authority, which announced the discovery on Sunday.

“This is the early Bronze Age New York of our region, a cosmopolitan and planned city where thousands of inhabitants lived,” said Itai Elad, Yitzhak Paz, and Dina Shalem, the directors of the excavation.

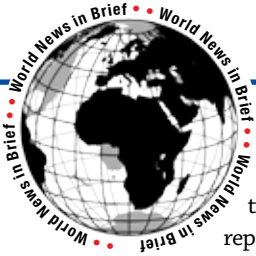
The excavations have been in progress for two and a half years. Deeper excavations found that the ancient city was built over an even more ancient 7 000-year-old settlement.

Hundreds of etrogs detained at UK airport

Hundreds of etrogs, the citron fruit used for the holiday of Sukkot, were seized at an airport in England.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency held up the shipment at Manchester Airport at the end of last month under new and stricter regulations on the import of citrus fruit. Etrog importers were unaware of the new rules, the London-based *Jewish Chronicle* reported.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews worked with the department for the environment, food and rural affairs to have the 600 etrogs



taken to a Manchester synagogue where the stalks could be trimmed to meet the stricter rules, the board reported.

Board President Marie van der Zyl said the board’s “timely intervention” had “potentially saved Sukkot”.

Golda Meir’s Yom Kippur letter discovered

A letter of condolence to bereaved Israeli families written by then Prime Minister Golda Meir on the eve of the Yom Kippur War has been discovered, and will be auctioned in Jerusalem in December.

On the eve of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, she sent a letter, dated October 5, to bereaved families in which she wrote, “Your pain is the pain of the entire nation ... Our main concern is achieving peace for Israel. The memory of our loved ones motivates us to do anything in our power so that there be no more casualties, and we know no more bereavement.”

A day later, the Yom Kippur War broke out, claiming the lives of 2 500 Israeli soldiers.

Maron Aran, an owner of Kedem, said the letter “evokes, more than anything else could, the tragedy that the state of Israel suffered 46 years ago”.

Sister of slain Ethiopian teen makes aliyah

The sister of Solomon Tekah, the Ethiopian-Israeli teenager shot in July by an off-duty police officer, has immigrated to Israel.

Masrat Warika and her two young children

landed at Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday evening. About 8 000 Ethiopian Jews are waiting to be brought to Israel.

Her arrival was arranged in part by Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel, who told Israeli media that he began working to bring her to Israel after he visited the Tekah shiva home and learned of her plight.

Her arrival came hours after *Haaretz* reported that the police officer who shot the 19-year-old Tekah in a suburban Haifa park will probably be indicted for negligent homicide. He could face up to three years in prison.

Palestinian Authority censures Israel in textbooks

The Palestinian Authority has removed information about agreements signed with Israel from its textbooks, according to Israeli non-governmental organisation IMPACT-se (the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education).

The only signed agreement still mentioned in books studied by students in the West Bank and Gaza from first grade through high school is the 1993 Oslo Accords.

The 2019 textbooks do not include the Palestinian Liberation Organisation’s call for “co-existence”, “peace” and nonviolence with Israel, which appeared in the old version of the curriculum.

The new curriculum also removes a substantial amount of information formerly provided to Palestinian students about the ancient Jewish history of “Palestine” and the Jewish presence and connection to Jerusalem.

• All briefs supplied by JTA

Torah Thought

Kol Nidrei prayer about power of words

According to our sages, Yom Kippur is a day with a unique power to remove from us the stain of transgression. It’s Hashem’s gift to us, and He urges us to use the opportunity that it affords us.

Why then does this exceptional day begin with the Kol Nidrei prayer?

This declaration is in fact a nullification of vows, and seemingly has nothing to do with the act of teshuva (repentance). Additionally, why is it accompanied by such a heart-rending tune?

Rav Yosef Breuer ZT”L explains that on Yom Kippur we utilise a special tool that is critical to our success. This tool, in fact, takes up most of Yom Kippur. It’s known as the power of speech. We pray with speech, we confess with speech, and we connect with speech.

However, as with any tool, one must service it and make sure that it is in pristine condition. How, though, do we service our speech?

The answer is by annulling our vows. We regret

our unkept promises, and our deviations from the truth that have sullied and corrupted our special tool.

Therefore, the sages instituted the Kol Nidrei nullification as a public show of regret for the previous mistaken use of our mouths, and as an avowal to use them for only lofty purposes in the future.

At the onset of Yom Kippur, we focus on the gift of speech, and dwell on how we have used it in the previous year. This self-examination, when done properly, should stir up emotions and engender a yearning for improvement. Therefore, Kol Nidrei is recited with a moving tune that slowly gets louder, drawing out of us an ever-strengthening desire to better our words.

This prayer is a magnificent introduction to Yom Kippur. Only then are we ready to pray, confess, and connect.

Similarly, in the Haftorah reading for Shabbos Shuva, the prophet Hoshea exhorts us to, “Take

with yourselves words and return to Hashem.”

The old saying that “sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never harm me” is a falsity. Words are, in fact, much more powerful. They can either build or destroy relationships, and define the pathway of our lives.

Thus, the prophet commands us to use them properly, and do teshuva.

May Hashem bless us to appreciate the wonderful present of speech, and the stirring of Kol Nidrei.



Rabbi Yonatan Landau, Ohr Somayach Savoy

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:54	18:44	Johannesburg
18:38	19:31	Cape Town
17:45	18:36	Durban
18:04	18:55	Bloemfontein
18:10	19:03	Port Elizabeth
18:00	18:52	East London

South African Jewish Report

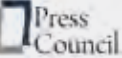
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SA-born businesswoman bags US ambassadorial post

NICOLA MILTZ

Lana Marks, the East London-born American handbag designer and close friend of United States President Donald Trump, will soon grace our shores when she takes up her position as US ambassador to South Africa.

Marks was nominated by Trump in November last year, and was unanimously confirmed by the US senate on 26 September. She appeared before a US senate committee hearing on foreign relations to motivate for her nomination to the position.



Lana Marks

In one of her first tweets since her nomination, Marks said on 28 September, “I am deeply honoured to have been confirmed by the senate, and to serve as the next US ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. There are deep, long-standing, and genuine ties of affection that bind Americans and South Africans. I will work tirelessly to further cultivate the already robust relationship that our people enjoy.”

She followed this with a Rosh Hashanah photograph of her and her husband, British-born psychiatrist Neville Marks, smartly dressed, sitting together with a beautiful Yom Tov table bedecked with green apples in glass vases in the background. Her message said, “Wishing everyone a happy&healthy new year.”

Marks, previously Lana Bank, was born and raised in East London, but lives in upmarket Palm Beach, Florida. She left South Africa four decades ago, and claims to be proficient in Xhosa and Afrikaans.

Her parents, Alec and Blanche Bank, were very involved in the local Jewish community, and Marks attended synagogue with her friends at the time, filling the seats to capacity when the community was at least 1 000 strong.

Today, the community has dropped to roughly 38 orthodox town dwellers and about 50 reform members, said community stalwart Louis Robinson, who grew up knowing the incumbent

ambassador and her family. He said as news of her appointment reached the ears of the tight-knit community, people seemed pleased, even discussing it over Yom Tov celebrations.

Robinson’s mother, Zahava, 92, told the *SA Jewish Report* that she played bridge with Lana’s mother, Blanche, for many years.

A lifetime resident and long-standing friend of the Bank family, Zahava said that she knew Marks as a young girl, as the Robinsons and the Banks were very close family friends who attended each other’s simchas

and parties. Marks’s father, Alec, was a pole holder at Zahava’s wedding.

She said she thought Marks’s appointment as ambassador was “incredible”.

“This news is fabulous for us East Londoners. It’s wonderful. It’s a big thing, the mind boggles when you think about it. When people talk about South Africans, it’s usually people from Jo’burg and Cape Town. Lana comes from a very small town; it’s quite something. And for me, having known her parents so well over the years, it’s unbelievable. The whole of East London will express joy.”

East London resident Lisa Schewitz echoed this sentiment. “It’s amazing that someone who grew up in East London has risen to such a position. We wish her best of luck in her new role, and we hope she comes to visit her home town. We would be delighted to welcome her to spend a Shabbos with our small community at any time.”

The glamorous handbag designer is best known for her wildly expensive exotic leather handbags, worn by red-carpet, A-list celebrities like Benoni-born Charlize Theron, Jennifer Aniston, Angelina Jolie, and Helen Mirren; and for her friendship with the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Marks, 65, has come a long way from her time spent at Stirling Primary School and Clarendon High School in the Eastern Cape.

As the owner and chief executive

of Lana Marks Collections, it’s still unknown how she intends to juggle her diplomatic duties with her fashion business.

In an interview with *New York* magazine earlier this year, Marks, who owns several upmarket stores, said that if confirmed as ambassador, she would have to give up any personal business interests within 90 days. “Essentially,” she told the magazine, “I’d say that I’m getting ready to sell.”

The US has not had an ambassador in South Africa since Patrick Gaspard vacated his post in December 2016, with its mission being overseen by a chargé d’affaires.

During her senate hearing, Marks said she intended to deepen trade and investment ties, and strengthen the relationship between South Africa and the US.

She said her experience in business and her ties to South Africa would hold her in good stead for the position. Her ability to speak three of the four most widely spoken of the 11 official languages, as well as her knowledge of the country, would also help.

In her written testimony, Marks said she started her business as a small artisanal handbag enterprise from the kitchen table of her then two-bedroom apartment, and grew it into a global brand.

Marks, who left South Africa when she was in her early twenties, said she and her family represented the American dream, “achieved through hard work, determination, and perseverance”.

Marks also spoke about her father, who she described as “a good and fair” man. “He escaped the anti-Semitism of Lithuania in the 1930s, and emigrated to South Africa, where he worked his way through university, earned a degree in engineering, and went into rea estate development.”

She said her priorities as ambassador would be the safety and security of Americans in South Africa, and she would work to cultivate the already robust relationship the US has with the country.

“South Africa is our most developed trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa. Deepening those ties would support one of the administration’s key objectives in the Africa strategy.”

Marks said American firms already contributed about 10% of South Africa’s gross domestic product, and employed about 200 000 South Africans directly and indirectly. Considering this, she would “work tirelessly” to expand markets in South Africa for American exporters, and ensure that American businesses and products were treated fairly.

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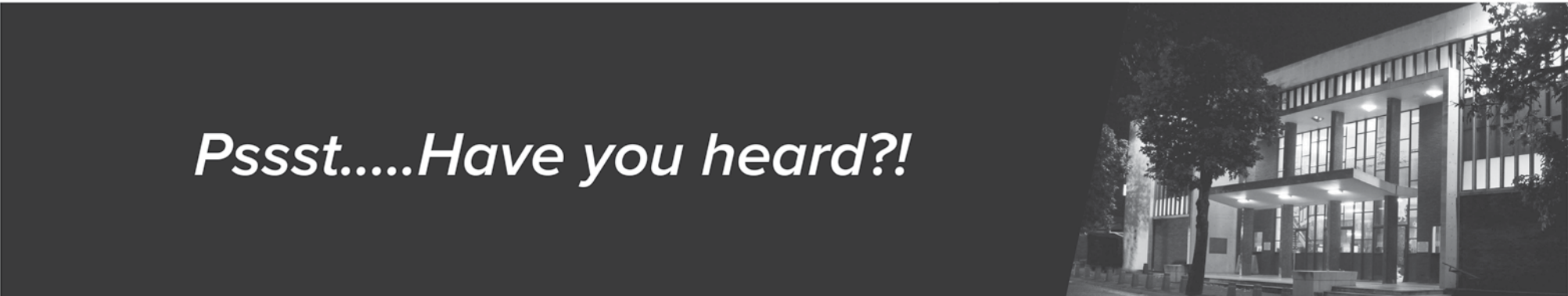
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DA reports MEC for hate speech against Jews

TALI FEINBERG

The Democratic Alliance (DA) has reported Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Lebogang Maile, to the province’s integrity commissioner for hate speech directed at the Jewish community. This follows Maile tweeting just

before Rosh Hashanah that the mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, was “giving buildings” in the city’s CBD to Jews. He later told the *SA Jewish Report* that he had nothing to apologise for as he was “stating a fact”. “If the MEC is aware of any irregularities in terms of the project of revamping inner-city buildings, he must address it as is his mandate

instead of playing a political game,” said DA Gauteng Chief Whip Mike Moriarty. “The Jewish community like any other citizens of this country are allowed to bid for any tender in the City of Johannesburg. These irresponsible and horrifying utterances by the MEC in the public space constitute hate speech. “MEC Maile has violated his oath of office through his offensive and discriminatory utterances that serve to inspire others to commit violence against Jews,” said Moriarty.

Because of this, his party has called on the integrity commissioner in the Gauteng provincial legislature to investigate Maile’s actions and make findings. “Should he be found guilty, Maile must apologise to the Jewish community, retract his tweet, as well as face the consequences of his actions,” he said.

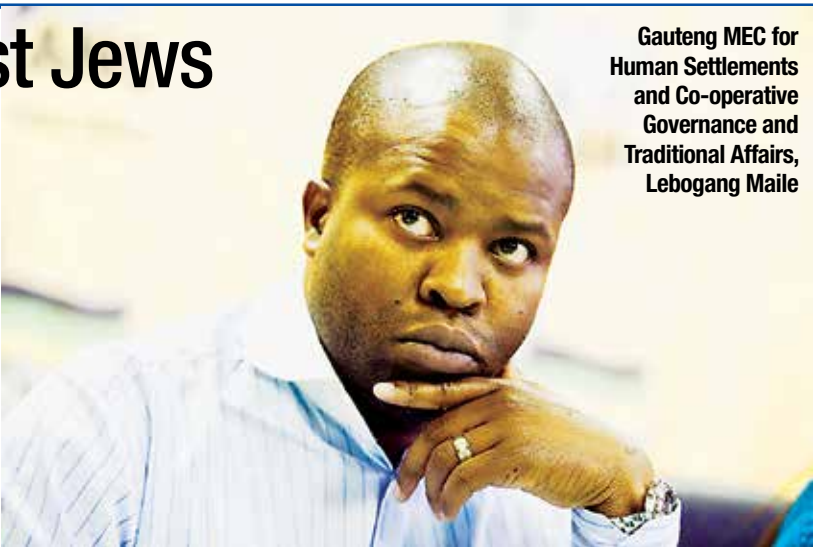
“At the very least, he [Maile] was inciting anger and hatred towards Jewish people,” Moriarty told the *SA Jewish Report*. “This is the last thing we need at this time in South Africa, when there is so much violence and xenophobia.

“There is a law against hate speech; it’s a crime. In this general climate of hatred, unless you call it out, it’s not going to stop and will only get worse.”

Moriarty said that the integrity commissioner was established to make elected members of the Gauteng provincial legislature abide by the ethical and moral standards they are bound to by their oaths of office. “If you violate this oath, you lose your eligibility to be a public representative.”

The integrity commissioner is therefore an independent person – in this case Ralph Mgijima – who will investigate, establish the facts, and declare his findings, which can take about three to four months. It’s then up to the legislature to take action against the member. The only way that this decision can be overturned is by going to court.

Moriarty said the DA had chosen not to go to the Human Rights Commission



Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Lebogang Maile

on this matter because in the past it had “behaved in a politicised manner ... and is more likely to protect Maile than uphold the Constitution’s approach to hate speech”. However, this option is still open to the party and anyone who wants to pursue it.

Moriarty said, “Even if every awardee of a tender [to work in the inner city] was of the Jewish faith, I do not believe for one minute it would have been through a faulty process.”

The *SA Jewish Report* has seen a list of 22 companies that were recently awarded tenders to work on land and properties in the inner city, and none of their directors are Jewish, proving that Maile is making a sweeping and untrue statement.

The Jewish companies that changed the face of the inner city did so when the situation looked hopeless and others were fleeing the scene. Their work has benefited people in the area.

Justin Blend of Afriscape, which has been involved in developing the inner city and its surrounding areas for more than 12 years, says: “Many years ago, inner city residential apartments were mostly slums. Today, people can live in apartments with great security, free gyms, free fibre internet, playgrounds, and rooftop soccer courts.

“We have developed more than 400 middle-income apartments, and have another 200 apartments coming on the market in the next nine months in the area. The apartments are priced so that the average earning employee in the city can afford to live in a wonderful

environment close to their work.” The improvement of Johannesburg for the greater good was recognised when the Duchess of Sussex visited Victoria Yards on her recent South African tour. Jonti Brozin, the son of Nando’s co-founder Robbie Brozin, first spotted the potential of this 30 000m² property.

“Once a nappy factory, the property was derelict with chop shops and informal housing,” the younger Brozin told the *SA Jewish Report* last year. “I heard that this area was going to be turned into low-cost housing, and I was concerned. With the Nando’s head office being across the road, the idea to do something innovative, exciting, and community-based came up.” Enter Brian Green, an “honorary Jew”, and the magic started happening, including a long-term plan to clean up the river.

Writing for News24, columnist Howard Feldman said, “The DA is to be commended for calling out this racism. Imagine, just for a moment, if the word ‘Jew’ was substituted with any other group in South Africa, and then imagine further what the reaction of the country would be.

“Whereas I don’t believe that the ANC [African National Congress] is inherently anti-Semitic, there are too many examples that indicate that for some within the party, Jews are a safe target.”

Maile didn’t respond to a request for comment. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies chose not to comment at this stage.



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BDS SA threatens to boycott Clover over Israeli takeover

NICOLA MILTZ

Boycott, Divest, Sanctions SA (BDS SA) has called on South Africans to join its campaign to boycott Clover and all its products, but it appears to be a lone voice against the now completed deal.

Clover was scheduled to delist from the JSE on Wednesday this week. This follows the go-ahead given by the Competition Tribunal to a takeover deal of the country’s largest dairy company by an Israeli-led consortium called Milco SA.

The consortium, led by Israel’s Tel Aviv-based Central Bottling Company (CBC), made an offer to buy out Clover for R4.8 billion in February. The direct foreign investment and promise of future job creation has been hailed by the business community.

However, because of the link to Israel, the anti-Israel BDS and pro-Palestinian groups have criticised the tribunal’s decision to allow the deal to go ahead.

Brimstone Investments was forced to pull out of the potentially lucrative deal earlier this year after threats from BDS. And, just as the announcement was made by the competition tribunal to give the deal the green light, BDS made threats again.

The organisation’s director, Muhammed Desai, told Radio Islam that if the takeover went ahead, BDS SA would launch a “militant but peaceful campaign”, including protests and disruptions against Clover, and a boycott of all its products.

“With public support, we will be able to drive this Israeli company out of South Africa,” he said.

“It’s now clear that Clover is in the hands of Israel, and no person of good conscience would want to be buying a product where the profit is going to the Israeli regime,” he told listeners.

However, business circles insist the deal will benefit South Africa and lead to future job creation.

One respected Johannesburg businessman, who is closely linked to the deal but wishes to remain anonymous, told the *SA Jewish Report* that there was nothing BDS could do to stop the deal from going ahead.

“This is a done deal. CBC is a world-class organisation which will create jobs, not destroy them,” he said. “BDS can do what it wants and say what it wants, but it is not interested in helping South Africans. This is foreign direct investment and, in time, more jobs will be created.”

The tribunal approved the takeover following a recommendation by the Competition Commission that the transaction be given the nod subject to stringent conditions. These relate to employment, procurement, and information-sharing protocols.

The tribunal initially had concerns about the merging parties’ proposed retrenchment of 516 workers as a result of the completion of Project Sencillo, a Clover project to ensure better use of its assets.

The tribunal consulted the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa, the Food and Allied Workers Union, and the Inqubelaphambili Trade Union – the unions that raised concerns about potential job losses as a result of Project Sencillo.

Continued on page 8>>

Anti-Semitic blogger hides out and spews hate

JORDAN MOSHE

There is a blogger and podcaster in South Africa who calls himself “William de Hewitt” who routinely shares vitriolic, hateful, and often stomach-turning opinions about Jews, black people, and other groups.

He writes on his platform things like the “niggroid [sic]and Afrikaner jew” rule South Africa at the expense of the “white Aryan race”. Perhaps most alarming, however, is the fact that he is seemingly based in South Africa.

The information available on his blog, called De Hewitt House of Publications and Radio, suggests that he has been active since November 2016.

Styling himself as an author, publisher, and radio host, he has devoted numerous posts, memes, interviews, and articles to expressing unbridled and unabashed hatred of what he perceives to be a global takeover carried out by world Jewry, and the threat it poses to the white population.

In one particular post, he writes, “Jews are very sick creatures! [...] White Aryan Folk can finally understand why I have been a so-called hateful anti-semite all of these years. Can you now see why I’m an anti-semite? Jews have unofficially DECLARED WAR ON OUR WHITE ARYAN RACE! [...]. So, what are we going to do about this jew problem?”

He is equally antagonistic towards the Holocaust, a subject which he treats with sick humour and disturbing imagery. A meme posted on his website shows Adolf Hitler gazing at a rally attended by thousands featuring the text “I have a dream”.

Beneath the image, De Hewitt posts, “I TOO HAVE A DREAM ... It is to live in an exclusively all White, Boer Nation, where my folk and I can live peacefully as healthful Aryans without parasite jews jewing, and without their niggroid and mixed-race proxy armies attacking my Folk and destroying our White Civilizations.

“As a White man, I long for a Nation without jew supremacism and terrorism, International Zionism, Communism, Capitalism, and all other degenerate, anti-White jewish philosophy.”

On 28 September, a podcaster by the name of Mike Vril Sledge uploaded an interview he conducted with De Hewitt to his blog page, the Laughwaffe Strike. According to Sledge’s description, they discussed “Aryan cooking, the impeachment of orange man, trump tel aviv tower properties, political wrestling, oy vey global domination, false fags, and the fall of jewmerica”.

The discussion that unfolds is nauseating. Both men joke freely about launching a pizza shop called “Auschwitz Pizza”, a restaurant which they boast alludes to their now banned “white nationalist cooking show” called “Fire up the ovens”, the logo for which they say was the Auschwitz crematorium oven.

“They looked like they could make a mean brick oven pizza,” quips Sledge. “Real brick oven pizza with extra f****ng pork and Italian sausage. So much pork that the grease from the pork is dripping of [sic] the crust and causing the flames to rush up. I’m salivating just thinking about it.” With equal zest, De



A meme from William de Hewitt’s blog

Hewitt says that he loves “talking about cooking, Jews, and whatever else is in the news!”.

It is during this interview that De Hewitt confirms that he is currently located in “one of the old Boer republics”, and other information he provides seems to confirm that he is based somewhere in South Africa. “My South African internet really does SUCK!” he writes in an online comment, and elsewhere writes about going “into different towns around South Africa” where he finds “niggroids everywhere”.

Beyond his frequent use of typical anti-Jewish rhetoric and imagery, De Hewitt makes it clear that the elimination of Jews is the only solution to the “problem”. In one of his posts, he maintains that Aryans like him should “identify them, ridicule them, humiliate them, deem them irrelevant, and furthermore remove them from our lives, societies, and lands by any and all necessary means!”.

Little can be gleaned about the man’s origins, although his accent suggests that he is American. David Saks, associate director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), told the *SA Jewish Report* that De Hewitt is apparently a pseudonym, and the man frequently uses fake accounts to cover his tracks. Saks also confirmed that he is originally from the United States, and married to a South African woman.

Although not much is known about him, his material can clearly be classified as hate speech. According to advocate Mark Oppenheimer, De Hewitt’s rhetoric is a violation of section 16 of the Constitution, and cannot be defended under the principles of free speech.

“His material clearly advocates hatred towards Jews and violence against them,” says Oppenheimer. “He calls on people to do something about Jews. His Hitler image, invocations of Auschwitz ovens, and other similar material is an implicit call for action. This is not a free-speech protected case.”

Oppenheimer says that the criteria set out in section 10 of the Equality Act, which governs cases like this, is clearly satisfied. According to the section, the violation must be hurtful, harmful or incite harm, and promote or propagate hatred. “All three are met in this instance,” he says. “De Hewitt’s

intention and the effect of his writing is to propagate hatred against Jews. It’s hurtful and a call to action.”

While it remains problematic to define such behaviour as a criminal act, it’s possible to implement sanctions such as fines and

demands for an apology. However, as Oppenheimer notes, the fact that De Hewitt’s actual name and location have yet to be determined make this difficult.

Charisse Zeifert, head of communication at the SAJBD, agrees, saying that the problem with social media is that people like De Hewitt are able to hide behind false identities and spew their hatred anonymously. “This is a global problem, and we need to be part of the broader society in fighting it,” she says. “De Hewitt’s posts demonise and dehumanise Jews as well as blacks to a degree that is not merely deeply shocking but dangerous.

“We know that words all too easily lead to action, which is why the SAJBD has been so active in bringing to book those responsible for propagating this kind of hatred in the appropriate judicial forums, as well as in serving on the hate crimes working group in trying to get the Hate Crimes Bill passed to ensure that there are consequences for disseminating bigoted and racist speech.”

• *The SA Jewish Report reached out repeatedly to De Hewitt for comment, but received no response at the time of going to print.*



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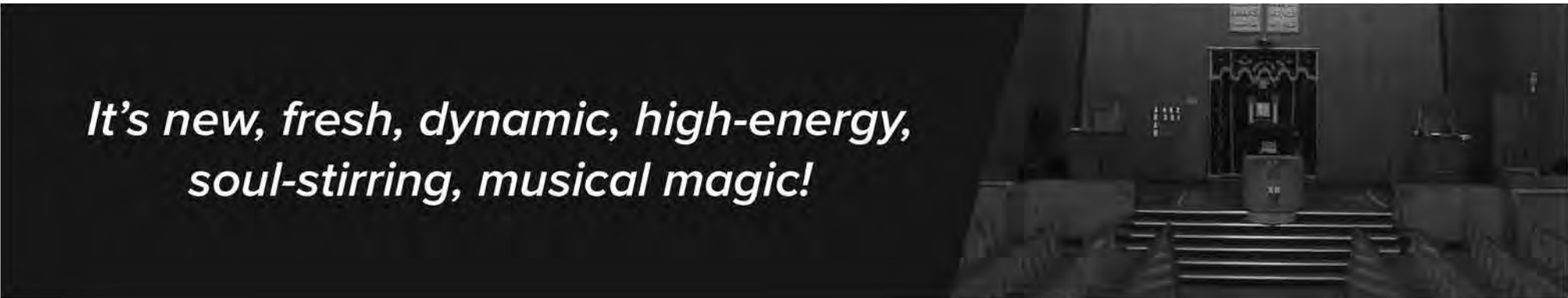
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We should sweat the small stuff

Having spent last Sukkot in Israel, I have an abiding image of a man with a long beard on a bicycle with a small sukkah attached to it. He was making his way down a busy one-way road with three or four lanes in Tel Aviv.

He looked so happy with his makeshift home-made sukkah almost around him, looking out for someone to help perform a mitzvah (good deed). As I saw him pull over, I held my breath and squeezed my eyes closed, hoping he would safely make it to the pavement. There was lots of hooting in peak-hour traffic on a Thursday afternoon, and he smiled as he approached a young, secular-looking man with the offer of the mitzvah of the lulav and etrog.

Once that was done, our mitzvah man then offered the young guy a seat on his bicycle and a sandwich so he could perform the mitzvah of sitting and eating in the sukkah.

I watched him pull a lever and the sukkah moved over the seat of the bicycle to make it work. Once the man was done, the sukkah was moved back so the cyclist could carry on to the next stranger.

It was a beautiful experience to watch, and it has found pride of place in the Sukkot memory box in my head. It slots in well alongside those wonderful childhood memories of spending hours creating things to decorate our sukkah at home.

One of the things that struck me about the cycling sukkah man was that he was clearly determined to create a sukkah that could help as many strangers as possible to perform mitzvot. So, he took what he had, and made a plan.

His sukkah wasn't beautiful or a work of art, but it did the job. He sweated the small stuff for a big goal.

I wonder if he lay awake at night, worrying and wondering if and how it was going to work. I would have done that. I would have pondered, worried, and made notes in the early hours of the morning.

How many of us do that? How many of us sweat the small stuff?

How many of us worry about things that sometimes don't warrant worrying about? Sometimes we even worry about not being able to sleep and being tired the next day because of it. Does that fit you?

I worry on a weekly basis if we have the best possible stories. Have we thought of all the angles? Do we have a lead that's worthy of being a lead? Have we missed anything that would be important to our readers?

Yup, every week I worry, and I know I'm not alone in this.

The point is, I'm grateful to be able to sweat the small stuff. We all have people we care about who aren't sweating the small stuff. The small stuff is meaningless to them. They have a big issue that is consuming their life at the moment, be it illness, a death, losing their livelihood, and so on.

There are a number of life challenges that make the small stuff seem like the sea lapping on the beach while they are dealing with a tsunami.

We do a lot of complaining about the small stuff. We bitch and moan a lot. I know I do.

Now, after having just experienced Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and having spent time contemplating, I'm so grateful for those small things that irk me so much.

This time of year, we are all looking around us and inside of ourselves to see what really matters, and what we want to be different.

Many people are facing big issues. Some are even wondering if emigrating is a good idea, and whether the grass is greener on the other side.

I can't say for sure one way or the other, but I do believe you take yourself and your small (and tidal-wave) stuff with you wherever you go. It's all a part of who you are. So is making the best plan using whatever you have at hand – like our sukkah cyclist. That takes vision, passion, and sheer grit.

There is a story in this newspaper that touched me in terms of sheer dedication and commitment to fulfilling a goal. It's about a young girl of 13 who, for a number of years, has dedicated four hours a day, six days a week to gymnastics training (see page 22). Her mother says she has tried a number of times to get her to give up and share her focus with school, drama (her other passion), and a social life, but Luca Lazarus is dedicated. Her mother says she is not a natural gymnast in a number of ways, but her sheer grit and determination led her to winning a national gold medal last week. She is at the top of her game. Luca has showed me and so many others that raw talent is wonderful, but making a plan and having passion and commitment to excellence is what it's all about.

She inspires me. As we move on from Rosh Hashanah 5780 and Yom Kippur, these are the abiding thoughts that remain in my head. For me, 5780 is going to be about continuing to sweat the small stuff and proving that grit, guts, passion, and a good plan are the way to excellence.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

The SA Jewish Report will not be published over Chol Hamoed. The next edition will be available on 31 October.



Israel heading for a third election

Increasingly, it seems inevitable that Israelis will be heading into a third round of elections.

Until now, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to concede that he is unable to form a government. But at the same time, he has not allowed any other member of his Likud party to try to do so.

Netanyahu has also made sure he has the full support of the right-wing bloc of parties, guaranteeing him 55 kneset (parliament) seats. They have assured him they will back only him to form the country's next government.

And Netanyahu is so certain that his rival, Blue and White party leader Benny Gantz, cannot become the next prime minister that he is now expected to give his mandate to form a majority coalition back to President Reuven Rivlin. He then will pass it on to Gantz. Legally, Gantz will then have 21 days to effectively fail in forming a new government.

The only party Gantz can approach that isn't already signed up to Netanyahu is Avigdor Lieberman's Israel Our Home. Gantz has 54 kneset seats under his belt, and with Lieberman's eight he would win a majority of 62 seats. But Lieberman will never agree to join forces with the left-wing Zionist Meretz party or the Arab faction that are part of Gantz's coalition. Netanyahu knows this. Gantz knows this. Rivlin knows this. Israelis know this. The only way out seems to be to call for a new election.

But how another election, possibly to be held in February or March next year, will break the political deadlock is unclear. The latest polls suggest it won't and that almost all parties will receive the same number of kneset seats they currently have.

The only variable could be Lieberman. Over the past two elections, his party has grown stronger. How his supporters decide to vote will be critical. If they, frustrated by the situation, decide not to vote for him a third time and instead vote for other parties in the right-wing bloc, Netanyahu could win the majority he craves.

But, emboldened by Lieberman's strong show of leadership and his insistence on separating state and religion – a key issue, particularly to the Russian voters who support him – they could choose to remain with him.

The chances of Lieberman and Netanyahu working together seem almost impossible as they despise one another intensely. Still, after attacking each other so fiercely during the election campaign, they agreed to meet last week. That meeting lasted less than an hour and failed to make any progress, but it showed that anything is possible when it comes to Israeli politics.

Meanwhile, the right-wing parties are weak, split, and lack clear direction. Who knows how they will fare in a third election?

One solution out of the impasse could be a national unity government between the two biggest parties of Netanyahu and Gantz. But negotiations to achieve this have failed so far. Gantz has refused to sit in a coalition with Netanyahu for as long as the prime minister is facing corruption charges. Gantz is hoping that

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier

another prominent Likud figure might lead a breakaway within the party, and join forces with him.

For a few short hours last Saturday, that seemed possible. Likud MK Gideon Sa'ar, a former education and interior minister who commands a loyal following within the party, tweeted that he would challenge Netanyahu for control of Likud if leadership primaries were to be held. But Sa'ar signalled that, until then, he would back his potential rival. The idea was swiftly shelved amid reports that Netanyahu realised he had little to gain and much to lose by holding it.

Another option on the table has been a possible power-sharing deal and rotating premiership between the Likud and Blue and White parties. But the sides have been unable to agree who would be prime minister first under such an arrangement.

Gantz was prepared to entertain the idea, but his co-leaders reportedly warned him that it would be his end – Netanyahu would break the agreement, and make his life difficult.

What's clear is that Netanyahu is fighting desperately to retain the premiership for no other reason than that he can push forward legislation that would give him immunity from the three corruption charges he's facing.

On Monday night, the fourth and last day of his pre-indictment hearings wrapped up. Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit now has until December to decide whether or not to close the cases against the premier.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shaking hands with Blue and White leader Benny Gantz at a memorial service honoring Shimon Peres

Either way, that decision will come with Netanyahu serving as prime minister – possibly in rotation with Gantz or some other solution, or as a transitional prime minister as the country heads into a third election.

If he's indicted, it could take months before the trial begins, and Netanyahu could ask for a plea deal instead. As prime minister, he'd be under no legal obligation to resign from office without a conviction. Israeli law states that ministers must vacate their posts if charged, but prime ministers can potentially stay on until all appeal processes have been exhausted.

If convicted in a trial, Netanyahu could face up to 10 years in prison. He's already the first prime minister in Israel's history to be subjected to a pre-indictment hearing on a series of serious criminal charges. He might be Israel's longest-serving prime minister, but he's also the first to be holding office while on trial.

Christian leader says nothing will stop him from visiting Israel

TALI FEINBERG

“I know apartheid, I grew up in it, so I know I never experienced it in Israel,” says Apostle KT Mkhize, who recently visited the Jewish State for the first time.

The KwaZulu-Natal Christian leader heads up the Mount Zion Christian Centre, a church in KwaZulu-Natal which has about 3 000 followers, and his weekly television show has up to a million viewers across southern Africa.

After visiting Israel on his own steam, he says not even an embassy downgrade will prevent him and his congregation from going there again. “Israel is home because of my beliefs. Our [Mount Zion] emblem even includes the Star of David.

“As a Christian, the root of our belief is in the Jewish faith. So people can’t call Israel names. It’s hard to hear people speak ill of my ‘family’. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but politics can’t influence religion. Just like you can’t stop a Muslim going to Mecca, if I want to go to Israel, no one can stop me. Even if there are restrictions, we’ll get there.”

His recent trip was a long-held dream of his father and grandfather, who never made it to the Holy Land. So Mkhize was fulfilling their dreams and his own. “It was always my desire to visit Holy Land. You read the Bible, but I felt that to get the whole story, you have to go to the place where the Bible took place. My father founded our church in 1972, and it was always his dream to make this pilgrimage.”

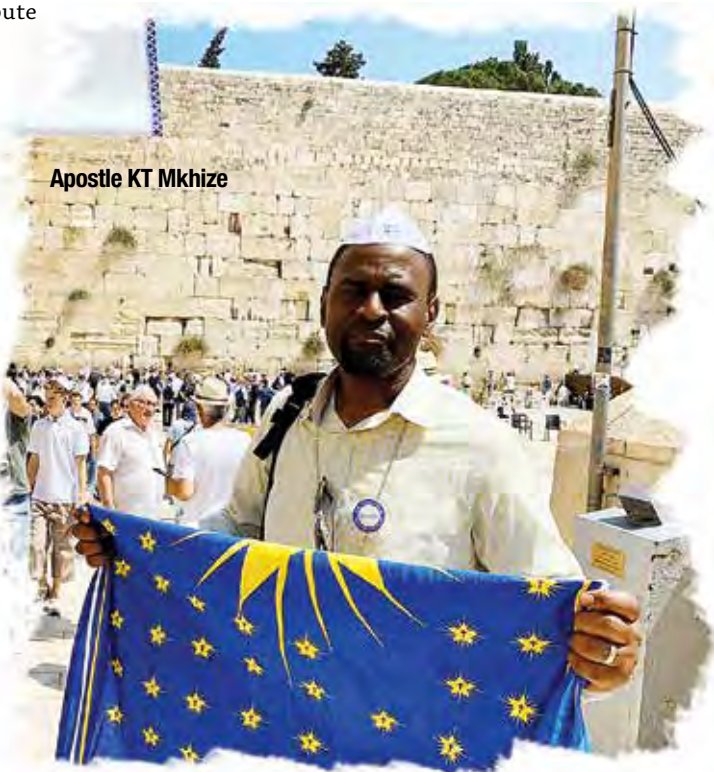
Throughout the trip, he wore a white hat that belonged to his father and grandfather

as a way of paying tribute to them and passing the baton from one generation to the next. It was also a symbol of peace.

“When I got out of the plane in Tel Aviv, I was overcome with emotion. This wasn’t what we normally see on TV. We think it’s only bombed-out buildings, so this was totally different.” Traversing the country over 10 days, he felt he had only “scratched the surface”. The highlight was visiting the Western Wall.

“When I stepped into the courtyard at the wall, I cried. I don’t know what made me so emotional, but I just wept. I had written prayers from my family that I put in the wall. I went again a few days later on a Friday, and again I wept. It’s extremely spiritual.”

Mkhize also got the chance to relax and enjoy the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Tel Aviv, which he says felt like being in California. He was baptised in the Jordan River, and visited the Sea of Galilee. He hopes to return at least twice a year.



BDS SA threatens to boycott Clover over Israeli takeover >>>Continued from page 4

Following consultation, the tribunal said the job losses would be reduced to 277 instead of the initial 516 jobs. The expected job losses would be offset by Project Masakhane, which would create 550 new permanent jobs over five years.

Aran Oelsner, chief executive of CBC Group International, has said the company is looking forward to exploring the potential of the informal sector in South Africa’s townships, and aims to bring innovation to the local dairy industry.

He says he will encourage his congregants and followers to go to Israel, and is planning a possible tour over Easter in 2020. He knows that a possible downgrade of South Africa’s embassy in Tel Aviv might make this more difficult, but he is determined that no one who wants to visit the Holy Land should be hindered because of politics.

Mkhize points out that he shouldn’t have to go to Israel to connect with the Jewish community. “Let’s meet, share our experiences, and learn from each other. We shouldn’t have to go to Israel to meet the Jewish people – we have you here in South Africa! And we’re here. I’ve never been inside a synagogue, or to a proper Sabbath. I would love to experience that. It would be an honour.”

After expressing this wish to the SA *Jewish Report*, Mkhize was invited by the Durban Jewish community to join them for their Sukkot celebration.

Most Jews of Polish and Lithuanian origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

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

Ashkenazi: It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia, Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents became citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesh says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi: The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese passport. If applicable, Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesh is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

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

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

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

Horesh is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.

I will be in Johannesburg from 14 to 20 November and then in Cape Town until 28 November. Please contact me for an appointment. My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com

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Seef tribute places spotlight on mental illness

JORDAN MOSHE

When Jayme Wolpe was woken by a knock on the door of his hotel room in Eilat on 26 June 2019, his life changed in a moment. As he rushed downstairs past reams of police tape, he discovered the worst: his cousin, Adam Seef, had taken his own life.

“At that moment, the hysteria stopped,” recounts Wolpe. “My vision blurred. My mind went silent. I was no longer present. No longer a part of the world. And when I finally did return to the world, it wasn’t the same. It was suddenly a more empty, hollow place. It was frightening.”

He was one of several speakers who addressed an audience at King David Linksfield High School on Friday at a unique assembly devoted to raising awareness of mental health. Accounts, dances, songs, and more were shared on stage not only to pay tribute to Adam’s memory, but to draw lessons from his death for those who suffer from mental health issues.

Adam took his life while on holiday with his best friends in Israel shortly after his 19th birthday. A first-year medical student at the University of the Witwatersrand, he struggled with issues of identity, anxiety, and depression.

Said Wolpe, “Chester Bennington, Robin Williams, Marilyn Monroe, Avicii, Adam Seef. These people didn’t commit suicide. They were killed by it. These people didn’t take their own lives. They were taken from them. Depression isn’t a choice. It’s an insidious, debilitating sickness. And it doesn’t discriminate.

“When depression infects a piece of your mind, it grips your rationality, distorts it. A cloud of black covers your neural vision. ‘For sures’ become ‘what ifs’, and reaching out for help seems more like a death sentence than a cure.”

Even those who appear successful and happy on the outside can harbour dark feelings inside, said Jodi Seef, Adam’s mother. She said her son had been a top academic achiever, possessed of a sharp sense of humour, and adored by his family and friends. Yet in spite of all this, he was never good enough in his own eyes.

“In his own mind, Adam was never good enough, not handsome enough, and just not enough. He was caught up in a vortex of hopelessness, and hated himself and who he was. Adam lived in absolute darkness [...] and could never accept his unique differences.”

In her son’s memory, Seef declared that it was time to “start giving a damn” by recognising others’ mental challenges, and reaching out to them. “No matter who you are and what your challenges are, you are worthy of life and love. We are all good enough to be here, and are all loved by Hashem unconditionally. A good person is a good person, and it’s okay not to be okay,” she said.

Seef stressed that parents and educators must reach out to our community’s youngsters, building them up from a young age, and helping them to shape their self-esteem and confidence. “Don’t let them collapse under the unbearable



At the tribute to Adam Seef at King David Linksfield

weight of low self-esteem,” she said.

Other tributes to Adam and acknowledgements of the battle he fought included a performance of *Why Can't I Be Me?*, a moving song composed and performed by student Tanna Levick. Introducing the song, fellow student Brad Gottschalk explained that Adam seemed to be most himself when he was on stage, and music was a medium with which he resonated.

“I’m not going to pretend I knew Adam personally, because I didn’t,” said Gottschalk. “Most of us never knew him personally. But if you have ever opted out of doing something you love because of what others think, you know Adam.

“If you wear a mask, and every day is a battle to be fought, you know Adam. If you are struggling with your identity or sexuality, you know Adam. If the future feels uncertain

and unclear, you know Adam. If you are on the outside looking in, you know Adam. If you are ‘the other’ or don’t fit into the mould, you know Adam. We all know Adam.”

The assembly was held in the midst of mental health awareness week, dedicated to talking about mental illness, and acknowledging that mental health is just as important as physical health. Starting last Wednesday, the school’s awareness committee devoted each day to a different mental health issue such as anxiety, self-image, depression, and autism, each of which was grappled with through various activities at the school. Journalling expert and empowerment coach Claire Holden also addressed the audience, outlining the constructive benefits of journalling in understanding the self.

“Mental illness is not something you can just get over,” said students Chad Silver and Samara Jay. “Acknowledging that it shouldn’t be invisible is extremely important. If you could see an invisible illness like you could see a broken bone, no one would ever be called weak for fighting.”

Wolpe said that he and a small group of individuals close to Adam were building a website that would have two main sections: Adam’s wall and Adam’s forum. The former will allow people to post memories, thoughts, and experiences directed at Adam, while the latter will be an anonymous community chatroom for sharing personal thoughts and experiences. Both will go live later this year.

Said Wolpe, “Adam didn’t feel that he could reconcile his inner feelings with the identity he built. Here, you are free of that burden. Our goal is not to seek and assist. We are offering a community of people and professionals who have either studied what you are going through, or have gone through it themselves.

“It doesn’t matter if you are male or female, old or young, gay or straight, an atheist or a believer, self-loathing or self-loving. Because before all of that, you are human. You are part of Adam’s community. We want to give you the tools to reach out, and to be part of something powerful.”

Sacha Baron Cohen’s Habo connection

TALI FEINBERG

Sacha Baron Cohen is best known for playing over-the-top comic characters Ali G and Borat, and he recently stunned Netflix audiences with his role as heroic Israeli agent Eli Cohen in *The Spy*.

Another claim to fame for the British actor is his involvement in the Habonim Dror youth movement as a teenager. The result is that many current and former members of Habonim are just “six degrees” of separation from him.

The connection is so close that Baron Cohen’s nephew was a madrich (camp counsellor) at Habonim Dror Southern Africa’s machaneh (camp) at the end of last year.

Others have childhood memories of the actor. “He grew up on my road. It’s weird to think we used to take the same bus home in Hampstead all those years ago,” says a member of the Cape Town Jewish community who lived in England in her youth, but asked not to be named.

Richard Summers says, “I went through all my years in the movement in Habonim in the United Kingdom with Sacha and his brother Eran.”

Lindi Giger Rudnicki remembers Baron Cohen from when their paths crossed while they were with Habonim in Israel – both on gap years – in 1990. “He and his friend Adam were on Kibbutz Tuval when we were there, and we had a seminar together. He was very down to earth.”

Martine Alperstein, a friend from Cape Town who now lives in Israel, also remembers Baron Cohen from that time. She says, “We just knew him as Sacha Cohen. He was living on Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra. He was a very funny but ordinary guy back then.” She adds that her colleague in Israel remembers busking on the streets of London with Baron Cohen in their youth.

A former shaliach (emissary) of Habonim Dror Southern Africa, Moshe Lederman, interacted with Baron Cohen when the latter was a leader of the youth movement. Lederman was Habonim UK shaliach at the time. He shared a video of a young man’s aliya (immigration to Israel) farewell ceremony, with Baron Cohen in it, and his appearance has hardly changed.

Belinda Geffen Copitch, formerly of Cape Town but who now lives in the UK, says she was a



madricha of Baron Cohen’s older brother, Amnon, in London. Gabi Katz Kurtz said that when Baron Cohen’s parents were in Melbourne, friends of hers organised to get a photograph of the actor signed and dedicated to her son, who is also an actor.

The *Times of Israel* (TOI) spoke to people who knew Baron Cohen back when he was becoming a successful comedian in 2012. “I remember being on the bus during our Habonim Mahaneh Lomdim trip, and he did this stand-up bit about lost property at the front of the bus,” said one woman now living in Ra’anana. She attended a three-week seminar with Baron Cohen in Israel when they were graduating high school.

“He was very nerdy. He didn’t hang out with the girls, but we were literally crying from laughter because he was so funny. I remember thinking how talented he was, and smart – a genius, really.”

The son of an Israeli mother and Welsh father, “a quirky, smart family”, according to the woman, Baron Cohen grew up in West London, and was active throughout high school in Habonim. “He was very Zionist, very involved in Habo,” said a fellow seminar participant, who has known him since they were babies in the same mother-and-baby group. “He wasn’t Mr Cool Guy.”

It was at Cambridge University, however, where Baron Cohen read history, that he began his stage career, first as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, a production of the university’s amateur dramatic club, according to TOI.

“I knew who Sacha was from London. His brother Eran was my age, and they were all in Habo,” said a woman named Debbie, who now lives in Israel and played Yente the matchmaker to Baron Cohen’s

Tevye. “It was a fun production, and he did this thing that I noticed later on as I watched his career unfold. He was always in character. When he signed my programme, he signed it ‘Tevye’, which was annoying because I could have [later] sold it on eBay.”

In fact, when Baron Cohen created the character Borat, it became a hit in Israel because the “Kazakh” he speaks in the movie is in fact perfect Hebrew, reported *The Guardian* at the time that the film *The Dictator* was being screened. The film is peppered with Hebrew expressions, Israeli slang, and inside jokes only Israelis could truly appreciate.

A fair amount of ink has been spilt asking whether Baron Cohen’s acting training ground was, in fact, Habonim. In the unauthorised biography of the actor by Kathleen Tracy, a spokesperson from Habonim said, “We think Habonim is where he got his craziness. The confidence to speak out and feel comfortable in a crowd, that’s what Habonim would have given Sacha.”

In an article titled “The comedy gang: the Jewish youth group that made Sacha Baron Cohen” in *The Independent* in 2011, fellow movement members share how the performing of “skits” and improvisation was the ideal environment to produce comedians. “It gave us the space and encouragement to be creative,” says fellow comedian Ivor Baddiel. “Being given the freedom to improvise together as a team was important for me. If you are going to chuck out comedy ideas to a group of collaborators, you have to develop the confidence that you are in a safe place where the others won’t rubbish you. Otherwise you will clam up. I learnt that at Habonim. It was somewhere I could be myself and be funny.”

Now that Baron Cohen has moved on to more serious acting in *The Spy*, it seems he has gone full circle back to his youth, when Israel was central to his identity. “I saw Eli Cohen, as he was written in the show, as an extreme version of myself,” Baron Cohen said recently, as reported by the *New York Times*. “The stakes were higher for him because the price of failure was imprisonment and execution. Eli Cohen was, in that sense, the greatest method actor of the last century.”

Public schools become ‘Jew-free’ following rampant anti-Semitism

OPINION

YVETTE ALT MILLER



“Jewish cockroach!” “Jewish vermin!” These hate-filled taunts were directed at a five-year-old Jewish boy in Melbourne, Australia, who had just started kindergarten in his local public school.

Each time the little boy went to the bathroom, he found himself confronted with a group of hostile children who taunted him for being Jewish and screamed insults at him. The boy began wetting himself at school and home, and didn’t want to go to school. Finally, one recent morning, he spilled his breakfast cereal, then broke down completely.

“He literally fell down on the floor,” his distraught mother told an Australian Jewish newspaper recently. The boy cried, “Mummy, you shouldn’t love me. I’m a worthless, Jewish rodent. I’m vermin.” Horrified, his mother comforted him, then called the school to let it know the horrible abuse her son was receiving.

Incredibly, instead of taking her complaint seriously, the school was “dismissive” and ignored the anti-Semitic elements of the bullying. Instead of addressing the anti-Jewish hatred in their school, school authorities suggested the boy use a different bathroom. Within a day, the anti-Semitic bullying repeated itself. The five-year-old has been diagnosed with acute anxiety, and is now being home schooled.

At the same time, another shocking case of anti-Jewish bullying in a Melbourne public institution is finally

coming to light. A 12-year-old student at Cheltenham Secondary College was lured to a sports field to play games and confronted by a group of nine other boys, aged 12 and 13. The students ordered the Jewish boy to bow down and kiss the feet of a Muslim student or else be beaten up.

The Jewish boy did bow and kiss his classmate’s feet. The humiliating encounter was filmed and shared widely on social media for months. During that time, the boy endured months of misery, with students routinely calling him “Jewish ape” and worse offensive slurs. He was physically attacked, punched in the face, and required a hospital visit. He has been diagnosed with acute anxiety.

When his mother complained to the school, the authorities were similarly dismissive, saying at first that since the original attack didn’t happen on the school grounds, there was little they could do.

Australian authorities have expressed “concern” in recent days, but some Jewish parents in Melbourne are feeling abandoned. “Essentially, everyone’s solution to this problem is to send your child to a Jewish day school,” the mother of the bullied five-year-old

told reporters. “Do we live in a society where we really have to do that in order to be safe?”

Increasingly, the answer seems to be yes, not only in Melbourne, but in cities and countries around the world where attending local public schools is no longer safe for Jewish students.

In France, the first official warning that rampant anti-Semitism in public schools was driving Jewish students away came in an official government report in 2004. Teachers and inspectors warned that Muslim students were beating and harassing Jewish students. Instead of tackling the violence and intimidation head on, many French public schools were ducking the issue.

“There are hardly any Jewish children left in state schools. The teachers can’t stick up for them,” Haim

Musican the vice-president of B’nai B’rith in France recently confirmed. Across France, Jewish students are increasingly choosing Jewish schools. So great is the demand that some Jewish families aren’t able to secure places.

In neighbouring Belgium, public schools are now virtually “Jew-free” after a series of high-profile attacks on Jewish students. In 2016, a Belgian Jewish schoolboy was injured after a crowd of fellow students surrounded him, spraying him with spray cans in what they said was an attempt to “gas” him like Jews in the Holocaust.

When the student’s mother complained, she said the teacher in charge “downplayed” the incident.

That same year, another high-profile case of a Jewish student identified only as “Samuel” in the Belgian press brought national attention to anti-Semitic violence in an affluent public school in the wealthy Brussels neighbourhood of Uccle. When word got out that Samuel was a Jew, the students turned on him. He was beaten up and called epithets, often by Muslim students. School officials did little, and Samuel’s mother eventually sent him to a Jewish school to escape the bullying.

In 2017, Germany had an

anguished national dialogue about anti-Semitic bullying in schools after one Berlin family went public with their son’s experiences at his local public school. On the boy’s fourth day of school, in a class on ethics, the teacher asked students to share which houses of worship they’d visited. When the student said he’d been in a synagogue, a strange silence settled on the class as he explained he was Jewish.

Following that, the student endured intense bullying. His grandfather, a Holocaust survivor, visited the school to share his experiences, hoping that would stop the abuse. If anything, the anti-Jewish bullying got worse. Finally, the parents, Gemma and Wenzel Michalski, took their story to the press. In the weeks that followed, dozens of other instances of anti-Jewish hatred and attacks in German public schools came out.

For many Jewish families, the choice of giving their children a Jewish education is a resounding victory over the anti-Semites whose hatred is turning too many schools into no-go zones for Jews.

• Dr Yvette Alt Miller earned her Bachelor of Arts at Harvard University. She completed a postgraduate diploma in Jewish Studies at Oxford University, and has a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics.





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Flame burns for lost soldiers in SA and Israel

JORDAN MOSHE

Members of the military know the risks they take so that others can sleep peacefully at night, and Jewish servicemen are no different.

The South African Jewish ex-Service League on 6 October paid tribute to the Jewish men and women who served South Africa, Israel, and the Jewish people, many of them with their lives.

At the outset of World War II in 1939, about 70 000 Jews lived in South Africa, 14% of whom volunteered to take up arms against the Axis powers, according to league chairperson Hilton Kaplan. The national average for volunteers was 7%.

Members of the league and the wider Jewish community gather every year at West Park Cemetery on the Sunday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to honour the fallen soldiers and martyrs who gave their lives for the sake of others.

The poignant memorial service pays fitting tribute to those lost. These include Jewish South Africans who served in World Wars I and II, in Israeli conflicts, and in South African border conflicts, as well as those soldiers who perished in the Holocaust.

Featuring powerful addresses, Sunday’s ceremony included the lighting of memorial candles, the recitation of Tehillim (psalms), the

sounding of the last post, and a two-minute silence.

“No matter where you served, in whatever capacity and for however long, committing yourself to service was a brave and selfless act that came with few guarantees,” said Kaplan. “You could not be sure of the duties you had to execute, where you might be deployed and, in some cases, if you would return home in one piece, if at all.”

“Today’s message is simple,” he said. “Jewish citizens have played their part in the defence of their country and people. This annual act of homage brings this into sharp focus. We recall the sacrifices made in honour of duty, country, our people, and Israel.”

Kaplan said that we have to accept that remembrance doesn’t have the same appeal for those who didn’t serve. “Our members are dwindling in number, but it’s imperative that our younger generations, schools, and youth groups become involved to keep the memory alive,” he said.

“Remembrance is a fading priority in this fast-changing world of ours. The men and women we remember gave up everything, including their lives, in service of our nation. As proud South Africans and Jews, it’s our duty to remember the service and sacrifice of our nation’s fallen. It’s up to us to ensure that every one of them is assured that their service to this country, our people, and Israel is appreciated.”

It’s important that the ceremony

takes place between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, said Israel’s ambassador to South Africa, Lior Keinan. “At this time, we reflect on our actions, and try to see where we stand,” he said. “In my work, I reflect on Israel, the Jewish communities around the world, and the connection between them.”



Major (retired) Marcus Goldring at the Westpark Cemetery memorial service

Two phenomena are simultaneously dominant today said Keinan. “One is the ugly uprising of anti-Semitism around the world, and the other is that Israel has never been better. While we see Jewish communities around the world threatened and suffering hostile acts, Israel has never been stronger politically, economically, or militarily.

“A strong Israel will never allow what happened 75 years ago to happen again. A strong Israel means that each of you is a flight away from

a haven.”

It’s for this reason, said Keinan, that the situation in Israel should concern every Jew around the world. “It’s a joint venture. Together, we can eliminate those forces which rise up again like they did years ago in Europe.”

He believes the memorial ceremony

here and Israel makes me proud to stand here and talk to the ex-military personnel who were willing to give the most valuable thing in order to serve and protect their societies and Israel.”

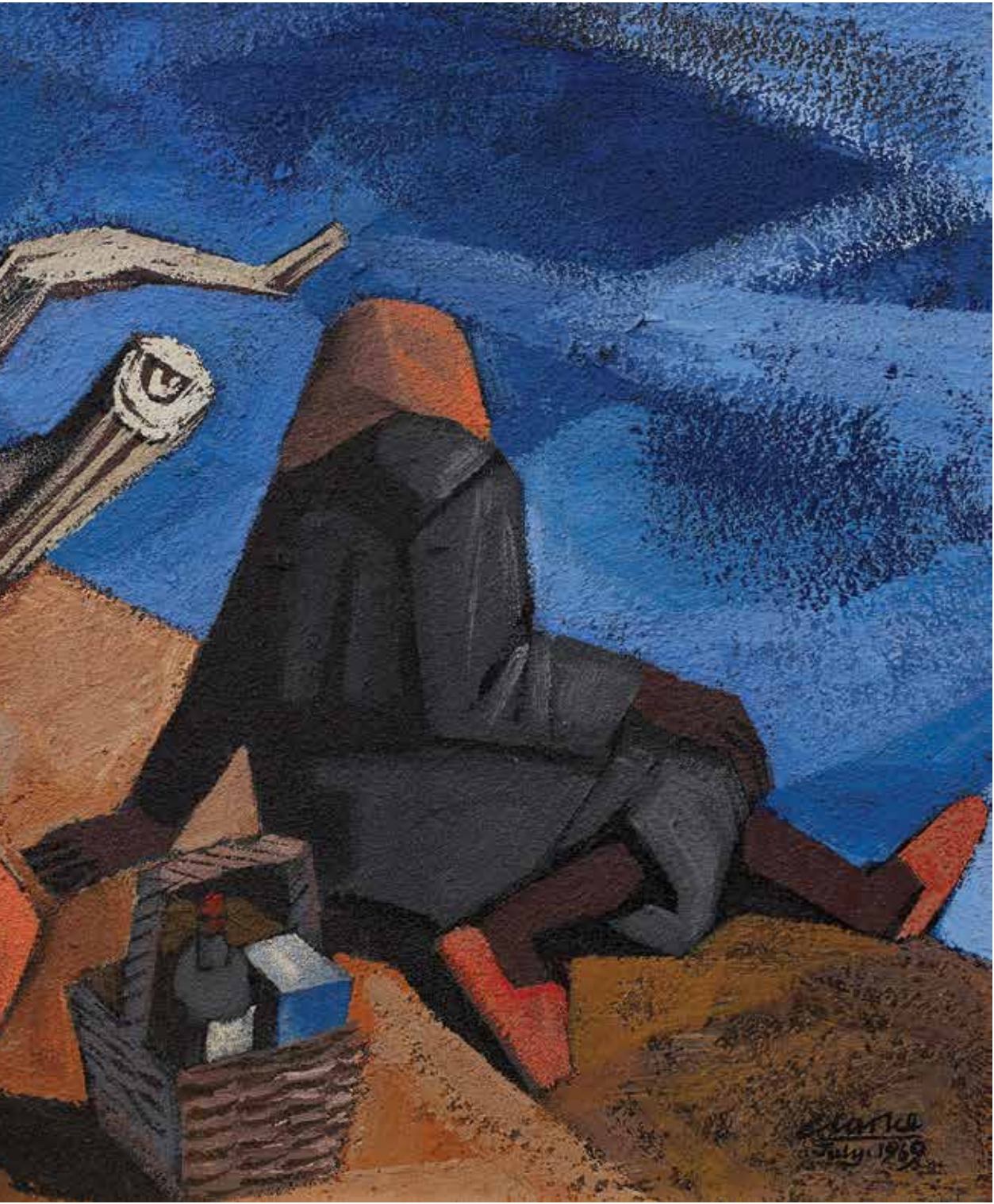
Before reciting kaddish and the memorial prayer, Rabbi Ron Hendler (whose late father served in World War II) emphasised that Jews never forget. “We always remember,” he said. “For how long should a ceremony like this carry on? It gets smaller every year.”

He cited two halachic (religious legal) opinions. “One says that yizkor for a parent should be said for 50 years. Another says there is no limit, that as long as there is someone to remember, it’s worth continuing.”

Applying the latter to the ceremony, he said, “Our memory never stops. We remember the destruction of the temple as we remember the first and second world wars, and the wars of Israel. We don’t stop remembering.”

The lesson we need to learn from those who gave their lives is to live in a way which honours them, Hendler said. “Every conversation we have needs to be one of hope, light, and comfort. In that way, we honour those who are not here, and carry what they gave us into a better world.

“It’s my hope that we meet here for many years to come, even if there are less of us. By being here, we prove the meaning of honouring and appreciating those who are no longer in this world.”



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Sukkot a message for the ‘me’ generation

OPINION

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS



Of all the festivals, Sukkot is surely the one that speaks most powerfully to our time. Kohelet could almost have been written in the 21st century. Here is the picture of ultimate success, the man who has it all – the houses, the cars, the clothes, the adoring women, the envy of others. He has pursued everything this world can offer, from pleasure and possessions to power and wisdom. And yet, surveying the totality of his life, he can only say, in effect, “Meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless.”

Kohelet’s failure to find meaning is directly related to his obsession with the “I” and the “me”. “I built for myself. I gathered for myself. I acquired for myself.” The more he pursues his desires, the emptier his life becomes. There’s no more powerful critique of the consumer society, whose idol is the self, whose icon is the “selfie”, and whose moral code is “whatever works for you”. This is the society that has achieved unprecedented affluence, giving people more choices than they have ever known, and yet at the same time has experienced an unprecedented rise in alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders, stress-related syndromes, depression, attempted suicide, and actual

suicide. A society of tourists, not pilgrims, is not one that will yield the sense of a life worth living. Of all things people have chosen to worship, the self is the least fulfilling. A culture of narcissism quickly gives way to loneliness and despair.



The power of Sukkot is that it takes us back to the most elemental roots of our being.

Kohelet was also, of course, cosmopolitan – a man at home everywhere and therefore nowhere. This is the man who had 700 wives and 300 concubines, but in the end could only say, “More bitter than death is the woman.” It should be clear to anyone who reads this in the context of the life of King Solomon, the author of the book, that Kohelet is not really talking about women but about himself.

In the end, Kohelet finds meaning in simple things. “Sweet is the sleep of a labouring man.” “Enjoy

life with the woman you love.” “Eat, drink and enjoy the sun.” That, ultimately, is the meaning of Sukkot as a whole. It’s a festival of simple things. It is, Jewishly, the time we come closer to nature than any other, sitting in a hut with only leaves for a roof, and taking in our hands the unprocessed fruits and foliage of the palm branch, the citron, twigs of myrtle, and leaves of willow. It’s a time when we briefly liberate ourselves from the sophisticated pleasures of the city and the processed artefacts of a technological age, where we take time to recapture some of the innocence we had when we were young, when the world still had the radiance of wonder.

The power of Sukkot is that it takes us back to the most elemental roots of our being. You don’t need to live in a palace to be surrounded by clouds of glory. You don’t need to be gloriously wealthy to buy yourself the same leaves and fruit that a billionaire uses in worshipping G-d. Living in the sukkah and inviting guests to your meal, you discover that the people who have come to visit you are none other than Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives (such is the premise of *ushpizin*, the mystical guests). What makes a hut more beautiful

than a home is that when it comes to Sukkot, there’s no difference between the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor. We are all strangers on earth, temporary residents in God’s almost eternal universe. And whether or not we are capable of pleasure, whether or not we have found happiness, we can all feel joy.

Sukkot is the time we ask the most profound question about what makes a life worth living. Having prayed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to be written in the Book of Life, Kohelet forces us to remember how brief life actually is, and how vulnerable. “Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” What matters is not how long we live, but how intensely we feel that life is a gift we repay by giving to others. Joy, the overwhelming theme of the festival, is what we feel when we know that it is a privilege simply to be alive, inhaling the intoxicating beauty of this moment amid the profusion of nature, the teeming diversity of life, and the sense of communion with those many others who share our history and our hope.

Most majestically of all, Sukkot is the festival of insecurity. It’s the candid acknowledgment that there’s no life without risk, yet we can face

the future without fear when we know we are not alone. G-d is with us, in the rain that brings blessings to the earth, in the love that brought the universe and us into being, and in the resilience of spirit that allows a small and vulnerable people to outlive the greatest empires the world has ever known. Sukkot reminds us that G-d’s glory was present in the small, portable tabernacle Moses and the Israelites built in the desert even more emphatically than in Solomon’s Temple with all its grandeur. A temple can be destroyed. But a sukkah, even if broken, can be rebuilt tomorrow. Security is not something we can achieve physically, but it’s something we can acquire mentally, psychologically, and spiritually. All it needs is the courage and willingness to sit under the shadow of G-d’s sheltering wings.

• *Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks served as the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. He is an international religious leader, philosopher, award-winning author, and respected moral voice. The article is taken from www.rabbisacks.org*

Home and heart: why Sukkot is the shelter we need

OPINION

ADINA ROTH

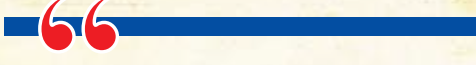


Many years ago, I had the privilege of studying at the Drisha Institute in New York, where women are paid to sit and study the Talmud. After enrolling, I discovered that the tractate of the Talmud we would be studying was about the sukkah.

Within a few weeks, I was pulled into the halachic minutiae of what constitutes a kosher sukkah. How high? How wide? How much sun? How much shade? Can it be built in a valley? How about on a mountain? To be honest, the finer details of sukkah building had not really been on my bucket list.

In New York, we were living under the spectre of 9/11, and back home in South Africa, Nelson Mandela’s dream of the rainbow nation had not yet faded. I was far from my family, yet living in one of the greatest cities in the world, and questions of home and what makes home were on my mind.

One day, on talking with my *chevruta*, I realised that the halachic discussion about what constitutes a sukkah were linked very much to my current preoccupations: what constitutes a good-enough shelter, and what creates the feeling of home?



The sukkah invites us to contemplate the true sources of our security, and to think more deeply about vulnerability and certainty.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg writes that “the halachic requirements for the construction of a sukkah attempt to capture the fragility and openness of the booths”. A sukkah should not be too small or too big, it



should be built well enough to withstand normal winds, but not so strong that it would stand in a gale.

Thus, the sukkah invites us to contemplate the true sources of our security, and to think more deeply about vulnerability and certainty. As we come to realise that walls are not our ultimate safekeeping, we are invited to trust in Hashem as our roots and shelter.

There is no doubt that people in our Jewish community are preoccupied with the question of home, of belonging, of security, and of a certain future. Indeed, questions of staying or going flow at Shabbat tables like the wine in people’s glasses.

These questions are real, and each person must answer them with integrity. In response to the current mood, a Facebook group with close to half a million members has emerged – the overwhelmingly positive #imstaying. In the group, one person after the next shares stories about why they are committed to deepening their roots in South Africa, why South Africa is home.

The truth is that no Facebook group can

create anything but an illusion about the certainty of home, even one with half a million members! But this Facebook group offers something beyond the assertion of #imstaying.

The vast majority of the stories in the group are about connections among people in our country, crossing racial and other divides. The stories affirm South Africans’ longing to connect. It doesn’t provide the walls and certainty of home, but it offers something more subtle: the power of the human web to create a sense of home and belonging.

#imstaying has the feel of a cyber sukkah. On joining the group, I felt as if I was taking shelter among fellow South Africans. Irreducible as we are in our uniqueness, we are joined by much in common, and long for fundamentally similar things.

A batmitzvah student undertook to visit the graves of all her ancestors around the country. Then, with her mother, she put together a massive family tree, which hung like a large wall hanging, as the background to her ceremony. When the mother of the

batmitzvah spoke, she said to her daughter, “I have always wanted to find a secure home, a place where I could say, ‘this is ours, we are secure and rooted here’.”

She had looked around the world, even visited her family roots in Lithuania, and of course sought to create a home in South Africa, but had never found that ultimate feeling of home. When she looked at the family tree, she realised that this web of ancestry was “home”. It’s these roots that sink deep into the heart and soul of each person in the family, creating a feeling of homecoming that is internal but real.

It must be wonderful to have a home where one can feel a sense of generational span, a farmstead that is passed down from parent to child, a sense of being an eighth-generation Jerusalemite.

But Sukkot invites us to contemplate an evanescence intrinsic to the human condition: that walls and fortresses, town house complexes, and even the “best” passport in the world will not give us an ultimate sense of shelter. Rather, it’s the contemplation of and connection with intangibles that give us a sense of homecoming. It’s our bonds with our family, with the Jewish people, with our fellow South Africans, and with our common, wider humanity, as well as our connection with life on this planet.

We are reminded, however, that the ultimate shelter is that of the infinite, whose rooftop is wide as the sky, and whose floor is as solid as mother earth.

• *Ideas from this article were taken from Rabbi Irving Greenberg’s article, “The reenactment of the exodus journey”, sourced from a lesson on Sukkot in the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning.*
• *Adina Roth is a Jewish educator and facilitator for the Melton programmes in Johannesburg.*

Making delicious food to eat in the sukkah

As we get ready to perform the mitzvah of sitting and eating in the sukkah, we sought out a couple of delicious recipes to prepare that will work wonderfully for just that experience – one from our own local ‘Butcher’s Wife’ and one from an international chef.

SHARON LURIE

HARISSA CHICKEN SCHNITZEL IN BUTTER LETTUCE AND RANCH DRESSING

Ingredients

- 8 – 10 butterflied chicken thigh schnitzel or six butterflied breast schnitzel
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp harissa paste or 1 tbsp harissa spice mixed with 2 tbsp oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Juice of 1 orange
- 2 tbsp mint, finely chopped
- 1 head of butter lettuce

Method

- Cut the chicken into three or four slices (six if you’re using breasts).
- Sprinkle the chicken with a little salt and pepper.
- Combine the harissa paste, lemon juice, orange juice, and mint.
- Place the harissa and juice mixture into a zipper bag, add the chicken, and mix it around to ensure all the pieces are coated.
- Allow to marinate for at least two hours.
- Remove from marinade, and fry the chicken over high heat



in a little oil until golden brown.

- Set chicken aside to cool.
- Place the well-washed butter lettuce on a board, remove the central vein and wrap each piece of chicken in a leaf.
- Place on a long narrow platter, and drizzle with ranch dressing (recipe below).
- Decorate with finely spiralised carrots, sprouts, lightly crushed salted cashew nuts, and a sprinkle of paprika.

Ranch dressing Ingredients

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp dried mustard powder
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast

- (available at Dischem)
- 1 tbsp honey
 - 1 tbsp onion powder
 - 1 tbsp parsley
 - 1 tbsp dried oregano
 - 1 tbsp dried dill
 - 1/4 cup white vinegar
 - 2 tbsp lemon juice
 - 1 tbsp crushed garlic
 - 1 – 4 tbsp almond milk (optional) depending on how thin you want your dressing

Method

Combine all of the above ingredients and blend until smooth. Decorate with croutons, finely spiralised carrots, sprouts, lightly crushed salted cashew nuts, and a sprinkle of paprika.

JEREMY SALAMON – THE NOSHES

TRADITIONAL HUNGARIAN CREPES LIKE THE FRENCH – BUT BETTER

Palascinata, Hungary’s take on the crepe, are slightly thinner than the French version thanks to the addition of seltzer water – and perhaps even more delicious. This recipe comes from chef Jeremy Salamon’s grandmother Agi, who cooked them for him throughout his childhood.

Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup milk, divided into 1/3 cup and 2/3 cup
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Splash of seltzer
- Clarified butter

Fillings

- Ground toasted walnuts
- Apricot jam
- Cinnamon sugar
- Dried fruit
- Chestnut puree
- Sour cream and/or whipped cream

Directions

- In a medium bowl, beat the eggs. Add 1/3 cup of milk and the flour, and beat until combined. Add the remaining milk, salt, and vanilla; whisk

- to combine.
- Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then loosen the batter with a splash of seltzer, just before cooking.
 - Heat a small non-stick or well-seasoned cast iron skillet over medium heat. Lightly grease with clarified butter, using a paper towel to wipe off the excess. Hold the pan’s handle in one hand and pour in three to four tablespoons of the batter, swirling and tilting the pan to spread it in a thin, even layer to coat the bottom of the pan.
 - Let it cook until the top begins to dry. Using a thin spatula, lift one edge of the crepe. Grab the edge with your fingers and flip. Cook on the second side for 10 seconds, then transfer to a plate. Repeat with the remaining batter.
 - Fill the crepes with your desired fillings and roll into logs. Finish with a dollop of sour cream and/or whipped cream.



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Wildlife app notches one billion views on YouTube

JORDAN MOSHE

Nadav Ossendryver, wildlife fanatic and founder of the app Latest Sightings, has taken game viewing to a whole new level with his YouTube channel, recently hitting more than one billion views.

He is the first South African to achieve this degree of popularity on the video-sharing platform.

There are fewer than 3 000 YouTube channels that have more than 1 billion views in the world. “It shows that we are passionate about wildlife, because if we weren’t, we definitely wouldn’t have been able to reach so many people,” says Ossendryver.

The 23-year-old entrepreneur founded Latest Sightings in 2011 as an online platform for those on safari – rangers or tourists – to report the animals and events that they are seeing in real time. Users report their location, time, and sighting to Latest Sightings, which in turn broadcasts these “tings” (a reported sighting) to other app users and also over various media including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

“These sightings allow users to enhance their safari experience as they get a heads-up on where sightings are taking place,” Ossendryver says. “Because we help so many people see many amazing sightings, it’s inevitable that someone will spot something unique and rare.

“We then take the rights to those videos and share them on social media, helping the footage go viral. Our YouTube channel is made up of a collection of the best wildlife footage.”

He says Latest Sightings helps to market South Africa and safari destinations to the world. “We are becoming a lead-generation platform for world-renowned safari destinations around Africa to showcase the sightings one can expect to have when visiting that park. We use Kruger Park videos to entice people to visit Kruger, and we are starting to do that for other game parks around the world.”

Latest Sightings is second only to Disney Channel on YouTube in South Africa. It is Ossendryver’s passion for wildlife that drives the site. “I love the park, and I’m the biggest user of the sightings and the community,” he says. “I know what content people are looking for because I’m looking for the same things they are. When a video stands out to me as amazing, more often than not, the community feels the same way.”

He says his channel was the first platform of its kind for sharing amateur wildlife footage. “People were so used to the David Attenborough documentaries made with budgets of millions of dollars,” he says. “Our footage is more relatable. Videos are

taken with phones, and there are always people shouting at the lion in the background. People see that, and feel that they can film something like that too one day, which makes them connect to the videos, and causes them to share.”

Ossendryver says the biggest challenge he and his team face is getting users to understand that an unreliable signal isn’t a massive hinderance to the use of the app. “Although some sightings disappear after five minutes, some last the whole day,” he says. “We find that a lot of people won’t even try our platform because they feel it won’t help.”

The most rewarding experience is when there is a sighting of an animal

that is injured by a snare, and the site’s administrators take it upon themselves to get hold of everyone in the vicinity of the animal. They keep a lookout until rangers get to the scene to save the animal. “We feel like we are there, and part of the mission,” he says.

Reaching one billion views means a lot to Ossendryver. “For one, it shows the hard work that my incredible team puts in every day, making sure that the community is happy and seeing lots of game,” he says. “For the business, it shows that we know the landscape of social media, and how to use that knowledge to generate interest in the various parks.”



Ossendryver’s next goal isn’t about views, but the number of parks covered. “Kruger and the rest of South Africa has amazing content, but imagine the content that can be recorded when our platform is being used in all the different parks around the world,” he says. “By the end of next year, we would really like to be in two other countries in Africa.”

Shakespeare gives hope to the homeless

REVIEW

CHARISSE ZEIFERT



I must confess to having ambivalent feelings about Shakespeare. Being the only Jewish girl in my Grade 10 class when we were doing *The Merchant of Venice* was a bit cringeworthy since I automatically found myself having to represent all Jewry whenever a question arose on the topic. I therefore felt a bit irritated when I saw that Shylock’s famous speech – “Hath not a Jew hands?” – was on the programme of an upcoming performance of the Johannesburg Awakening Minds (JAM) at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre.

Yet, when Sipho Nyhila stood up and gave his performance, changing the word “Jew” to “homeless”, I felt myself moved to tears. Himself once homeless, Nyhila’s rendition was heartfelt and heart-rending.

I was further compelled to put my Shakespeare prejudices aside as other cast members – either still or once homeless – recited Shakespeare passages that resonated with them. For Michael Mazibuko, it was Hamlet’s “To be or not to be”. He said that he had been on the streets because of alcoholism, and had often thought of taking his own life. His mindset changed when he learned the piece. Hamlet’s own agony about whether or not to take his life resonated with Mazibuko. He is now off alcohol.

For Lwazi Myeki, this passage from *Richard III* takes on an especially wrenching meaning: “I, that am curtail’d of this fair proportion; cheated of feature by dissembling nature; deformed, unfinish’d; sent before my time, into this breathing world, scarce half made up; And that so lamely and unfashionable; That dogs bark at me as I halt by them.”

Shakespeare inspired Congolese refugee Louis Kalombo in another way. He suffered from a tumour, and found himself destitute, living in parks and under bridges. On learning Shakespeare with Dorothy Ann Gould, the founder of JAM and one of South Africa’s premier actresses, teachers and directors, he was encouraged to write his own story of living on the streets.

In his soliloquy, he questions why those who have everything want to impoverish those who have nothing. Why sell *nyaope* to the poor? Why deny those who have nothing the little they have, when you want for nothing? His face contorts in pain as he describes his hurt when people tell him that he stinks. “Of course I do. I have walked in the hot sun for four hours to wait my turn in the queue for food. You, too, would be in this situation, if it happened to you.”

Yet, through Gould and JAM, Kalombo was given a second-chance at life. He had a seven-hour operation, organised by volunteers, and now goes back into his community to share what he has learnt.

Gould has performed in the United States, Canada, Europe, and in London’s West End, and has appeared in local programmes such as *Generations*, *90 Plein Street*, and *Erfsondes*. Yet she has become associated with Shakespeare, having played 18 of his heroines. Her passion for his work was inspired by Dame Janet Suzman, who taught her the real magic of Shakespeare, namely the passion and rhythm that it contains.

Seven years ago, Gould came across homeless men at a soup kitchen in Hillbrow. Wanting to make a difference, she offered them her skills of teaching drama, mainly Shakespeare. The group initially started with seven men (there are currently no women members), and she met them once a week.

It has now grown to more than 20, with many of them having gone on to perform in *Generations* or study at the Market Theatre. JAM offers a sanctuary where the men can find relief from their difficult lives on the streets and gain self-respect, dignity, and a sense of belonging. Performing gives them pride, helps to keep them drug- and alcohol-free, and enables them to earn a little money. Gould has become their mother. They refer to her as “Mma Dorothy”.



Some of them are no longer homeless. They also have a purpose in life. While they meet with Gould on a Monday, they join forces without her on Wednesday to practise their lines, and offer each other support.

The evening revealed many of my prejudices. I saw the teaching and learning of Shakespeare in a new light. Mma Dorothy says she isn’t

one of those who believe that Shakespeare should be dropped from the school curriculum. It still has value. Perhaps it’s not the learning of Shakespeare that’s the problem, but the teaching of it. Maybe one needs a bit more life experience than the average school goer to enjoy it fully, or perhaps one needs to act it, rather than learn it as a set text.

The evening also challenged the way I see the homeless (whom I have been told should rather be referred to as “destitute”). I no longer see them just as faces on street corners worthy of no more than pity and handouts. Now, I see them as potential performing artists deserving of the opportunity to further their skills.

While there is always magic in any theatre production, this evening had an extra star quality, which challenged my cynical self. As mawkish as

it sounds, it had love. Mma Dorothy, say the men, has given them neither food nor money. Rather, she has given them her skills, a belief in them, and the confidence to find their voice. She also has given them something they all believed they had hitherto been denied – love – which was clearly reciprocated.

Gould says that her biggest achievement has not been her international acting acclaim, nor has it been the opportunity of working with some of the greatest talents among her peers. Instead, it has been helping the voiceless find their voice.

Concluding the performance, Gould quoted the Talmudic axiom that whoever saves a single life is considered to have saved the whole world. She has done just that.

Any potential volunteers should contact Dale on 083 778 0169 or dale.russellhowell@gmail.com

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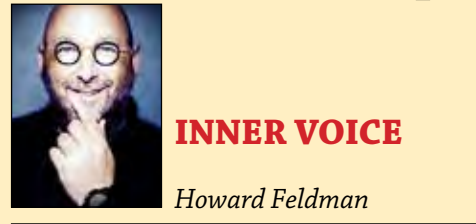
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How can we repent without coffee?



INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

I woke up on Monday morning to the realisation that I’m nothing without caffeine. I have no personality; I can hardly string a sentence together; and I’m certainly not a very nice person. Indeed, if someone were to fall over in front of me, there is more than a good chance that I would be so annoyed that I would have to step over them. Assisting them, injured or not, wouldn’t be an option. Not without caffeine.

Monday morning meant 24 hours since my last coffee. It meant there was another 36 hours to go before the start of Yom Kippur, 25 hours of the fast itself, 30 minutes following the end of Yom Kippur when we would be trapped in shul for a gratuitous no-explanation reason, and then another 30 minutes before it would be possible to actually make something worth drinking. Eighty-six hours without caffeine might not sound like a lot, but it’s a long time to hate oneself and every living creature that G-d put on this irritating earth. In 86 hours, I reckon I could have ruined my marriage, alienated my children, lost all my friends, and repented for nothing! And that’s without touching social media.

Apologies to the dead border on meaningless

In the current era, it has become trendy to apologise for almost anything, which makes the person doing it feel good while not necessarily helping the injured party, who might even be long dead.

After a very long time, the British government this month expressed “regret” that apparently, soon after explorer James Cook and his crew on the HMS Endeavour landed 250 years ago in the country that was to become New Zealand, they murdered some Maoris. This action was documented in the diary of Joseph Banks, the expedition’s botanist.

Cook’s example is minuscule in scale compared with other historical atrocities. Now, entire indigenous people and modern nations are demanding apologies and recompense for what was done hundreds of years ago. In some cases, it becomes ridiculous.

America has apologised to black Americans whose forebears were brought as slaves to what became the United States. The Atlantic slave trade began in 1619 with the arrival of enslaved Africans to the British colony of Virginia. Slavery officially ended in 1865 after the American Civil War, when Confederate soldiers of the southern US wanting to preserve slavery fought the Union from the North, resulting in 620 000 deaths. The Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in the South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

American politicians demanded that an apology for slavery and Jim Crow be made because the government apologised for the internment of Japanese citizens during World War II, and for dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These bombs immediately devastated their targets, and over the next two to four months they killed between 90 000 and 146 000 people in Hiroshima, and between 39 000 and 80 000 in Nagasaki. Roughly half of the deaths in each city occurred on the first day.

An extreme example of national guilt is that

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

elicited by the actions of Germany in World War II. Not all Germans regret that entire communities of Jews in the country and elsewhere were obliterated as a result of Nazi policy, amounting to six million, and alarmingly, neo-Nazism is on the rise again. As a government, however, Germany has made an official apology, and has made a serious attempt to compensate Jews and eradicate anti-Semitism.

On a more politically complex level in South Africa, black people warrant an apology from whites for European colonialism and apartheid. But given the society’s diverse nature, from whom exactly would such an apology come? And who among blacks would have the authority to receive it? The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996 tried to lay the ground for reconciliation by allowing perpetrators to tell injured parties the truth about what they had done, but it only partially succeeded. Many of the true devils of apartheid, such as the people responsible for the deaths of anti-apartheid activists like Ahmed Timol, Steve Biko, Neil Aggett, and David Webster, for instance, slipped through loopholes.

In Southern Africa, a numerically small example of injury against a people is the San, the earliest inhabitants of the region. The San’s demise occurred over the past few hundred years from the impact of colonialism from the 17th century onward, when they were enslaved and sometimes exterminated. But apologising to them would be an empty act to no-one’s benefit.

One could go through the history of the globe and find examples of people taking over and destroying others. Insincere moral grandstanding about this, however, is dangerous and too easy. Cynics might say that complex human society is inherently prone to these sort of troubles, and that humans are not actually programmed to live at peace with each other.



As a positivity coach, I feel a professional responsibility to at least try to view the situation from another perspective. Maybe that means applying the old “you don’t know what you got ‘till it’s gone” adage to gratitude. Logically, this means going full-festival appreciation for the underrated cup of java.

It’s time to declare a day or two as a festival dedicated to the celebration of the gift of caffeine. It’s not as bizarre as it might initially sound. Truth be told, I don’t understand half the reasons why we Jews celebrate our various holidays. I don’t really understand some of the fasts that we observe (think the Fast of Gedalia), and much as I pretend to, I’m still not clear why we shake the lulav over Sukkoth. Perhaps it’s time to celebrate one of G-d’s special gifts to humankind, to reflect simple gratitude for something we adore.

I have no idea if it will be a one- or two-day festival (but in the latter case, I would be

happy to take on the extra day) and I have no idea what food we will eat. I do know that it will be a festival like Purim, where we can use electricity so that we won’t be shackled to instant coffee as on Shabbat.

During this time of the year, it’s customary to ask others for forgiveness for something or things that we might have done to them over the past year. It’s a time when people try harder to be sensitive to the needs of others so as not to upset anyone, and to avoid adding another thing to ask forgiveness for. For me it doesn’t quite work that way. A simple Excel spreadsheet provides me with unequivocal proof that my list of forgiveness required increases exponentially in the 60 hours before Yom Kippur, rather than the other way round. Little wonder, considering my behaviour.

Which proves, once again, that coffee isn’t just good for our heart and brain, but also for our souls.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Small communities association on track

Earlier this year, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) decided to establish an organisation called the Small Jewish Communities Association (SJCA) to take over the work of the board’s country communities department from the beginning of next year.

Encouraging progress was made in getting the SJCA up and running at a meeting of small community trustees on 6 October. There is still much work to be done mainly from a technological and administrative point of view, but the fundamental principles of the new body are now in place. These include the composition of its governing body (on which the SAJBD will be represented) and responsibility for its day-to-day running. Under the capable and dedicated chairmanship of Barney Horwitz, and with Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft as chief executive and positioned to continue doing the outstanding work as spiritual leader to our far-flung country brethren that he has done for the past 26 years, we believe that the SJCA will be in excellent hands, and hopefully it will go from strength to strength.

Heritage Day

Interfaith activity has long been one of the strengths of the SAJBD Cape Council. On Heritage Day last month, the council partnered with various local faith communities in organising this year’s Cape Town Interfaith Initiative Religious Heritage Day Bus Tour. This is the seventh such tour arranged by Cape Deputy Director Gwynne Robins, an executive committee member of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative of many years standing. This year, participants visited the historic Gardens Shul, South African Jewish Museum, St Mary’s Cathedral, the Tushita Kadampa Buddhist



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



Meditation Centre, and the Shiite Mosque. Robins presented a history of the museum, while Cape Director Stuart Diamond addressed the group at the Gardens Shul.

The importance of initiatives like this in fostering social cohesion and breaking down historic barriers of mistrust between people from different cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds cannot be overstated. They help to transform potential causes of division into opportunities for learning and sharing. This is surely the kind of South Africa we should all be striving to build, whether as organisations or simply in our individual interactions with our fellow citizens. Regrettably, all too often, political leaders, instead of showing the way in this regard, are guilty of exacerbating tensions by making inflammatory and offensive comments about certain sections of the population.

A recent example was Gauteng MEC Lebogang Maile’s deplorable tweet alleging that Jews have unfairly gained control of certain buildings in the Johannesburg CBD. We are in the process of arranging a meeting with the MEC to ask him to account for this baseless and insulting charge against our community, one that runs completely counter to the non-racial values of his own party, and indeed of our country as a whole.

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

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

Shared experience eases trauma for Holocaust descendants

MIRAH LANGER

“It was wonderful to be amongst descendants. [It] gives you the feeling they understand what your life has been about.” So said one of the participants of the Descendants of Holocaust Survivors Group launched at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in Forest Town.

This comment expressed the sentiment of the group, most of whose participants want to share their experience with those with similar life stories, not least to help make sense of it all.

The dozens of second-, third- and fourth-generation survivors who attended the event filled out a questionnaire asking for ideas about what they would like to experience from the group.

Brenda Solarsh, group co-ordinator, said, “A major theme was the joy of experiencing the bond of a shared experience.”

In fact, Solarsh said, at least one young woman had never met anyone else in her age group whose parents were survivors until joining the group.

Psychotherapist Tracy Farber distinguished between generations of descendants, suggesting that second-generation survivors “had a visceral connection with the Holocaust because they grew up in the arms of these very traumatised, hurt, and brave people”.

“Children ... are direct witnesses of their parents’ suffering, and their resilience.”

Third-generation survivors grew up with family members such as grandparents, who “had a lot of anger and unprocessed grief”.

Nevertheless, while the specificity of these lived experiences is important to pinpoint, Farber also asserted that the overall definition of a descendant needed to be inclusive in terms of acknowledging the long tendrils of trauma.

Solarsh said that some descendants expressed “an interest in our local human rights context” in the questionnaire.

As one descendant noted, “My parents, because of their experience in Europe, were very anti-apartheid. They taught that to their children. I want us to try and help with the current problems we are facing.”

More than half of the questionnaire’s respondents wanted a more personal angle to interactions. “There was a strong desire for a meetup to share stories and experiences. That’s also on the drawing board,” Solarsh said.

Overall, she said that the “positive, warm atmosphere” at the launch was a “good start” to the project.

“Johannesburg is known as a city where its citizens have a history, and show characteristics of their pioneer forefathers [as] entrepreneurs, builders, and optimists. This augurs well for our programme.”



The audience at the descendants meeting

Remembering the ‘Boerejode’ 120 years later

DAVID SAKS

There is a classic photograph of a group of Boer prisoners in Bermuda, one of the British colonies where about 30 000 Boer prisoners of war (POWs) were eventually interned. Among those pictured is a certain Aaron Pincus, a Free Stater from Winburg, who before his capture had served (as did his brother Myer, also captured) under legendary General Christiaan de Wet. It’s easy to identify him – he’s the little chap standing at the end of a line of typically tall, strapping Afrikaners.

This is my favourite among the photographs in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ (SAJBD’s) archives of Jews who served in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.

Existing evidence suggests that about 300 Jews ultimately served in the Boer forces during the war. That number increases somewhat if one includes those who played a more supporting, background role, such as in guarding POWs, mines, and bridges, or serving in the various town guards.

At least 10 were killed in action, while nearly 100 were made POWs (occasionally on suspicion of having supported the commandos rather than actually fighting with them), with three of them dying in captivity.

Unlike the Dutch, Germans, Irish, and other foreign volunteers who fought for the republics, the “Boerejode” didn’t make up a distinct corps, but were scattered throughout the Boer forces. As a result, there is a Jewish angle, however small sometimes, to all the major aspects of the war. These include the key battles and sieges, the guerrilla

campaign, the home front, the POW camps, and even to a limited extent the tragedy of the concentration camps, where a number of Jewish children are known to have died.

Some volunteers were themselves of Dutch or German origin, and a number accordingly served in those units. The majority, however, were recent immigrants from Lithuania and other East European territories forming part of the then Russian Empire.

Naturally, most Transvaal Jews opted for neutrality. Those who fought tended to be young, unmarried men between the ages of 16 and 25, although a few were considerably older.

While most of the Jewish Boers were no doubt content simply to do what they had to and come through it all in one piece, there were some noteworthy exceptions who achieved some distinction.

It was Chief Rabbi Dr Louis Rabinowitz who unearthed the story of Herman (Chaim David) Judelewitz, a former Slobodka yeshiva *bochur* (student) who served under General Piet Cronje, took part in the Prieska rebellion in the Northern Cape, and eventually died in action heading up a commando of Cape Rebels.

Another heroic figure discovered by Rabinowitz was Joel Charles Duveen, whose bluff and daring saved his commandant’s life at Spioenkop. With the rank of lieutenant,

he performed many daring individual feats during the guerrilla campaign in the Eastern and Northern Transvaal. On contracting a fatal dose of blackwater fever shortly after the war’s conclusion, it’s recorded that he

he discovered trembling in his tent gabbling Tehillim (psalms) just prior to the British attack at Colenso. Leviton successfully approached General Louis Botha to allow the poor man to return home since he obviously

wasn’t going to be of any use to anybody.

Several Jews were involved in the capture not only of Winston Churchill outside Ladysmith, but also in the arrest of his fiery aunt, Lady Sarah Churchill, near Mafeking. There is even an amusing Jewish coda to the story of Churchill’s famous escape from captivity in Pretoria. Many years later, the great statesman received an unexpected letter from a certain Sam Judelsohn. In this tongue-in-cheek missive, he informed Churchill that he had been one of his guards who had fortunately been off duty the night of the escape. Had he been at his post, Judelsohn wrote, the history of England would have been very different. Getting into

the spirit of things, Churchill sent his reply, “T[hank].G[-d]. Sam Judelsohn you weren’t on duty – poor England!”

In 2012, I was part of a joint SAJBD-Ladysmith Historical Society initiative that erected a small monument in memory of the Jews who died in the service of the Boer republics. It’s located close to the main Burgher Monument on the Platrand outside Ladysmith.

We commemorate the 120th anniversary of the outbreak of the war this Friday 11 October.



Aaron Pincus (far right) and other Boer prisoners in Bermuda

insisted on being laid out on the floor to die. This was because the only bed available belonged to an Englishman, and he refused to die in an Englishman’s bed.

And just as there is a wolf and jackal pairing in Afrikaner popular folklore, so was there such a pairing in one of the Free State commandos, comprising two *landsleit* (natives) from the Latvian shtetl of Pilten – Wolf Jacobson and Joseph “Jakkals” Segall.

Against such tales of intrepidity is the account by Jacob Leviton of his meeting a frightened little Jewish shopkeeper whom

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Applications close 15th November 2019.

Find out more at csgnsw.org.au

Rugby Fever at KD Ariel



There are a variety of things that make one proud to be South African, and rugby is one of them. Students from King David Ariel celebrated their heritage by dressing up in support of the South African team at the 2019 Rugby World Cup. Back row, left to right: Elle Farber, Kaiya Isserow, Matt Flaum, Matthew Holliday, Zac Solovei, Ryan Hellman, Maddison Kahn, Kara Rozentvaig. Front row, Shiri-Lee Chernick, Bella Shewitz and Benjamin Shudsky.

WHAT'S ON

Sunday (13 October)

- The Big Band Music Appreciation Society hosts a programme presented by Lionel Gordon. Audio: *The Count Basie Orchestra and top singing artists*. Movie: *Playmates* starring Kay Kyser and his orchestra together with John Barrymore. Time: 14:15. Venue: Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium, 38 Oxford Road, Parktown (entrance in Third Avenue). Contact: Marilyn 072 243 7436 or Jack 082 450 7622.

Thursday (17 October)

- Learn Yiddish every Thursday with Tamar Olswang and the Union of Jewish Women. Time: 10:00 - 11:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R100 per person, R80 for pensioners and UJW members. Includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 648 1053.

Saturday (19 October)

- The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society is hosting Fawly Flowers, A de-lushious evening with Basil & Sybil Fawly.

Time: 20:15. Venue: Auto & General Theatre on The Square, Sandton. Cost: R200 per ticket. Book now. Contact: 011 485 5232/083 441 7287/email gloria@jwbs.co.za

(Sunday 20 October)

- The Johannesburg Light Music Society hosts two audio presentations, followed by a short interval for refreshments, then an audiovisual of great music from either Broadway type shows or MGM movies. Time: 14:00. Venue: Roosevelt Park Recreational Centre. Cost: First-timers free, R20 per head optional. Call David on 011 678 9725 or 076 574 1446.

Sunday (27 October)

- The Women's International Zionist Organisation hosts a visit to three of Johannesburg's prettiest gardens. First garden: 09:45 - 10:30, 36 Third Avenue, Illovo; second garden: 10:30 – 11:30, Anreith House, 55 Rivonia Rd (entrance on Harrow Road), Sandhurst; third garden: 11:30 – 12:30, 53 Alexandra Avenue, Craighall. Join us in the third garden for a fabulous tea and talk by tree expert Anton Moller. Donation R240. For bookings and information, contact Helen 083 267 2607 or Lee 082 441 2953.

Victory Park Grade 8s visit Our Parents Home

Grade 8 pupils and the students representative council of King David High School Victory Park recently visited Our Parents Home in Norwood, where they did Kabbalat Shabbat with residents. They also danced, sang Shabbat songs, and read a story for Shabbat. Residents were then treated to sweets from the students. The students took pride in this act of *chesed* (benevolence), a core value of the high school.

Talia Bartell and Erin Midzuk perform for the residents of Our Parents Home



Torah Academy boys enthralled by rugby hero's life story

Author Jeremy Daniel recently had Torah Academy Boy's High School pupils on the edge of their seat with humorous and heartbreaking stories about the sporting personalities he has featured in his books. Daniel is the author of the Road to Glory series. His latest book, *Siya Kolisi Against All Odds*, tells the improbable story of the first black South African to captain a Springbok rugby team.

Kolisi's story began on the impoverished streets of Zwide, a township outside Port Elizabeth. The boys were fascinated to learn that he was so poor he had to do his homework under a street light.

Daniel tracks Kolisi's journey from running wild on the streets of Zwide, where the only language he knew was Xhosa, through some crucial games at prestigious Grey High School, into the Western Province rugby set-up,

and his fight to become Springbok captain. He delves deep into the systems that identify junior talent, the characters that shape the various sports heroes' journeys, and the glory moments of their careers. Daniel was brought to the Torah Academy by Jonathan Ball Publishing as part of the Constitutional Court Book Fair.



Tzvi Stern, Yoni Hurwitz, Yossi Shaw, and Adir Lurie listen to author Jeremy Daniel's stories of sporting heroes.

Letters

ARTICLES HELP TO SUPPORT RAPE SURVIVORS

Thank you for the article on rape in South Africa in 2019, "Rape victim has long road to recovery – but we can help", *SA Jewish Report*, 20 September.

Also, I appreciate the fact that the newspaper is raising funds for therapy for the Israeli woman and for South African rape survivors.

Gender-based violence is terrible, and totally out of control in South Africa. Thank you for trying to raise awareness of this terrible crime, and for giving your readers the opportunity to contribute to lessening the pain for rape survivors.

We need more good in the world.

– Carolyn Segal, Johannesburg

DIRCO'S HYPOCRISY KNOWS NO BOUNDS

Accusing Israel of ethnic cleansing, the South African envoy to the United Nations, Clinton Swemmer, cited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement about annexing the Jordan Valley. Surely, he remembers similar statements by Netanyahu prior to the previous elections. Even a diplomat should understand political rhetoric, similar to the promise that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa made before the South African elections of building a million new homes in Alexandra – promises, promises for political expediency.

The envoy's remarks about ethnic cleansing were fallacious in the extreme. How can there be ethnic cleansing when the Palestinian population has grown exponentially? Could he perhaps be referring to the Christian population in Palestine that declined from about 10% in the 1960s to less than 1% today? Bethlehem and surrounding villages were 86% Christian, but by 2016, the Christian population had dipped to just 12%. Prior to Israel's withdrawal, the Christian

population in Gaza numbered more than 5 000, whereas today it numbers less than 1 000.

The minister and deputy minister of the department of international relations and co-operation (Dirco) are women. Yet, in the face of the recent wave of gender-based violence in South Africa, Swemmer makes no mention of the horrific gender-based violence in almost the entire Arab world with which South Africa maintains strong diplomatic relations, but deems it necessary to downgrade diplomatic relations with Israel.

Dirco has ignored the plight of women in the Arab world whose lot is worse than that of a goat, who have no or little rights, and are subject to the whim of their father or husband. More than 90 million girls are pressed into forced marriages, and genital mutilation is common practice. So, too, is stoning to death for being the victim of rape in Iran. Honour killing is accepted as a norm in Arab society. Limb amputation and the flogging of both men and women are the favoured

methods of punishment in many countries of the Levant, and the beheading of criminals is common practice in Saudi Arabia.

But the South African ministry of foreign relations, headed by two women, has yet to raise any concern with these countries, but is quick to vilify a country whose women enjoy some of the most liberal rights in the world, where their status is equal to men, and they participate in all aspects of political and civilian life. A country where fair and free elections are held every four years, and sometimes, even more frequently.

In the Arab world, women are barred from participating – that is, if elections ever take place in many of these countries. The hypocrisy of Dirco knows no bounds, given that Ramaphosa has committed in the strongest terms to combat gender-based violence. Yet, his foreign affairs ministry seems to condone the treatment of women in the Arab world with which South Africa maintains the closest of relations. – Allan Wolman, Israel

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Giant communal artwork for Greenside shul sukkah

Members of Greenside shul came together on 6 October to create the shul's annual giant sukkah mural, measuring 5m wide by 3.3m high. This is the third year that the community has painted a colourful canvas work of art depicting a scene from Tanach.

In 2017, the community painted a tree of life. Last year, it painted Jonah and the whale. This year's mural depicts Noah, his ark, and all the animals in their pairs.

Clearly, there is no limit to the beauty and wonder that can be achieved with many hands, hard work, energy, and an abundance of creativity.

The artwork will have pride of place in the Greenside shul sukkah. It will first be seen in completion when the community gathers for dinner on the first night of Sukkot.



Challah bake in memory of Hayley Fraser



Eighty family and friends got together to bake challahs at Waverley Shul on 25 September to commemorate the sudden death of Hayley Fraser seven years ago on erev Yom Tov (the night before Yom Tov). More than 40 challahs were baked in the shul's ovens. They were donated to Jewish food fund Yad Aharon & Michael.

Hayley's mother, Helen, who hosted the event, spoke about Hayley's love of life and commitment to charity, especially when it involved children. A group of Hayley's friends shed tears as they captured the essence of her life. Funds and non-perishable groceries donated were shared by the Nashua Children's Charity Foundation and Yad Aharon. The evening was assisted by Amy Samson and Nicole Smith, the founders of the charity "Challah"ishing.

Linksfield Shul gets modern, meaningful mikvah

More than 150 women gathered on 6 October for the opening of a state-of-the-art, four-bathroom mikvah at Linksfield Shul on the King David Linksfield (KDL) campus in Johannesburg.

Sponsored by Dan and Melanie Saltzman and named in honour of their grandmothers, the mikvah was built with the intention of serving women in the area who are looking for a deeply spiritual yet modern mikvah experience. It will also serve as an educational tool for pupils on the KDL campus, helping to make the experience relatable and meaningful.

At the opening, the women were treated to a lecture by well-known author and educator Richard Sutton titled "From surviving to thriving".

Architects Asher Marcus and Mandy Shindler (who also did the interiors) explained the design concepts behind the mikvah, and a short film was shown on what it means to women in the community. Brian Weinberg, who facilitated the project on behalf of the shul, thanked the donors and all those involved in making the project happen, and Dan Saltzman spoke about their vision and passion for the project.



13-21 October

- Public sukkah in the heart of Sandton CBD at Chabad's Goodness & Kindness Centre. Venue: 8 Stella Street, Sandton. Contact: Rabbi Ari Kievman 079 434 1293 or rak@chabad.org.za

Tuesday (15 October)

- Pizza in the hut at Chabad of the West Coast. Time: 10:30. No charge.

Wednesday (16 October)

- Shashuka in the sukkah. Time: 09:00. Venue: Temple Israel Wynberg.

Thursday (17 October)

- Seniors Sukkos Party. Live music, entertainment, comedian, delicious lunch, lulav and etrog, and much more. Time 11:00 - 13:00. Venue: Chabad House Sukkah, 27 Aintree Ave, Savoy. RSVP: 011 440 6600, rak@chabad.org.za
- Chabad of Strathavon is hosting a public sukkah at Grayston Shopping Centre during Chol Hamoed, open to the public. On 17 October: cinema in the sukkah for kids. The animated docudrama *Young Abraham* will be screened. Time: 17:00: Cost: R20. Refreshments on sale.

Monday (14 October)

- Candy Sukkah fun for kids at Sandton Central Shul. Venue: 8 Stella Street, Sandton. Time: 10:30. Contact: batya@chabad.org.za.
- Sushi in the sukkah at Chabad of the West Coast. Time: 10:30. No charge.

Sunday (13 October)

- Erev Sukkot service and meal. Time: 18:00. Venue: Temple Israel Green Point. Sukkot morning service and brocha. Time: 10:00. Venue: Temple Israel West Coast.
- Beit Luria will have Seder Sukkot (bring and share dinner). Time: 18:00. Venue: 61 Mendelssohn Rd, Roosevelt Park. Contact: Rabbi Julia Margolis 076 673 0750.

SUKKOT WHAT'S ON

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

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Chag Sameach & A Big Thank You

To the Union of Jewish Women, Kosher Mobile Meals, Yad Aharon and all the volunteers for their outstanding work in the community.

A communal Sukkah will be available for all to enjoy during Sukkot at KosherWorld.

Run fast, fly high – gymnast Luca Lazarus wows the judges

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

At first sight, Luca Lazarus doesn't strike you as a talented gymnast. Shy and modest, the only thing that gives it away is the fact that she stands on one leg while talking, and delicately balances on a lever-arch file while concentrating. But last week, she beat 36 other contestants for first place in the level 7

group (ages 13-17) at the SA Gym Games, the national championship in Cape Town. It wasn't the first time that the 13-year-old, who is in Grade 8 at Redhill School in Johannesburg, blew the judges away. She finished second at the provincial championships in August, and in July travelled to Malta, where she came third in the Malta GymStars International competition, competing against top

gymnasts from across the world. Lazarus competes in artistic gymnastics, including bar, beam, floor, and vault. It's a demanding set of practices, requiring a great deal of physical strength, agility, and mental toughness. To say that gymnastics is a labour of love for her would be an understatement. She started at the age of five. Her mom, Rose, talks about how, at a young age, she "spent all day on her hands". Lazarus currently trains four hours a day after school, six days a week. She makes one exception to this rigorous schedule – to attend school play rehearsals. Drama is her other love, and she had a leading role in this year's school play. Acting helps her to cope with performance anxiety. "Gymnastics can be nerve-racking, what with the judges judging you," she says. "Drama helps with stage fright." She overcomes anxiety by not thinking of it as a competition, but about having fun. Her favourite practices are the vault – where she enjoys the power of sprinting and moving through the air – and the beam, which she describes as the "most scary and mentally challenging" of gymnastics. "But, after I got the back-handspring right [most things on the beam are connected to this], I wasn't afraid anymore," she says. Lazarus says she does currently have some "growth-related challenges", with fast growth causing pains in her wrists and ankles. "Sometimes I have to take it easy and focus on choreographic dance moves and avoid doing flips," she says. To prepare physically, she focuses on



Luca Lazarus

eating healthily, with lots of protein-rich foods before training. She also shows an unusual amount of mental discipline and composure for a person her age. She visualises and focuses on her routines, going through them in her head over and over again – all the way to Cape Town recently. By the time she performs, even if she can't consciously remember the next step, having done the routine mentally and physically thousands of times, the moves come naturally to her.



This self-starter also streams videos of the best gymnasts in the world, learning their skills, do's and don'ts. Gymnastics is a technical discipline with a lot of formality and rules. For example, says Lazarus, you have 10 seconds to get off the beam after a performance or you get penalised. "Coaches can be really strict, telling us what to do and not to do every day," she says. Though this "hypercritical" element isn't her favourite part of the sport, it helps to "love it and have fun". The thing she loves the most about it is "being in the air", and it isn't surprising therefore that this athletic teenager also climbs cliffs with her dad in the Magaliesberg when she has any spare time. Though she says next year "may be her last year of competing" because she has so much else she wants to do – like school and social stuff – she admits that in just one week off gymnastics (she is on a break) she already misses it like crazy. Ultimately, Lazarus believes she will always be involved in gymnastics, and would like to coach one day because "if you've been a gymnast, you'll understand coaching". "My dad always says that the person who has the most fun wins. I live by this," she says. It seems that doing what you love and loving what you do are paying off for her.

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South Africans kicking up a storm in English football

LUKE ALFRED

When former hedge fund manager Clive Nates was considerably younger, he used to catch the bus to and from school with a couple of friends. Conversation often revolved around English football – his mates supported Liverpool and Manchester United, respectively – and, finding himself teamless, Nates was socially obliged to join in and choose a team. He opted for Everton. He'd always liked Alan Ball, famously the youngest member of England's World Cup winning side of 1966. In those days, Ball was in the midst of making Everton's midfield the most feared in the land. Everton's blue might not have been the best known club in Liverpool, but he didn't mind. The young Nates had found an English football home. Nates's loyalty to Everton continues to this day (he still watches them when he can). Upon retirement, after helping to set up South Africa's first hedge fund management company, he looked forward to putting his feet up and easing into his dotage. It wasn't to be. Three years into retirement, he felt the itch to do something different. "I realised I needed to do something more," he says. "It was either get back into hedge fund management or do something crazy." Nates opted for the latter. Although an Everton supporter through thick

and considerable periods of thin, he had also started to follow Lincoln City, a side who Everton had a brief alliance with in the early 2000s. As Everton was well beyond his means, Lincoln City became an obvious choice as the idea of investing in an English club grew. The catalyst for furthering the idea occurred in early 2015, when he read about Lincoln's bankers withdrawing their facilities to the club. He fired off an e-mail to England, and spoke to their then chairman about buying a stake. "It took almost a year to do the deal," says Nates. "Along with Ashley Mendelowitz and Sean Melnick, silent partners initially but now much more involved, we formed a limited liability partnership and suddenly I was involved with a non-league English football team." Whether by luck or circumstance, Nates's role in Lincoln City (Lincoln is a cathedral town in England's East Midlands) coincided with years of conspicuous success for the club. They gained promotion in two of the first three seasons he was involved in, and currently find themselves mid-table in English Football's League One, the old third division, in other words. Two seasons ago, Lincoln also had a dream FA Cup run in nudging past Brighton and Premier League Burnley before having the adventure rudely ended 5-0 by Arsenal in the quarter-finals – the first non-league club in 103 years to go that far. "We

did well from prize money, additional sponsorship, and broadcast fees [in the FA Cup]," says Nates. "Also, the gates get shared, so we received 45% of a 60 000 crowd at the Emirates for the Arsenal game. That kind of money allowed us to pay off our debts and fund the development of a new training ground." Such success was always going to attract attention, and last month, the club lost their successful and hugely popular managers, Danny and Nicky Cowley. Uncertainty prior to their departure meant they lost five of their last six matches, and the club's poor run of form continued before Michael Appleton was formally appointed as the Cowleys' successor a couple of weeks ago. Nates is trying to remain philosophical, saying that a period of "consolidation" was always going to take place sooner or later, but they've recently shipped six goals to Oxford United, a result which would thankfully appear to be an aberration after Saturday's important 2-0 home win over Sunderland. Nates now takes even greater interest in the club than he might have done when he and his silent

partners bought their stake. Just more than a year ago, he became chairman, is part of an executive committee of four, and works hand in hand with the club's chief executive, visiting England about five or six times a year.

says, with a suggestion behind the words that he might have agonised a little longer in becoming so involved if he'd known then what he knows now. He also hasn't been able entirely to get used to the scrutiny the



His next trip will take place at the end of the month, and coincides with the beginning of the club's FA Cup campaign, something he's hoping will be as lucrative as it was in 2017. When he gets to Lincoln, he's invariably busy, lending his considerable financial and organisational expertise to a club who have recently got used to dreaming big. "You can't imagine the issues and the complexities which crop up when you are involved on a day-to-day basis," he

club's decisions attract, whether these be in the local media or on social media. This, too, is something Nates responds to with good-natured stoicism, saying that the decision to get involved initially and subsequently accept the chairmanship has given him reason to get up in the morning. It's a simple but strangely noble admission. Who, after all, wouldn't want to indulge their boyhood dream of being chairman of an English football club?

Most South African Jews of Sephardi origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.



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

Ashkenazi: It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia,

Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents become citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesh says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi: The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese



passport. If applicable, Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesh is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

Horesh resides in Israel, but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship, with a full

understanding of local immigration laws.

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

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

Horesh is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.

I will be in Johannesburg from 14 to 20 November and then in Cape Town until 28 November. Please contact me for an appointment. My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com



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