



Pair of Victorian
silver Sheffield
plate wine coolers
SOLD R16,000



Norman Catherine
Penance
bronze cast
SOLD R75,000

Steven Cohen
Alice In Pretoria
hand coloured silk screen
SOLD R60,000



south african Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

■ Volume 25 – Number 07 ■ 26 February 2021 ■ 14 Adar 5781

www.sajr.co.za

One step towards population immunity



See pages
3 and 6

26 FEBRUARY 2021

Anytime between
11H30 – 15H00

CHEV PREMISES
(Long Avenue entrance only)

Follow us @chevrahkadishajhb for more details



We're throwing open our doors
for the first time in a year to give
you The Greatest Purim Show.
Drive through our winding maze
to see explosive, splendiferous,
riveting and mind-bending acts
and attractions, all from the
safety of your car.

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

Appliance Repairs on Site

Fridges, Dishwashers, Washing Machines, Stoves Tumble Dryers & more

Call Jason
082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532
FREE QUOTATIONS

DECEASED ESTATE HOUSE CLEARANCES

Entire households cleared professionally & confidentially.

We will take the burden off your shoulders and pay you for it.

For a trusted service call
Ladislav Miklas on 082 920 5907
ladimiklas22@gmail.com

DIGITAL MULTI-FOCAL SPECIAL
until end Feb 2021

R1499 a pair of branded digital multi-focal lenses

The Optical Studio
Midways Mall - Bramley Gardens

011 440 9001 063 915 0722
eyecare@theopticalstudio.co.za

Shaun Defries Dip Optom MC Optom MBA I&E Stanford
Midways Mall

FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE

Have a love at first sound experience.
Phonak Audéo™ Marvel

A new all-in-one solution that improves your hearing in everyday life and even in the noisiest environments.

- Experience exceptional sound performance
- Connect seamlessly to Bluetooth® devices
- Rechargeable so you'll always stay connected
- Remote Support for the ultimate in convenience

AFFORDABLE RANGE FOR PENSIONERS

CONTACT US TODAY:
(011) 849-6256
082 953 4628

Fairmount
6 George Ave,
Sandringham

Additional branches in Benoni and Germiston

We are COVID-19 compliant

VEHICLES WANTED

Any make, any model, any condition
Accident damaged vehicles and non-runners also wanted

Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826
AUTO AFRICA

Purim: a four-point plan for embracing uncertainty

PURIM MESSAGE

As we approach Purim this year, it's hard to escape the feeling of disappointment. This is the second Purim since the beginning of the pandemic, and the world remains upside down. Our lives at the moment seem reduced, our Purim celebrations muted.

But maybe it's the opposite. Maybe this is the year for a Purim like no other.

Think about what we are all grappling with at the moment – the pervading sense we have is of living in a world of uncertainty.

Purim is all about embracing uncertainty. In fact, the very word "Purim" means "lots", referring to the lots Haman cast randomly to select the day to carry out his genocidal plan.

In a world so full of threats and danger, Purim gives us a game plan. In fact, the four *mitzvot* of Purim constitute the perfect formula for coping with an uncertain world.

First, the *mitzvah* to hear the reading of the Megillah in the night and again on the day of Purim teaches us about faith. The Megillah inspires us to see Hashem's presence everywhere, even when it isn't obvious. The name Esther – the Megillah's chief protagonist – comes from the word *hester*, meaning "hidden", a hint at G-d's hidden presence in the world (Talmud,



Chulin 139b). Famously, the Megillah, which relates the miraculous story of how the Jewish people were saved from annihilation, doesn't mention Hashem's name once. Even when we cannot see Him, we are reminded that He is there, looking out for us every moment of every day.

He was in ancient Persia when Haman rose up against us, and He is here with us in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We can take comfort in knowing we are in His loving embrace, and that everything He does is ultimately for our best.

The third *mitzvah* of Purim – *matanot l'evyonim* (Esther 9:22), giving money to those in need on the day – reminds us of the power of giving. There are many who have been hit financially by COVID-19. Our incredible institutions, too, are buckling under the strain. This year in particular, when so many of us are vulnerable, we need to reach out and give according to our means.

Then there's *mishloach manot* (Esther 9:22) – sending gifts of food to our friends and family on Purim. Now is the time to

invest in our relationships. We need them more than ever. We need to lean on one another. Our relationships feed us, giving us the strength and emotional well-being to withstand these difficult times. At a time of isolation and dislocation, *mishloach manot* remind us to fortify our connections to the people around us as we draw strength from them and they draw strength from us.

Finally, there is the *seudat* Purim, the celebratory meal on Purim day. The Purim *seudah* is a feast of gratitude and thanksgiving. We are grateful to Hashem for our miraculous deliverance on Purim, and it reminds us to offer thanks to Him also for the daily miracles we all experience, to truly savour the divine blessings we have in our lives, and to live with gratitude.

And so, as the world gradually moves to the next phase of this great global health struggle, let's embrace Purim. Not with big gatherings, but with immersive engagement in the four *mitzvot* of the day which, together, provide a game plan for living in a world of uncertainty, guiding us to the four things we need right now: faith, kindness, love, and gratitude.

May we all merit the "light and joy and celebration and glory" (Esther 8:16) which the Megillah tells us filled their world after the miracles of Purim, and may these divine blessings flow into our lives and into our world.

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:12	Johannesburg
19:08	19:59	Cape Town
18:14	19:04	Durban
18:15	19:22	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:31	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:20	East London

Torah Thought

Believing in Hashem; believing in ourselves.

When would Hashem ever want us not to daven? In Parshat Beshalach, as the Jewish people were standing between the sea, the Egyptian army, and the desert, they naturally turned their faces upwards and pleaded to the Almighty for help. Remarkably, Hashem responds: "קַצַּצְתָּהֹם וְלֹא יָלָא (Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward)."

It's not as if Hashem doesn't want our *tefilot* (prayers). On the other side of the sea, we are attacked by Amalek, our long-standing enemy, and the Torah tells us when Moshe's arms were raised, we took the upper hand. Moshe's arms didn't magically cause us to win, but rather, when the Jewish soldiers looked at Moshe's posture of prayer, they were inspired to daven, and through the combination of G-dly intervention and human effort, we were victorious. What's the difference between these two confrontations – against the Egyptians where we shouldn't daven, and against the Amalek, where we had to?

One needs to understand the purpose of both wars. The Izhbitza Rebbe explains that the battle with Egypt was one of the

awareness of the creator. Hashem displayed His might through the ten plagues and the splitting of the sea. We just needed to walk, and Hashem would do everything, supernaturally, to respond to Pharaoh's original response to Moshe when he asked for the Jews to be free to worship Hashem: "ה' יָמִי" (Who is the Lord?)"

On the other hand, Amalek, who descended from Eisav, believed that our existence was meaningless and coincidental. Eisav sold Yaakov his birthright for the quick satisfaction of hunger. He wasn't interested in the long term commitment of temple service. Eisav exclaimed, "Here I am going to die, so why do I need the birth right?" Amalek despised the idea of a world-to-come where we receive reward or punishment for the actions we do here on earth. In order to persuade the world otherwise, we needed to fight him with meaningful human action. We partnered with Hashem through physical effort and prayer to display how, together, the creator and created can make a difference.

On Purim, we celebrate the fact that the Jews defeated Amalek once again. Hashem

was, of course, behind our success, but He would remain quite hidden, allowing Esther and the Jewish people to come forward with bravery and self-sacrifice. At first, Esther refused to step up on behalf of her people. But after Mordechai inspired her asking, "Who knows, perhaps for the sake of a time such as this you have come to join royalty?", she accepted responsibility and asked Jews to pray. Through her cunning and leadership, Haman, descended from the Amaleki King Agag, is trapped, and eventually hung on the gallows he built to kill Mordechai the Jew! Coincidence? I think not!

There are times in life where we raise our hands in prayer knowing that only Hashem can help as He overcomes the natural laws He put in place. At other times, He beckons us to act and overcome our natural tendencies to remain stagnant and passive and "join" Him to bring about the change. Esther revealed her hidden G-d-given potential to save the Jews, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Purim sameach!

Rabbi Shmuli Kagan, Bnei Akiva



South African Jewish Report
The source of quality content, news and insights

Editor Peta Krost Maunders – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • **Sub-editor** Julie Leibowitz **Journalists** Nicola Miltz • Tali Feinberg • Jordan Moshe • **Photographer** Ilan Ossendryver • **Editorial co-ordinator** Martine Bass – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za • **Proofreader** Kim Hatchuel CEO Dani Kedar
ceo@sajewishreport.co.za • **Advertising** Britt Landsman: 082 292 9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za • **New business development manager** • Laura Kaufman laura@sajewishreport.co.za • **Design and layout** Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za • **Distribution** Sandy Furman • **Subscriptions** Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860 525 200 • **Board of Directors** Howard Sackstein (Chairperson), Dina Diamond, Herschel Jawitz, Shaun Matisonn, Benji Porter. • **Advertisements and editorial copy** do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff and board of directors. Tel: 011 430 1980.

The SA Jewish Report subscribes to the Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media that prescribes news that is truthful, accurate, fair and balanced. If we don't live up to the Code, within 20 days of the date of publication of the material, please contact the Public Advocate at 011 484 3612, fax: 011 484 3619. You can also contact our Case Officer on khanyim@ombudsman.org.za or lodge a complaint on their website: www.presscouncil.org.za

Press Council

ABC
Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa
transparency you can see

Vaccination a jab of hope for healthcare workers

JORDAN MOSHE

After a sleepless night marked by a mix of anxiety and excitement, Dr Mark Kadish woke up on Tuesday morning, 23 February, ready for a historic occasion: his long-awaited vaccine against COVID-19.

“I woke up on an emotional rollercoaster,” the GP told the *SA Jewish Report*. “I sat with my wife and reminisced about this past year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it had been working in healthcare. All healthcare workers and their support staff are mentally, physically, and emotionally depleted. As I entered the vaccination environment, I was overwhelmed with emotion.”

Kadish is one of thousands of South African healthcare workers who have at last received their shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in recent days. The first leg of South Africa’s vaccine rollout programme is well underway, and in spite of some complications and frustrations, almost 40 000 healthcare workers across the country were expected to be inoculated by Wednesday, 24 February.

“I feel grateful and blessed to have received the vaccination,” says Kadish. “I feel privileged and at the same time so excited

Dr Anton Meyberg, who had booked for this vaccination slot. “A lot of them then went to Steve Biko Academic Hospital, and it was absolute chaos.

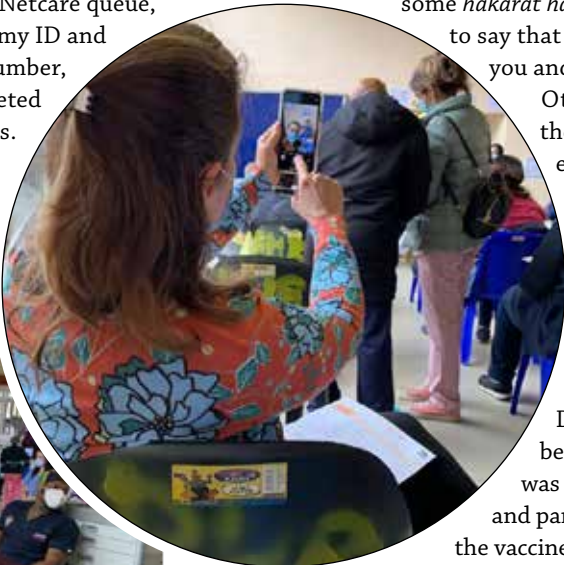
“More than 2 000 people were there, with queues on top of each other. They don’t have the facilities for people to be there, and people were being told to leave. It was a feeding frenzy.”

Thanks to the efforts of Netcare, however, Meyberg was able to secure a second booking for Tuesday, going to Baragwanath Hospital with fellow specialist Dr Carron Zinman.

“I was pleasantly surprised,” says Zinman. “The process was organised and efficient, with healthcare workers standing in designated queues with strict distancing. I joined the Netcare queue, presented my ID and booking number, and completed some forms. It felt like I was back at school.”



Healthcare workers getting vaccinated at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital



Carefully spaced groups of vaccinees were ushered into a hall and positioned at individual

stations, greeted by a nurse ready to administer the vaccine. stations, greeted by a nurse ready to administer the vaccine.

Zinman recounts, “Bara had drawn up individual doses. There was a syringe with your name and number on it waiting, and after you got it, they waited to see if you had any immediate reaction. Women burst into song and clapped as we stepped outside to be monitored for anaphylactic reaction. It was a beautiful moment.”

Though the vaccine won’t change her social distancing habits or wearing of personal protective equipment, Zinman says it offers some relief and hope.

“I’m happy it’s done,” she says. “We’re still seeing positive patients, and though we’re

wearing our equipment, you have a feeling that maybe the vaccine adds another layer of protection.”

Meyberg was equally elated. “Fighting COVID-19 means working hard, putting life on hold, and risking your family,” he says. “The vaccine felt like getting some *hakarat hatov* [gratitude], something to say that people appreciate the risks you and your family take daily.”

Other healthcare workers in the Jewish community had equally moving experiences, in spite of many initially being let down by events on Sunday.

“I was as nervous about driving to Bara as I was about getting the vaccination,” admits GP Dr Lana Marcus. “I hadn’t been there since 2006. There was a lot of anxiety about logistics and parking, and obviously about the vaccine.

“I had an idea of what to expect based on photos shared by other GPs, and I was really impressed with the setup. It was smooth, there was no crowding, it was well-explained, and the staff were friendly. “I now no longer have the holy terror of catching COVID-19.”

Dr Monique Price, the Chevrah Kadisha’s senior medical doctor, described her vaccination as an out-of-body experience. “My rescheduled appointment was at 15:20 on Monday, and within a few minutes, I was in the observation area,” she says.

“When I had it, I felt on a high and part of something momentous and positive. Only two weeks ago, we weren’t sure any of us would get it when the AstraZeneca vaccine was cancelled.”

If the successful rollout so far shows how things can be done at a public tertiary hospital, Price feels that the rest of the country can surely follow suit and everyone can be vaccinated.

“13 March marks a year since the Chevrah



Call Alan: 082 850 0004
www.alfinauto.co.za

Kadisha closed the doors to its facilities,” she says. “I would love to open them again, but that can happen only when it’s safe. It’s still some way off, but this is possibly the beginning of a positive change.”

After some initial scepticism, GP Dr Daniel Israel says his vaccination this week offered some much-needed light at the end of a long tunnel.

“There was some concern about GPs because they don’t fit into either public or private healthcare systems,” he says. “They’re on the frontline, so it’s important they get their shots, too.

“I had the attitude that I would believe it only when I saw the needle in my arm. When I saw all the incredible work being done by volunteers at Bara, however, I was reminded of the election in 1994 and felt that people were coming together and uniting for a common, important goal. People pulled together and made it happen.”

Doctors being vaccinated is a beacon of light, Israel says. “Time will tell if the vaccine is fully effective, but it’s a wonderful thing, and I feel a little safer.”

Dr Gilad Mensky, who works in intensive-care at Baragwanath Hospital, paid tribute to the efforts of the hospital and all volunteers involved. He was vaccinated last week.

“Bara has done an outstanding job,” he says. “You really felt safe. Heads of department and senior doctors were on the floor ushering people and helping them. You felt the commitment and the enthusiasm.

“We’ve all gone through an emotional derailment, and it was nice to get some upliftment at last. A vaccine isn’t a right but a privilege, and I’m honoured to have received it.”

Says Meyberg, “We will still wear our masks and maintain protocols as we wait for herd immunity as more people get vaccinated. People need to understand that more vaccines are on the way, and that everyone will get it. There’s a lot of work going on behind the scenes, and we are seeing the results.”

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

INVEST IN PROPERTY IN ISRAEL
FROM R5 MILLION

Contact Herschel Jawitz in strict confidence
082 571 1829 | herschel@jawitz.co.za

REAL LIFE

Real Estate.

FOR SALE



GLENHAZEL | R 2 100 000

Delightful 5 bed family home on Glenhazel border. This family home offers 5 bedrooms, 3 bathroom (2 en-suite), 3 reception rooms leading out to lovely pool setting and gorgeous tranquil garden. A huge work from home or entertainment/ playroom. An ample size kitchen with separate scullery. Double staff quarters. Electric security driveway gate with additional parking for 5 cars - Off street parking. Double automated garage. Security cameras and beams.

 5  3

Web Ref: RL73489

Joel Harris 082 926 0287 *National Sales Consultant of the Year*

Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

FOR SALE



SAVOY ESTATE | R 1 750 000

A rare “Gem”. Excellent location in 24hour guarded complex. So centrally located stands this very modern home, consisting of 2 bed, 2 bath (both en suite), spacious open plan reception area leading onto lovely covered patio and private walled garden. Bonus is a double lock-up garage. Easy access to Highways, schools and shops.

 2  2

Web Ref: RL72944

Joel Harris 082 926 0287 *National Sales Consultant of the Year*

Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

NEW RELEASE



WAVERLEY | R 1 375 000

A nicely, renovated unit in one of Waverley's older, sought-after complexes. Stylish, open plan kitchen overlooks spacious living room & dining area, lovely, big main bedroom, 2nd bedroom, 3rd smaller bedroom/study, 2 modern, neat bathrooms, enclosed balcony offers an additional room for discretionary use, 2 parking bays. Situated in a secure, well-managed complex with easy access to the M1 & major commercial/retail districts. Walk across the road to the Waverley Shul.

 3  2

Web Ref: RL73795

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

PRICE REDUCED



MORNINGSIDE | R 3 000 000

Uber Glamorous & Luxurious! Brilliant Position! Sexy & Stylish. Modern 2 bed, 2.5 bath apartment. Spacious & stylish indoor & outdoor Entertainment areas with braai area, TV points and air-conditioning throughout. Impressive built in Entertainers Bar. Modern kitchen with full scullery. Decent sized storeroom. 2 undercover parking bays & plenty visitors parking. Superb security. Brilliant position with Shul, shops, schools, gyms & all amenities virtually on your doorstep! Sparkling complex pool.

 2  2.5

Web Ref: RL72315

Sandra Luntz: 083 679 1247

JOIN OUR VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE 1PM EST SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2021

For more info and to register visit www.jct.ac.il/international

Your Future
Within Reach

Machon Tal

International Program for Women

B.S. in Computer Science

Highly Regarded 3-Year Degree
Complete Program in English
Torah Environment
Degree with High Earning Potential

Siona Margrett
Program Coordinator
siona@jct.ac.il



ONLY
\$3,800
PER YEAR

According
to current
exchange
rate

Your Future
Within Reach

Machon Lev

International Program for Men

B.S. in Computer Science

B.A. in Business Administration

Complete Degrees in English
3-Year Programs
Torah Environment

Gavriel Novick
Program Coordinator
gnovick@jct.ac.il



ONLY
\$3,800
PER YEAR

According
to current
exchange
rate

SABJE 33RD TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

EMBRACING OUR PAST -
RACING TO THE FUTURE

"We achieve greatness by handing our values onto the next
generation and empowering them to go and build the future"

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2021

19H00

<http://bit.ly/SABJE-TriennialConference2021>

- Insights from the last 3 years
- Strategies for the future
- Election of the new SABJE Board

Featuring International Speaker

Anthony Salicito - Vice President
Worldwide Education, Microsoft



South African Board of Jewish Education
ידיד מוסדות יהודיים בארצות הברית



King David Schools'
Foundation
www.kdsf.org

SA chiropractor in Melbourne jail pleads guilty to drug trafficking

NICOLA MILTZ

A former head boy of King David Victory Park (KDVP) has pleaded guilty to importing a large quantity of cocaine from South Africa to Australia in 2018.

Dr Warren Sipser, 44, a prominent Melbourne chiropractor, previously married to television personality and author Andi Lew, has been in jail since December 2018. He recently pleaded guilty in the County Court of Victoria to importing a commercial quantity of cocaine with an estimated street value of A\$90 million (R1 billion).

Australian police say that 120kg of liquid cocaine was shipped from South Africa in 600 wine bottles ordered on eBay. Police discovered the bottles containing the illegal substance, and an elaborate plan was devised to follow the drug trail which lead them to Sipser's Elwood clinic in July 2018.

Sipser was previously denied bail in the criminal division of the Supreme Court in Melbourne in 2019.

His worried mother, who lived with her son in Melbourne at the time of his arrest, has been told by her son's lawyers not to comment. She remains in regular contact with her son and grandson, Sipser's 11-year-old son.

Sipser's father, who asked not to be named, lives in Johannesburg. He hasn't had much contact with his son since he left the country 22 years ago, but said the matter was taking its toll. He told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that he believed his son was "possibly set up".

"I don't believe my son is a drug dealer," he said.

While Sipser sat in his high security jail cell this week, his troubled parents communicated via WhatsApp, marking the *yahrzeit* of his sister and their daughter, Stacey, who died 35 years ago from cancer.

"There isn't a day we don't think of her," said Sipser's father, 78, who continues to hope that one day, he will be reunited with his son and meet his grandson for the first time "when all this is over".

Being so far away and suffering from several co-morbidities, Sipser's father is doubtful that will happen soon, if ever.

"I feel so helpless. He's there, I'm here, we're all helpless. We can do nothing, it is all in Hashem's hands," he said.

"I told my ex-wife to wish him happy birthday earlier this month, and send him all my love. Warren is in the prime of his life, what can I say," he lamented.

For now, his parents can only hope that their son will be given a light sentence after having already spent 26 months in jail awaiting trial.

The *Herald Sun* reported last week that Sipser will be sentenced later this year on one charge of attempting to import a commercial quantity of a border-controlled drug, and one charge of possessing a controlled drug.

At his 2019 bail hearing, prosecutors said Sipser allegedly bought a consignment of wine through eBay on 23 June 2018. When it arrived in Sydney, addressed to Sipser, it came with supporting documents which predated the purchase date.

The consignment was inspected by the Australian Border Force (ABF), and the contents of one of the bottles tested "a positive presumptive test for cocaine". The consignment was seized by the ABF, and the matter referred to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) for investigation.

The AFP office in Sydney retained the

original consignment, and forwarded the packaging to the AFP in Melbourne. Subsequent testing allegedly identified traces of cocaine in 343 out of the 600 bottles in the consignment, according to court documents.

The prosecution said agents then replaced the original consignment with replica bottles containing an inert substitute, and let the shipment continue under surveillance.

The bottles were delivered to Sipser's Elwood clinic while he was at Crown Casino in what police suspected was an attempt to distance himself when they arrived.

The cargo was then collected by two men, who were arrested in a highway intercept at Tallarook, north of Melbourne, and later released without charge.

Three months later, an undercover police officer allegedly made contact with Sipser and made "an offer to alter or destroy documentation connecting the applicant [Sipser] to the consignment", according to court papers. Sipser allegedly accepted the offer.

Sipser, who has no criminal convictions, was arrested in December 2018 at his Ormond Road clinic.

Police searched Sipser's home and practice. The bail hearing was told items found included clip-seal bags, empty capsules, scales, 79.3g of cocaine, and A\$2 100

Warren Sipser and his ex wife Andi Lew



(R30 709) in currency. A search of his vehicle was also conducted, which allegedly found capsules, and A\$650 (R9 505) in currency.

Sipser was headboy of KDVP in 1994, and played first team rugby. After Grade 12, he trained as a paramedic in South Africa, then graduated as a chiropractor from RMIT University in Melbourne. He has a Masters in paediatric chiropractic. He opened his popular chiropractic practice at the age of 25. He made a name for himself as a primary care provider and health and wellness professional, with children making up a large percentage of his business. He served on the executive of the Chiropractors Association of Australia for many years.

He and Lew described themselves as wellness experts, and co-authored a book: *7 Things Your Doctor Forgot To Tell You*, as a guide to optimal health. The couple, who divorced several years ago, have a son together.

Sipser's chiropractic business has been sold since his arrest, and his license to practice has been suspended by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

People have been known to plead guilty, even when they are innocent, often in exchange for a reduced sentence, rather than risk a guilty verdict at trial that would come with more severe punishment.

It's not known when Sipser will appear for sentencing.

SA expats face ‘apocalypse now’ in Texas

TALI FEINBERG

South African Jewish expatriates in Texas, United States, have experienced isolation, outages, and chaos on a scale that they never expected when they made the move to America, after the state was hit by an unprecedented snowstorm from 10 to 17 February, causing a humanitarian crisis.

“It felt apocalyptic. If we’d had any warning we would have prepared, but there was no inkling that we would be in such a crazy situation,” says Deborah Barak, who is in Houston with her partner and one-year-old daughter. “We had no power, water, or heat from Sunday 02:00 [14 February] to Wednesday night [17 February], aside from a couple of hours on Monday morning. To keep warm, we stayed in the smallest room in the house with all the blankets we could find.

“Luckily, we had gas to cook with and had recently been shopping, so we ate well, but we had no water to clean with or flush toilets. After a few days, the dirt started to pile up. I dressed my daughter in layers and tried to keep her under blankets, but she’s pretty mobile and got frustrated that we wouldn’t let her out of the room.

“There was absolutely nothing open around us, and very little information about what was going on. We were truly isolated. Occasionally, we would go for a careful drive to warm up in the car and charge our phones, but we kept those to a minimum because we had only a little petrol and there was none to be found anywhere. Luckily, we had a case of water, because we couldn’t find any. After several attempts, we found some diapers. We were down to just three when we found some.

“We got our power and heat back on Wednesday, but it took several more days before we had drinkable water. Everything is back to normal now, and it’s hard to believe that we felt so helpless about keeping our child safe and warm. It’s quite shocking how easily you can suddenly be cut off from the rest of the world.”

Trevor Kobrin lives in an apartment block in Irving, near Dallas. He was hit by rolling blackouts for three days, with only intermittent power coming on unexpectedly for half an hour, often in the middle of the night. At one point he was so cold, he warmed a cup of soup with heat from candles, and tried to make a cup of tea by boiling water on the stove. Soon after his electricity returned, he found he had no water in his taps. “Almost a week later, I still have no water,” he told the *SA Jewish Report* just hours before his water did return.

“I was able to go to a friend to shower and I had enough to drink, but needed water for washing dishes, flushing toilets, and so on. On Thursday night [18 February], I was so desperate, I went out to collect snow and melted it. The snow has since melted, and I was able to buy water, but you are only allowed to buy two five-litre bottles a day at the moment. On Sunday [21 February], I went to the complex swimming



Trevor Kobrin going for a walk on Sunday 14 February

pool to try to get some water. It was all iced up, but I found a corner where the ice had melted, and I took from there.” Kobrin says he was in Cape Town at the height of its drought crisis, and what he learnt then helped him in this situation.

Says Linda Behr, “My husband and I left South Africa on a beautiful day in January 1977 and believe it or not, arrived in Dallas, Texas during an ice storm. Since then, we have had similar ice storms every couple of years. None of those winter storms prepared us for the one we just had!”

On Thursday morning, 11 February, she says, “I was due to go get my second COVID-19 vaccine. At 10:00 I received a call that my appointment was cancelled – the distributors were unable to get the vaccines out because of icy roads.

“On Saturday, I managed to get to the grocery store, which was packed. We were

blackouts. The power was supposed to be off for 15 to 45 minutes then go on again, but the people working these rollouts had no idea how to manage it properly. So the power would come on for anywhere from one to four hours, then go off for about seven to nine hours.

“One thing saved us. We have a gas fireplace, so we huddled there to defrost! My daughter, Tracy, and her boyfriend, Moshe, were staying with us. Moshe got very creative. He took one of my pots with a long handle, filled it with water, and boiled the water over the fire. He also made toast and scrambled eggs over the fire.

“For two days, the power was more off than on. Many people had burst water pipes, some died because of the extreme cold, and other weather-related problems have caused billions of dollars of damage in what may become Texas’s most expensive natural disaster in history.”

Joan Gremont in Dallas says, “On Friday night during our family Shabbat Zoom, our son in Austin mentioned that they had been without power for more than 24 hours. I told them they should come to Dallas. Austin had precipitation which had turned to ice, but Dallas didn’t have – yet. He agreed, and at 21:00, they packed up the kids, food, and two dogs, and were on the road, a 200-mile (322km) trip, arriving at midnight.”

Her son, Evan Gremont, says they looked “like refugees after packing up the house in complete darkness”. Ironically, the power returned to his house one hour after he left, and didn’t go off again. However, since returning to Austin a few days later, he has had to boil water to drink, and people have had to queue for water.

“It was cold, but we had power,” says his mother. “It got colder, and on Monday, our power went off and on without any warning. We left a lamp on in the living room. This was our signal that it was on or off as we

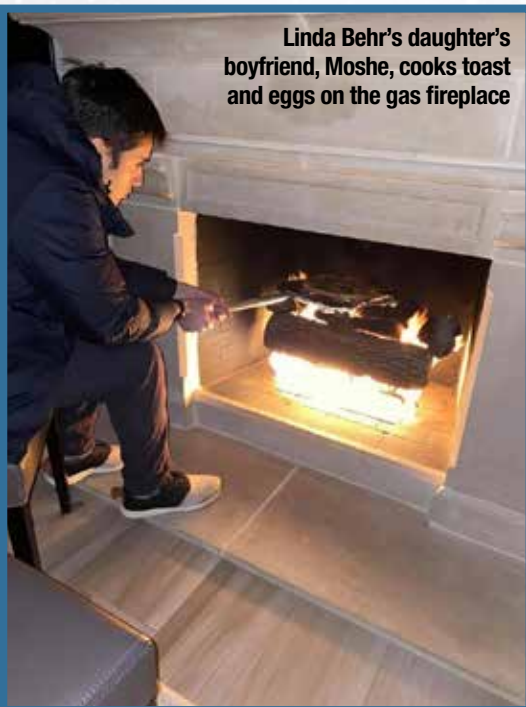
sat in front of the raging fire in the gas fireplace.

“When there was no heat late on Monday afternoon, we all packed up and went to a friend, who lives in a spacious house not even a mile away from us, but they never lost power. There were 14 of us in their house, plus three dogs!

“The next day, we came home after we were able to determine that our power was back on. The pool iced over. In our 42 years in Dallas, we had never seen anything like this. I put the kettle on so we could have our Five Roses tea – first priority! That night, the power was out again so we went back to our friends, and returned home on Wednesday morning. We were much better off than tens of thousands of others,” she says.

Gremont says many organisations offered assistance, for example, one of their local kosher restaurants made free, hot kosher meals to distribute to anyone who needed it.

“The only reason we were able to drive on the snow-covered roads is that our son drives a four-wheel-drive truck. Neighbourhood roads were never cleared of the snow. Texas doesn’t have the equipment or manpower for this.”



Linda Behr’s daughter’s boyfriend, Moshe, cooks toast and eggs on the gas fireplace



told that temperatures on Monday could reach -15 C. In the 44 years that we have lived here, we had never heard of Texas experiencing such low levels. We woke up on Monday morning to -13 C. Our power had gone off in the middle of the night, and it was freezing!

“We heard we were going to be having rolling

TALK TO US ABOUT FINDING AND SECURING YOUR PROPERTY IN ISRAEL.

20% DEPOSIT SECURES THE DEAL.



Netanya



NEW RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

Ra'anana | Jerusalem | Haifa | Harish | Netanya
Ir Yamim | Ramat Beit Shemesh | Tel Aviv
Modi'in | Jaffa

HOLD SERVICES

Legal representation, banking services - including opening bank accounts and organising mortgages and project management.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

We will find tenants and manage your apartment so you capitalise on your investment immediately.

CUSTOMER FOCUS BROKERAGE

We help buyers to find properties that are relevant and meet their requirements.

HOLD REAL ESTATE

SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL

In association with

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

To schedule a consultation contact us

✉ julian@hold.co.il
☎ +27 87 551 0734
📞 +972 58 631 9754

Visit our website: www.hold.co.il

Inject suitable caution into Purim festivities

The excitement is palpable. As more and more doctors and healthcare workers are vaccinated, there is a sense that we are slowly on our way out of this quagmire of illness, separation, and death.

So many of these frontline doctors, nurses, and others in the healthcare industry have put their lives on the line to save ours. No oath or commitment is strong enough to make people do that. It’s pure determination to save lives that’s behind this – a life mission. The *kavod* that should go to these people is immeasurable.

And to see so many of them, who themselves may have comorbidities or vulnerable family members, rejoicing after getting their vaccine is exciting.

It means that the rest of our vaccines aren’t far behind, especially seeing as the next batch of vaccines is due to arrive in South Africa this weekend.

What we must remember is that these healthcare workers are, in fact, testing the vaccine for us. The vaccine isn’t yet registered for commercial use globally, in spite of it being rolled out in the United States, United Kingdom, and here. So, once again they are putting themselves at risk so we know how effective the vaccine is and what – if any – side effects there are.

Having said that, it’s clear that healthcare workers feel very confident in this vaccine. You may wonder why we temporarily changed the format of our front page this week to photographs only and no stories. The simple truth is because these men and women being vaccinated is history in the making. We will look back on this time as a turning point in our pandemic crisis. Or at least, we hope we will be able to do so.

It was around this time last year that the Wuhan flu began to hit home. It began to sink in that this dreaded illness that had hit China and other parts of the world was heading this way.

For so many, Purim last year was the last Jewish festival that was celebrated in what was then the normal way. It was festive. It was bonding and celebratory. People took it for granted that they were safe when they hugged each other, danced together, shared a plate of hummus, or dipped into their finger food. Even sharing hamantaschen with friends was totally acceptable.

We took our health and safety for granted when we surrounded ourselves closely with friends and family. We also thought nothing of kissing and being unmasked – yes, even on Purim – with people we didn’t live with.

One year later, and so much has changed. Masks are the norm, and part of our protection from this dreaded coronavirus. Being separate is the rule. And, trying to find a way to celebrate Purim while still observing all the COVID-19 safety protocols is the call.

Our rabbis, Hatzolah, and doctors have put out a stern warning to us to totally downscale celebration of this fabulous *chag*.

In the words of doctors, they are “urging and appealing to everyone to make sure that this festival of Purim isn’t the catalyst for the beginning of another surge of coronavirus”.

While they aren’t saying we shouldn’t celebrate, they are saying that “this isn’t the time for communal meals, events, and senseless alcohol consumption”. They ask that we keep our *seudot* to “each person’s home/family bubble”.

They are dissuading people from sending and delivering *mishloach manot* to lots of friends and family as this could spread COVID-19. They suggest limiting this to a minimal number of people.

While, like us, they would love to celebrate Purim as we have always done, they have seen the ravages of this deadly virus up close, and want to guide us in doing what’s right to prevent a further surge.

The rabbis particularly ask that we limit our *seudot* to our nuclear family and focus on the “preservation of life” this year in the hope that next year, we can celebrate in the manner we are accustomed to.

Hatzolah gives some great tips in how to safeguard ourselves over Purim this year. This includes making sure all surfaces are sanitised and that people who don’t live together remain two metres apart at any given time. They also encourage plated food, and individually bottled drinks. They recommend having *seudot* outside and with as few people as possible, avoiding the elderly and people with comorbidities.

The vitally important take-home information this week is that we are on the right path but we are a long way from safety and security in terms of COVID-19.

It’s 100% up to us to keep our guard up, keep social distances, wash and sanitise our hands. You know the drill by now.

It’s too easy to let it go when the numbers are low. So easy! Nobody believes that when the numbers are low, they can get the virus. In fact, most people who have contracted the virus were shocked and never believed it would happen to them.

It’s exciting that the rollout has begun, and our healthcare workers are getting vaccinated. It’s brilliant and a sign of great things to come. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, but we won’t get there in the next few months.

The light is bright but it’s way down the line. We need to accept that we will still be wearing our masks through the middle of this year. We are most likely still going to have a third surge no matter how quickly we vaccinate two thirds of the population.

So, let’s lift our spirits because there is hope in sight, but let’s make a commitment to stay safe over Purim no matter how difficult that is.

Chag Purim Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Every doctor’s COVID-19 jab is one step closer to your vaccination

OPINION

DR DANIEL ISRAEL



The myalgia I awoke to this morning isn’t unfamiliar to me. It’s the common achy feeling we all experience at the onset of a touch of flu. The mild malaise I’m also feeling, after a shorter night’s sleep, is a physiological effect I try to avoid, but it’s the result of a habit that seems to creep into most of our busy lives.

Perhaps more particular, last night was the close constant attention I paid to my glucose levels as a Type 1 diabetic. Thankfully, all remained normal. Barring my mild symptoms, I’m feeling fantastic this morning, 24 hours after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

My mind drifts back to almost a year ago, when I contracted a simple rhinovirus (the common cold). In spite of experiencing similar symptoms, I would certainly not have described myself as feeling “fantastic” at the time. These same symptoms used to conjure up uneasiness that my family had to bear as part of the role in life I have chosen. That’s what happens when you live with some comorbidities and work in a busy practice that had started to screen its patients vigilantly for the new “Wuhan flu”.

I welcome the vaccine’s side effects as do my colleagues as we enrol this week as the guinea pigs of the Johnson & Johnson trial. This is the only vaccine to date that has shown significant efficacy in preventing severe COVID-19 or death as a result of the 501.V2 variant, the most common strain of COVID-19 in South Africa today.

It’s a single-dose vaccine, with 500 000 doses secured to inoculate healthcare workers over the next four weeks. This is a trial still at stage 3b, which means that it’s not yet registered anywhere in the world for commercial use, in spite of its rolling application in the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.

The vaccine is being rolled out as an emergency measure while it awaits FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approval potentially at the end of this month. Should the vaccine prove to be effective amongst South Africa’s healthcare workers, it will give SAHPRA (the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority) the green light for commercial rollout to our citizens.

My social media feed has been preoccupied with posts by colleagues receiving their vaccines. I, too, have added my own story to this noise. In reality, it’s far from noise. The supportive response we have all received from the public has been overwhelming.

A dear pulmonology colleague and I engaged in conversation yesterday as to whether doctors should be “flaunting their receipt of a vaccine” on social media or rather just quietly receiving the jab under the radar.

After some meaningful thought, we both agreed on the former. The palpable excitement by the public to doctors’ Facebook posts is fuelled by some valuable perspectives which I would like to share with you. These are the reasons that our community members should feel joy that our healthcare workers are finally being vaccinated this week.

The healthcare worker’s safety perspective: during surges of COVID-19 infection, patients have described the thought of not being able to see their doctors, nurses, and paramedics with ease as a terrifying dynamic. Statistics have shown that healthcare workers are three to four times more likely to develop COVID-19 than the general public. As many as 54 685 healthcare workers in the public sector alone have been infected with COVID-19 over the past year, with 779 losing their lives.

Unfortunately, every community doctor knows another doctor who has either contracted a serious COVID-19 infection or even lost their life to this plague. The vaccine offers you the promise that your doctors will be protected and able to help you when you may need them whether for COVID-19 or

another reason.

The experimental perspective: the AstraZeneca vaccine taught us that in the dynamic, evolving space of COVID-19, variants affect efficacy tremendously. This phenomenon is so significant, that an already procured vaccine at one million units had to be returned. It’s still unknown whether the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will indeed be effective in large numbers on the ground, beyond the limited sample size of the original study in South Africa.

It’s best to run a live trial on largely healthy healthcare workers. I have my predictions that even with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, modifications will need to be made to the product in the near future. Dr Glenda Gray advised me that a two-dose regimen is also being explored. Other expert vaccinologists have reported that it’s relatively simple to modify vaccines. As a member of the public, you will hopefully have access to the next round of vaccines – the improved version two.

The snowball perspective: this is the mindset that has excited me most since the rollout of vaccines a week ago. Every country with a functional vaccine campaign started off by vaccinating its healthcare workers. They constitute less than 5% of the population. Once healthcare workers start being vaccinated, the rollout soon spreads to essential workers and the elderly and vulnerable. Thereafter, vaccines are offered to younger healthy adults.



There is nothing more my wife and I would like to see than our own parents being vaccinated. I can say the same for my elderly patients. Understanding the procurement plan in South Africa, I’m confident that once the initial snowball of vaccinated healthcare workers has been formed, it’s inevitable that it will grow quickly and our deserving, beloved, vulnerable citizens will be vaccinated soon. Every doctor you see vaccinated means you are one step closer to being vaccinated yourself.

COVID-19 has changed our lives. It continues to place tremendous strain on our community socially, emotionally, financially, and physically. It has been proven that our second-nature, non-pharmacological measures of mask wearing, sanitising, and social distancing are powerful weapons in our armament. These measures dropped COVID-19 cases from a peak of 21 980 a day on 8 January 2021 to 998 today. However, we are finally exploring options of real pharmacological immunity. I’m utterly grateful to be contributing towards the body of knowledge of this development, and I have confidence that as the lightning development of vaccines continues to play out in South Africa, we will slowly get back to normal life.

• Dr Daniel Israel is a family practitioner in Johannesburg.

Former Israeli ambassadors to SA fight for the left

PAULA SLIER

Three former Israeli ambassadors to South Africa have put their names and faces to an online campaign supporting left-wing Israeli political party Meretz.

Circulated via Facebook and on Twitter, the tag line reads, “We were ambassadors in South Africa. We won’t let it happen here too. That’s why we support Meretz.”

Meretz is one of 39 parties competing next month in the fourth parliamentary elections to be held in Israel in less than two years. The party is projected to win four out of 120 Knesset (parliament) seats. Members see themselves as political representatives of the Israeli peace movement.

While not explicitly saying “apartheid”, the word “it” in the campaign is understood to mean exactly that, according to Dr Alon Liel, the former head of the South African desk in the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs and ambassador to South Africa from 1992 to 1994.

“Only very recently did Meretz start using the term ‘apartheid’ as a means to differentiate itself from the Labour Party,” he said. “But I have always supported the term when applied to what’s happening in the West Bank where there are two legal systems. One applies to half a million Israeli settlers and the other applies to two-and-a-half million Palestinians who live on the same piece of land.”

Liel was appointed ambassador during the South African transition from apartheid to democracy. Labour party leader Yitzhak Rabin had just been elected prime minister for the second time, and Jerusalem’s foreign policy objected to apartheid and supported Israel normalising relations with the African National Congress (ANC) leadership.

“We were really, really worried that the new South Africa, controlled by the ANC, would break off diplomatic relations with Israel because of our very intimate relationship with apartheid South Africa,” Liel says.

“I was sent to save the relationship. Six days after

I arrived, I met Mandela, even before I handed my credentials to [SA president FW] de Klerk. During that time, relations between our countries were not just normal, but good.”

Israel was secretly negotiating the Oslo Agreement with the Palestinians at the time, and the conversation was about exchanging land for peace and withdrawing from the West Bank. The official policy supported a two-state solution.

“South Africa had its turning point in 1994, when

South Africa and Israel as Mbeki was impressed with the bold steps taken by then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the context of disengagement,” said Baruch.

“I think post-apartheid South Africa was looking at our conflict from the point of view of conflict resolution, which wasn’t the case with Israel. Israel succeeded – unfortunately – in bringing the Palestinians to the brink of defeat. Had it been otherwise, had we seen international players apply pressure on the two parties to depart from their original positions and be prepared to

prevailing positions of my government were pretty far away from my own”.

“I want to see Meretz succeed in these upcoming elections. I’m very proud to be supporting a political party that is strong on ideology,” he says.

Another former ambassador to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, who served from 2013 to 2017, is also relieved to no longer feel conflicted between his personal and public beliefs.

“After 25 years in which I needed to keep quiet about my opinions, I’m no longer at that point in my life,” he says.

But Lenk says he lent his name to the advert not to make a comment on South Africa or its politics, and certainly not on the Jewish community “who I lived with for four years and have the warmest feelings towards”.

“I think what’s clever about the campaign is its use of words and non-use of words – it leaves a lot open for an audience to read what she/he wants to. The nuance of the word ‘it’ isn’t unintentional. The word ‘apartheid’ isn’t used. The advert is in Hebrew for a domestic Israeli audience. My message is to the Israeli voter.”

Lenk left the Israeli government after returning from Pretoria, initially for a break. But later, he decided to go into the business of capacity building in part because of what he saw it could achieve in South Africa.

“I think in the upcoming Israeli election, very few of us are voting on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. One of the parties that is talking about peace and co-existence in the neighbourhood with the Palestinians is Meretz, and for that reason I support it and think it’s an important voice.”

Says South African-born veteran journalist and Israeli author, Benjamin Pogrund, “I’m surprised that two men who spent several years as ambassadors in South Africa learnt so little that they actually equate Israel with apartheid South Africa.”

The Israeli ministry of foreign affairs declined to comment.



Ilan Baruch



Arthur Lenk



Dr Alon Liel

Mandela was appointed. We had our turning point when Israel officially dropped the two-state policy about 10 years ago and replaced it with annexation. Once this happened, I could no longer support the government. For me, annexation is the end of Zionism and democracy.”

While he’s used to being called a traitor, Liel insists he’s still a very loyal Israeli.

“Like apartheid South Africa and post-apartheid South Africa, it’s the same country. So, too, is Israel of Oslo and Israel of annexation the same country. But there was a U-turn in policy. I couldn’t be an ambassador for Israel today.”

Neither could Ilan Baruch who served a decade later, from 2005 to 2008, during Thabo Mbeki’s presidency.

“At the time, there was good reason to believe we could actually work out some reconciliation between

take a different course, that would have given us a chance at peace making. But that was not the case. I don’t judge South Africa as the party that spoils any opportunity for peace; I blame South Africa for not applying enough pressure on Israel to make peace an option.”

Baruch also blames Benjamin Netanyahu, who became Israeli prime minister for the second time in 2009 for moving the country further to the right. Two years later, he resigned from the government in protest against the political partnership between Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman, the leader of the right-wing Israel Our Home party. Since then he’s been active in civil society in opposition to the government.

A long-time Meretz supporter, Baruch admits that when he was ambassador to Pretoria, he was wrestling between his personal convictions and the desire to serve his country the best he could. That is, he says, “even if the

Find Your FAB PROMO

GREY

600x600mm

NEVER-TO-BE-REPEATED PROMO PRICE.

Matt Glazed Porcelain Cement-style Tiles.

Avenue Tile Range

LAUNCH PRICE

R149m²

CHARCOAL

WHITE

200x1140mm

HAYA

100% MADE IN SPAIN

NATURAL

SAVE 20%

Maryland

Wood Look Porcelain Tiles

NOW R390m²

WAS R490m²

NOW ON!

UP TO 40% OFF local and imported tiles, taps, baths, basins, sanware and so much more.

265x800mm

Origami Satin Ceramic Decor Tile Range

NOW R179m²

WAS 210m²

ON TREND

Best seller

MOSAICS UP TO 40% OFF

GLOBAL STONE

COTTO

Sensation

Round & Square Basins

From R1999 each

Tetragon

White Floor-Standing Toilet & Soft Close Seat

From R4799 each

Simply Modish

White Wall-Hung Toilet Including Soft Close Seat

From R5299 each

WAS R6590 each

ITALTILE

LIVE BEAUTIFULLY

Our showrooms are open 7 days a week.

Prices are valid while stocks last and subject to change. Prices include VAT.

Browse these beautiful products and so many more instore or online.

Get the full range on promotion at www.italtile.co.za/fab

Dizengoff attack still haunts families 25 years on

TALI FEINBERG

South African-born Tali Gordon and her friend, Inbar Atiya, had gone to Dizengoff Center to find an outfit on the night of Purim 25 years ago, but instead of celebrating the *chag*, they were killed in a terrorist attack outside the shopping centre.

So many years later, her father, Barry Gordon, is still haunted by the loss of his beautiful daughter who was killed at the age of 24. Tali was killed on 4 March 1996, when a suicide bomber detonated a 20kg nail bomb at a busy intersection next to the centre in the middle of Tel Aviv. He murdered 13 people, including Tali. Her father, who lives in Johannesburg, says, “Every time there’s another terror attack, it adds fuel to the fire. You don’t get over it, the pain gets worse.” Tali was living in central Tel Aviv, and she and her friend went to Dizengoff Center, which had a number of shops where one could buy dress-up clothes for Purim, he recalls. They walked out of the centre and had crossed the road to the ATM. While they were waiting at the traffic light, the Hamas terrorist blew himself up in the middle of the road. Both Tali and Inbar, who was 22, were killed instantly. “They died together. I first heard about it when my son phoned me in the middle of the night from the mortuary in Jaffa. Tali had a small tattoo of a seagull on her right shoulder, and that’s how they

identified her. They also found her car in the vicinity.” Tali was born in South Africa, but grew up in Israel. Her father spent his whole life in Johannesburg, and attended King David schools. Fiercely Zionist, he headed to Israel straight after school as a volunteer after the

Israel, but eventually he and his first wife divorced and he returned to South Africa. The children remained with their mother, and visited him once a year. Tali spent a year in Johannesburg, and attended King David.

After school, she went to the army. Talented in languages, she could speak Arabic, French, Hebrew, and Spanish, and she worked in intelligence. She was also recruited to the paratroopers. After the army, she travelled widely. “She was quite worldly, and went to America and the Far East. She started studying political science at Bar Ilan University, and was very politically motivated. Without a doubt, she would have gone into politics. She was a remarkable young lady and we had a special bond,” Barry says.

Strangely, a number of disconnected South African families were also affected by the tragedy, including one Durban family in which a mother and sister were killed. “What was so harsh about this *pigua* [terror attack] was the range of age of victims. There was Yovav Levy, who was 13 years old. I’m in daily contact with his mother since we met at the cemetery two years ago. The oldest victim was 84. Most of the victims were young – two were 13, one was 14, and one was 15,” Barry says.

He wasn’t able to get to Israel in time for the funeral. But there was another memorial on the seventh day after the tragedy, and about 2 500 to 3 000 students attended. His daughter is buried in a cemetery just outside Tel Aviv.



The memorial stone at Dizengoff Center
image of her. She is in her late 20s, and lives in Panama City with her boyfriend, working as an interior designer.” The Gordons travel to Israel every year to commemorate the tragedy. Last year, they were there in late February and the memorial ceremony was cancelled as COVID-19 began to grip the country. Still, they went to the cemetery, and to the spot where the attack happened. “It’s on the corner of King George and Dizengoff. There’s a memorial stone there, and a place to light candles. I don’t like the place very much, it gives me cold shivers. But when we were standing there, we

saw a photographer and an Israeli actor doing an interview. They asked what I was doing there and I said I lost my daughter in the attack. They said they were doing a piece on the history of Dizengoff, and asked if they could interview me there and then. It was very emotional.” Another strange coincidence was when they went into the centre to get something to eat, and spoke to the security guard who checks everyone at the entrance. “I told him I lost my daughter in the attack, and he said he was there that day. He got shrapnel in his arm, and it took almost nine months for him to recover. He saw the carnage.” Barry says that in a strange way, the people who die in terror attacks are “the lucky ones”. “They go to heaven,

they’re with the angels, they’re done. But the families left behind – their lives are changed forever, never to be the same.” Even though the Israeli government pays a monthly stipend to families of victims of terror, “the injured and their families suffer the most. The ramifications are endless”. For him, the pain never goes away. “Terrorism has an impact on a person mentally, physically, spiritually, and religiously. Your loved one is there one minute, gone the next. I wonder about so many things, like if I would have had grandchildren by now. Terror means you don’t just lose that person, but an entire generation.”



Tali Gordon

Six-Day War. He was there for three years, and met his first wife there. They went to South Africa, where they had two children, Tali and Alon. After 1976, they returned to



Barry Gordon at Tali's grave

Barry says the families of the victims are like a support group. “We share our sorrow. There is such a void. They relate to your tragedy, and you get a bit of closure in that moment.” His son was deeply affected by the loss of his sister, and has never managed to live a normal life. The family has also been affected by another tragedy. Barry’s mother (Tali’s grandmother) was killed two years before the terror attack in a hijacking in Johannesburg. “Her grandmother took her travelling around the world, and her death really affected Tali.” Barry remarried, and he and his second wife, Theresa, had a girl named Tashima. “She is named after Tali and is the spitting

YOUR MATANOT L'EVYONIM

MEGILLAH
Reading GIFTS TO
The Poor MISHLOACH
Manot SEUDAH
Meal

MAKE
PURIM
5781
POWERFUL

ENTRUST YAD AHARON WITH
YOUR DONATION

DONATE
NOW

WE WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS
DISTRIBUTED TIMEOUSLY ON
PURIM.

YAD
AHARON
& MICHAEL

The Jewish Food Fund

Call: 011 485-2076 or 011 640-2106

FOR MORE INFO:
info@yadaharon.co.za

DONATE VIA: YADAHARON.CO.ZA

Your donation is tax deductible and attracts an 18A certificate

Banking Details: Yad Aharon & Michael, Nedbank, Branch Code: 151105, Account Number: 1911087363, Ref: Your full name/PURIM

Donor: 06/10/2021

FULFILL A REALLY

BIG

MITZVAH

THIS PURIM

**MATANOT
LE'EVYONIM**

HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE IN OUR COMMUNITY

1

SMARTCAN

Search "Chevrah
Kadisha" or
"Smartcan" on the
App store or Google
Play

2

EFT

Chevrah Kadisha
Standard Bank JHB
Branch Account
000 154 253

3

WEBSITE

www.jhbchev.co.za

4

SMS

SMS Purim
to 37613 and we
will call you back



Snap here to pay



SnapScan

**OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTOR
OF THE COMMUNITY**



ChevrahKadisha

Valiant heroes and dark villians – why Purim is like COVID-19

OPINION

We all love fairy tales. Beautiful, clever heroes who use their charm to bring frightening dramas to a quick denouement after which everybody lives happily ever after. From nursery school, this is how the story of Purim has been told to us by well-meaning educators: gorgeous young Esther, blessed to have won an empire-wide beauty contest to become the new Queen of Persia, lives in wedded bliss with the King. As soon as a threat is levelled against her people, she manages to sweet-talk her husband, Achashverosh, to nullify the plan. And they all live happily ever after.

I apologise in advance if I’m spoiling a childhood dream. A thorough reading of the Book of Esther, aided by the commentary found in Talmud Megillah, shows each of the statements in the above paragraph to be untrue. Esther was neither young, gorgeous, nor happy. She was dragged, against her will, to join the King’s harem. Though she secured the role of spouse, she still lived a miserable double life, and had to vie for the monarch’s attention against many rivals.

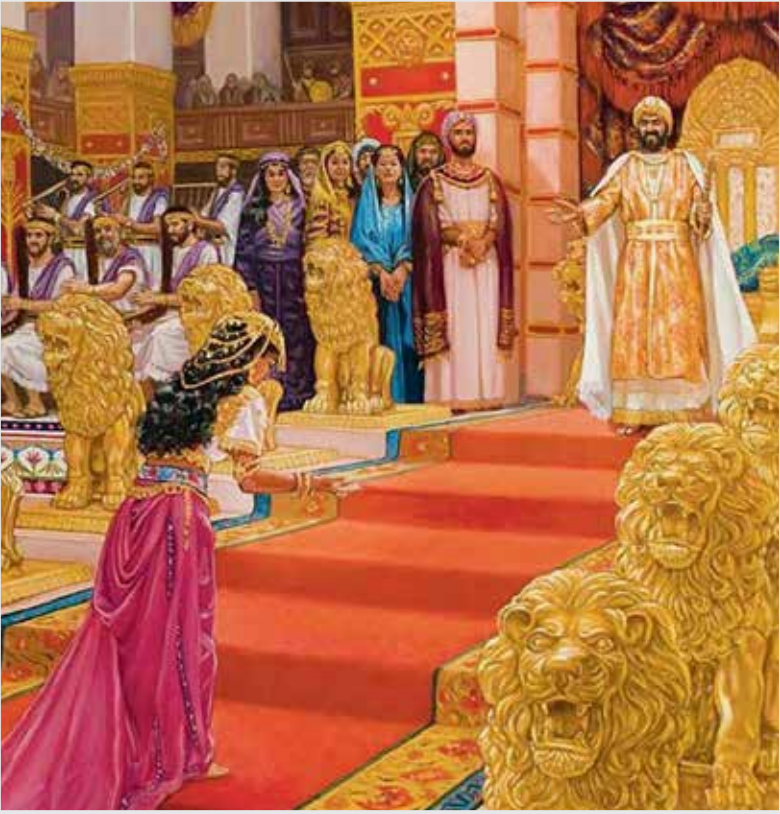
By the time she heard of Haman’s evil plan, she hadn’t seen the King for more than a month. And here’s a little challenge: for an audience with the King, you need to be invited. Nobody, even Achashverosh’s wife,

simply marches into the throne room and says, “Howzit!”, as Mordechai expected Esther to do. Trespassers are executed!

Esther’s approach to the King could only have disastrous consequences for her. At worst, she would lose her life for her breach of royal protocol. At best, the King would extend his golden sceptre to her, signifying forgiveness for her breach (which, as we all know, is what happened). This outcome would actually be far from pretty. But first let me introduce you to another fact you are unlikely to have been taught by your nursery – or even primary – school teacher.

As per the Talmud, prior to her abduction to the harem, Mordechai and Esther were husband and wife. For years, she lived a double life, halachically married to one man while prisoner to another’s whims. Yet, from the moment she volunteered to approach the King and seduce him into saving her people, her marriage to Mordechai would have to end by Jewish law (which tragically is precisely what happened).

Mordechai’s request of Esther was to make an ultimate sacrifice for both of them. It involved pain and deprivation for individuals for the sake of the entire nation. A sacrifice Esther took upon herself, with the famous words, “Thus I will come to the King, contrary to the law, and if I perish, I perish.” (Esther, Chapter 4).



A verse heavily loaded with double meaning. “Contrary to the law” – Persia’s or G-d’s? “I perish, I perish” – in this world or in the world to come.

The past year has been no fairy tale, just like the Purim story. But these magic stories often involve villains and heroes. Here the parallel applies.

The hero and heroine of Purim are Mordechai and Esther, a couple prepared to make huge personal sacrifices (hers far greater than his, of course) for the benefit of a community.

So many heroes have emerged in the past year and a half. These

are good men and women, giving up what’s precious to them for the common good. Tribute has been paid to the angels of Hatzolah and to frontline health workers who have worked tirelessly under horrid conditions to save lives and minimise pain. In my position of chairperson of the South African Rabbinical Association, I also want to make mention of the heroic efforts of my colleagues to give spiritual guidance and hope to our community, this with our sanctuaries shuttered for the greater part of the past year.

The real hero is each one of us, in

our own personal life, who has made and continues to make huge personal sacrifices for the good of the wider community. The many of us who stay home, cut down on socialising, give up on parties, glamorous weddings, Barmitzvahs and Batmitzvahs, and other life-cycle celebrations, and have radically modified our lifestyle to save others’ lives. Not to mention the wretched mask wearing, an altruistic act, according to experts, who say that most of the benefit is for those around us. The cost to this year’s Purim observance has been huge, accustomed as we are to large, merry gatherings.

The mortal danger in the Purim story took close to a year to disappear. To be exact, from Pesach to Purim. (Haman’s edict was promulgated on the Eve of Passover; the threat ceased about 11 months later, on 14 Adar, later to become Purim.) That’s the precise timeline of the current peril we are facing. We pray for Hashem to give us another Purim miracle, with total and complete deliverance from the current danger. As we read in the Book of Esther (Chapter 9), may we experience “transformation from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning to festivity”.

Purim sameach!

• Rabbi Yossi Chaikin is the rabbi at Oxford Shul and the chairperson of the SA Rabbinical Association.



RABBI YOSSEI CHAIKIN

Less is more: friendship is the essence of *mishloach manot*

OPINION

ADINA ROTH



Purim is easily one of our most social and communal holidays. The festivities begin at nightfall, and flow through to the following day. There is dress-up, a *seudah* (festive meal), and our communal web is activated as people send *mishloach manot* (food parcels) to friends near and far.

With so much socialising as well as giving and receiving, Purim is often a day to acknowledge one’s connection to people and feel grateful for community.

Yet, a group of Jewish doctors issued a caution recently about *mishloach manot*, saying that the circulating of these food parcels isn’t a good idea during a pandemic. These doctors advised keeping the *mitzvah* to its minimum, which is to send *mishloach manot*, (a minimum of two items of food), to one person.

Should we resign ourselves to saying Purim is yet another holiday suppressed by the pandemic, or might there be something valuable, even deeply connecting in reducing the *mitzvah* to its minimum requirements?

In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, we are told that Rabba, an impoverished yet highly esteemed Amoraic Sage who became head of the Yeshiva at Pumpedita, would send a sack of dates and a cup of roasted flour with Abaye to the esteemed exilarch Marei, the son of Mar. Abaye the student of Rabba, functions as a kind of quirky commentator.

Appraising the dates and the flour he says, “When Marei the exilarch sees this, he will say, ‘Even when the farmer becomes the king, the

basket doesn’t hang low.’” In other words, when Abaye looks at the modest package, he thinks that Marei, an exilarch, might find it a little ... spare.

Marei the exilarch then sent Rabba in return a sackful of ginger and a cupful of long peppers, an eminently more expensive gift. At this point, Abaye comments, “Rabba will say, ‘I sent him a sweet treat, and now he has sent me pungents in return.’” In other words, Rabba will say, he has sent me something smelly!



This humorous anecdote relaying an exchange between a rosh yeshiva and an exilarch touches on the underbelly of *mishloach manot*: sending food parcels to your friends on Purim can be complicated.

Who would have thought that bag of Fritos and that almost stale hamantaschen actually touches on complex socio-economic issues, class stratifications, egos, and interpersonal sensitivities? Purim is a day where dates and flour might be misconstrued as a little frugal, where ginger and peppers might be received as

a subtle insult.

Indeed, sometimes a *mitzvah* can become entangled in other stuff: how many *mishloach manot* did I receive? Am I popular? Do I have money to send fancy *mishloach manot*? Is my *mishloach manot* as nice as the one I’m receiving from others? Did we receive from so and so? So and so delivered to us, but we hadn’t prepared any for them.

Mishloach manot is almost akin to getting likes on Facebook. You feel loved when you get lots of them. What’s more, the very next day, you find yourself sitting with a pile of confectionery that you want to give away. Between longing to receive it and then giving it all away, what’s the point? As doctors advise us to return to the minimum practice of the *mitzvah*, perhaps it’s also a chance to return to the essence and meaning of the *mitzvah*. The words in the Megillah tell us “*mishloach manot ish le’rei’eihu*” (food parcels from one person to his/her friend). If this is about sending a gift to your friends, perhaps Purim is

a day to consider where we are in terms of our friends and friendship. What does it mean to truly give and receive as a friend? What does it take to recognise the true needs of your friends, and to offer yourself without over-reaching or under-reaching.

Perhaps this focus on reaching out to your friend is because the story of Esther is really about failed relationships. On a micro level, Achashverosh isn’t a guy who has deep and meaningful relationships! He gets rid of Vashti when she challenges him, he doesn’t summon

Esther for days on end, and his relationship with Haman is based on power and flattery. The failed interpersonal relationships have ramifications for the wider level of society. As Vashti is punished, all women in Persia are further subjugated, and as Haman hates Mordechai, he seeks to kill all Jews.

So this Purim, as we adhere to our doctors’ orders and prepare *mishloach manot* for one or maybe two people, let’s return to an examination of friendship and consider the ways in which bonds have been strained through social distancing.

Let’s offer our reduced *mishloach manot* with simplicity and genuineness, a nourishing yet humble gift to a friend who could do with it, and receive what’s offered without judgement or expectation. But more than a food parcel, let’s remember how to be a friend, and how to cultivate friendship.

If Rabba and Marei’s *mishloach manot* manoeuvres were complicated, the Talmud in Megillah ends with a meaningful and touching tale about two other rabbis. We are told that Abaye bar Avin and Rabbi Chaninah bar Avin would simply exchange their meals with each other, thus fulfilling their *mishloach manot* obligation.

The Talmud seems to tell us that through this simple, humble, and uncomplicated exchange, without fanfare or ceremony, they were satisfied and complete, and all obligations were fulfilled. They understood the essence of the *mitzvah*.

• Adina Roth is a clinical psychologist in private practice, and a teacher of Jewish Studies. She runs an independent Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah programme in Johannesburg, and teaches Tanach to adults.

The lessons we can learn from drinking on Purim



RABBI YUVAL CHERLOW

Opinion
In many cultures and religions, we find certain days on the calendar commemorated by a certain degree of “escapism”. Actions that would be deemed abnormal on a typical day are embraced as the norm, often leading to behaviour that can approach the chaotic or even lawless.

In the greater world, “carnival culture” gives people the opportunity to let loose and act in ways that many would never even think of engaging in outside of that setting.

In Jewish tradition, the day that most approaches this idea is Purim. The explanation for this can be found in the written text of Megillat Esther, which highlights the concept of upheaval, or turning reality upside down.

The Megillah itself is different from any other biblical text. G-d’s name is never mentioned. An evil decree is launched against the Jewish people, but unlike all the many other times this is recorded in biblical texts, there is no explicit reason given for why this decree was issued.

The Megillah discusses extensively issues which on face value, aren’t directly related to the story. This, along with other practical and thematic differences make it stand alone among other texts we read and learn.

Purim day itself is also different from any other day in the Jewish calendar. There are specific *mitzvot* that aren’t observed on any other day. Our sages specifically ordained that people should get inebriated to the extent that they are unable to distinguish between Mordechai the righteous and Haman the villain.

Like nearly every action which asks us to stray from our “normal” modes of behaviour, this halacha has the ability to be done in a way that brightens our world and those around us, and almost as easily has the ability to darken that very same world.

Everyone who has enjoyed alcohol with the purpose of embracing Torah values or to open one’s heart in honest conversation knows that drinking can have a wholly positive and even heavenly purpose.

But we also know how Purim can become a truly dark and disturbing day, where children and teenagers become exposed to the evil side of



excessive or irresponsible drinking. This can lead to complete lack of control and place people in great danger. Alcohol also has the additional risk of leading a drinker quickly along a path of addiction, a concept which is all that much more frightening when we’re talking about our children or grandchildren.

We are, therefore, presented with a real challenge in which tradition asks us to confront an activity which brings with it the potential for danger.

One option is to abstain completely. Stay away from drinking altogether, and avoid potentially problematic parties. This makes a strong statement of avoiding potential risks. But for many – particularly impressionable teens and young adults – it’s not overly practical. It’s also not the best way to educate children about the importance of moderation and responsibility. Practically, teenagers will be exposed to these parties, and will drink.

Perhaps more importantly, if we are to completely ban drinking, it also ignores one of the basic elements that comes with the holiday.

The second option is to look at this challenge as a real teaching opportunity. Educators and parents should approach this issue by speaking to our students and children honestly about the realities and dangers that come with drinking, particularly the dangers associated with Purim.

We shouldn’t deny that alcohol can be a positive thing when closely and carefully controlled, allowing us to escape from behind the “mask” which we wear the rest of the year. But they need to understand that when it’s uncontrolled, the results can be tragic.

The message is that when we act responsibly and remain in control, it can even be a blessed thing. The goal is to instil in the next generation the fact that we view our approach to this holiday as challenging. If it accepts that challenge with the proper steps in place, then alcohol need not be prohibited completely.

From both educational and ethical perspectives, this is an appropriate lesson with which we need to approach Purim every year – and one which is applicable at all other times

as well.

Young people need to appreciate that there are many inherent dangers in our world, in both what we do and who we interact with. But life gives us tools and capabilities to encounter those potential dangers and use them in a way that can be positive and beneficial rather than destructive. To bring light rather than darkness, and indeed, to make us better and stronger people.

This is a key message and one

that needs to be approached with patience and sensitivity. But if it’s conveyed effectively, we can be confident that we will educate our children to be better prepared and equipped to make the difficult moral, ethical, and practical decisions that lie ahead.

• Rabbi Yuval Cherlow is the director of Tzohar’s Center for Jewish Ethics in Israel.



UNITED HERZLIA SCHOOLS
בתי"ס המאוחדים הרצליה

Herzlia Weizmann Primary School

HEBREW TEACHER (part-time)

Sea Point, Cape Town

Part-time contract post, starting as soon as possible

Herzlia is a highly successful, independent, community Jewish Day School. We seek a person fluent in Hebrew to teach and to be part of a high achieving and collegial department.

The successful candidate will:

- ◆ Be fluent in Hebrew.
- ◆ Ideally be qualified to teach Hebrew, or wish to obtain a teaching qualification whilst gaining practical experience.
- ◆ Ideally have previous experience in teaching Hebrew at Primary school level, or be willing to learn.
- ◆ Ideally be familiar with the Ulpan Or programme.
- ◆ Be able to integrate technology into the curriculum using various electronic media in the classroom.
- ◆ Be able to work in an inclusive environment.
- ◆ Be willing to extend and enrich classroom learning.

Please email a brief CV to
application@herzlia.com

Closing date: 03 March 2021

Please note: the submission of a CV will not automatically result in an interview. United Herzlia Schools reserves the right not to appoint anyone to this position. Herzlia is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; applicants must be willing to undergo screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers.

A BRIDGE TO BETTER DAYS

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate the economy, an increasing number of Jewish owned businesses are struggling. The Gesher Small Business Relief Fund offers last resort, flexible term, interest-free loans up to R750,000 to appropriate Jewish-owned businesses in South Africa. We have funds available to continue to be able to support small businesses and professionals where they broadly meet the qualifying criteria set out on our website.

To donate please email
romy@gesher.org.za

To apply or express interest
please visit www.gesher.org.za



Loans to
120+
businesses



Average loan size
R250,000



Employees directly
impacted by loans granted
+1500

Gesher
SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF FUND

Ts and Cs apply

The masks we wear

OPINION RABBI GREG ALEXANDER



As I write this, I’m looking at a row of masks. That might not be surprising given that it’s a week to Purim. The masks, however, aren’t in honour of this favourite of festivals, but because we live in a deadly time and to leave the house without one is dangerous and illegal. How appropriate, then, for Jewish time and COVID-19-time to align so compellingly. Let’s begin with Purim. The mask is so connected with Purim, we may forget why it got there in the first place. The little Esthers and Mordechais running around the shul playground might not know that the Purim mask has a deep, dark history, and one that has much to teach us in 2021. The opening chapter of the Megillah describes a huge feast the likes of which no-one can imagine, COVID-19 or no. It’s not set in Israel but in the land of Persia, the city of Shushan to be precise, and for the rest of the chapter, it’s unclear what the story has to do with us at all.



It’s only in chapter two that we meet Mordechai the Jew, and he is introduced not only with the typical lineage, but the fact that his great grandfather was one of the original exiles sent from Israel to Babylon. Mordechai the Jewish exile. And so, we’re told a story that isn’t just Jewish, but reflects a reality familiar to you and me and every Jew who lives in the diaspora today. At first glance, the Jews of Persia live in a land of plenty. The palace of Shushan is full of bling and excess and, at least until Haman changes the rules, the Jews seem to live peacefully alongside their compatriots. Mordechai has a position of some influence and access to the king. And yet, at the whim of his majesty, all qualifying virgins are trafficked from their homes to the palace to provide fodder for the harem. No consent. No security. But that’s true for all the maidens, not just the Jewish ones (sadly true today too). The first mask is the mask of comfort – financial and physical. The Megillah reminds us that what we see on the surface as “the good life” is fragile and impermanent. Enter our heroine, and the name of the book. Esther isn’t her Jewish name. The Megillah tells us that her Hebrew name is Hadassah. But Esther is the name she goes by, which hints at the Hebrew *nistar*, the hidden one. Hadassah hides herself behind the beautiful Persian face of Esther. In spite of the seductively wealthy surroundings, the price Esther and Mordechai pay is to leave some of themselves at home. Every day. Even as she ascends to the highest position a woman in Persia might, at Mordechai’s insistence, Esther hides her true identity. What did they fear? The text doesn’t say. But we, the reader, have a sense that we know. It may be from our knowledge of our past, remote and recent, when the Hamans and Hitlers of history have turned

a seemingly safe haven into a hell of persecution and death. Or it may be more subtle, as every day, we choose carefully, depending on who it is we are with, how much of our Jewish self to reveal. Part of the irony of life in the diaspora is the measure of successful assimilation, the daily dance of acceptance and social climbing while trying to preserve a core of Jewish self. Outward signs are clothing, “looks”, and having the right stuff. Esther, after all, is chosen for her beauty, the ultimate sign of being “in”. In our society, it’s the right car, the latest look, the nose not too large, the hair like (insert celebrity name). Esther trades on her looks, and Mordechai encourages her. They aren’t bad people, nor are they weak characters. They are just doing what we do every day – living as Jews in a non-Jewish world. The most striking mask in the book of Esther is the absence of G-d. Not one mention. A notion that’s picked up by the Talmud: “From where does the Torah bring the name Esther? From the verse, ‘But I [G*d] will surely conceal My face [*haster astir panai*] on that day’.” (Deuteronomy 31:18 in B.Talmud Hullin 139b). The name, Esther, is interpreted as an extension of the phrase for a concealed G-d. Is that not the experience of so many today, who want so desperately to see G-d, hear G-d, speak to G-d, ask G-d, “Why?” And thus, the mask becomes not just a device worn on Purim to evoke a laugh, but a symbol of our spiritual challenges, the lives we lead, and the identity negotiations they require. And this year, masks are all the more the primary metaphor of the moment. Purim was the last festival that we celebrated in person. The first COVID-19 case had just surfaced in South Africa (on 4 March 2020) when Purim was celebrated (9 March) and while we watched with interest, the Megillah was read (in person to real people), the drinks circulated, and no-one, no-one said, “You are on mute” once. Zoom shares were still affordable. A year later, that memory is tainted with every single cancelled sacred occasion since then from Pesach seder to Shavuot cheesecake competition to the unthinkable high holy days online. Worse than this, so many of our community have lost loved ones, friends, and family to the deadly disease. And all the way through, the (non-Purim) mask has been with us. So, this Purim, as we mask up, may we pray that soon, the time will come that we can all take off the mask. The COVID-19 mask but also the mask that hides our true reality. The masks of hiding who we are. Hiding our yearnings, fears, hopes, sexual orientation, failings, and our gifts. And the mask of meaning. May we delve deeply into the deepest mystery of all to reveal the Dwelling Presence in and around us. Have yourself a joyful Purim.

• Rabbi Greg Alexander is part of the rabbinic team at the Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation.

Dutch confectioner engages in some Jewish ‘cookie washing’

CNAAN LIPSHIZ – JTA

In Dutch supermarkets, no cookie aisle is fully stocked without a national treat called *jodenkoeken* – shortbread discs whose Dutch name means “Jew cookies”. Exactly how *jodenkoeken* (also spelled *jodekoeken*) got their name is unclear, but they have been a feature of Dutch teatime since at least the 19th century. Whatever the etymology, Dutch Jews don’t seem to mind having a cookie named after them. “I know it sounds strange to Americans, but there’s never been an issue around *jodenkoeken*,” said Ronny Naftaniel, who led Dutch Jewry’s watchdog group on antisemitism for 37 years before becoming vice-chairperson of the Central Jewish Board of the Netherlands a decade ago. Things changed on Friday, 19 February, when the company behind the Netherlands’ oldest and best-known *jodenkoeken* brands announced that it was changing the cookie’s name in a bid to “help create a more inclusive society”. Patisserie Pater wrote on its website that the Davelaar-brand *jodenkoeken* will be called *odekoeken* – Dutch for “ode cookies”. Meanwhile, several other companies also manufacture *jodenkoeken*, and one, Lotus Bakeries, said on Saturday that it was considering changing the name too. The name change comes at a time when companies the world over are assessing their product lines to ensure that they are culturally appropriate, a reckoning that is hitting the food world hard. And the Netherlands, where the Dutch Christmastime tradition of wearing blackface is a matter of open debate, does feature a few desserts with names that have drawn criticism for being insensitive.



But Dutch Jews say they didn’t see any reason for *jodenkoeken* to get a new name. “Davelaar can of course name their products as they please, but *jodenkoeken* really isn’t something I’m offended by, and I don’t know of anyone who is,” said Ronit Palache, a 36-year-old Dutch-Jewish journalist and author who said she detected “woke overzealousness” in Patisserie Pater’s decision. “When you start making corrections no one needs or asks for, you’re just creating resistance and friction over nothing,” she said. How the cookies got their name isn’t known, but there are several theories, according to Jonah Freud, who published a book in 2012 about Dutch-Jewish cuisine. Under one theory, the *jodenkoeken*’s simple recipe – they require only butter, flour and sugar – was created by a non-Jewish baker whose last name was “De Jode”. But that man, if he existed, has never been identified. Another theory, Freud said, holds that an unnamed Amsterdam Jew sold the original recipe to Lotus Bakeries, which made it famous. According to a third theory, the biscuits were named *jodenkoeken* because of their simplicity at a time when many Amsterdam Jews were poor. “But then they have lots and lots of sugar, more than other cookies, which would have been a luxury product in the 19th century, so they weren’t your typical poor people’s food at all,” Freud said. A fourth hypothesis is that the cookies were introduced by Sephardic Jews who travelled on shipping lines that connected Northern Europe with the Iberian Peninsula’s Bay of Biscay. Advocates for this theory point to the fact that some parts of Norway and Denmark also have a very similar pastry called *jodekaker* in Norwegian and Danish, while Iceland has a sugarless variant called *gyðingakökur*, all of which are far less popular and well known than *jodenkoeken* are in the Netherlands. Whatever their origin, Freud said, “Everybody likes *jodenkoek* in the Netherlands and beyond. So why would we Jews want to distance ourselves from such a tasty treat?” Many Dutch Jews have *jodenkoeken* stories. Palache

Continued on page 14>>

Call to wake up and listen

OPINION MELANIE MORITZ



The great Rabbi Yehuda says, “The human soul should turn g-dly ... Perceive the world, enjoy the sublime, that sublime light and the hearing of the divine speech.” (Zohar) How far has humanity travelled away from this truth here in South Africa? The dreaded load shedding, darkness upon the face of the earth ... hmmm! It’s time to take a good look at yourself – no television, no devices – could Hashem be asking you to now look inwards? Then the virus, resulting in the wearing of masks. How many different masks do we wear for our spouse, children, friends, and co-workers, so full of masks covering up our true self, not hearing the divine voice of Hashem. We are now wearing our mask outside of ourselves. Why? No more space inside, full up, the pretense is overflowing. Then comes a cry of compassion for humanity – a new rule, masks, social distancing, sanitising, or could we say this, could we look at it like this, expose the truth, give each other space, cleanse soul and mind? Yet, humanity couldn’t obey this simple law of protection, then came lockdown. Imprisonment not only of your mind – your body, your whole being, locked up. And now death, what’s more final on this earth than death? Death, giving up or giving in, surrendering. How to die, why, where do we go, what do we do ... well this is for another discussion. If each of us does our best by being still, listening to the voice of Hashem, doing it

through prayer is one way to hear his voice. We have, as some people call it, collective karma, the law of cause and effect, we also have our own individual karma (attaining good merit or drawing negative energy through our deeds and actions). In collective karma, we are all in the same energy, this is where we see how the innocent and guilty suffer together as a result of a situation. We can open the door to a new energy, a new way of living, we all have the key in our hand, all you need to do is turn the lock and enter. Let your fancy dress and mask for your Purim celebration be the last mask you wear. Pesach is nearly upon us. Think of the slaughtered lamb in place of the first born, allow the angel of death to pass you by, the angel will know death has been, she will see the sign written on the door although it’s the blood of the lamb. What an auspicious time to play your part to turn your life around! A time in which there are no more masks, the truth can be revealed, the doors open wide, children can laugh and play in the park once more, the light of Shekinah shines brightly in your soul once more. Let’s pray that through the blessing power of Hashem, the truth will set us free and heal us. It’s time to turn to prayer. Wishing you a spiritual and enlightening Purim and Pesach!

• Melanie Moritz is a spiritual teacher and healer.

Ten days in Iran, one day discovering isolated community

PERSONAL STORY

DAN BROTMAN



Much to my parents’ dismay, two years ago I spent 10 days in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Persian and Jewish history are intertwined, with Jews having lived in what’s now Iran for more than 2 500 years.

King Cyrus the Great, whose tomb we visited, liberated the Jews from Babylonian captivity in 538 BCE, and issued an edict for Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Second Temple. Every year, Jews around the world celebrate the festival of Purim, commemorating the heroic actions of Queen Esther, who saved us from Haman, an Achaemenid Persian Empire official who was planning to kill all the Jews. Her tomb and that of her cousin, Mordechai, are located in the city of Hamadan. My namesake, Daniel, was thrown into a pit by Darius the Mede, protected by an angel, and is buried in the town of Shush.

On the eve of the Islamic Revolution, Iran had full diplomatic relations with Israel and was home to a Jewish population of about 100 000. The revolution and its aftermath resulted in the severing of diplomatic relations between Iran, Israel, and the United States, and most of the Jewish community departed for those two countries. Today, the Jewish community in Iran consists of fewer than 10 000 individuals.

Although our tour schedule was packed, I was determined to find a way to connect with the local Jewish community.



Tomb of King Cyrus the Great

Our Muslim guide, Mohammad, was instrumental in helping me achieve this goal. When our tour group happened to be in Isfahan on a Friday evening, Mohammad was able to ask around and secure the address for the Mullah Jacob Synagogue.

At sunset, he and I walked the streets searching for the elusive building. At some point, he stopped a random young boy on the street to ask for directions. To our astonishment, the boy replied, “Follow me, I’m on my way there now to pray!” I followed the boy to the synagogue, where I removed my shoes at the entrance, as per local custom. I was initially received with stares, as foreigners are meant to get official permission from the government before visiting any Jewish institutions.

Although I had turned up unannounced and visibly stood out like a sore thumb, a young congregant who spoke English came to sit next to me, where we spoke intermittently throughout the service about what it’s like to be Jewish in the Islamic Republic. I noticed that the large Star of David outside the synagogue was covered up, as the Star of David is viewed in the Islamic Republic as a controversial political symbol linked to Israel and Zionism.

Through Mohammad’s persistence, halfway through the

trip, the tour company was finally able to secure clearance for me to visit Jewish institutions. I had one full day at my disposal after our tour ended which I intended to use to see as much of the local Jewish community as I could. I brought my passport to the offices of the Tehran Jewish Community, the official organisation representing Iranian Jewry. The office administrator issued me with a stamped letter in Persian, which I was to take to each Jewish institution I would visit later that day. I was then met by a young lawyer representing the Jewish community, who accompanied me to meet the community’s president. The president was friendly but clearly guarded in his language and demeanour. I then took a taxi to one of the city’s four kosher restaurants, which surprisingly didn’t advertise itself as kosher on its signage and didn’t display a mezuzah on its doorpost. I proceeded to attend prayer services at the Abrishami Synagogue, located on Palestine Street. The street name is noteworthy, as once the Islamic Republic had broken off relations with Israel in 1979, it handed the Israeli embassy over to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and renamed the road in front of the mission Palestine Street.

Through a friend of a friend in South Africa, I had been put in touch with Arash Abaie, an active member of the Tehran Jewish community who teaches Judaism at the University of Religions and Denominations. We met for coffee towards the end of my last day, right before I was to head to the airport. At the end of our conversation at Lamiz Coffee, a local Starbucks-like chain, I spontaneously asked him, “If I were able to secure the funding, would you be willing to come to South Africa to speak about Jewish life in Iran?” He said he would, although I wonder in retrospect how serious he thought I was about making such a visit happen. Within several weeks of arriving back in South Africa, I had secured funding to bring him to Johannesburg and Cape Town to speak at Limmud South Africa, the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre, and the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, where he spoke about Jewish and Muslim coexistence in Iran, Persian-Jewish history, and Iran’s Jewish pilgrimage sites. The Holocaust isn’t taught at Jewish schools in Iran, and it was thus particularly meaningful when I took Abaie and

a fellow Iranian-Jewish traveller to meet local Holocaust survivors at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

Although many thought I was reckless to travel to Iran as a Jew, it was one of the most memorable trips of my life, and gave me the opportunity to interact with a tight-knit community that is isolated from the rest of the Jewish world. By bringing Iranian Jews to South Africa and creating additional platforms for them to interact with diaspora Jewry, I’m hoping that we can learn more about their unique Jewish experience as well as give them a greater sense of camaraderie with other Jewish communities, in spite of their isolation. I hope one day to make a second trip to Iran, and this time I will make sure to visit Hamadan and Shush in honour of Purim.

• *Dan Brotman is a former resident of South Africa, and is currently the executive director of the Windsor Jewish Federation & Community Centre in Windsor, Canada. He is hosting a virtual event with local Jews in Iran on Sunday 14 March at 18:00 South African time. For more details, please email him at dan@jewishwindsor.org.*

Chevrah Kadisha: The Greatest Purim Drive-Thru! The Chevrah Kadisha is throwing open its doors at its premises in Long Avenue, Glenhazel, for the first time in a year to give you the Greatest Purim Show. On 26 February, from 11:30 to 15:00. Drive through the winding maze to see mind-blowing acts and attractions, all from the comfort and safety of your car! Lots of surprises and competitions for the whole family in this free Purim extravaganza.

Sydenham Shul: SydShul's Spectacular Purim Carousel. Between 12:45 and 14:00 on Friday, 26 February at Sydenham Shul (enter at Main Street balloon arch). Free of charge, all welcome. Kids gifts and a raffle. Ladies Purim Shiur (on Zoom): “Purim – a story of self-transformation” with Rebbetzin Estee Stern. Sunday, 28 February, 09:30. Meeting ID: 813 028 4050. Password: sydshul

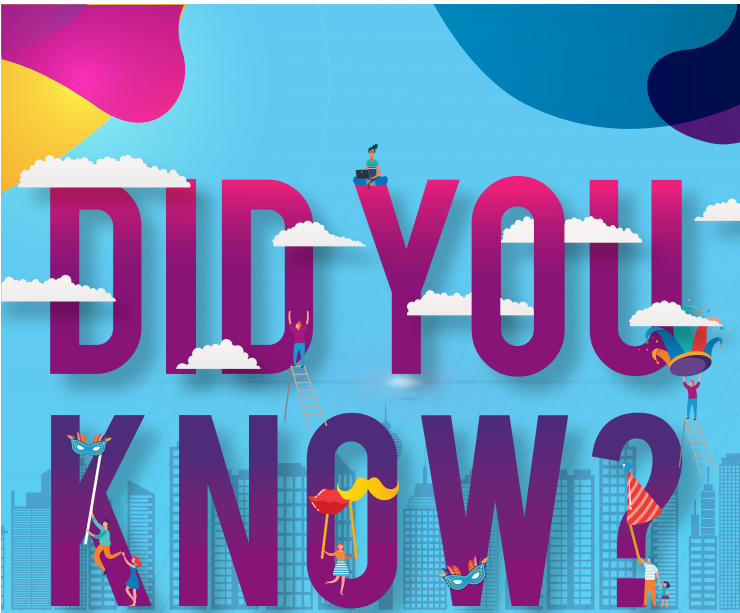
Great Park Shul: Has an exciting COVID-19-safe carnival, with balloons, treats, and lots more. Friday, 26 February from 14:00. Book your children for the best fun ever! Go to the Facebook page, Great Park

Shul, for more information or to book.

Greenside Shul: Women For Women – reading of Megillat Esther outside. At 14:30 on Friday, 26 February. RSVP shul office 011 788 5036.

Chabad of Greenstone: COVID-19 friendly Megillah readings on 25 February at 19:00 and 26 February at 17:00. Email: rabbi@chabadgreenstone.co.za for more information.

Sandton Shul: Sandton Shul presents a fun, COVID-19-friendly Purim drive-thru and car dress up on 26 February. Dress up your car to win prizes. Chip n dip and slush available. From 12:45 to 14:00. Here's the internet link for all Megillah readings in Johannesburg: http://bit.ly/Purim5781_2021



- 1 The Mitzvah of Matanot Le’evyonim is to give tzedaka to at least 2 poor people - we distribute your donation amongst many beneficiaries.
 - 2 We ensure that everyone receives a festive meal & money on the day.
 - 3 The Chev’s Matanot Le’evyonim collection is endorsed by the Beth Din & fulfills all Halachik requirements.
 - 4 In terms of Halacha, you can donate prior to Purim day and we will distribute on Purim day.
 - 5 Tzedaka should be given to the poor of one’s own community before those of any other.
- ”עניי עירו קודמין לעניי עיר אחרת”
ש”ע: יורה דעה רנ”א:ג

DONATE VIA THE CHEV SMARTCAN APP



Lifting up artists taken down by lockdown

TALI FEINBERG

“Performing artists rely on gatherings of people. So in a sense, they’ve been hit hardest by lockdown. Any way you look at it, they have no options,” says performer, choreographer, director and Fame Academy owner Vicky Friedman.

Friedman and other professional performers in Johannesburg – Lorri Strauss, Shelley Meskin, Talia Kodesh, Caryn Katz, and Sharon Spiegel-Wagner – say they cannot stand by and watch their contemporaries suffer. The group have formed Noah’s Art, an initiative to collect food and money for performing artists negatively affected by the pandemic.

“The needs within our industry are unprecedented. Noah’s Art aims to help feed as many performers and their families as possible during this time of crisis,” says Friedman.

In a moment of powerful synchronicity, Meskin happened to mention to performer and studio owner Jonathan Birin that they had formed this initiative. Birin said that he thought Glynne Wolman and The Angel Network would love to get involved. At the same time, Birin was organising the *Saturday Night Unplugged* webinar with Howard Sackstein, the chairperson of the *SA Jewish Report*. Within minutes, these various forces came together, and the webinar, which had an estimated audience of 9 000 from all over the world, became an avenue to support South African artists who are literally starving.

“Working in the performing arts is already hard. Most people are freelancers, and they survive from gig to gig, corporate event to corporate event,” says Friedman. “Add lockdown, and they are truly stuck. For example, you may be a dancer, but you can’t teach a dance class online because you have no data. There is a mountain of problems. There was one dancer who was losing so much weight from going hungry that his friends had to club together to help him even though they also had nothing.”

Friedman says that although everyone in the performing arts has suffered, those in the Jewish community have mostly been able to get by because of support from family, friends, the community, and communal organisations. But others aren’t so lucky, and these are the performers that Noah’s Art aims to help.

“They are people who we’ve performed with in hundreds of productions. They’re the ones next to us on stage, lifting us up into the air! We couldn’t just stand by as they told us their stories. We hoped to collect food for a few



weeks, but then it just snowballed. We are so grateful that so many “ears” picked up what was going on. It was a huge surprise on Saturday night when Glynne handed over R104 000 from The Angel Network. We were flabbergasted. We couldn’t believe what we were hearing. And then we were shocked and awed by the generosity of the community, which raised R200 000 on the night of the webinar.” One hundred McDonald’s vouchers were also generously donated.

The funds raised will go towards nutritious food parcels packed by The Angel Network, as well as food vouchers, supporting at least 715 families. Wolman says that they hope to raise even more. This isn’t the first time that The Angel Network has supported those in the performing arts, and Wolman agrees that the situation is “dire”. She emphasises that every cent raised will go towards food parcels and food vouchers. “The webinar was beyond our wildest dreams, in terms of entertainment and fundraising,” she says.

“These are skilled, talented entertainers. They’re not used to living in poverty,” says Friedman. “They have made their way very capably in the world. They are our friends.” Many people who work behind the scenes, from crew members to runners to lighting designers, have also been hit hard, and many small businesses have had to close down.

“The other element is that the arts feeds our soul. There is the emotional and mental implication of not being able to do what we love,” says Friedman. “This webinar made people realise the importance of the performing arts to us as a community. Look how we rely on performance, music, and the stories in movies

and series on Netflix to keep us going during lockdown. So, people’s hearts just opened.”

Birin says he has been performing virtually for a year at the *Mike’s Place Open Mic Night* every Monday night, after the famous Israeli venue hosted musicians from all over the world to perform and keep their momentum during tough times. It was the inspiration for the *SA Jewish Report* webinar. Then, when Birin got heart-wrenching voice notes from well-known entertainers saying they didn’t have enough money for food, he got The Angel Network involved.

“I know an artist in Israel who has 90% of his salary covered by the government. Here, artists just starve,” says Birin. “And they’re the top names in the industry. If there was a major event, they would be the ones on stage. They’re so embarrassed to say they’ve got no food. And they’re not asking for steak and chips, they need an apple and some muesli. They’re like a forgotten tribe. But this community is so special, and the donations and comments came flying in. It’s amazing how a few small actions have led to this avalanche of goodness. And we aren’t even doing this for our own community, we’re doing it for others. Because that’s who we are.”

Meskin says, “We had to get on the ground and actually do something to help our fellow artists. They haven’t earned a cent since last March. They can’t feed their families, pay rent, buy basic medicines, or get electricity, airtime, or even water. The ‘pit’ is endless and deep. We hope to keep the momentum going. We’re just a group of girls who want to help, so thank you to the *SA Jewish Report*, The Angel Network, and

the community for allowing us to do something. There is so much to be done. This has helped us to pick up where the government has let us down.”

Noah’s Art is also collecting non-perishable food. See its Facebook page for more information. Drop off items at: Voodoo Lily Cafe, Migali, Photogenic (Norwood), Bowring Levin School of Dance, JATA Johannesburg Academy for Theatre Arts, Stageworx, Andrea Beck School of Dance, Osrin Goldsmith Dance Academy, Jade Tannous Dance Academy, Rosenberg Dance Studio, Claire van Niekerk 5678 Productions, Joanne Bobrow, or King David High School Victory Park.

Donations can be made to: Noah’s Art; Investec; account no: 50016898206; branch 580105. Reference: your name.

Dutch confectioner engages in some Jewish ‘cookie washing’

>>Continued from page 12

recalled laughing when a former boyfriend, who wasn’t Jewish, brought home *jodenkoeken*. It was the first time she had them in her home.

Barry Mehler, a New York-born Jewish Amsterdammer and organiser of the city’s main annual Chanukah concert, also bought *jodenkoeken* for laughs once to give as a gift to a Jewish colleague from abroad. Asked to explain the joke, Mehler said, “What’s to analyse? It’s just comical. A Jew giving Jew cookies to another Jew.”

“They’re cookie-washing the *jodenkoeken* is what they’re doing,” Mehler said.

Dutch Jews haven’t always been so nonchalant about desserts named for them.

Naftaniel said he received dozens of complaints in 2005 when he was heading the antisemitism watchdog group from Jews about the reintroduction of a discontinued candy called *jodenvet* (Jew fat). The name is offensive because it “makes people think about grilling Jews”, Naftaniel said at the time. He said then that *jodenkoeken* did not carry any problematic connotations. The candy was renamed “chest honey” following the protest.

More recently, Dutch confectioners changed other desserts’ names. One product, a marshmallow-cream cake coated with chocolate, was called *negerzoen* (Negro kiss). It now goes by just Kisses. (The cookie is a lot like an Israeli Krembo.) And the chain store HEMA, something of a Dutch Target, last year renamed *moorkope* (moors’ heads) as chocolate balls.

Black Dutch advocates pressed for changing the *negerzoen* name. Many Dutch Jews, including Palache and Mehler, also found that name inappropriate.

Patisserie Pater, which makes Davelaar, said it wasn’t responding to any outside pressure around *jodenkoeken* when it changed the name.

Max Moszkowicz, a Dutch-Jewish filmmaker and radio presenter, said he appreciated Patisserie Pater’s attempt to support Jews.

“But it’s unnecessary and unfortunate,” Moszkowicz, 39, said. “Because finally there’s something named for the Jews that’s nice and that everyone likes, and they take it away from us to be politically correct.”

WHO DO YOU REMEMBER?



SEND US THEIR NAMES

Send us the names of **any family members** you **lost in the Holocaust** and we will include them in our online Yom Hashoah ceremony.

Please include their **full name, city of birth** as well as **the year they were born and died**, if you have these details. Send your names to

Yom Hashoah ONLINE
Friday, 9 April
12:00

 yomhashoah2021@gmail.com

SAJBD
South African
Jewish Board of Deputies



south african Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

www.sajr.co.za

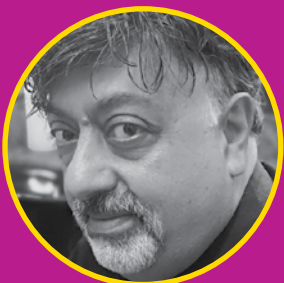
Saturday 27 February at 20:00 SAST

PURIMTON



AN ONLINE-NO-FAKE-NEWS PURIM PLAY TO TRUMP ALL OTHERS

STARRING



Renos Nicos Spanoudes
as Mordechai



Caryn Katz as Vashti



Gia Emma Jacobs
as Esther



Dean Goldblum
as Achashverosh



Sharon
Spiegel Wagner



Bradley Nowikow
as Haman



Lorri Strauss as Duchess
Lorri of Morningside



Tali Kodesh as Lady
Tali Von Sandtonstein



Adam Pelkowitz as
Lady Whistlestein



Alan Glass
as Vinnie JewLiani



Vicky
Friedman

DIRECTED BY

WRITTEN BY
SHARON SPIEGEL WAGNER

PRODUCED BY
VICKY FRIEDMAN

EDITED BY
ADAM PELKOWITZ

COSTUMES BY
MARGO FLEISCH

SPECIAL APPEARANCES BY MARISE DUSHEIKO, JONATHAN BLAINE SHORE, STACI LYONS, HANNAH RUDNICKI & YISHAI BASSERABIE

Register now: bit.ly/sajrweb79

JORDAN MOSHE

“Our graduates come from around the country, representing major Jewish schools, educational organisations, and

Rabbi Raphael Zarum, the dean of the LSJS, stressed that the qualification is not a mere piece of paper but a tool with profound implications.



DAVID E KAPLAN



After receiving thousands of doses from Israel, the Palestinian Health Ministry administered its first known coronavirus vaccinations at the beginning of February. It announced the start of the campaign by saying that Health Minister Mai al-Kaila had received a first dose along with several

"That was the idea of this master's degree. You have raised it in South Africa to a level I couldn't possibly imagine."


Asked what he thought would happen to the medical supplies, al-Najjar responded, "I don't know where they will go, but we won't accept them. They're free to do with them



- David E Kaplan is the editor of 'Lay of the Land', and executive director of the Global Investigative Journalism Network. This piece was used courtesy of 'Lay of the Land'.

WANTED!!!


TOP PRICES PAID



Free Evaluation & Buying on:

- South African & International coins and banknotes
- Medals and Militaria
- Silver and Gold Jewellery in any condition
- Silverware
- Collectable Items
- Pocket and wrist watches

Remember your I.D. and banking details if you wish to sell your items



Collectors Investments
Dealers in Coins, Medals & Banknotes

Enquiries:
Tel: 011 880 9116 / 076 741 8801 • WhatsApp: 079 784 0101
32 Fricker Road, Illovo, Johannesburg

www.collectorsinvestments.com

Never too early to teach about prejudice

JORDAN MOSHE

In an era in which division and “othering” are rife, topics like racism and equality can be difficult to discuss with children. Jews are no strangers to discrimination, but how can we broach the subject with our youngsters and ensure that they are sensitive to differences between people?

“The majority of children in our country are aware of differences between themselves and others and, due to our history, are particularly sensitive to differences in race,” says Catherine Boyd, the education manager at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

“While some children are more exposed to ideas and language around identity politics than previous generations, others aren’t able to articulate what they see and feel until they are encouraged and guided.”

Boyd, along with education officer Mduduzi Ntuli and educator Rene Pozniak, make up the education team at the centre, dealing with the subject of prejudice among youngsters. The centre runs an identity activity to help young people articulate their differences and perhaps even their prejudices.

“Of course, family culture is a dominant influence in what they think, but they are as vulnerable to hate speech as adults are,” says Boyd. “That hate speech can be equally reinforced by family, peer pressure, and acts of ‘othering’ they see around them.”

The fact that most Jewish youngsters attend almost exclusively Jewish schools can put them at something of a disadvantage, says Pozniak.

“There is no doubt that the pupils

at an all-white, Jewish school lack the opportunity to interact with pupils from another cultural group,” she says. “As a result, this lack of diversity and the limited contact they do have [be it doing sport or any other extra mural] makes it unlikely for it to translate into a meaningful relationship.”

However, many pupils are aware of this gap, she says, shown by many programmes supported by pupils aimed at *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) like charity collections.

“There is no question that these pupils are familiar with the concepts of prejudice, stereotyping, marginalisation, and ‘othering’. Their in-depth learning about Jewish history, and especially the lessons still being gleaned from the Holocaust experience, have made them acutely aware of diversity and cultural differences,” Pozniak says.

The subject of equality is probably discussed more in schools than in the broader community, Pozniak says, pointing out that there have recently been attempts to correct this.

“The South African Jewish Board of Deputies has cautioned how important it is to be genuinely involved in the broader community, playing our part in healing our nation and being instrumental in it moving in a positive direction,” she says. “Various communal institutions have been vocal in their opposition to any display of discrimination, be it against the Jewish community or any other community.”

“Degrees of awareness and subsequent involvement with the issue of equality depend on the generation you’re socialised in. Current school pupils are post-apartheid

students, without any first-hand experience of the kind of racial discrimination experienced by their parents and grandparents. They haven’t been tainted by that experience, and are thus more comfortable with other cultures and racial groups, given the opportunity to interact.

“There is always room for improvement, and every opportunity should be sought to

with multifaceted identities.

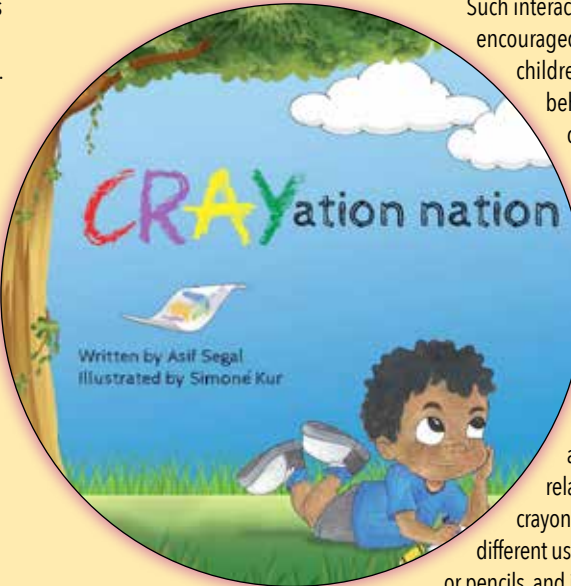
“Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, is something that can be modelled, practised, and encouraged at home from an early age. This can be done by encouraging curiosity about others, developing communication and listening skills, and challenging prejudice and stereotypes.”

Such interaction can even be encouraged amongst younger children. This is the motivation behind *Crayation Nation*, a children’s book written by Asif Segal centred on a box of coloured pencils to explain that engaging with people, thoughts, or traditions which are different isn’t a bad thing.

“I tried to find a way to describe a situation in a way that children could relate to,” says Segal. “A box of crayons or pencils is colourful, has different uses for each one of the crayons or pencils, and if combined can create something new that wasn’t originally there.

“To children in general, race or colour makes absolutely no difference at all. It’s in later years once they have been exposed to the thoughts or attitude of the adults around them that the issue becomes more significant.

“I hope that by realising that a box of crayons or pencils has different characters in it, they can understand that they are all there to complement each other, just like in the world around us.”



interact with as many different people as possible,” Pozniak says.

A good starting point for parents is to talk about their children’s own identities.

“Discuss how they think about themselves, their families, and their communities. In this way, they can begin to understand and appreciate that their own identities are multifaceted and fluid, and that if this is true for them – that they are not defined by a stereotype – then they are encouraged to see others as individuals

Discussion between parents and children shouldn’t revolve around race, Segal stresses, pointing out that inequality or intolerance of difference isn’t only about race.

“It’s a worldwide problem that’s manifested in everything from bullying, gender, sexual orientation, tradition, religion, and life choices,” he says. “We should attempt to give children the tools to make the correct choices in life, to allow them not to judge at first sight but keep an open mind.”

Simone Kur, the book’s illustrator, says that discrimination is becoming more of an issue and believes that the book can make a difference to how parents and teachers approach the subject and teach its lessons.

“The world is still very backward when it comes to accepting different people,” she says. “It makes you realise that not everyone is that open-minded about accepting. It seems that now, under the pandemic, people are even less tolerant of each other and are quick to judge.”

“*Crayation Nation* is aimed at teaching children not to judge too quickly when faced with an uncomfortable situation, and to take ideas from others.

“Developing tolerance and striving for equality isn’t just important for children, but it’s easier for them because they’re younger. If everyone took time to see how important it is not to judge others and be tolerant, we would all be a lot better off.”

• ‘Crayation Nation’ is available on Takealot, at selected Exclusive Books stores, and from Farm Animal Publications.

THE WHITE HOUSE GALLERY

WE BUY AND SELL ARTWORKS BY SOUTH AFRICAN & INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS



SEEKING TO PURCHASE ARTWORKS BY:

Andy Warhol . Jim Dine . David Hockney . Joan Miró . Pablo Picasso . Marc Chagall . Damien Hirst
Lynn Chadwick . William Kentridge . Irma Stern . Deborah Bell . Robert Hodgins . Edoardo Villa

CONTACT US FOR A VALUATION 011 268 2115 / amber@whg.co.za
Shop G 13, Thrupps Illovo Centre, Oxford rd. Illovo

Holocaust refugee’s son a powerful politician in Congo

CNAAN LIPSHIZ – JTA

Like many powerful politicians in Africa, Moise Katumbi goes by multiple titles. He is widely seen as the leader of the opposition of his native Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the president of its TP Mazembe soccer team, which is one of Africa's finest.

Now, Katumbi is also closer than he's ever been to becoming the first African ruler descended from a Holocaust refugee.

Katumbi's father, Nissim Soriano, was a Greek Jew who fled the island of Rhodes from the Nazis and settled in Congo in the 1930s when it was still a Belgian colony. Soriano built a fishing empire, and married the daughter of a local chief, Mwata Kazembe XIV Chinyanta Nakula, with whom he had two children.

Katumbi, who has said several times that he wants to become president, forged a crucial political union last month with former rival Jean-Pierre Bemba. The union helped Katumbi, a former regional governor, become the second-strongest politician behind only president, Felix Tshisekedi.

Katumbi doesn't define himself as Jewish, "but he has a warm connection to Judaism and Israel", said Menachem Margolin, a Brussels-based rabbi who has been a close confidant of Katumbi since 2018.

In public addresses, the African politician refers frequently to his Jewish roots, even calling himself "the Moses of Katanga, back to lead his people".

(Moise is the French spelling for the name Moses.) Katumbi was the governor of Katanga, one of the country's 21 provinces and by far its richest in minerals.

Margolin, the Israel-born director of the Brussels-based European Jewish Association, said his relationship with Katumbi started "because I'm a rabbi", but he declined to elaborate, citing his need to preserve the privacy of those who approach him in his rabbinical capacity.

Last week, Katumbi was asked to become prime minister or appoint one of his allies to the post, according to the *African Report*. He has not yet responded to the offer. Katumbi, who declined to be interviewed for this article, spent three years in exile in Brussels, where he met Margolin, before his return to Congo in 2019.

Katumbi had to flee because prosecutors in the capital, Kinshasa, issued a warrant for his arrest for alleged corruption. Katumbi, who enjoys considerable popularity in Katanga, has argued the claim was bogus to prevent him from running for president. The warrant was finally lifted in 2019, allowing his return.

Congo has lived through decades of anti-democratic political dysfunction that has essentially bankrupted the war-torn Central African nation three times the size of Texas with an unparalleled wealth in natural resources.

Katumbi's own family lost everything, including their name, in one of the Congo's best-known upheavals: the

Republic of the Congo.

In Greece, Soriano's family, including his parents, had all perished in the Holocaust. Soriano's sisters, however, came with him to the Congo and survived.

Katumbi, who is married and has six children, preaches reform and change in his speeches, a focus reflected in the very name of his party, Together for Change. His credentials go beyond rhetoric.

As governor of Katanga, Katumbi pulled off one of the most remarkable economic rehabilitation programmes in Africa in recent history.

Annual revenue in his region – the size of Spain which has 55% of the world's cobalt production and 5% of copper – was about \$100m (R1.5bn) in 2007 when he was elected governor at the age of 43. By 2013, two years before the end of Katumbi's term, revenue had soared to \$1.2bn (R17.7bn).

Katumbi achieved this partly by halting the export of raw materials and investing heavily in local processing and refinement. It was a bold gambit in a country where a culture of corruption and theft has stunted industrial growth for decades.

Yet that move, coupled with Katumbi's political appointments and vigilance, paid off massively. Under his leadership, the production of copper cathodes in Katanga rose from 18 000 tons in 2007

to more than a million tons six years later, according to *African Business*.

Just less than a third of the province's collapsing roads have been rebuilt in that period and access to water rose from less than 5% to 67% of the population. School attendance in Katanga, where about five million people live, rose from 400 000 children in 2007 to 1.2 million in 2013. The share of girls at schools tripled, from 15% to 45%.

It's not anywhere near good enough, Katumbi told *African Business*.

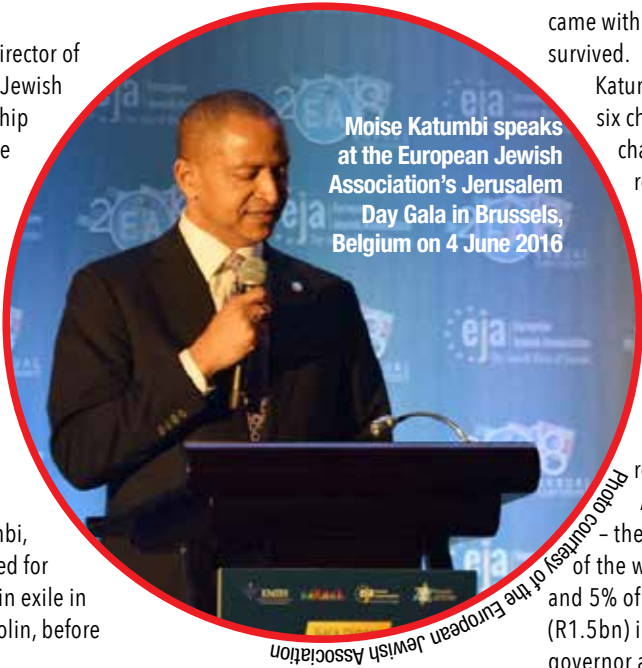
"We not only have minerals in abundance, we have good rains, good soil. We should be as economically strong as South Africa," he said.

Those who know Katumbi, an athletically built tennis and soccer player, speak of his laid-back demeanour, wry sense of humour, and excellent people skills in at least three languages, including English and French.

Africa, and Congo specifically – where about 70% of the population live in extreme poverty on less than \$2 (R29.48) a day – have experienced many promising politicians who declare their intention to improve the lives of their constituents but end up doing the opposite.

Margolin believes Katumbi's story will be different.

"He has what he takes," the rabbi said. "He has the warmth needed to be loved by his people and the vision necessary to lead them and command the respect of international partners. I think something very special is about to happen in Congo."



rise to power of its kleptocratic former despot, Mobutu Sese Seko, in 1965. Under Mobutu, his loyalists nationalised and divided among themselves businesses and possessions across the country, including the Soriano family's fishery business. The family was also forced to change their Western-sounding name to something more African. They selected Katumbi, a name that appears in the lineage of the chief's family.

Mobutu, who had seized power in a coup d'état, renamed the Republic of the Congo as Zaire. Following his ouster, the name was changed to the Democratic

Moise Katumbi speaks at the European Jewish Association's Jerusalem Day Gala in Brussels, Belgium on 4 June 2016

Photo courtesy of the European Jewish Association

AUDIT • ADVISORY • TAX

CLARITY.
ORDER.
DIRECTION.

Our team of over 1 400 professionals, operating from 7 offices in South Africa, offers a unique combination of local market knowledge coupled with an international network, personal service and a professional approach. We shine a unique lens on clients' businesses to see the people beyond the numbers and establish where they are going.

www.bdo.co.za

© 2019 BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd.

Benevolent to the fore

For the past 128 years, the Jewish Women's Benevolent Society (JWBS) has been working under the radar, assisting those in our community in need. However, since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, it has come to the forefront.

To date, the JWBS has provided more than 3 000 packs of essential winter and summer clothing. Since March 2020, it has donated funds to Africa Tikkun for sanitiser and masks; the Chevrah Kadisha for purchase of personal protective equipment; and Camp Keshet for activities and security. It also sponsored Yad Aharon's soup kitchen for a week.

Beautiful blankets, in conjunction with nonprofit organisation Warm The World, have been knitted by our talented group of knitters; and the elderly and lonely received gifts and activity packs.

Boxes of books were given to various facilities in Johannesburg and to Jaffa Jewish Aged Home in Pretoria. Some residents have even started their own book clubs.

The men who work so tirelessly at Westpark Cemetery in Johannesburg received vouchers and gifts from the JWBS. Arrow, the German shepherd security dog and his handlers at Westpark were spoiled too.

All this and much more has been accomplished since the start of lockdown by the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers. The generosity of the community has enabled us to fulfil this vital task. We ask you to please partner with us so that we may continue to help those who need assistance during this difficult time.

Matric boffins bond over muffins and coffee

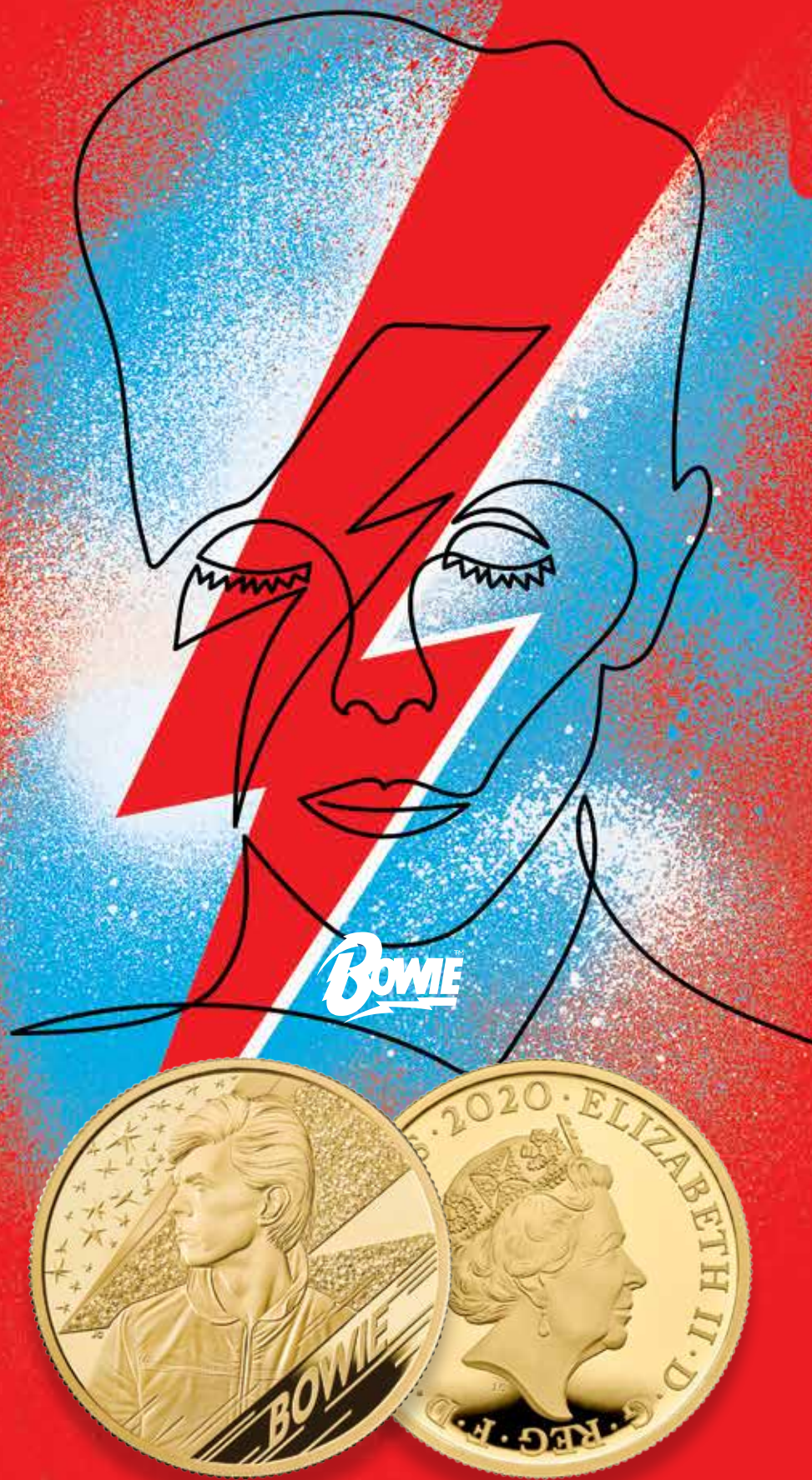
The Yeshiva College matric students of 2020 returned to campus on the weekend to get their certificates together with a muffin and coffee, generating an atmosphere of friendship, love, and respect.

They were greeted by their dedicated teachers and school heads, who worked with them tirelessly during lockdown and beyond to ensure that they achieved the unbelievable results that Yeshiva College is so thrilled about.

However, it's not just the phenomenal distinction rate that makes the school proud. Greater pride comes from the fact that each learner achieved a university pass, opening doors to further study should they wish to take that particular path. *Kol ha kavod* matric class of 2020!



The
South African
Gold Coin Exchange
— THE MARKET LEADERS —



DAVID BOWIE 2020 UK 1 OZ AND ¼ OZ GOLD PROOF COINS

VISIT US AT: BROOKLYN MALL • SANDTON CITY • WALMER PARK • EASTGATE • ROSEBANK • SOMERSET WEST • GATEWAY
MALL OF THE NORTH • LIBERTY MIDLANDS MALL • THE GLEN • PAVILION MALL • CANAL WALK • V&A WATERFRONT

CALL 011 784 8551 • SHOP ONLINE AT [SCOINSHOP.COM](https://www.scoinshop.com) • T'S & C'S APPLY

Finding G-d in fresh herbs

Sunday wasn't a day for bald people to be outside without a hat. But I was, and although it was good to walk around a nursery choosing pots and creepers for our courtyard area, I was pretty much well done after an hour.

My wife on the other hand seemed just to be getting warmed up, and it didn't take a genius to foresee that there was a significant possibility, left to chance, that we would be spending the rest of the day roasting in the fresh herbs section. Because, Howard, our kitchen needs instant access to thyme. And rosemary, obviously.

By this stage, the two assistants we had co-opted along the way – and no strangers to spousal negotiations – started to become a little skittish and moved the laden trolleys towards the airconditioned indoor pay area. I was impressed by their use of non-verbal cues, and resolved to increase their tip once the car was loaded.

Only, G-d had other plans. Further context is that my wife had also left her purse at home and had asked me for my credit card earlier in the day. For something or other. And it was now very much missing. Her claims that she had given it back to me were patently a poor attempt to grasp at any straw possible, but it was clear that we now had a tiny problem. The helpers, now not only afraid for the loss of their tip, also looked to be afraid for their lives as the establishment refused Samsung Pay, and EFT, and an offer of our youngest born as compensation for the jasmine.

It needs to be known that my wife is significantly more attuned to the whims of G-d than I will ever be. And so, she confidently turned to the cowering assistants and in her most evangelical voice said, "We need to trust that He

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



will help us, and we will find that credit card." Inspired by her Sunday sermon, they seated me in the cool breeze of the aircon, and went on their mission in search of the card. I'm not exaggerating when I say that they were quite literally chanting, "Trust in G-d! Trust in G-d!" as they went on their walk with G-d. And my wife.

They obviously found it. The nurse is acres large and we had traversed it all in search of the perfect pot and creeper. Which meant that the credit card could have been pretty much anywhere. And yet, they found it, unsurprisingly in fresh herbs. Because our kitchen needed fresh thyme. And G-d would never have abandoned us. Apparently.

Between the religious experience and perhaps the tip they received in gratitude for putting up with us, the nursery assistants were clearly inspired. With "G-d is great!" and "Trust in G-d" as their final words, we left the centre with me grateful I didn't need to call Investec and my wife glowing from the whole religious experience. So inspiring was it, I wouldn't be surprised if Goodwill and Kingston didn't join us for megillah reading on Thursday night.

Which is the point. As annoying as the experience was, my wife was right. Purim is a time of hidden miracles. It's an illustration of G-d's presence in every aspect of our lives. And just because this miracle isn't a grand one, doesn't mean that He isn't present.

Sometimes you just have to look for Him in fresh herbs.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Duty to remember from generation to generation

Tribute to Veronica Phillips, o"n

When Holocaust survivor Veronica Phillips, who sadly passed away earlier this week, was the guest speaker at the Johannesburg Yom Hashoah ceremony many years ago, it was the first time that she had spoken in public about her harrowing experiences. From that time on, however, she was a regular speaker on Holocaust remembrance platforms, including at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, as well as in schools and media interviews. Veronica was a proud and committed member of our community, and an inspiration to those who knew her. One theme she continually stressed in her addresses was that of *l'dor v'dor* (the duty of passing down the torch of remembrance from generation to generation). This, indeed, is the keynote theme of this year's Yom Hashoah ceremony, where survivors will stress the solemn responsibility of youth today to ensure that the stories of survivors and above all, those who perished, aren't forgotten. Although this time, Veronica won't be with us to drive home that message, her dedicated, unselfish work in doing so in the latter part of her life will always resonate with those who were privileged to hear her tell her story.

Jewish Affairs – 80 years young

This week, the first issue for 2021 of our journal *Jewish Affairs* (Vol. 76, No. 1, Summer 2021) was published. The articles cover a wide range of subjects, from the Biblical writings, history, and archaeology of ancient Israel, to Zionist pioneers in the modern era, to such noteworthy Jewish South Africans who made a difference like the late Clive Chipkin, a celebrated architect, architectural historian, and Johannesburg heritage activist who

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



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



passed away earlier this year. To read it, along with all previous issues that have appeared since the journal switched to its online format, go to South African Jewish Board of Deputies (sajbd.org). PDF versions of all previous issues going back to 2009 can be found at *Jewish Affairs* – archived issues.

Exactly 80 years have passed since the appearance of the inaugural issue of *Jewish Affairs* in 1941. I warmly thank all the loyal subscribers, advertisers, and contributors who have enabled us to reach this milestone. The original purpose of the publication was to serve as a vehicle for reporting back to the community on the work of the SAJBD and provide information on issues of concern to the community. In succeeding years, it developed into the country's leading Jewish current affairs, historical, and cultural journal, and is now a vital resource for academics, journalists, genealogical researchers, and others with an interest in the history of our community.

Jewish Affairs is housed on the main SAJBD website, but a new, standalone *Jewish Affairs* website is in an advanced stage of production. Those interested in taking full advantage of this rich communal resource can do so simply by signing up, at no cost, as a subscriber. Send your name and email to david@sajbd.org.

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

Letters

SEEKING ANY INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING FATHER

I'm looking for information about my father, who may have emigrated to South Africa in the early 1960s. His name was Victor Vinegrad, and he had British citizenship. He would have been in his forties when he emigrated from Britain. He would be 101 today, if alive. Any help you can give me about his life or death would be greatly appreciated.

My father disappeared in Australia in 1952, leaving my mother with two small children. She was forced to fend for herself and to return to the

United Kingdom. Searches for Victor yielded nothing. Sometime in the late 1980s, she met a man who said he had seen Victor in London in 1960 or thereabouts. He confided to him that he was going to emigrate to South Africa.

My mother, at 98 years old, is still an Agunah. It would be a blessing if she could be freed before she dies. It would also help me if I could find out what happened to my father. Email: jlfestival@gmail.com
– Menachem (Martin) Vinegrad, Katzrin, Israel

KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER



MANY MORE PURIM PRODUCTS IN-STORE

Feigels
Est. 1968



Yummy!!

1/2 BAKED
HAMENTASHEN
Apple, Jam, Chocolate
& Mon **R68⁵⁰ x 4**
Cheese **R80⁵⁰ x 4**



CHAG PURIM SAMEACH

CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE
orders@kosherworld.co.za



FRUITREE JUICES
ASSTD FLAVS
200ML EACH



AND SO MUCH MORE

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD - LINKSFIELD • BLUBIRD CENTRE - ATHOL
BALFOUR PARK - HIGHLANDS NORTH • THE POINT - SEA POINT

Checkers

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel | 011 440 9517
info@kosherworld.co.za | www.kosherworld.co.za

