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Off to Durban on their iron steeds - for ubuntu and charity



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

To the oom pah pah sound of the Springs Field Band of previously disadvantaged youngsters and the roar of Steel Wings and Rolling Thunder bikers on their Harley Davidsons, grade 11 cyclists from Torah Academy, as well as Pace College and Moletsane High School in Soweto, joined by five cyclists from Israel from Partnership2Gether, embarked on Sunday on CycAlive’s 750 kilometre relay cycle ride to Durban. Waving the South African and Israeli flags, the boys were sent on their way from the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory in Houghton by Tokyo Sexwale, a patron of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. This is the 19th annual CycAlive event. It spreads the message of ubuntu, build bonds between young people from different communities and raises funds for educational projects. En route to Durban, where the boys arrived on Thursday, they visited hospitals and schools. They also stopped off at the Capture Site in KwaZulu-Natal where Nelson Mandela was captured. CycAlive is one of the foremost events on the Nelson Mandela Day calendar. See page 5.

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Me, you and us



Parshat Ekev
Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Senior Rabbi,
Sydenham Shul

Who is more important, the Jew or the Jewish people? Is it Reb Yisroel or Am Yisroel?

In last week’s parsha we read the first chapter of the Shema. This week, we read the second. Yet there are so many similarities between the two. In fact, certain sentences are virtually identical. Why would the Torah, normally so cryptic, be so repetitious?

If one examines the text closely, a significant distinction between the two chapters becomes immediately discernible. The first chapter is in the singular and the second in the plural. Teach Torah to your son in the first and to your children in the second. Put tefillin on your hand in

the first and on your hands in the second.

But why the need for both? Why not use one or the other? Why a paragraph for each expression? The answer is that G-d speaks to the individual but G-d also speaks to the community. He addresses the Jew; and also the Jewish people.

The first paragraph of the Shema teaches us that each and every single individual is important, even critical, and G-d addresses every individual personally. The second paragraph reminds us that there is also a sum of all the parts; that together, individuals make up a community. And communities, too, are very important.

A community is not only a motley collection of disparate individuals. A community is an important entity in its own right. In some ways, a community is supreme; in others, we acknowledge the supremacy of the individual. So, yes, there is a tension at play here.

Over 800 years ago, Maimonides ruled that communal leaders were obliged to safeguard the community and ought not to pay exorbitant ransom monies if one of its members was taken hostage.

However, should a dangerous enemy de-

mand that Jewish leaders hand over to them a particular individual lest they attack the entire community, it is not permitted to sacrifice even one individual for the sake of the community.

So we need both sections of the Shema, because both are important, the individual and the community.

In approximately five weeks’ time we will usher in the new year. And the ongoing tension between the single and plural will manifest itself very blatantly.

“Why must we pay to pray?” some will demand. They will decry the shameless commercialism of organised religion.

Of course, a shul should have a heart. And our Houses of Prayer should not be allowed to become materialistic and mercenary, lest we lose the young, the poor and the idealistic.

At the same time, individuals need to be sympathetic to the hard facts of congregational life. We cannot take for granted or take advantage of our established - and costly to maintain - infrastructures. The tension is sometimes tangible as we struggle to balance these two, seemingly exclusive, imperatives of Jewish life.

Statistics vary. In some communities, not more than 30 per cent of Jews are officially affiliated. In others, the figure is much higher. The community must be sensitive, welcoming and embracing of every individual who seeks to belong. Still, individuals must be fair too. If everyone demanded a free ride how would a congregation or a community support itself?

Let us keep reciting both chapters of the Shema. Then we can look forward to healthy Jews and wholesome communities.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Ekev August 26 / 22 Av August 27 / 23 Av		
Starts	Ends	
17:35	18:25	Johannesburg
18:07	18:59	Cape Town
17:20	18:11	Durban
17:40	18:30	Bloemfontein
17:38	18:30	Port Elizabeth
17:30	18:21	East London

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Roodepoort Jewish cemetery in sad state - and no funds for repair

STAFF REPORTER

The Jewish cemetery in Roodepoort on the West Rand is in a sorry state of disrepair, with nearly a third of the tombstones broken or pushed over. There is also no wall to demarcate the area from the general cemetery. Unfortunately, no Jewish congregation remains to deal with the problem, nor are there funds available to carry out the necessary restoration.

Currently, the Country Communities Department of the SAJBD is responsible for the maintenance of over 220 cemeteries in the smaller towns and villages around the country. What makes it possible to carry out this role, however, is the availability of funds from various trusts set up by the former Jewish congregations of the areas concerned.

In the case of Roodepoort, no provision was made for the maintenance of the cemetery while there was still a functioning Jewish community in the town and no funds remain from the sale of the community’s assets after the closure of the shul.

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader to the South African Country Communities, says his department is willing to take over the responsibility for maintaining the cemeteries of other congregations in the event of their closing down. This, however, is predicated on the trustees of those congregations entering into an agreement with the SAJBD to ensure that adequate resources are available for that purpose.

This can be done, as in the case of other country cemeteries, through the establishment of a trust, set up through the sale of the community’s property and other assets. It follows



The sad state of disrepair at the Roodepoort Jewish cemetery is clearly visible in this photograph.

that the larger the cemetery, the more funds are needed to be made available.

In the case of Roodepoort, he had met with the trustees before the congregation closed and strongly advised that they make provision for their cemetery’s future maintenance. They had taken a conscious decision not to do so, and unfortunately, there was now nothing that his department could do about the situation, he said.

Rabbi Silberhaft urges all communities outside the Greater Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban areas that have not yet made provision for the upkeep of their cemeteries, to do so as soon as possible, while they are still active and viable.

The upkeep of the final resting places of community members who have passed on, is a sacred responsibility, he stressed, and that in turn means that the trustees of the congregations concerned need to act responsibly when determining what to do with their community’s remaining assets.

Rabbi Silberhaft said that should they wish the SAJBD to take on that responsibility, they

should contact him at thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com to arrange for the necessary legal document to be drawn up in anticipation of the community closing. Alternatively, they can contact SAJBD Country Communities Chairman Marlene Bethlehem on bhjbeth@gmail.com.

KASHRUT ALERT

The kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues has announced that due to a change in formulation Kahlua is no longer kosher wherever it is produced or bottled.

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O’Sullivan is said to have kidnapped Bobroff whistle-blower, Van der Merwe



ANT KATZ

Forensic investigator Paul O’Sullivan, 60, is currently facing a number of criminal charges - including kidnapping, extortion and intimidation - bringing a surprise element to the fore, namely that while he allegedly acted for lawyers-on-the-run Ronald and Darren Bobroff in 2014 he had illegally obtained information that ultimately played a part in the Bobroffs’ downfall.

The State alleges that O’Sullivan kidnapped Bobroff whistle-blower and former Bobroff staff member Cora van der Merwe by threatening that if she did not accompany him, she would not see her children again. The leak eventually uncovered an alleged massive R170 million fraud of the Road Accident Fund (RAF) said to have been committed by Ronald Bobroff and his son Darren, both of whom have taken refuge in Australia.

O’Sullivan gained recognition for bringing down disgraced Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi and Czech criminal Rado-van Krejcir.

Then a candidate attorney at the Bobroff law firm, Van der Merwe was suspended from the firm after she apparently gave confidential information to O’Sullivan on “unlawful practices” at the firm in October 2014.

The firm was placed under curatorship in March and the Bobroff father and son high-tailed it to Australia. The South African government is understood to be negotiating their extradition.

O’Sullivan has been a constant and ongoing thorn in the side of the police and has claimed that “certain factions” in the police have begun persecuting him on spurious charges.

He has asked the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) to investigate what he called the “gross abuse of power” and the “monstrous abuse of my constitutional rights” due to his having called the appointment of the police’s Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI, or Hawks) Gauteng head Major-General Prince Mokotedi “unlawful”.

The war between Mokotedi and O’Sullivan goes back to the days of Selebi - Mokotedi testified for Selebi.

O’Sullivan told IPID in his complaint regarding the Bobroff whistle-blower: “Curiously, the alleged kidnapping took place in October 2014, yet Van der Merwe only comes forward with her case 19 months later, being a few weeks after I was arrested on the Section 26 B allegations.”

The Hawks are now investigating O’Sullivan’s allegations of “biased and unlawful actions” by their Gauteng head,

Mokotedi. O’Sullivan appeared briefly last week Friday in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court in connection with two separate cases. Prosecuting advocate, Jabulani Mlotshwa and O’Sullivan’s defence lawyer, Darryl Furman, got into a verbal wrangle after the latter told the prosecutor he did not have the docket against O’Sullivan.

He had asked “for the docket four times,” said Furman. “Are you shouting at me? Are you shouting at me? I’m not your boy!” retorted Mlotshwa.

O’Sullivan jumped into the argument, saying he was going to report Mlotshwa for misconduct. “I’ve opened a docket against you; I’m going to report you! This is the problem when you have criminals running the justice system. I’m not going to take this crap,” said a furious O’Sullivan.

“How do you expect me to run a trial without the docket?” asked Furman. Mlotshwa snapped: “You think you can intimidate me like you intimidate the complainants? Threaten what you like.”

The spat took place just before Magistrate Gail Pretorius entered the courtroom for the first case, where O’Sullivan is being charged for fraud for allegedly misrepresenting himself. This is the fourth criminal case opened against the forensic investigator.

O’Sullivan and a former staffer, Melissa Naidu, were appearing on kidnapping, extortion and fraud charges relating to their questioning Bobroffs’ Van der Merwe about RAF abuses. According to the evidence, the words “Help me!!!” form the beginning of a string of panicked text messages between Van der Merwe and her lawyer as she was driven by O’Sullivan and Naidu to the forensic consultant’s offices in 2014.

The duo was investigating a leak of information from the chambers of Ronald Bobroff & Partners.

In her statement, Van der Merwe said O’Sullivan had told her if she did not accompany him and Naidu, she would spend the night in jail and there was “a possibility that I would not see my children”. Surmising he was a policeman and “terrified”, Van der Merwe said she went with O’Sullivan, who has denied this and said Van der Merwe went with him willingly. The case was postponed to September 8

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Municipal elections turned into ‘litmus test of democracy’

SUZANNE BELLING

“Getting a pleasant shock,” was how Democratic Alliance shadow Deputy Minister of Labour Michael Bagraim reacted to hearing the results of the August 3 municipal elections, after his party gained Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay and Johannesburg, adding the control of these major metros to that of Cape Town.

“Going into the municipal elections, the entire Democratic Alliance geared itself up to ensuring that its message of service delivery was taken out to the people,” said Bagraim. “The activists worked hard for over 18 months leading up to these elections. We were all aware these elections were the litmus test of democracy in South Africa today.”

Bagraim told SA Jewish Report that his party knew that if it did not produce results or show any change, the level of despondency within the business community would be incredibly destructive.



“The feedback that the party had received from its supporters and its activists is that if there was no change during these elections, it would spell bad news for the future of democracy and indeed the future of our country. During these last 18 months every single person within the Democratic Alliance wore out a lot of shoe leather.

“We started getting feedback



that our message was being heard and that the service delivery in the Western Cape was an excellent launch pad by the municipalities and indeed all the metros.”

Personally, Bagraim spent days, weeks and months treading the streets especially in the Langa township in Cape Town. “For the first time I was able to be received without any animosity and posters remained on poles for weeks on end. In the past, I and others felt unsafe and even threatened when we entered the townships. I, for the first time, could proudly wear my blue T-shirt and cap.

“When we saw the mood in Port Elizabeth and we heard the results, we knew that this was a new South Africa and that democracy at last was taking its hold. Not in my wildest dreams did I believe we would take over the governance of both Johannesburg and Pretoria, let alone a governance of many Karoo towns and smaller municipalities. The mood is now joyous and euphoric.”

Bagraim stresses that the party fully understands it needs to deliver, a stance it maintained throughout its electioneering campaign. “Now we need to do just that,” he said.

Another Jewish member of Parliament for the DA, Darren Bergman, told Jewish Report: “The DA ran an election to bring about real change. We focused on freedom,

Community Voices

Community welcomes a political change of scenery

The recent municipal elections created a shock for the ANC. Smaller parties supported the DA, leading to DA control over several major metros, with DA mayors being installed for the first time since 1994. Most of the members of the community approached by SA Jewish Report on their reaction to the outcome were upbeat about the changes, feeling it was a sign of true democracy in South Africa and that it would lead to better service delivery. They were also generally optimistic that the changes could lead to better governance.



Dr Jonathan Moch



Kim Isaacman



Lana Chatkin



Adam Krok



Heath Hall



Marilyn Lever

SUZANNE BELLING

Psychiatrist **Dr Jonathan Moch** said: “I think it’s a really good swing - the results are great, because the cities are where the real power is.”

Most of the ANC votes came from the rural areas, which were not indicative of power.

“The opposition has control where the major power is - I think it is fantastic, actually a miracle.”

He felt the elections were reasonably fair, with results out three days after the poll. Even in the United States, when George W Bush was voted in as president, the results took weeks to come out.

“In South Africa, people expected a major revolt from the EFF and it didn’t happen.”

Kim Isaacman of Sydenham said: “I am very happy that a DA councillor got in in my area. I am hoping that the DA keeps to its word, because the ANC didn’t.

“Politicians are very good talkers, but we need doers, not talkers.”

She is pleased that there are DA mayors in major centres - “as long as they keep their word and follow through”.

The DA results are “wonderful, but it takes a true leader to keep promises”.

The EFF backing the DA was “a real surprise”.

She felt it would not be a good idea for Malema to get in, but the EFF backing was welcome.

“The bottom line is, we need what is good for the country, not for individuals.”

Lana Chatkin of Dowerglen believed the results were much better than in previous elections. However, it was good that other parties are supporting the DA, “but the EFF is doing it to help themselves, not the DA. They want the ANC out, not the DA in, so they can have a better chance in the next election.”

She was hoping that the DA could deliver. “Now they have to come to the party. We have a DA councillor in our area, which I think makes a difference,” she said.

fairness and opportunity, using ideals and a vision similar to that of the late icon Nelson Mandela.

“My initial projection of Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane and Johannesburg fell short of some of our other important achievements in smaller municipalities. We have done the unthinkable by taking charge of four of the six metros and controlling other municipalities that we had no chance in five years ago.”

Bergman paid tribute to the

voters, without whom he said, “this major feat could not have been achieved.

“We will do our best to make sure we make our voters proud. We already have a plan for the first 100 days and we have ensured we hit the ground running. We live in exciting times in South Africa and we are not just part of history but we are creating it day by day.

“The DA will serve all South-Africans humbly and productively,” he pledged.

Former King David pupil, **Adam Krok**, a student of politics, philosophy and economics at Yale University in Connecticut, who is back on a family visit to South Africa, said: “I think democracy works in South Africa.”

The only legacy President Jacob Zuma leaves is that “the ANC would remain in power until ‘Kingdom Come’, but this was blown out. People no longer support the ANC because of its corruption and ineptitude.”

He hopes that other major metros will become a replica of Cape Town, with its governance and stable politics.

However, the DA in Cape Town, in spite of its service delivery in urban areas, still creates inequality, as it does not apply to the townships.

“We need good governance and lesser inequalities.”

Heath Hall, a member of the “very tiny” Boksburg Jewish community, said the election results made him very happy.

“I was always hopeful that the DA would get a bigger percentage of votes, but was surprised that it was as high as it was.”

Living in the Ekurhuleni Municipality, the ANC ended up with an ANC mayor. They were still strong in the area.

Referring to DA rule in Cape Town he said this has been quite successful.

“I am hoping it will be the same here. I feel South Africa is fulfilling the democratic constitution.”

Marilyn Lever of Oaklands agrees. “I think the fact that we now have a strong opposition makes for a better democracy.

“I am hoping for change in service delivery. But the DA is not big enough to make sweeping changes,” she said.

It was in order to support them, “but we should not put them on a pedestal”.

She said the ANC did not apply tender processes correctly and she was hoping the DA would rectify this

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Young cyclists off to Durban in a spirit of unity and camaraderie

En route... Torah Academy dean, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan; Israel Judah; Lungisane Hlongwane (Pace); Aharon Solomon (Bet Shemesh) and TA Boys' High Principal Rabbi Yossi Chaikin.



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

SUZANNE BELLING

CycAlive participants were symbolic of bringing people together, veteran ANC politician and businessman Tokyo Sexwale told dignitaries, educators and cyclists at the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory on Sunday before 35 boys embarked on their 750 kilometre relay ride to Durban.

Sexwale, who is also patron of the Nelson Mandela Foundation and a member of the Fifa executive, came straight from the airport after a trip to Ghana, where he received a lifetime award for Africa, so that he could attend the launch.

“As you cycle the journey to bring peace to people,” he told the cyclists, he was going to be “cycling” from Tel Aviv to Gaza and Ramallah on behalf of Fifa to try and broker “a peace not known for thousands of years” between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Addressing the grade 11 cyclists from Torah Academy, Moletsane High School and Pace College in Soweto, as well as five cyclists from Israel, who were brought out by Partnership 2Gether - Sexwale exhorted them to “show respect for the road so we don’t have an incident, respect motorists and one another. Make it a happy event.

“Send a good message to Durban that Johannesburg is likely to be in the hands of the DA.” In any event, he added, “we are one country and one society. Bring a spirit of peace in a world fraught with problems.”

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, who was master of ceremonies, said: “We have the capacity to impact on the world.”

South Africa could be a power of looking to one another and making the country an example all over the world.

“It is not about me, it is about working together. We can change the world.”

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, principal of Torah Academy Boys’ High, who, with Rabbi Hazdan, accompanied the cyclists on the trip, said a prayer for their safety and

welfare.

“Put into the hearts of all South Africans a spirit of wisdom and understanding, that we may recognise that nation-building is founded on love and concern for each individual citizen - regardless of race, religion, culture or language - and on mutual respect for the rights of each individual community and religion to express itself freely and uninhibited and to thereby contribute its uniqueness to the betterment of our country.”

Wendy Kahn, national director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, paid tribute to the late Bertie Lubner, a sponsor of the Field Band Foundation. (The Springs Field Band, together with Steel Wings and Rolling Thunder on their Harley Davidsons, contributed to a rousing welcome and send-off of the cyclists).

Kahn referred to the Olympic gold medal won by Caster Semenya, quoting Semenya that it was all about loving one another and not about discrimination.

Dan Zimba, principal of Pace College, who started CycAlive with Rabbi Hazdan in 1998, with the intention of taking the classroom to the road and helping young boys develop educationally, said it was a lesson in life orientation.

“Learn to respect and co-operate, recognise one another and know that South Africa belongs to all of us.” Zimba was among the educators accompanying the cyclists on the trip.

The objectives of CycAlive are to build bridges and form bonds between young South Africans and their respective communities; inspire Ubuntu; fundraise for educational projects - 75 per cent to previously disadvantaged schools; highlight road safety and encourage leadership and self-confidence among the participants.

The boys prepared care packages, including stationery and refreshments for schools and hospital patients en route. The cyclists arrived in Durban on Thursday to a welcome by the Field Band from KZN, civic dignitaries and community leaders.

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How Israeli women are gaining in the fight for Jewish divorce

ANDREW TOBIN
JERUSALEM

In this case, the sins of the son are the sins of the father.

Israel’s Supreme Rabbinical Court this month jailed a Charedi Orthodox man for 30 days for pressuring his son to withhold a divorce from his wife for more than a decade. By upholding a lower rabbinical court decision, the high court gave its blessing to an unprecedented approach to freeing women from unwanted marriages.

The Orthodox rabbis who adjudicate divorce in Israel - all of whom are men - have come under fire in recent years for not doing enough on behalf of such women, commonly called “chained women,” or “agunot”. In response to mounting public pressure, and due to an influx of new judges - selected in a process that includes more women than ever before - rabbinical courts appear to be edging toward more aggressive action against husbands who refuse to give their wife a “get”.

“I believe and hope that a new spirit of caring and understanding of the woman’s position as a victim of get refusal and as an agunah is spreading throughout the entire system,” Rachel Levmore, a rabbinical court advocate who provides legal counsel to chained women, told JTA.

Levmore directs the Agunah & Get-Refusal Prevention Project at the International Young Israel Movement and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

“As the old guard are replaced, many of the new appointments are much more in touch with the reality of Israeli society and the standing of women within Israeli society as a whole and within Jewish law specifically,” she said.

Shai Doron, a spokesman for the interim director of the Rabbinical Courts Administration, Rabbi Shimon Yaakobi, agreed.

“There are more new judges in the rabbinical court and they bring a new attitude,” Doron said. “There is a stronger attitude toward those who refuse to give a get in the last few years, so that’s the reason there is more punishment.”

As part of a system dating back to the Ottomans, Jews in Israel must marry and divorce through state rabbis, whose decisions are based on civil as well as Jewish law, or “halacha”. Divorce is handled by regional rabbinical courts and the Supreme Rabbinical Court.

Women who are not granted a divorce cannot remarry under halacha and are often shunned by the Charedi community. Any children they might have with another partner are relegated to marrying only other “illegitimate” children in Israel, as are generations of their descendants.

By contrast, the offspring of a recalcitrant husband and another woman, are considered legitimate and generally are able to move on with their lives, putting them in a position of power when it comes to divorce.

The plight of chained women has made headlines in Israel and abroad in recent years, as women’s rights and religious groups, many of them led by religious Zionist women, have worked to highlight the issue and push for

change.

Activists on behalf of chained women said changing public attitudes have encouraged harsher action by rabbinical courts against recalcitrant husbands.

“More and more pressure is being put on the rabbinical courts to adopt a friendlier approach to interpretation [of Jewish law],” Yedidia Stern, a researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute think tank who seeks solutions to the problem of chained women, told JTA.

“What is interesting to me is the spearhead of religious women in Israel. Most activists are [modern] Orthodox religious women, and they are basically expressing some kind of moderate feminist approach to halacha.

“Partly as a result, we see lately more and more cases where very well-known rabbis in the rabbinical court system in Israel are willing to step forward and to help those women who are being refused by their husband to get a get.”

At the same time, Stern added, there is growing willingness by Charedi Orthodox rabbis in Israel - including Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi David Lau, who sits part-time on the Supreme Rabbinical Court - to interpret Jewish law in favour of women.

In the case of the father who was sentenced to jail time - and fined some \$40 000 - media reports have highlighted that his daughter-in-law suffered a debilitating stroke in 2005 during a family vacation to Israel from New York.

The son, who comes from a wealthy and influential Chasidic family, then abandoned his wife and their two children, refusing a divorce for 11 years, even after the rabbinical court ordered him to grant one. None of the family members’ names have been made public.

The Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court, which sentenced the father, called it “one of the harshest cases of ‘igun’ [‘chained’ to a recalcitrant husband] the rabbinical court system has ever had to deal with,” according to Haaretz.

“All these cases are not easy for the woman, but this case is especially powerful,” the chained woman’s attorney, Aviad Hacoen, dean of the Academic Centre of Law and Science in Hod Hasharon, told JTA.

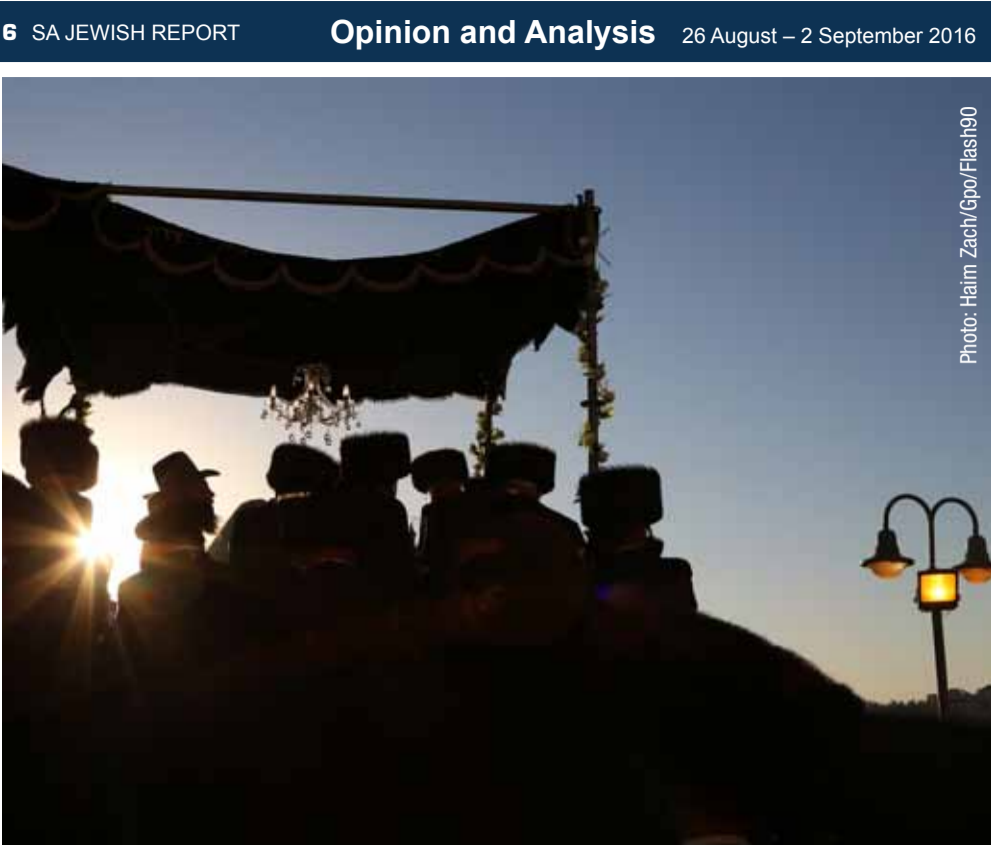
“She is really miserable. She just wants to be a free woman. I can’t find any reason why her husband is refusing. It’s pure cruelty.”

The father’s attorney, Eliad Shraga, did not respond to JTA’s request for comment. But his office told Haaretz in March that divorce refusal is “unacceptable” and “must be eradicated”.

The office added: “At the same time, it seems that the court floundered and decided to fix a wrong with a wrong, choosing to mistreat the elderly father rather than punish the recalcitrant son.”

Shraga has appealed the father’s sentence to Israel’s Supreme Court, where Hacoen is representing the daughter-in-law.

Also last month, the Israeli media reported that the Supreme Rabbinical Court sentenced a recalcitrant husband to five years in jail for adamantly refusing to give his wife a divorce.



As the public discourse about chained women has changed, so have the rabbinical courts. About a third of the roughly 100 judges serving on the courts were appointed in the past year following a nearly decade-long freeze on new appointments. That includes 22 new regional court judges and all 10 of the fulltime judges on the Supreme Rabbinical Court.

The new judges look somewhat different than their predecessors. In the past, judges were overwhelmingly Charedi. Only one, the Tel Aviv court judge who ruled against the father, held an academic degree and few judges in the regional courts and none in the high court had served in the Israel Defence Forces.

Among the new regional court judges, eight are rabbis from the religious Zionist movement, sometimes known as modern Orthodox, who tend to be more egalitarian in their interpretation of Jewish law than Charedi, or fervently religious, rabbis. Three have academic degrees, including one doctorate, and seven served in army combat units. Five of the Supreme Rabbinical Court judges served in the army.

But Rabbi David Stav, a prominent religious Zionist rabbi, said the problem of chained women is only getting worse in Israel. He said prenuptial agreements - like the increasingly popular version offered by his religious services group, Tzohar, but opposed by much of Israel’s religious establishment - are the only realistic solution.

“We should understand that what has been done so far is not solving the problem from its roots. We cannot not get to the point of helping the women two or three years after the story has begun. We have to understand that this time is a tragedy for the agunah,” he told JTA.

No one knows how many chained women there are in Israel. Estimates range from hundreds to thousands. A handful of recalcitrant husbands sit in prison at any given time.

According to partial numbers provided by the rabbinical courts, sanctions ordered by judges jumped to 168 in 2013, from an annual average of about 60 over the previous 12 years, but incarcerations stayed about the same, at 19. Judges can send recalcitrant husbands to jail for up to five years and renew the sentence indefinitely.

Short of incarceration, rabbinical courts can revoke state-issued licences and personal

credit cards, levy fines and forbid other Jews to interact with recalcitrant husbands. In one case, the courts even backed Internet shaming of a recalcitrant husband.

Rabbinical judges have historically been hesitant to go too far with such tactics because Jewish law requires that divorce be granted voluntarily to be valid. Where to draw the line is a matter of debate among scholars of Jewish law.

But more women than ever are now helping to draw that line - albeit indirectly, since Orthodox rabbis, from whose ranks rabbinical judges are drawn, must be men.

After decades of male dominance, the 11-member Rabbinic Judges Appointments Committee that selected the new rabbinical judges had four female members, thanks to a 2013 law requiring it.

The law was itself forced by a 2011 Supreme Court ruling on a petition by the women’s rights group Emunah that froze the committee’s work until women were added.

(In January, the High Court of Justice ruled that women must be allowed to contend for the position of rabbinical courts director.)

After seven years of inactivity, the committee last September appointed the regional rabbinical court judges. And last month, the committee filled the high rabbinical court seats, which were vacant after eight years without an appointment.

Levmore, who is also an activist for chained women and wrote her doctorate and influential academic work on the issue, said she saw first hand how having females on the committee impacted the applicants and the appointment process.

She interviewed all the applicants at length, and said the discussions changed the thinking of many of them as well as of the committee.

“The four women [Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, Knesset member Revital Swid of the Zionist Union list, attorney Efrat Rosenblatt and Levmore] formed a voting bloc,” she said. “This voting bloc influenced the appointment process not in a total manner, but it did have influence on the appointment process.”

Last week, Levmore was able to pat herself on the back after the panel of three Supreme Rabbinical Court judges she had interviewed and appointed issued what she called a “stunning” 47-page ruling upholding the jail sentence of the father of the recalcitrant husband. (JTA)



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What to say to a Steven Cohen phenomenon?



When 54-year old, controversial performance artist Steven Cohen astonished a sober gathering of arts lovers last week at the Wits Art Museum by bursting into the centre of them, anybody who happened to be thinking about something else was instantly riveted. He was dressed - actually only partially dressed, since much of his body was naked - in an outrageous get-up consisting of lily-white skin, high-heeled pointed shoes, naked backside behind half a black dress and other tricks.

His entire performance lasted five minutes, then he was gone, but it left intriguing questions about what is art, what is Jewishness - he wore a silver Magen David above his eyes and another mounted on top of his head which he discarded at a certain point, accompanied by music from Fiddler on the Roof - and what is the meaning of everything else?

The gathering was to mark the 80th birthday of a South African icon of the arts, Linda (Goodman) Givon, who for the past 50 years - through Johannesburg's Goodman Gallery - had encouraged, cajoled and facilitated development of a veritable parade of young black and white artists, during times when the apartheid regime did everything it could to discourage such mixing.

The event marked a dignified end to her career, described eloquently by one of her gallery's successes, artist William Kentridge, in his speech, and the handing of the baton to younger people.

Steven Cohen's shaking up of conventional notions, something he has done for the past 20 years, is a metaphor for events unfolding in this country today - such as the thrashing in the recent elections of the ANC's tired old men epitomised by President Jacob Zuma and his cohorts, at the hands of young bucks of the EFF and

DA opposition bursting with fresh energy. The leaders of the latter parties - Julius Malema and Mmusi Maimane - are in their mid-thirties and at the beginning of their careers. This country and its component minorities, including South African Jewry and others, are seeking new, forward-looking people who recognise past history but are not hamstrung by old slogans hanging like lead balls around their elders' ankles.

What will this country look like in 20 years' time? And closer to home for the readership of this newspaper: What will the Jewish community look like, when most of the older generation has passed on?

Do the people being placed in leadership positions today have the calibre to rise to the demands of the next decade? Given recent demographic trends, will the shrinking of the Jewish community continue? If the size of the community today is 70 000, down by half from its high point in the 1970s, will it have dropped to 30 000 in 20 years' time? And if it is smaller, what kind of community will it be - both in Jewish and South African terms?

Every generation has its challenges. Young South Africans - the born-frees - do not want to be forced to follow the old catchphrases of their elders who fought apartheid. They want to look forward. And young Jews do not want to be forced to continue mouthing old refrains either, when new challenges are staring them in the face.

Every generation needs a Steven Cohen to shake things up. And also the courage he has shown, for example on the day he walked onto Loftus Versfeld rugby field in Pretoria in 1998, dressed as an "ugly girl" in his characteristic style, and confronted hardened, macho, white sports fans who couldn't work out what he was saying to them, and some of whom wanted to attack him.

We live in exciting times, even if we can't quite work out what it is all about.

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World’s longest glass-bottom bridge has its origins in Israel



OWN CORRESPONDENT

When Israeli architect Chaim Dotan was asked to design the world’s highest and longest glass-bottomed bridge over a gorgeous natural gorge in China, he asked: “Why do you want a bridge? It’s too beautiful,” he recalls telling the developer.

Finally, Dotan conceded: “I told him he can build a bridge but under one condition: I want the bridge to disappear.”

Last weekend, the Israeli-designed-and-built bridge opened in the spectacular park in the Zhangjiajie mountains in China’s central Hunan province.

The bridge is made of 99 panels of clear glass and can carry up to 800 people at the same time. It tapers towards the centre where it is six metres wide.

One of the summits in Zhangjiajie Park from which the bridge hangs, has a claim to movie stardom as well - it inspired the floating mountain which appeared in the blockbuster film Avatar after a Hollywood photographer who holidayed in the area in 2008, took images that were later used for the film.

Last year another, much smaller glass bridge at the

Yuntai mountain in Henan province, developed an alarming crack in some of its glass panels, so the authorities in Zhangjiajie were understandably eager to demonstrate the safety of the Israeli structure.

To this end, they organised a string of media events, including one where people were encouraged to try and smash the bridge’s glass panels with a sledgehammer, and another where they drove a car across it. It proved indestructible!

Dotan also made provision for the more adventurous in his design. He included a bungee jump and a ride on a zip-line.

A visitor at the opening with her family, Wang Min, told the Xinhua news agency that she had “wanted to feel awe-inspired by this bridge. But I’m not afraid - it seems safe!”

Because usage will be limited to 8 000 people a day, people who want to cross it in this already popular tourist area, are advised to book in advance. The cost is about R380 at present exchange rates.

Cameras and selfie sticks are banned, and people wearing stilettos will not be allowed on the bridge. The camera ban was seemingly ignored at the opening.

Louis Botha corridor... risks and opportunities



ANT KATZ

In this week’s part of the series on the City of Johannesburg’s “Corridors of Freedom” project, Jewish Report looks further afield to the “Transit Oriented Development” (TOD) that is set to drive the project to success. Jewish Report also looks at some of the risks and opportunities the project will offer residents of the area.

The initial phases of the mega-project involve the Louis Botha Avenue Development Corridor; the Empire-Perth Development Corridor; and the Turffontein Development Corridor.

Last week Jewish Report Online showed how the city was planning to increase the population density six-fold and rezone areas along Louis Botha Avenue to as much as eight storey buildings. The City Council is at present installing bulk services to meet this need as well as building six bus stations between Orange Grove and Wynberg.

Fixing severe urban inefficiencies

The City is characterised by severe urban inefficiencies and an urban form and social profile that makes it one of the most inequitable cities in the world, according to the City’s own reports. This apartheid-era legacy affects almost every town and city in the country and Johannesburg plans to fix it.

“The distribution of urban densities, the low productivity of land use, high levels of energy consumption and carbon emissions, as well as unsustainable and distorted per capita expenditure on infrastructure, are but some of the issues the City has to address in changing course to ensure a better urban

future,” say the city planners.

The plan to fix all this has enjoyed the unqualified buy-in of all political parties and is unlikely to see any changes with the new administration.

The urban restructuring and the improvement of urban efficiencies that the City is embarking on will “re-stitch the city together” the planners say, using the philosophy of TOD and its associated strategies. They believe it will build unity and social transformation and cohesion.

The programme deals with the triple transformational challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Corridors of Freedom are fundamentally about creating a non-racial, non-sexist, socially and economically cohesive city using the twin programmes of TOD and Corridor Development.

The Corridors of Freedom is an initiative that seeks to build a new city along and around TODs, mass transit movement lines, in selected areas of the city to create housing, jobs and social opportunities in proximity to each other.

The objectives of energy efficiency, climate change mitigation, economic growth and social inclusion are re-enforcing and can be simultaneously achieved by compact, connected and resilient communities centred on the transit nodes in the Corridors of Freedom.

The rationale and characteristics of TOD is an approach to development that focuses high intensity mixed land uses within walking distance of a transit station or within a transit corridor. Redeveloping existing urban fabric around transit nodes within the Corridors of Freedom is a critical component of the development strategy.

To succeed, the city will use a strategy of creating a hierarchy of TODs and focus on creating compact, mixed-use, walkable urban environments. These will all be supported by civic spaces and amenities and create the ability to leverage investment opportunities.

Property-owners living in leafy suburbs that will about the new higher density properties will have to carefully consider the potential risk to the value of their properties, while investors will be considering buying and consolidating potential development sites for residential or business rental or sale. It would appear that the city will waive rezoning costs as they will be creating bulk rezoning of areas.

Ward councillor Steven Kruger (Ward 72) which covers part of the Louis Botha corridor, has spoken to residents in the area and some developers. “One of the concerns from residents is that the plan is for the City to develop low cost/affordable housing along Louis Botha. However bearing in mind that the development of properties along Louis Botha will be done and managed by private developers, this is unlikely to happen as private developers that I have had discussions with, don’t believe that this is financially feasible. Nevertheless other developments may indeed be viable.”



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PROPERTIES

Cape Town’s Gardens Shul – glorious past, bright future

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

It all began in September, 1841, when 17 men gathered for the Kol Nidre service at the home of Benjamin Norden, which today forms part of the Mount Nelson Hotel.

The next month, the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, the first in the country, was officially founded. In 1863, its synagogue, the first in sub-Saharan Africa, was inaugurated and became the hub of Jewish life in South Africa until 1905 when the current Edwardian edifice was

consecrated. Could those early pioneers have dreamt that almost two centuries later, 650 people would gather to celebrate another momentous event - 175 years of what is affectionately called the Gardens Shul’s existence and indeed, that of South Africa’s Jewish community? As much as last week’s gala dinner at the Century City Conference Centre was dedicated to this milestone, it also served as a tribute to the shul’s dynamic Rabbi Osher Feldman and his wife Sarah, who

Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, delivered the keynote address and was accompanied by his wife Valerie. Rabbi Feldman’s parents, Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM and his wife, Peninah, travelled from Australia for the occasion. Other dignitaries included Rebbetzen Sarah’s parents, Rabbi Yossy Goldman, president of the South African Rabbinical Association, and his wife, Rochel; Av Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and his wife Gina.

Rabbi Mirvis referred to “175 glorious years for the Gardens Synagogue and for all of South African Jewry” as well as the “magnificent” spiritual leader of this community. “Valerie and I witnessed first-hand the deep impact you’re making on so many lives,” he said to Rabbi Feldman, referring to the previous Shabbat that they had spent at the synagogue. Rabbi Mirvis noted that Abraham our Patriarch had lived to the age of 175 and that the four most outstanding features of his life were

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Rabbi Osher Feldman; Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis (Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth); Rebbetzen Valerie Mirvis; Rebbetzen Sarah Feldman; and Rebbetzen Gina Goldstein.

in the 10 years since their arrival, have succeeded in rejuvenating the historic congregation. Chairman Solly Berger noted that the shul’s 100-year mark (in wartime 1941) had been no time for celebrations; its 150 years in 1991 was commemorated with a much-reduced congregation, due to the emigration of previous decades. “There were difficult times when we were not sure the congregation would survive its tribulations.” But, he said: “The golden years were on the horizon. In 2007 we hit the jackpot when we employed (then 24-year-old) Rabbi Osher Feldman and his wife Sarah and the aging community began revitalising.” Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief

“The Gardens Shul does not look its age; it is 175 years young,” Rabbi Goldstein stated. “We have gathered to pay tribute to a shul whose best days lie ahead. “Cape Jewry too is such an example to all South African Jewry for its cohesion, unity, sense of purpose and organisation and everything it does with such professionalism.” For his part, Rabbi Osher Feldman recalled it was “love at first sight”, when he and Sarah walked into the shul. “Ten years later, we look back and our hearts are bursting with gratitude. “We love South Africa, we love Cape Town and we are proudly confident in the future of our community and our country.”

matched by the achievements of the Gardens Shul and South African Jewry: Faith, righteousness, the recognition of the centrality of the Land of Israel to the Jewish psyche and the importance of education for the future. “I will always be so proud to be a product of the South African day school movement,” the chief rabbi added. Choni G, introduced by master of ceremonies Nik Rabinowitz as the “One Direction” of chazzans, provided a musical interlude, while singer Johnny Clegg had the crowd clapping along and dancing in the aisles to some of his well-known hits, ending the inspiring evening on a high note.



Community

Bet David’s old synagogue in Morningside is deconsecrated

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Shabbat Chazon marked a milestone in the history of the Bet David congregation, as they bid farewell to the “old” sanctuary in preparation for the move to the “new” Bet David. Desmond Sweke, chairman of the congregation which has been in the “old” building since 1971, said: “There comes a time in everyone’s life when progress and change become the cornerstones of a congregation. That time is now. This past Shabbat marked the beginning of our transition.” Rabbi Adrian M Schell elaborated: “The Erev Shabbat family service was made very special by the involvement of all our children. The highlight of the Shabbat morning service was the

Torah reading where all congregants present were honoured with an aliyah. Both of these services were accompanied by the Bet David Choir.” Rabbi Schell used the opportunity to thank Bet David’s management committee, Sisterhood, choir, teachers, shamashim and team of Gabba’ot for their support and help in making Bet David a place with a strong sense of community. “Both the services offered congregants a space to share their memories of the old shul. Bet David has been a place for so many happy moments but also a place to find comfort in times of sadness and mourning. The new campus will continue the strong traditions established over the last 43 years,” said Rabbi Schell.

Jewish vote is sought-after in upcoming US presidential election



Photo: Times of Israel

TALI FEINBERG

“It’s estimated that 85 per cent to 90 per cent of American Jews will vote for (the Democratic Party presidential candidate) Hillary Clinton in November,” said Dr Jonathan Sarna (pictured), who spoke in Cape Town recently on “Jews and American Politics: Historical Ideals and Contemporary Realities”. His talk was hosted by the South African Jewish Museum and the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies.

Dr Sarna is the Joseph H. & Belle R Braun Professor of American Jewish History and chairman of the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Programme at Brandeis University.

Such a landslide Jewish vote is almost unprecedented, said Sarna, who delved into the history of Jewish political involvement in the United States. The last time a similar thing happened was when 90 per cent of Jews voted for Franklin D Roosevelt in 1940. “Since when have 90 per cent of Jews done anything?!” he quipped.

“The Jewish vote still matters today, and both parties are working hard for it,” he said.

There is a number of reasons for that: “Firstly, Jews turn out to vote - at least 85 per cent in presidential elections. It’s really decided on the day by who goes to the polls. Jews see it as a ‘mitzvah’ to vote, as we didn’t always have that right.”

In contrast, other minorities in the US, such as Hispanics and Muslims don’t usually vote in such high numbers, “which is why (Republican Party nominee) Donald Trump feels he can insult them; and why Hillary is working hard to ensure they do register, and vote for her.

“Secondly, Jews contribute disproportionately to political parties, and are relied upon to do so. Even Donald Trump’s largest donor is Sheldon Adelson.

“Thirdly and crucially, Jews live in states that any successful candidate needs to win. Up to 85 per cent live in four metropolitan areas: California, New York, Flor-

ida and New Jersey. These ‘swing states’, particularly Florida, are the states that decide elections.”

Commenting on the upcoming American presidential election, Dr Sarna said it was a particularly unusual one, as one candidate had never held political office before, and the other was a woman.

“It is also unusual concerning the Jewish community; firstly, both candidates have Jewish sons-in-law and Bernie Sanders was the first Jewish politician to try and run for president. All this shows how Jews have become embedded in American life, and how much has changed over a generation.”

In fact, Dr Sarna says that the topic “Jews and American politics” would have horrified community leaders until recently, “who would have insisted that there was no such thing as Jewish politics’ in the United States: it does not exist and should not exist.”

This was because Jews were fearful to be seen as having “dual loyalty” and not being invested in their homeland, endangering precious rights so recently won.

Delving into the history, Dr Sarna showed how this was strictly adhered to and then slowly eroded. For example, in 1819, a Jewish community leader called for “cherem” to be imposed upon any Jew who took sides in a political debate! “But later we see how Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D Roosevelt actively campaigned for the Jewish vote and that the Jewish community began to engage in politics.”

On Israel, Dr Sarna noted that Hillary Clinton has experience and knowledge about the Middle East and that her husband Bill, “knows every inch of the land of Israel”. He was unsure of Trump’s approach, which has not been clarified during his campaign.

While much can change before November, Dr Sarna said that one thing is for certain: “The next president of the United States will have a Jewish son-in-law!”

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Disclaimer

The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

Guidelines for letters

Letters of up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

‘INCREDIBLE RESOURCES’ OF THE ELDERLY ARE GROSSLY UNDERUTILISED

Growing old is a natural part of life. Older people have an incredible amount of experience and could provide the youth with a lot of wisdom and knowledge. Yet in the Western culture we often try to cling to our youth. This is impossible of course and is a losing battle; it is better to age gracefully.

We could learn from the African traditions where the elders are revered. In the traditional Jewish view, honouring old people is an extension of the commandment to honour our parents.

While it is unhealthy to be overly secretive, many of us are ashamed to give our age away as if there is something wrong with it. Anyway, the other person is likely to speculate about how old we are and will probably get it wrong, so why not set the record straight?

To temper the recklessness of the young with the wisdom of the old is a path to wisdom and success. It is a pity to force productive

and experienced people into retirement, especially when they hold so much knowledge about running the organisation. Starting again with an inexperienced person who will make mistakes is in itself a mistake.

Why not make use of the incredible resources of the elderly to guide our young people? This would benefit both the young and the old and provide the latter with a new lease on life.

It is nevertheless true that the enthusiasm of youth coupled with fresh ideas can also be very useful, yet older people could also be encouraged to dig deep and tap into these wellsprings.

If we instil respect for the aged into our society it will make our own later journeys easier.

Martin Zagnoev
Johannesburg

COMPARING HILLARY CLINTON TO YITZHAK RABIN IS TO DISHONOUR THE LATTER

I would like to comment on Yitzhak Rabin’s son’s immature comments about Donald Trump, as reported in last week’s Jewish Report.

It is any person’s and any politician’s basic right to doubt the sincerity of the election commissions in their country and it is everyone’s right to doubt the sincerity of the mainstream media and everyone knows it is biased in the West.

And above all, comparing Hillary Clinton to the late Prime Minister Rabin is dishonouring the latter. I would compare Clinton and the possibility of her being assassinated to a certain person (the initials of his name were AP) who was killed in Argentina a few years after the Second World War.

It is unknown whether any government did it or some underground movement, or any individuals. In short, I would compare Hillary Clinton to that “Mr AP”, but not to Rabin.

Avner Eliyahu Romm
Jerusalem

RABBI MIRVIS’ MISGUIDED COMMENTS MAY LEAD TO MORE ANTI-SEMITISM

The comments made at the recent SA Jewish Board of Deputies Conference by Commonwealth Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis on the UK, Brexit and immigration are hugely misguided and this attitude among Jewish elites in the UK is creating great anti-Semitism among good people.

Rabbi Mirvis really cannot understand why working-class people in the UK are against mass emigration from the Middle East and the Third World?

Is he aware that hundreds of veterans from the British armed forces who gave everything to protect Britain are homeless and live on the streets while Muslim immigrants (“refugees”) are housed in council houses and have all their needs seen to with free medical care, free schooling and a budget for groceries, etc. Thousands of British children go to bed hungry while migrants are put up at top hotels. The journalist and true voice of conscience and nonconformity to the prejudices of Britain’s left elites, Julie Burchill, makes the very important point that it is easy for the middle and upper classes not affected negatively by immigration to condemn the working classes who suffer as a result of it.

“That the working class might have a thoroughly legitimate reason for becoming more agitated about immigration than the tolerant middle class with their health insurance, private schools and comfy cars is never considered by these usually oh so caring people.”

“Furthermore, Rabbi Mirvis speaks of the main threat to British Jews as being the British right wing. Actually although there are small neo-Nazi groups existing like National Front and Combat 18 which must be condemned, they have paled into insignificance today. Genuine patriotic organisations like Britain First and people like Paul Weston and Tommy Robinson, support Israel and have condemned the actions of those people.

Whether Rabbi Mirvis and his ilk like it or not, the vast majority of anti-Semitic attacks in the UK today come from Muslims and the majority of anti-Semitic hate speech come from Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party and Muslim clerics like the fanatical Anjem Choudary.

People like Rabbi Mirvis and other British Jewish elites are living in a 40-year time warp.

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg

SIFRIN SEEMS TO BE HOSTILE TO ORTHODOX JUDAISM AND TO ISRAEL

It seems as if a large proportion of my life is going to be spent combating Geoff Sifrin’s hostility to not only Orthodox Judaism, but to the State of Israel. Israel is a land in which almost every citizen criticises the government right, left or middle of the road.

They also care for its achievements and its safety. People like Ronnie Kasrils and Denis Goldberg seem to do so out of hatred. Thus Denis is to be found today seemingly as a supporter of BDS whose aim like Iran’s and Hamas is the destruction of Israel with its seven million Jews.

Sifrin mentions Arthur Goldreich. Arthur happened to serve in Israel’s army during both the 1948 and 1973 wars and when convicted of treason among the Rivonia Trialists, he escaped brilliantly, was received with love in Israel where he lived with his family for the remainder of his life.

Goldreich had a right to criticise Israel because he cared for it and served it. Goldberg for the public’s information was released prematurely from prison because the late Julius Weinstein, great president of the SA Zionist Federation, accompanied by the Israeli ambassador, called on PW Botha and pleaded with him to release Goldberg.

Botha acceded to the request. This man, together with a few other icons, now as a member of BDS seems to seek the destruction of Israel. That’s gratitude for you. Aikonna!

It boggles the imagination how an organisation like Limmud, which I assume to be favourable to the existence of Israel, can have Goldberg almost as its main attraction!

This being so, we have a duty to inform the South African Jewish community of this fact. Let them decide whether to attend the said gathering. They do have a distinguished guest, Rabbi David Wolpe of Temple Sinai presenting. He is obviously a man of great achievement, but whether he is the “most influential rabbi in the world” as the Jewish Report suggests (based on a report in Newsweek), I doubt.

Newsweek is most definitely not an authority to make such a judgement, that is certain. Limmud can no longer deny, as it has in the past, its ties with Reform Judaism, and the South African Jewish community which is 90 per cent traditional, must take notice of this.

Rabbi Ben Isaacson
Johannesburg

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DA MUSTN’T DROP THE BALL IN THE COUNTRY’S SLIPS

It was a tranquil day in idyllic Sandwich Town, Kent, where the sounds of a cricket match filled the air. Besides the ear-splitting thump of the ball on a batsman’s helmet, the solitude of the game allowed one plenty of time to ponder the big questions.

And so, it was for me, recuperating from a mild concussion, to ponder the big questions about South Africa’s recent election and its political future.

At the outset, the obvious must be stated: The ANC underestimated the deep-seated frustration and resentment among its metro supporters. Its ubiquitous T-shirt and food parcel no longer served as catalysts for votes.

The opposition, on the other hand, understood voter concerns - bread and butter delivery issues. In doing so, it was empirically in a position to demonstrate its competence in governing the Western Cape and given the opportunity, to govern equally well in other provinces.

South Africa’s 2016 municipal elections were a watershed moment. It has demonstrated a political maturing of its people resulting in the genesis of a new power structure with the DA playing a prominent role.

It is up to the DA, metaphorically speaking, not to drop the ball in the country’s slips or its boundaries. South Africa’s future depends on it.

Errol Horwitz
Fresnaye, Cape Town



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KDVP announces its new Students Representative Council



Photo: Yael Gordon

King David High School Victory Park has announced its Students Representative Council for 2016 - 2017.
Back: Julia Stenz; Emma Stein; Georgia Stoller; Daniel Flowers; Gideon Mendelowitz; Jordan Heyes; Tristen Haverly; Jemma Sundelson; and Gabriella Sitsakis. Front: Alexa Novick; Jonathan Sidi (deputy head boy); Jared Greenstein (head boy); Gila Dove (head girl); Danielle Bortz (deputy head girl); Rachel Weisz (chief whip) and Micaela Dirmeik.

Olympic fever takes hold at Sydenham Pre-Primary School

JENNY MILLER

The children of Sydenham Pre-Primary School were perfecting their sports skills in preparation for their Winter Mini Olympics this week.
Grade Rs were given carte blanche to choose and draw a sport from the Rio Olympics which came to an end last weekend. The beautiful results speak for themselves...
Proudly showing off their artwork are Shaiya Crouse; Brandon Blacker; Gabriella Seymour; and Noah Meyers.



Photo: Sue Benjamin

Yeshiva youngsters showcase their art talents

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Yeshiva College Primary School held a magnificent art exhibition last week Wednesday.
Each set of artwork on display was based on a particular quote. The children's work was of an incredibly high standard and demonstrated some exciting levels of creativity and ingenuity.



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Information sought on Fritz Hesse, who lived in Johannesburg

Stefan Kahlen, a historian from Germany, is looking for information and photographs of Fritz Hesse, who was born on November 15, 1900 in Borgholzhausen, Germany.
Hesse, who was Jewish, immigrated to Johannesburg in 1934. He passed away on May 25, 1972 in Johannesburg.
Kahlen may be contacted at ccalen@web.de

Looking for David Goldberg from Mutare

Alfred Hitschmann who lived in Mutare in Zimbabwe between 1960 and 2007, is looking for an old friend, David Goldberg, who also lived in that town. Hitschmann who at present lives in Spain, may be contacted at alfredhitschman@gmail.com

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Umhlanga’s ‘Movers and Shakers’ contemplate Izinga on North Coast



Event organisers Terri Pillemer, Angie Sacks and Nicole Tuttle with Stefan Terblanche.

TERRI PILLEMER

Last week Tuesday, guests gathered at the Umhlanga Jewish Centre (UJC) for “Movers and Shakers” - an evening of cocktails and schmoozing. The guests, primarily people in business in Umhlanga and members of the Jewish community, enjoyed networking on the veranda overlooking the expansive rolling hills of sugarcane before moving inside for some snacks and informative talks.

David Jollands, development director of Tongaat Hulett, shared plans for the fast growing suburb of Izinga and showed how the area, right up to King Shaka Airport and beyond, will continue to transform into world-class developments.

Dean Macpherson, the DA’s shadow deputy minister for trade and industry, spoke about the importance of building strong communities and Stefan Tereblanche, SA rugby hero, told the guests why he chooses KwaZulu-Natal for his family.

He was so impressed with Izinga and the UJC that he joked about buying an adjoining plot for the Afrikaans community, which he

said he could easily fill with his cousins from Boksburg, Benoni and Brakpan.

Rabbi Pinchas Zekry, who dreamed up the Umhlanga Jewish Centre, Akiva College school and nearby residential complex, regularly receives queries from people outside KZN looking to join this warm new community.

A refrain he hears all too often is that there are no jobs. The “Movers and Shakers” evening was an effort to encourage those in business in the area to let the centre know when jobs become available at their companies or when career opportunities arise, so that people interested in moving here can be informed and forward on their resumes.

The Umhlanga Jewish Centre provides a happy and healthy environment to raise families and has proven popular with empty-nesters too. It’s perfectly positioned - 15 minutes south of the airport and 15 minutes north of the city centre. Plus, it’s a stone’s throw from a new CBD, Umhlanga Ridge, on the doorstep of Gateway Theatre of Shopping and surrounded by more cool coffee shops than one can count.

Read the South African Jewish Report online
www.sajewishreport.co.za

World News in Brief

Most Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution

JERUSALEM - A new survey by the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) and the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, has found that most Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution to the Palestinian conflict.

The poll surveyed 1 270 Palestinians and 1 184 Israelis on their views of a theoretical peace agreement and perceptions of one another.

Only 39 per cent of Palestinians and 46 per cent of Israelis would support a proposed nine-point peace deal that would include; demilitarising a Palestinian state, Israel withdrawing to pre-1967 lines, and dividing Jerusalem to become east and west capitals for Palestine and Israel, respectively.

Secular Israeli Jews were more likely (56 per cent) to support a peace deal than traditionalists (35 per cent).

A majority of both Israeli Jews (52 per cent) and Palestinians (62 per cent) blame each other for why previous peace negotiations failed. (JNS.org)

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Miriam Shapiro; Rose Gishen; Frances Jorsh; Esme Kopelowitz; Stella Joffe; Myrna Jankelowitz (general manager); Helen Meyers; Lily Chiat; and Denise Adler.

Warmth and compassion at Golden Acres

The residents of Golden Acres home for the aged in Johannesburg enjoy a sense of camaraderie and unity that transforms them into a large, close-knit family. The knitting circle is just one example of their co-operative achievements.

Over the past six months 75 beautiful blankets have been knitted and distributed, the Chevrah Kadisha said in a media release.

- Fifteen blankets were donated to “Fish and Chips” babies, so named because many of them are sent home with their mothers wrapped in newspapers or cardboard boxes.
- Five blankets went to abandoned babies at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital.
- Forty blankets went to the Nelson Mandela Project “67”.
- Fifteen blankets were given to the Union of Jewish Women to distribute to people in need.

ORT JET tones up at Deloitte for Women’s Month

GIDON VAREJES

On a recent morning, women entrepreneurs streamed into the Deloitte offices for an ORT JET Women’s Month event., sponsored by Deloitte at their head office in Woodmead in Sandton.

Guest speaker Lori Milner, an engaging facilitator, thought leader and mentor known for her insightful approach to being a modern corporate woman, addressed the guests She is also the CEO of “Beyond the Dress” and co-author of “OWN your space”. She provided a perceptive journey through the secrets of successful branding, being true to oneself and the importance and cautions of social media. She also gave advice for moving onward and upward towards financial sustainability.

Then it was time to kick off shoes (literally) and participate in a session of Nia with Michelle Raichlin. Nia combines dance, martial arts and mindfulness. This was followed by a lucky draw with sponsored prizes from various participants on the ORT JET mentoring programme.

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- Excellent typing skills
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills
- Minimum five years’ experience

A Curriculum Vitae with at least two referees should be e-mailed to: koseffs@sabje.co.za
Closing date for applications: Monday 5th September 2016

The SABJE reserves the right to interview only shortlisted candidates.

Life-saving Israeli app used at Olympics

BEERSHEBA - As the world looked to Brazil for the Olympic Games, an Israeli startup was there to improve the safety of millions. SayVU is an application that sends a distress signal to an emergency call centre from any phone, even if it is locked.

The company was selected as part of the Olympics’ comprehensive security network.

“We see the Olympics as a main stage for global exposure of the unique technology we developed,” SayVU CEO Amotz Koskas said.

The app cuts response time and brings assistance more rapidly from emergency services, including police, firefighters and first responders.

SayVU contacts emergency services without the user needing to open or log in to the application. When triggered, the app immediately starts to compile data using the phone’s microphone. That data then transfers a comprehensive picture of the emergency to service providers.

The app also tracks and reports to a predetermined list of emergency responders and family members.

The startup was founded shortly after the tragic kidnapping and murder of three Israeli youths, which sparked the 2014 Gaza war.

After realising they were in danger, one boy dialled the police for help, but the operator thought the call was a prank and did not take it seriously.

Koskas, who was studying at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev at the time, was inspired to develop an application to prevent a repeat of such a tragedy.

Koskas won the “Innovation in the Public Sector” competition the next year. - Jerusalem Post

Australian foreign minister calls for Wallenberg facts

CANBERRA - Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has called for the truth to be revealed about the fate of Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg, after news of an initiative to persuade Russian President Vladimir Putin to return the remains of Australia’s first and only honorary citizen, for burial alongside his parents in Sweden.

With new details of his death in a Soviet prison coming to light, Bishop has described the Swedish diplomat as “a courageous hero who saved so many people from the murderous Nazi regime.

“I support the efforts to determine his fate following his arrest in 1945 and I wish the Wallenberg family every success in seeking to close the chapter on Raoul Wallenberg’s extraordinary life.”

In Hungary in 1944, Wallenberg issued protective visas that saved tens of thousands of Jews from transportation to Auschwitz. But apparently suspected of espionage against the Soviet Union, he was last seen in Soviet custody after its army entered Budapest in January 1945.

New information seems to indicate Wallenberg was executed by lethal injection at Moscow’s Lubyanka prison in 1947 on orders that can be traced to Joseph Stalin.

However, child survivor Professor Frank Vajda, an acclaimed Melbourne neuropharmacologist whose life was saved by Wallenberg, is sceptical about the campaign.

Vajda was a key campaigner for Wallenberg to be made an honorary citizen of Australia, and in 2013, then Prime Minister Julia Gillard conferred Australia’s first honorary citizenship on

the Swedish envoy, citing his courage and humanitarianism. - Australian Jewish News

Afghan baby’s heart surgery story captures hearts

HOLON - Baby Yehia has enormous chocolate-brown eyes. His family, Afghani refugees living in Pakistan, nicknamed their huggable little boy “Yaya”.

They almost lost Yaya because he was born with multiple severe heart defects that doctors in India and Pakistan could not repair - or at least not for a price the family could afford.

Yaya is now a 16-month-old walking miracle. Paediatric cardiologists from Israel’s Save a Child’s Heart nonprofit organisation, based at the Wolfson Medical Centre in Holon, performed a complex eight-hour operation, paid for by donors.

Yaya and his father are staying in SACH housing as he heals and they should be able to return home in two or three weeks’ time to meet Yaya’s newest sibling, born just before the surgery.

Since 1995, SACH doctors have repaired the hearts of more than 4 000 children from 51 countries, at no charge. About half of these children are Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza. Others, like Yaya, live in countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel, including Iraq and Syria. No children from Afghanistan had been treated by SACH previously.

Arranging to bring sick kids from hostile countries is complicated. In Yaya’s case, the process involved determined, goodhearted people in several parts of the world. - Israel 21c

Community

Bibi likes Sydenham Shul’s ‘Miracle at Entebbe’

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul got a nice surprise in the post the other day - a personal, signed letter from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, thanking Rabbi Goldman for the “Miracle at Entebbe” film which his shul produced for the concerts they had in June, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of Operation Jonathan.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said he was sorry not to have been able to visit South Africa during his recent visit to Entebbe, Uganda and other African countries.

He expressed the hope that he will one day have the opportunity to come to South Africa and cement the special ties between Israel and South Africa and between the Jewish communities of both countries. In his letter he quoted from the script of the Sydenham video, which spoke about all Jews being responsible for one another.

“Miracle at Entebbe,” has so far been seen on YouTube by over 291 000 viewers, including one prime minister!

A link to the video is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xCxzdU9dQo>.

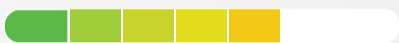




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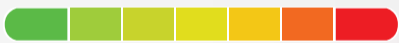
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Soccer boys spread message of unity

BENJI SHULMAN

An under-15 and -16 boys’ soccer team from Israel is spreading the message of unity through sport to young people around South Africa. The team from the Beit Shemesh-Mateh Yehuda region comprises players from both Jewish and Arab backgrounds.

They are part of an initiative from the Peres Centre for Peace which focuses on Jewish, Arab and Palestinian dialogue projects.

The boys were brought out under the auspices of the Israel Centre and South African Zionist Federation under the banner of the Partnership2Gether programme that connects different communities around the Diaspora with regions in Israel.

The team had a full itinerary upon arrival,



Super Sport United players and Bafana Bafana teammates Dean Furman and Reyaad Pieterse, with Tomer Ben Bassa-Heller and Aron Awadallah of the Partnership2Gether team, a mixed Arab and Jewish team that is a project of the Peres Centre for Peace.

visiting various schools and doing a tour of Soweto, the Lion Park and Nelson Mandela’s house. The highlight, however, was the “Unity though Sport” soccer tournament held at Discovery Park.

The event, organised in conjunction with the South African Friends of Israel, brought together a variety of boys’ soccer teams from

around Gauteng. The teams were from diverse backgrounds and included 128 participants from the Lebanese, Portuguese, Jewish, Christian and African diaspora communities as well as from local schools, social development programmes and Maccabi. The aim was to bring together all the boys with the goal of promoting unity through sport.

The opening included a variety of dignitaries including the chairman of the South African Zionist Federation Ben Swartz, Israel’s Deputy Ambassador to South Africa Ayelet Black and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.

The biggest attraction of the day, however, was the two SuperSport United and Bafana Bafana stars who arrived to give training tips to the teams. They included Dean Furman who is a previous captain of the national squad and Reyaad Pieterse who is the current goalkeeper. They also happen to be Jewish and Muslim respectively, adding an extra level of symbolism to the message of the day.

After introductions and a training session by the players, the teams got the opportunity to play mini matches against one another. Befitting the spirit of the event, there was no “winner” but all delegations received a medal and certificate of participation from Aviad Sela, director of the Israel Centre. After the event, the team continued on its journey to Cape Town where they will be visiting the community there and playing another tournament.

Gavi Sacks, executive director of South African Friends of Israel, said: “These sorts of events are an integral part of our work promoting a positive image of Israel to the broader community and are beneficial for everyone involved.”

He said this was the second such team to visit South Africa and he hoped that many others like it would be organised in the future.



FROM FOE TO FRIEND

Catholic-Jewish relations

Rabbi David Rosen is a world-renowned figure in the field of interfaith dialogue. He has been honoured with a Papal Knighthood by the Vatican and an OBE from Queen Elizabeth II. Formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland, he created the International Catholic Jewish Association 40 years ago. He will be in SA to celebrate the 51st anniversary of the Nostra Aetate Document, which was the beginning of the inter-religious dialogue between Jews and Catholics.

Don’t miss out on his fascinating, one-of-a-kind insights into the challenging world of interfaith relations, brought to you by the SAJBD.

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Good reads for all tastes

STEVEN KRAWITZ

JEWISH INTEREST

Here I am by Jonathan Safran Foer (Hamish Hamilton) is the eagerly anticipated new novel from the author of *Everything is Illuminated*. Here Safran Foer explores both contemporary American Jewish identity and Diaspora Jewry’s connections to the Land of Israel. The Bloch family, four generations of Washington DC Jews, are a microcosm for American Jewry. The novel is kick-started by Sam, almost barmitzvah, who is caught by his teachers writing hate-speech at school. Screenwriter dad Jack and architect mom Julia have to deal with this crisis or Sam’s barmitzvah will be cancelled. So goes Jewish life in 21st century America. Later in the novel a devastating earthquake in Israel and a war are litmus tests for American Jewry’s levels of Zionist commitment. A thought-provoking novel and definitely a springboard for debate for Jewish communities around the world; *Here I Am* is a sprawling narrative, beautifully written and challenging.

Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan by Ruth Gilligan (Atlantic Books) is a rare book, a novel about Jews in Ireland and follows in the steps of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (and Leopold Bloom). Gilligan follows three stories over a century, beginning with the Greenbergs, and especially Ruth, Litvaks whose transatlantic passage to America accidentally arrives at Cork, Ireland instead of New York and a Litvish community takes root, through Shem, (a nod to Finnegans Wake) who becomes mute just before his barmitzvah and is called to transcribe the life of another mid-century Irish Jew; to Aisling, an Irish woman in contemporary London who is contemplating conversion to Judaism to marry Noah. This novel will resonate with South African Jews who are predominantly from Lithuania.

Homo Deus by Yuval Noah Harari (Harvil Secker) is the follow-up to the international phenomenon *Sapiens*. In *Homo Deus*, Harari, a Hebrew University professor of history, looks into the future and tries to foretell what our future will look like and his predictions make for uncomfortable reading. His basic premise is that Humanism, the dominant secular paradigm, has allowed mankind to conquer our greatest threats, infectious diseases, hunger and war. What will it allow us to achieve in the future and how long will the success of Humanism, technology and our understanding of life allow man to remain human? What altered forms of life or knowledge processing might we create that could relegate mankind to irrelevance? This book is an uncomfortable read, but needs to be read by everyone who expects to be alive in 10 years’ time and not be surprised by future developments.

THRILLERS

Underground Airlines by Ben H Winters (Century) is an explosive thriller, set in an alternative America, where the Civil War never happened, the South negotiated a constitutional amendment to allow slavery, and slavery exists in 2016. Enter Victor an escaped slave who entered into a Faustian pact: to track down and hand over other escaped slaves to the US government to be returned to their owners in exchange for his freedom. Victor’s current case is not what it seems, and Jackdaw, the escaped slave he must find, represents the greatest threat to Victor’s freedom and the continuation of slavery. Look out for James Brown and Michael Jackson and South African-produced cheap cars.

The Supernotes Affair by Agent Kasper and Luigi Carletti. This book is based on a true story. Agent Kasper is kidnapped in Cambodia while on a CIA mission to uncover counterfeit money schemes. He is meant to disappear forever because he has discovered something so terrible, explosive and damaging, that intelligence agencies want him neutralised. Finding himself in one of the world’s most notorious prison camps near Phnom Penh, Kasper will do anything to remain alive. This is a truly sensational read.

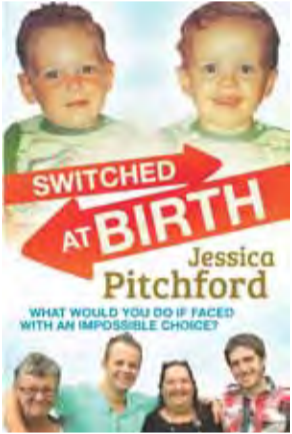
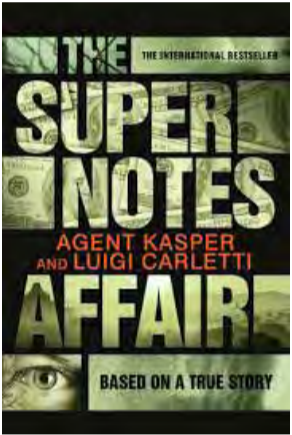
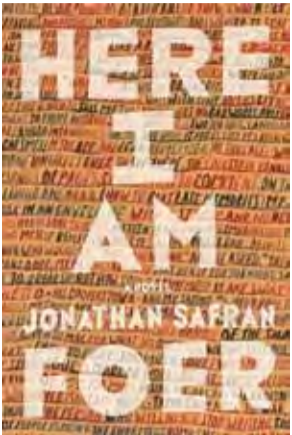
FOR THE BOOKCLUBS

The Muse by Jessie Burton (Picador). In her follow-up to the million-plus seller *The Miniaturist*, Burton once again explores

art and creativity setting her novel in Civil War Spain and ‘60s London. Odelle Bastian, an aspiring writer from Trinidad is working in a London gallery. Her boyfriend Lawrie Scott has a painting the gallery owner believes to be a masterpiece. The provenance of the painting is revealed in the Spanish Civil War storyline and revolves around Olive Schloss, an artist, and a Spanish revolutionary, Isaac Robels. Anyone who read *The Miniaturist* and has been waiting for Burton’s next novel, will not be disappointed.

SOUTH AFRICAN INTEREST

Switched at Birth by Jessica Pitchford (Jonathan Ball). Two children were accidentally swapped at birth at a Nigel hospital in 1989. A year later when the truth was uncovered the two mothers faced a choice no one should be asked to make: - should they hand back the child they had nurtured for a year to get back the child they gave birth to? Both mothers chose nurture over nature, to try make their strange relationship work and to sue the State for the original mistake which, cast a long shadow over so many lives. Journalist Jessica Pitchford followed this agonising story and has written a heart-breaking account of this bitter saga.



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NO MORE CLASSIFIEDS AFTER ROSH HASHANAH BREAK
After the Rosh Hashanah break, we will no longer be publishing the Classified section. This decision took into account financial considerations and the changing face of print and online media and we realised it was no longer viable.
We apologise whole-heartedly to our regular advertisers and we thank them for the many years of support.

Friday (August 26)

• UZLC hosts Mo Skikne on “The Jews of Poland”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

• Shalom Masorti Seniors Club invites everyone who would like to make new friends and have some light-hearted fun on the last Friday of each month. Tea will be served and there will be a selection of board games, cards and a convivial, friendly atmosphere. Mike Kimmelman will speak on “Growing up and Helping the World”. Contact: Esther (011) 485-5619
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday mornings, for more information.

Sunday (August 28)

• UJW hosts “A Celebration of the Wit & Wisdom of Sholem Aleichem in Word and Song” in “Welcome to the World of Fiddler on the Roof”, starring Shane Baker, special guest artist from New York and Caely-Jo Levy, with the Yid Dish Players. Venue: SABC Auditorium, St James Road, Sea Point, Cape Town. Time: 17:30 and 19:30. Booking: Quicket or tel (021) 434-9691. Tickets R180. Proceeds of the shows in aid of the Cape Jewish Seniors Association.

Monday (August 29)

• Cape Town Holocaust Centre, Gardens, screens the documentary “The Good Ones” which tracks the tenacious efforts of three of South Africa’s public schools to change the trajectory of their learners’ futures.

Time: 18:00. The screening (25 mins) will be followed by a Q&A with Molly Blank. Light refreshments will be served. Entrance is free, donations welcome. RSVP: Dianne (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za

• UJW’s adult education division hosts Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, national director, SA Institute of International Affairs, on “Antartica and South Africa - the Antarctic Treaty, a Legal Exposition” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (August 31)

• RCHCC is hosting a “Book Event” with Daniel Browde who will be in conversation with Terry Shakinovsky about his book “The Relatively Public Life of Jules Browde”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R80 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rdhcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net orwww.greatpark.co.za

• UJW’s adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer, Dept of English, Wits, the fourth lecture on “Enjoying Contemporary Poetry”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Sunday (September 4)

• CANSA’s “Bark for Life” relay walk for Woodrock takes place at The Mall of

Africa/Waterfall Park. Come walk around the track with your dog(s). This relay event is a celebration of cancer survivors celebrating fighting back and remembering. Time: 09:00 till 13:00 (registration at 09:00 for the first relay and 11:00 for the second relay). Entrance fee: R100 per human and R20 per dog. There will be food stalls and other stalls. Dogs must be on a leash at all times.

• Second Innings hosts Prof Amanda Krause on “Should I be Worried About My Jewish Genes?” Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

• UJW hosts “A Celebration of the Wit & Wisdom of Sholem Aleichem in Word and Song” in “Welcome to the World of Fiddler on the Roof”, starring Shane Baker, special guest artist from New York and Caely-Jo Levy, with the Yid Dish Players. Venue: Theatre on the Square, Sandton. Time: 17:00 and 19:30. Booking: tel (011) 645-2591 or Bev 082-574-4770 or Lynne 083-378-1114. Tickets: R180. Proceeds of the show in aid of Union of Jewish Women.

Wednesday (September 7)

• Second Innings hosts a “Movie Morning” in the auditorium of the SA Military Museum in Saxonwold with Marvin Hamlish’s “What He Did For Love”. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R90 (incl movie, snacks and tea/coffee). Booking: Laura Sher (011) 786-5109 or Helen Wolfson 082-877-9470.

Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies




Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

Jewish Relations”.

Rabbi Rosen has a long association with our community, dating back to the late 1970s when he served as rabbi of the Green and Sea Point Congregation in Cape Town. He has since gained international acclaim for his work in the interfaith field, for which he has amongst other things become the recipient of a Papal Knighthood from the Vatican and an OBE from Queen Elizabeth II.

Rabbi Rosen is being brought out, as a guest of Religions for Peace, to participate in the 50th anniversary commemorations of Nostra Aetate, a landmark document which inter alia saw the Catholic Church decisively break with various anti-Semitic dogmas that had for so long been an intrinsic part of its theology.

This included finally rejecting the notorious “Deicide” charge, that is, that Jews are collectively and for all time guilty of killing Jesus. The declaration ushered in a new era of reconciliation and dialogue between the world’s Jewish and Catholic communities, in which Rabbi Rosen has and is playing a decisive part. The importance of dialogue, bridge-building and understanding between the world’s various faith communities hardly needs emphasising. Today, it is religion rather than ideology that

would appear to be the number one threat to global peace and specifically the emergence in recent decades of a violent, radically intolerant form of Islam.

It is crucial to remember that adherents of these ideologies are not only hostile towards other religions and the secular liberalism of the West, but as much, if not more so, to fellow Muslims who do not adhere to their notions of how the Islamic faith should be interpreted and practised.

As can be seen by the tragic events in, among other countries, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan, Muslims constitute the great majority of victims of Islamist violence.

Religious hatred, historically and in our own time, is characterised by the demonisation (often literally) of the “other”, through which people’s essential humanity is denied to the point that slaughtering them is seen as a holy act.

Invariably, such crude ways of thinking are underpinned by simple blind ignorance, which fanatical leaders as a matter of course seek to perpetuate. As is true of all conflict situations - our own country’s history is proof of that - the antidote lies in honest, respectful dialogue. Once people are talking to one another, it quickly becomes possible to clear up misconceptions and find common ground, of which there is so much in all of the world’s great religions.

This is the kind of message that Rabbi Rosen brings with him, and I hope many of you will join us on Monday evening to hear what he has to say.

To confirm your attendance or for further information, contact Roseanne on (011) 645-2521/sajbd@sajbd.org.

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

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Israeli Arab proud to lead Paralympic goalball team

JACK MILNER

The 2016 Rio Olympics have come and gone. There have been some incredible sporting performances over the just more than two weeks, but unfortunately also some nasty and vindictive acts.

From an Israeli point of view the Games were, well... sort of average. If you had to score it like a soccer match you would have to go Medals 2, Snubs 3. An improvement, no doubt, but the Snubs still have it.

The two silver medals won by Israel were both in judo - and so were two of the snubs. The third snub was the team from Lebanon not allowing the Israeli team on the bus to the opening ceremony.

Now it is the turn of the Paralympics which get under way on September 7 in the same venues as the Olympics.

Israel will once again send a team but there will be one important change. One of their athletes is an Israeli Arab - and she is proud to be there.

Elham Mhamid is a 26-year-old from Umm el-Fahm who worked hard to become captain of the Israeli women's goalball team. She also happens to be "legally" blind, suffering from achromatopsia, a hereditary disorder characterised by decreased vision, light sensitivity and a complete inability to see colour.

She takes great pride in representing Israel in international competitions - and no competition is bigger for her than the upcoming Paralympics in Rio.

"For me being captain comes with a lot of pride and responsibility and I think I deserve this responsibility," Mhamid told the Jerusalem Post. "I will do everything to make my country, my relatives and the Arab sector proud, showing that there is no difference between all of us and that we can live together."

Goalball is a team competition designed specifically for blind athletes and is one of 23 sports in the Paralympics. It was added to the programme of the 1980 Summer Paralympics, the first sport in the Games designed specifically for disabled athletes.



The Israeli Paralympic goalball team with their Arab captain Elham Mhamid (centre) are looking for Gold at the upcoming Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Each team comprises three players who try to throw a ball that has bells embedded in it into the opponents' goal. Players use the sound of the bells to judge position and movement of the ball. Mhamid was the first Israeli woman to take up goalball 10 years ago. The Israeli women's national team was established shortly afterwards.

"I loved sport from a young age but wasn't allowed to play in school because I couldn't see the ball," she said. "I always felt I was missing out on something. Then, at the age of 15, I heard about goalball. At the same time our current coach, Raz Shoham, decided to set up a women's national team and I joined."

Israel's goalball team won the gold medal at the 2015 International Blind Sports Federation World Games in Seoul. Now the team is aiming for the top of the podium in Rio de Janeiro.

"We are aspiring for the gold medal but it won't be easy," said Mhamid. "It will be a big challenge to face the best teams in the world."

Mhamid, who is studying for her master's degree in drama therapy at the Kibbutzim College of Education (Oranim) in Tel Aviv, said there was initial tension between her and Jewish members of the team, but that quickly faded. "It was difficult at the start," she admitted.

"I only began learning Hebrew when I was 18 and didn't know the culture. I was even scared of the soldiers. They also didn't under-

stand my culture. We slowly began to get to know each other and everything worked out. Now I feel that I really belong. I love everyone and they love me.

"The squad is like family. We sleep together, we go out together, we train together, we cry together and we do everything together," she explained. "This is like my second family."

Mhamid is unhappy with the limited media coverage received by the Paralympics. "If you broadcast the Olympics then you have to broadcast the Paralympics. That shouldn't even be a question."

"There is an additional reason to show the Paralympics, which is to raise awareness of the different sports which people are unfamiliar with," she said.

"I only started with goalball at the age of 15 or 16, but had I known about it earlier I would have been able to begin training beforehand. There are a lot of kids who are sitting at home and don't know about the different sports in which they can take part."

Despite not being able to relate to "Hatikva", Mhamid is desperate to hear it in Rio. "Any way you look at it, the national anthem doesn't relate to me. Nevertheless, I still get emotional hearing it when I'm on the top of the podium and I see the flag," she said. "I would like the national anthem to relate to me one day. I'm part of this country. I belong here. That should be a given."

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