


■ Volume 25 – Number 08 ■ 5 March 2021 ■ 21 Adar 5781

# south african Jewish Report

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## KING DAVID MATRIC 2020 IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

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**Open day | Wednesday 26th May 2021**

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The year 2020 will long be remembered as the year that the Covid-19 virus pandemic threatened to derail the academic year and particularly the Matric year. There was speculation from many quarters of the students not being able to complete the year by December and that the final examinations would have to be held in March of the following year. But, thanks to the determination of the incredible group of students and the teachers who were completely committed to supporting their students, the year ran to completeness in a typical cycle that was no different to any other year.

We celebrate the entire group of students who have all achieved greatness and substantial personal growth through their commitment and dedication to their studies this year. Behind the students there is a dedicated team of exceptional educators who went to great lengths to ensure that everything was thoroughly covered in preparation for the finals.

"As teachers, it is our responsibility to open up a child's world, no matter his or her background, and expose them to the range and variety of contexts and opportunities that exist outside their own world and range of experience. Give their minds an opportunity to explore the seemingly fantastical and alongside that exposure, give them the opportunity and the courage to engage confidently with the unfamiliar and the unknown, applying known concepts to address problems in unknown contexts (Anne Oberholzer - CEO of the Independent Education Board)." This philosophy epitomises our goal of preparing our children to be "ready for life." No matter which direction our matriculants choose to go, whether it be into tertiary study, the world of work or elsewhere, these young men and women have been prepared for their next chapter in life.

The Matric Class have shown themselves to be true "menschen" by insisting that their school celebrate their achievements both collectively and individually. I am of the belief that KD High School Victory Park provided a values-based educational environment that integrates educational studies with good middot (students constantly strive to correct their faults and improve their character) and a desire to make a substantial difference in the world.

*Andrew Baker*  
Principal



**Open day | Wednesday 19 May 2021 (Online)**

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The matrics of 2020 have brought me nothing but pride. They are human beings who have shown courage, empathy, resilience and grit and who have taught me more than I thought I had to learn.

We know that writing matric during the COVID-19 pandemic was not an easy time for them and their families, but the buzzword of 2020: "pivot" and all that it entails belongs to this group of students who pivoted with us as a school. They understood the sacrifices that keeping themselves and their families safe entailed, and they graciously gave up sports matches, musicals, matric dances and 18th birthday parties and joined the responsible adult world a year before it was absolutely necessary. I commend the courageous way in which the matrics pivoted and focused on getting through the year as best as they could. I hope that they know that the sacrifices made were not in vain and that everything that was done, and not done, was noted and appreciated.

Even more so, all of these sacrifices are evident in our outstanding set of matric results that King David High School,

Linksfield has achieved. I am so proud of the hard work and commitment to academic success that is evident in these results. Jonas Salk the American virologist who developed one of the first successful polio vaccines sums it up when he said: "Hope lies in dreams, in imagination and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into a reality". Our reality may now be different, but our dreams can be the same. Our success is not measured in distinctions, our success is measured in the meeting of potential, in fulfilled dreams and wishes that come true.

And this year our success is no less so. Winston Churchill said: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts". And continue we did. With courage. The matrics inspired me. The matrics are my success.

I wish the matrics of 2020 well in their journeys ahead.

*Lorraine Brage*  
Principal







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## An aliyah flight of biblical proportions

TALI FEINBERG

It was an aliyah flight that came together as if guided by the hand of G-d. The South Africans, presently the pariahs of the world thanks to the COVID-19 variant discovered here, were told about it just less than 24 hours before. And it wasn't just any flight they were joining, but an historic aliyah of Ethiopian Jews who had been waiting decades to come to the Jewish state.

"We were like the Jews leaving Mitzrayim," says *oleh* Rabbi Craig Kacev, who read the Megillah in the middle of Addis Ababa Airport on Ta'anit Esther (The Fast of Esther). He spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* from Haifa, where he and his wife are in quarantine at the same hostel where 286 Ethiopian *olim* are isolating.

"It was fascinating and exciting to see first-hand the effort Israel makes to continue the ingathering of the exiles," he said. "There was such joy in witnessing history."

Liat Amar Arran, the director of the Israel Centre South Africa, says the flight was a "miracle".

"We had a group of about 20 people who wanted to make aliyah, but there were no flights. Everyone told me to wait, but I said people have jobs lined up, or no place to live here, and I'm not giving up. Then this Ethiopian flight was approved – one of only five aliyah flights from around the world.

"Shai Felder, the head of the aliyah department, said he could try and organise a bigger plane from Ethiopia to add our *olim*, but he wasn't convinced it could happen, and he said I might need to give up. I said I'm not giving up, I'm counting on this option," says Amar Arran.

"I told the South African *olim* to go for COVID-19 tests as they might be able to get on a flight tomorrow. At this point, we were just praying. Everyone said I was crazy, that you couldn't do this so last minute. I said I would rather wait till the last minute and try. Well, 12 people had COVID-19 tests, and there were 12 seats available on the plane. It was due to many good people working together that they got on that flight."

"Getting to Israel was never certain," says Kacev. "We were asked if we were willing to take a chance and have our COVID-19 tests last Wednesday [24 February 2021] in

the hope that we would get on this flight. We did the tests, and late on Wednesday, we were told there was space on the flight going the next day. We had been living out of suitcases for weeks already in the hope that we could go, but from that point, it was still a complete whirlwind – but was also beautifully organised.

"We arrived in Addis after 20:00, and had to wait until 03:00 for the next flight. It was Purim night, so I *leined* the Megillah in the airport, which was packed, but we found a quiet spot." Kacev says that while the Ethiopians had cell phones and were living a modern life, they also brought a lot of traditional food with them on the plane, as well as musical instruments.

"When we arrived in Israel, there was such rejoicing, with music playing, flags waving, sweets for the children – it was such a *simcha*." The welcoming committee included Israeli ministers, the chairperson of the Jewish Agency, Isaac Herzog, and even former *shaliach* to South Africa Danny Adeno Abebe, who himself made the long walk to Israel from Ethiopia as a boy. As the new spokesperson for the ministry of absorption, Abebe told the *SA Jewish Report* that he was thrilled to see both Ethiopian *olim* and South Africans finally touch down on Israeli soil.

"It was so nice to see well-known and familiar faces," says Kacev. "We walked down to the tarmac and were put straight onto buses with our luggage, and driven to Haifa. Because we are quarantining with the Ethiopians, we are being served their traditional food. We asked staff to 'tone it down' for us!"

While in quarantine, the Kacevs have been able to speak to their children (who have already made aliyah) through a nearby fence. Many of the Ethiopian *olim* have done the same, speaking to relatives who settled in Israel before them. "While we had the inconvenience of not being sure when our flight would be, I thought about how these *olim* from Ethiopia have literally been waiting years.

It was so humbling," says Kacev.

Sean Korb, who was also on the flight with his wife and two young children, says, "If there is one thing the past year has taught us, it's that we aren't in control of everything. As 2021 rolled in, we were ready with every document necessary, and were looking forward to being

get our hopes up, but asked to get our COVID-19 tests just in case. Hours later, we received the news that we had made it onto the flight and would need to be at OR Tambo International Airport for our flight leaving in less than 24 hours.

"The rest of our experience was filled with more extremes: the kindness and hospitality of regular Ethiopians helping us with our pram and luggage as we got off in Ethiopia, but also the ruthless security who checked our bags and wanted our son – who was a day away from his first birthday – to walk through security alone. Our pram was taken away twice to be inspected.

"But we made it. Our baby boy turned one in an Ethiopian airport, on Purim, during a pandemic, on our way to Israel. Now we sit in quarantine in a hotel in Haifa, with staff working tirelessly to ensure that more than 400 people are taken care of. We will never forget the way we made our way to the place we want to be."

Korb says they didn't realise how historic it would be to fly with this group of Ethiopians. "We didn't know how many people it was going to be,

but it was literally an entire plane filled with young and old. The kids wanted to interact with our two children, and it was incredible to see them play together. There was also a lot of chaos. Everyone wanted to get onto the plane, and was excited and nervous."

He emphasises how "incredible" Amar Arran and aliyah consultant Ziva Taitz were throughout the experience. "They literally didn't stop, working 24 hours a day trying to get us to Israel," Korb says. "They helped us to deal with our expectations, not get our hopes too high, but also to keep up hope. They were professional, organised, and are still helping us. So a huge *kol hakavod* to them, and their team. We count ourselves extremely blessed to have arrived in Israel on this historic flight."



Rabbi Kacev  
leining the  
Megillah in  
Addis Ababa on  
his way to Israel

part of the second or third aliyah plane of the New Year, but then Ben Gurion Airport was shut.

"Being thrown between excitement and disappointment was anxiety-provoking to a degree that we have never experienced. Every flight was an option but not an option. Frankfurt, Turkey, Ethiopia were all options, but not for us South Africans. Permission was needed by the Israeli government to allow us to enter on those flights.

"On the morning of 25 February, we had said we will go when we need to go – we cannot push the river anymore. Just a few moments later, we received a call that there was one more option: to fly together with a group of Ethiopians the following day. We were warned not to

# Congratulations!



## MATRIC Class of 2020



### on 270 distinctions

» 38% received an A average	» 73% received a B average or above	» 17% received a full house (7 or more distinctions)	» 82% received one or more distinctions
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# Sacks lifts the lid on massive Prasa-related corruption

NICOLA MILTZ

Forensic accountant Ryan Sacks last week blew the cover on alleged corruption and financial irregularities within and without the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa), exposing for the first time how billions in tax payers’ money was stolen.

Sacks opened a Pandora’s box into corruption during his explosive testimony at the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture before Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo.

What was only meant to be a two-hour appearance at the commission turned into almost two days of riveting testimony. Evidence leader Vas Soni questioned Sacks about his findings into Swifambo, the now liquidated local company behind the notorious, ill-fated, multibillion rand tender to procure locomotives.

Four years ago, the Hawks commissioned Sacks, 43, the director of Crowe Forensics SA to present a cashflow analysis of the corrupt Swifambo tender. He presented his report, which revealed outrageous movements of funds linked to Prasa’s contract with Swifambo Rail Leasing (SRL).

His preliminary report alleged financial irregularities masterminded by a widescale web of corrupt activity within and outside the stricken government-owned entity. However, at the time, his report seemingly fell on deaf ears, he told the commission.

He asked police to furnish him with further information to complete his analysis. He was again ignored, and has not heard from the Hawks regarding Swifambo since.

Last week, however, Sacks was heard loud and clear when he presented his report after being summoned to do so. His report – until recently kept highly confidential – was presented to the public for the first time.

The report revealed the astonishing movement of funds linked to Prasa’s corrupt contract with SRL, a local company set up only a year before Prasa first advertised the tender. This was under the watch of then Prasa Chief Executive Lucky Montana, who oversaw the shady acquisition.

SRL was the front company in 2012 that clinched a R3.5 billion contract to supply 70 locomotives to Prasa. It had no track record in the rail industry. Swifambo, merely acting as a middleman in the corrupt deal, ordered the locomotives from Spanish supplier Vossloh España.

Prasa ended up paying Swifambo R2.6 billion and in return, received only 13 Afro4000 diesel-electric locomotives. These trains were

too tall and totally unsuitable for South African rail specifications, as revealed by *Rapport* newspaper.

Sacks’ testimony exposed the hundreds of millions in tax payers’ money that should have been used to supply Prasa with new trains but was instead diverted. The money went to Auswell Mashaba, Swifambo’s former managing director, and businessman Makhensa Mabunda, as well as to several entities, high ranking public officials, and individuals linked to them.

Mashaba failed to appear before the commission last week in spite of being served with a summons.

“Last week was the first time that the public and a judge has had the opportunity to hear and see evidence of actual cashflows. It was the



first time this real evidence has been produced,” said Bernard Hotz, commercial litigator and head of business crimes and investigations at Werksmans Attorneys.

“Instead of false allegations about Werksmans being a white monopoly capital law firm that was unlawfully appointed to investigate Prasa, the public and the judge focused on the large-scale theft of billions from Prasa, and got to see where those billions went,” Hotz told the *SA Jewish Report* this week.

According to Sacks, Werksmans Attorneys was appointed by Prasa in 2015 to conduct a forensic investigation into various instances of irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure incurred by Prasa, which had been outlined by the auditor general. Crowe Forensics was appointed by Werksmans as expert forensic accountants to assist it. Sacks was appointed by the Hawks to perform a cashflow analysis relating to the Swifambo tender debacle.

Sacks’ testimony last week revealed how



Swifambo funnelled about R80 million of its Prasa earnings to Maria Gomes, an Angolan businesswoman with strong ties to former President Jacob Zuma, and to George Sabelo, a lawyer also with close ties to Zuma. Mashaba has stated in an affidavit that Gomes and Sabelo

paid out the money, the report revealed.

Before that time, there were a lot of payments to various beneficiaries, namely to Mabunda’s group of companies.

The company Sebenza Forwarding, to which former Prasa chairperson Sfiso Buthelezi (former deputy finance minister) is linked, was paid just less than R100 million, according to the report.

As background to the saga, in July 2017, Johannesburg High Court Judge EJ Francis ruled that Prasa had awarded the contract to Swifambo through a “corrupt tender process”, and that Swifambo acted as a front for Spanish manufacturer Vossloh. The court ruled that the contract needed to be set aside.

Swifambo took the matter to the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA), where the SCA agreed that “the tender was procured through corruption”. It also affirmed the high court’s decision that Swifambo had been part of a “fronting practice”. The SCA confirmed that the Afro4000 locomotives Swifambo delivered to Prasa weren’t suited for South African railway lines.

“There’s a sense of vindication,” said Hotz, “At long last the public and Judge Zondo can truly understand admissible evidence and cashflows that show how much was stolen from Prasa and who benefited. It’s high time that people go to jail for this.”

Sacks told the *SA Jewish Report*, “The financial information shows that this whole Swifambo tender was one massive corrupt exercise. Officials running the state-owned enterprise wanted money and the best way to get it was through procurement and the vehicle within procurement was the tender. They set up fronting companies, gave false motivations for why they needed to spend money, and there was collusion on multiple levels to sign the multibillion rand contract. People allegedly stole money before making the first payments to the supplier, it was brazen.”

Sacks is busy doing a forensic analysis of the VBS banking scandal. We should be seeing a lot more of him in the future.

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**STEVEN GRUZD**

He and his wife, Yael, joined 286 overjoyed Ethiopian Jews making aliyah. Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report*

In 1996, he was approached by Rabbi Isadore Rubinstein to fill in for a teacher at King David Linksfield.

"For every mad story, there were 100 good stories  
- kind parents, heroic teachers, and amazing kids who



His final message is not to take our Jewish schools and communal institutions for granted. We need to support these bodies to sustain the vibrancy and viability of the South African Jewish community.

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## 2020 matriculants in a class of their own

The 2020 matric group will go down in history as being the most versatile and resilient year ever. True, these young people had no choice, it was a matter of sink or swim...

They went into matric, believing they knew exactly what they were in for, whether they were prepared for it or not. However, then the world turned upside down with the coronavirus pandemic, and so too did their year.

Nothing they expected happened when it was supposed to. Nothing they had longed for was available to them. And all the years of expectation they had built for their final year of school was set aside for a whole new reality.

I can't blame them for being disappointed. We all spend 12 years of school looking forward to that final year which includes being the elders of the school, prefects, the matric dance, and various other once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

These young guns had to make urgent plans to adapt and make the most of their year. While the schools did what they could, every matric scholar had to find a way of making this work for themselves.

They had to dig deep to master their work under lockdown and, more often than not, the only contact they had with friends and teachers was online.

Yet their results were astounding, and they came through ... with flying colours!

This is our annual matric results edition, which much like everything else to do with matric 2020, didn't come out when it was expected to. We normally begin our year of newspapers in mid-January with the matric edition.

And although this special edition was delayed by the release of the results, our rock-star matriculants didn't disappoint. I'm incredibly proud of them all. *Kol hakavod!*

In some schools, the 2020 results were better than ever – go figure!

I can't help but wonder how their bizarre matric year will set the tone for the rest of their lives. Resilience and versatility are character traits that can only serve them well.

Would that we were all able to adapt quickly to any situation and make the most of it, with outstanding results. People who are capable of this can literally take on any task because they make it work for them. I have to say, I'm expecting great things from this year of matriculants.

Having said that, their challenges aren't over yet.

Imagine having applied to three universities around the country and not knowing exactly which one was going to accept you and what degree you could do. Exactly! Instead of having two months or thereabouts to get ready for university, they had a matter of days.

So, they hung around for two months waiting for the moment they could make these life-changing, urgent decisions and act on them. Talking about living the phrase, "Hurry up and wait!"

And then there are those matriculants who planned to go on one of the Masa programmes to Israel. These include study programmes, internships, service learning, and Jewish studies. Many young people in our community take up these incredible subsidised opportunities. But this year, the 2020 matriculants who were anticipating leaving soon after the December holidays are still waiting...

These youngsters came home from their holidays all geared up to go. Then Israel closed the airport for 10 days. And it remained closed.

They are still waiting to hear when they are going to leave. They can do nothing but wait. They can't start another course or get a job because they might be given 24 hours' notice before they leave. So, they wait and wait, anxiously trying to fill their time. They were all looking forward to Purim in Israel, and now they may still be here for Pesach.

Thank goodness they are part of the versatile and adaptable 2020 group!

Talking about being given 24-hours' notice to fly to Israel, our page one story is truly phenomenal. A group of South African *olim* had also been waiting for ages to make this massive move. Many had sold homes, packed up, and were ready to leave.

But when you are given 24 hours to leave your home permanently, it's never enough time to say goodbye. Having said that, what a unique experience their journey to their new home has been!



### International Women's Day

As a newspaper, we don't often commemorate international days like Women's Day, not least of all because we have our own national Women's Day.

But a highly intelligent male 15-year-old told me the other day that he's so bored with modern-day feminists as they are all man-haters. I realised then that it was important to take every opportunity to dispel myths and strengthen the move towards equality and ridding ourselves of gender violence.

Feminists of any description aren't man-haters, they are simply people fighting for women's equality. Their struggle is around reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, and against sexual harassment and sexual violence.

I do understand that there may be some women who don't like men, but that has nothing to do with them being feminists.

Men can also be feminists. It simply means being involved in progressing equal rights and opportunities for women, and it encompasses the social, political, and economic arenas. I would love to say that in South Africa we are past the need to campaign for change, but we aren't.

While in our community women have far more power than in most, there is still disparity in pay, and mothers are more often than not left to look after their children (mostly on their own) while their husbands pursue their careers.

In society in general, women are the main breadwinners but also the ones who earn the least. They are estimated to earn between 15% and 17% less than men for the same jobs.

While these issues exist and need a concerted effort to sort out, because of our enormous problem of violence and abuse of women, that has to be our focus.

And this has an impact on our community too.

This year's theme of International Women's Day is #ChooseToChallenge. I'm asking every one of our readers to challenge themselves to stand up against the abuse of women. It's often the smallest correction in what people say that has the biggest impact. Join me in choosing to challenge myself to fight for women's rights.

Shabbat shalom!  
Peta Krost Maunder  
Editor

## Six myths about land reform

OPINION

MARK OPPENHEIMER



Parliament's plans to change the property clause in our Constitution to allow the state to expropriate land without compensation (EWC) have stalled. However, a freshly drafted Expropriation Bill has recently been distributed for public comment.

One of the more alarming features of the Bill is a section that would allow the government to confiscate land without compensation "where the land is not being used and the owner's main purpose isn't to develop the land or use it to generate income, but to benefit from appreciation of its market value".

Government alleges that EWC is necessary to restore land that was stolen during apartheid; to redistribute land so that home ownership matches racial demographics; and to appease an electorate that's crying out for land.

President Cyril Ramaphosa not only claims that EWC won't hurt the economy, but that it will bring more people into the fold by helping beneficiaries to become farmers. Before adopting such a radical policy at a time when our economy has been devastated by the pandemic and lockdowns, we should do some much-needed myth busting.

### Myth one: land hasn't been given back to its rightful owners

South Africa has a dark history of land theft. Justice requires that the wrongs of the past are addressed by awarding compensation to the victims of land dispossession. Over the past 25 years, the Land Claims Court has resolved more than 95% of the claims that have arisen. More than 1.8 million individuals have received compensation either in the form of land or money, and fewer than 3 500 claims remain unresolved.



### Myth two: home ownership is skewed along racial lines

Amidst the cry for land reform is the claim that we need to have a more equitable distribution of land based on the country's racial demographics. We should be suspicious of racial-demographic thinking because it's exactly what the apartheid government specialised in. However, for those who are sympathetic to it, home-ownership data demonstrates that racial groups own homes in almost perfect proportion to their numbers.

### Myth three: people are crying out for land

When South Africans are asked about the country's most serious unresolved problems, almost 40% identify unemployment, 33% raise lack of service delivery, while less than 1% are concerned about land distribution.

When people win their land-claim cases, they are given the choice of receiving land or financial compensation. In 92% of cases, people choose money over land. This shouldn't come as much of a surprise because money translates into freedom. Beneficiaries can use that money to start businesses, pay off debts, or invest in the market. The facts show that land isn't a burning issue for ordinary citizens. It's an issue being capitalised on by a few radicals with big loudhailers.

**Myth four: anyone can be a farmer**

The government spent more than R1.4 billion buying farms in the Eastern Cape to redistribute to aspirant farmers. Of the 265 farms purchased, only 26 remain viable. In 90% of those cases, once thriving farms that produced food and employment are now in ruin. Being a farmer isn't easy. It's a technical job that requires an enormous amount of time, expertise, and money.

### Myth five: the Constitution impedes land reform

Section 25 of the Constitution provides a roadmap for land reform while ensuring that no one is arbitrarily deprived of property. It empowers the state to expropriate property in the public interest, which includes land reform. A classic case would be the construction of the Gautrain project, which needed to run through privately owned land; or the acquisition of land to build RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) homes. The Constitution recognises that in such cases, private owners deserve compensation and the following test is used:

The amount of the compensation and the time and manner of payment must be just and equitable, reflecting an equitable balance between the public interest and the interests of those affected, having regard to all relevant circumstances, including:

- (a) current use of the property;
- (b) the history of the acquisition and use of the property;
- (c) the market value of the property;
- (d) the extent of direct state investment and subsidy in the acquisition and beneficial capital improvement of the property; and
- (e) the purpose of the expropriation.

**Myth six: EWC won't damage the economy**

This is akin to saying that a vow of celibacy won't affect your sex life. Unfortunately, life involves trade-offs. You can't remove property rights and have a flourishing economy. Foreign investors won't risk having their land confiscated in South Africa when they can pick any number of other nations that will protect their investments.

One doesn't have to look at Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution or the horrors of Joseph Stalin's regime to know how bad this idea is. When Robert Mugabe implemented EWC in Zimbabwe, it led to the world's worst case of hyperinflation. It wasn't just the original land owners that were hurt, the average man on the street was left destitute after the economy was annihilated.

### What this means

Once the above myths about land reform have been revealed, the following becomes apparent. Almost all victims of land dispossession have been compensated. Home ownership matches racial demographics. Barring a few opportunistic politicians, almost no one views land reform as a burning issue. The transfer of functioning farms to ill equipped beneficiaries has been a spectacular failure. EWC has been tried in communist regimes around the world, and it has wrought riches for a few elites and devastation for everyone else.

• Mark Oppenheimer is a practising advocate and member of the Johannesburg Bar.  
\*All statistics have been sourced from the Institute of Race Relations.



# Death and destiny during pandemics

OPINION

RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN



I have lost friends, colleagues, and family members this year, people of all ages. How many of our legendary, most distinguished spiritual leaders have been taken from us around the world this year alone? How many wonderful young people have left behind grieving spouses and young children?

These are some of the troubling philosophical questions that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic. Others that we have thought about are:

- How are we to understand the deaths of young people in the prime of their lives from this pandemic? Was it their time? Was it part of G-d's plan for them, or was it perhaps the fact that they broke the rules and interfered with the higher plan?
- Was the Holocaust part of G-d's plan? Was it a punishment for something we did?
- Is there any spiritual insight to all of this?

Naturally, these are all very thought-provoking questions, and each one is deserving of a full essay – or an entire book – on its own. But this isn't a scholarly dissertation. I shall rather share some general principles of Jewish philosophy and theology on how Judaism views the world, how G-d runs the world, and the interface of our own actions with providence, or G-d's higher plan for the world.



First, it's a principle of our faith that G-d not only created the universe, but that He continues to manage its affairs, even on the most micro level. He hasn't retired, or semi-retired. He hasn't gone on holiday to Mauritius and handed over the management of the world to a corporate hierarchy of gods and goddesses, demi-gods, or any celestial powers.

If G-d is running the world, then there can be no "accidents" and no "mistakes", not even mere coincidences. Everything happens for a reason. Do we know why bad things happen, often to good people? Definitely not. We certainly cannot see the whole reason with all the hidden meaning behind every event. Our eyes of flesh behold only the external, the superficial, the tip of the iceberg. And even when we think we 'get it', there are still layers and layers beneath the surface that we are completely oblivious to. Indeed, there is, in the immortal words of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, a "vast eternal plan", and every single event that occurs is part of that higher plan.

When it comes to the mysteries of life, we should try to understand that we cannot understand. Maimonides and other sages of old that said "the ultimate knowledge is to know that we don't know". Even Albert Einstein once famously said, "The more I learn, the more I realise how much I don't know." And Einstein's most famous line on the subject was that, "G-d doesn't play dice with the universe."

We mustn't just take the proverbial "shtum powder", shrug our shoulders, and resign ourselves to not asking questions. No, we may ask. But we should also be wise and humble enough to understand that finite mortals cannot reasonably expect to grasp the workings of an infinite supreme being who is, by definition, impenetrable.

My late father, obm, once told me a story of two great spiritual leaders of old who had the following conversation. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was a renowned defender of his people. He poured his heart out to his friend and colleague, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the author of the Tanya.

"Why do so many of our people have to suffer the oppression of the czar? Why are so many poverty-stricken? If I were G-d, I would see to it that every Jew has the necessary livelihood and good health to enjoy a better life."

Zalman, more the philosopher, replied, "If I were G-d, I would do exactly as G-d does."

"What?" cried the Berditchever. "How can you say

that? Have you no compassion for your people?"

Zalman answered, "Don't you realise? If I was G-d, then I would see the world with G-d's eyes. I would know exactly why He does things. And I would obviously understand that what He does is, in fact, correct."

When it comes to the Holocaust, there are simply no explanations and certainly no rationalisations for such a horrific tragedy – quantitatively the worst in our entire history. An event of such enormity is inexplicable and unfathomable to finite men and women.

My saintly teacher, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was extremely critical, even angered, by those who gave explanations for the Holocaust, when they argued that it was because of certain "sins" of that generation. No sins could ever justify such a punishment! When I hear people say such things, I cringe. To rationalise the Holocaust is an insult to the memory of the six million! Who can dare to justify more than a million innocent children being butchered? Or thousands of rabbis, *roshei* Yeshiva, chassidim, Yeshiva students, and millions of fine, innocent, Jewish men and women? My father was the sole survivor of his entire

family in Poland. Were all those holy martyrs sinners? G-d forbid six million times! In our lifetimes it will, no doubt, remain one of the deepest secrets and mysteries of life.

Of course, we believe that G-d has His own reasons and a higher plan for everything. But this one is clearly beyond human comprehension. We will never understand it until

we reach the world to come.

Now, although each one of us does indeed have a destined number of years to live, it's possible for one to forfeit years of one's life through irresponsible behaviour. A person can cause his own premature death if he behaves recklessly. If a fellow decides to jump out of the window of the 17th floor wearing a Superman cape, arguing that, "If it's not my time, G-d will find a way to save me", he is pretty much committing suicide. Yes, he did have an allotted number of years which may not have been up yet. But the problem is that he has now gone and put G-d on the line, forcing Him to perform a miracle for him. But that individual may not be worthy of a miracle. Sadly, he will have then forfeited his life.

I have heard a doctor say that, generally speaking, COVID-19 is taking people whose time had come. That's easier to accept when it comes to 90 year olds. But what about young people?

Concerning the great flood in the generation of Noah, Rashi, quoting the Midrash, says that there are extraordinary times when pandemic, chaos, and calamity come to the world and may sweep away good people with others. Is the COVID-19 pandemic such an event? I don't know, but perhaps it may be.

Does anyone know the deeper reason for this pandemic? In the days of Noah, the people of his generation had become completely degenerate and lost all moral perspective. I cannot bring myself to say that this is a punishment for our sins today.

Clearly, there is a bigger picture behind a universal pandemic. No doubt, we should all be doing some serious soul searching as individuals and as a society. While we may not find the reason, we should certainly try to find the message. We should listen carefully, and if we hear a message that resonates with us and inspires us to do good, to improve our behaviour, to reach out to others in need, then let's do so, and help make the world a better place.

Thankfully, much good has already come out of this pandemic as well. Many innovative ways of teaching and working have emerged. So much kindness and outreach is happening, which is nothing short of inspirational.

Please G-d may the pandemic soon be behind us, and may our world be completely healed.

- Rabbi Yossy Goldman is the rabbi at Sydenham Shul and the president of the SA Rabbinical Association.

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# Veronica Phillips’ secret story of survival lives on

TALI FEINBERG

When Holocaust survivor Veronica (Vera) Phillips passed away on 24 February 2021, her pallbearers were German Ambassador to South Africa Dr Martin Schaefer; Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Lior Keinan; Ádám Vadász (the husband of acting Hungarian ambassador to South Africa, [chargé d'affaires] Zsuzsanna Bernadett Rothschild); and Jonathan Andrews, who made the film, *The Secret Survivor*, about her life.

“Where do you have a funeral with all these ambassadors carrying her to her final resting place and crying, saying they are heartbroken? That was Veronica Phillips,” says the director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC), Tali Nates.

Phillips was the tenth Shoah survivor to have died in the past year in South Africa. “Although she was 94 years old and her health had deteriorated, it feels like the end of an era. I’m heartbroken,” says Nates. She and Phillips were as close as family.

“She was iconic. She began to tell her story only very late in life, and did so with such gravitas, wisdom, detail, and empathy,” says Nates. “It was very difficult for her to tell it. It was very painful, and she always broke down, but she was so authentic. She was a ‘silent’ survivor’ for 70 years.”

Veronica Philips (nee Katz) was born on 9 November 1926 in Budapest, Hungary, to Regina and Meyer Katz. Her mother and her brother, Michael, survived the Holocaust thanks to the efforts of Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz. For a time, she was protected by Lutz and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in the “international ghetto” in Budapest, but then the Nazis and their Hungarian collaborators deported her and her father to Ravensbrück concentration camp in December 1944. Although it was in the dying days of the war,

for Phillips, the horror was just beginning. After a harrowing nine-day journey in cattle cars in the coldest winter on record, she arrived at Ravensbrück, a concentration camp mainly for women that had by then also become a death camp. Her father was murdered. Phillips was housed in a giant tent with thousands of other women. There was no food, toilets, or medicine. A gas chamber had been built, and in Andrews’ film about her life, Phillips recalled how the smell of burning flesh would never leave her. While in Ravensbrück, she was selected as a labourer, and taken to work in Penig (a sub-camp of Buchenwald concentration camp) where she suffered inhumane conditions. She was then taken on a death march. At Johannegeorgenstadt, the group was liberated by the allies, but only after many were killed by the Nazis or by starvation and fatigue.

She started an incredible journey in an emaciated physical condition back to Budapest to find her mother and brother. After World War II ended, Phillips became a microbiologist and geneticist at Brunel University. She went on to marry Herman (Hermuscz) Phillips. As a result of what she endured as a teenager under the Nazis, she suffered eight miscarriages and could never have children. The only child she gave birth to survived less than two days.

In 1956, she and her husband escaped communism and settled in London, following her brother. Her niece, Janice Leibowitz, remembers this time. “I was an only child and my parents shared me with them. We were very close.”

Leibowitz’ father got a job opportunity in South Africa, arriving in 1975, and Veronica and Herman followed a year later. “While everyone was leaving, we were arriving!” remembers Leibowitz. [Phillips] got a job very quickly as a microbiology lecturer at Wits [the University of the Witwatersrand], where

she stayed for 20 years.” Nates says that in spite of all she endured, “she was loving and embracing of everyone. For example, a few years ago, we had an ex-Neo Nazi come to our centre, and Veronica was the one who hugged him and invited him over for tea. She told him he was special. That’s the kind of person she



was. And when we had an event on statelessness, there she was, saying, ‘This is terrible, we were stateless, and now it’s happening again!’ She went beyond just remembering the Holocaust, she made the connection to today’s world. She had a really authentic voice that we will miss.”

Nates first met Phillips only about 15 years ago. “This was before the establishment of the JHGC,” says Nates. “[Psychologist] Tracy Farber and I started running group meetings for survivors in Johannesburg. Veronica became part of it, and started to speak about her story for the first time. First to the group, then to pupils, teachers, and schools. And then she discovered us [the JHGC], and we became her family.”

Phillips was intricately involved with the centre from the start. “I remember when the centre was being built about eight years ago, there was just a ramp going up to what would become the third floor. We invited all of our cherished survivors to see how the building was going, and they all went up the ramp with their hard hats on. And there went Veronica, going up the ramp in her high heels! She was always so elegant,” recalls Nates.

Asked why she told her story only so late in life, Nates surmises that the trauma of the past, escaping communism, and not being able to have a family meant that she was continuously battling the next challenge and never had a chance to stop and speak about what had happened to her. “In one way or another, she was always trying to survive the next hurdle.

“Meeting us, helping to create the centre, and becoming part of a group of survivors was the start of something new. I think she felt she had a duty to speak. She would say that if you listen to a witness, you become a witness. Just recently in December, she spoke to students in Uzbekistan! She said, ‘I’m not speaking for me, I’m speaking for you. You have to speak up because there will be deniers, or those who distort the Holocaust, or those who don’t learn from the past.’”

“She really valued education,” says Leibowitz. “That’s why it was so important to her to pass the torch to the next generation. She loved talking to schoolchildren, and they loved her. There was an instant rapport. She was very close to the ambassadors – they all adored her. She had a way with people. She instantly called them ‘darling’, and befriended them. She found a way into everyone’s heart. If you met her, you never forgot her.”

Says Nates, “She said her story wouldn’t die with her. And it will continue in the hundreds of people she had an impact on. That’s her legacy. We will never forget her.”

## MOST SA JEWS (BOTH OF ASHKENAZI AND SEPHARDI HERITAGE) ARE ELIGIBLE TO REINSTATE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT.

A common misconception is that European citizenship and EU passports can only be obtained if one has documents providing his/her lineage. The fact is that not having any documents proving lineage, doesn't lead to disqualification of eligibility. Jews of Ashkenazi heritage can rely on documents obtained in Lithuania or Poland.

Jews of Sephardi heritage need no proof at all!

In his experience, the majority of South African Jews are descendants of Jews whose European citizenship was illegally deprived, and therefore they are entitled to reinstate it, and accordingly obtain an EU passport.



Adv. Horesh has been operating in SA market with the Jewish community since March 2018. He arrives regularly to South Africa, and can meet in person with Jews who are interested to do so.

**Ashkenazi:** This ad refers to Jews of Polish & Lithuanian heritage only. The most important things is the understanding that prior to the end of WW-I, the European map was very different than the one we know today. Countries like Poland and Lithuania did not exist as independent countries, and until 1918 these territories were only known as Lithuanian or Polish regions/counties of the Great Russian Empire who ruled all of north eastern Europe. Accordingly, until 1918, residents of these territories were Russian citizens, as Polish and Lithuanian citizenships didn't exist. Therefore, since applications for reinstatement of these citizenships can only be based on whether one's ancestor was a Polish or Lithuanian citizen, whoever is a descendant of an ancestor who left Europe prior to 1918 will not be eligible.

In addition, it is highly important to remember that since borders in Europe were shifted once again during and after WW-II, one's eligibility for Polish or Lithuanian citizenship depends on the city from which his/her ancestor hailed. Horesh explains: Shifted borders resulted in cities changing nationalities, and that the resultant effect for descendants of Jews left Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined whereas a similar



Adv. Avi Horesh is an Israeli attorney, who lived in Poland for seven years. Horesh is recognised in Israel as one of the leading lawyers in the field of reinstatement of European citizenship.

application for reinstatement of Polish citizenship may very well be approved! Horesh has an in-depth knowledge and a full understanding of European immigration laws.

**Sephardi:** This ad refers to all Jews of Sephardi heritage – Jews who arrived from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, as well as many descendants of Jews who arrived from Holland and the UK. Most descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago)are eligible to reinstate Portuguese citizenship and, accordingly, an EU passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh will apply for (on behalf of the applicant) an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which, an application for Portuguese citizenship is most likely to be approved.

Horesh resides in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – enabling him to travel to Poland and Lithuania, as well as to Portugal, where he collaborates with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications of reinstatement of European citizenship.

Adv. Horesh closely collaborates with professionals who assist him in tracing documentation in Europe required for successful applications of reinstatement EU citizenships.

**My travel schedule has been postponed due to COVID-19, at the moment I plan to arrive in May. I'm offering to review and advise your case for free. You are most welcome to contact me on [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com) or whatsapp +48783953223**



# Matrics of 2021 ready to roll with the punches

TALI FEINBERG

After watching the matrics of 2020 endure a rollercoaster year, the class of 2021 are expecting their final year of school to be filled with similar ups and downs. However, they're ready to take it on the chin and see the positive side of matric in the shadow of a pandemic.

Jonty Schkolne, 17, the deputy head student at Herzlia High School, says, "I think we all know that this year will be different. It even started off differently as we did online lessons for the first two weeks of this year. Luckily, we have experience in different types of school years, and will be able to adapt to anything that life throws at us."

At the same time, he's hoping for a relatively normal year, "as matric is supposed to be one of the best years of your school career. I hope that we are able to experience all the highlights of the year, with minimal interference from COVID-19." Schkolne is concerned about the possible cancellation of matric milestones like the matric dance, "but the matrics of 2021 are used to a bit of disappointment and are expecting that maybe some of our events will be cancelled or look different to previous years."

"I'm grateful to say that if schools do suddenly close, I would be able to continue at home," Schkolne says. "I spent the majority of last year doing school online, and I know what works for me. My school is also able to provide proper online lessons and resources, and I feel that I get just as much out of



Jonty Schkolne

an online lesson as I do in a physical lesson at school."

On not being able to socialise, he says, "Obviously, nothing is the same as seeing my friends at school, but luckily there are many other ways to socialise online – through social media and WhatsApp. Last year, I didn't see one of my best friends for five months, but we made the effort to video call and keep in touch."

"We're all taking it day by day and trying not to worry about the effect COVID-19 will have on our matric year," he says. "We are kept so busy with tests, assignments, and assessments, we don't really have time to think about the 'what ifs'."

But Dani Furman, 17, at Edenvale High School in Johannesburg, fears going back to school online. For her, the pandemic might mean "not being able to finish the syllabus on time, and not getting enough face-to-face interaction that we would usually get in the school year". She says she finds online learning stressful, and government schools in particular may have to shut down suddenly.

"During lockdown last year, our school didn't offer much of an online aspect. We do have Google Classroom, but there's no online teaching going on – it's all self-study," she says. "So, a lot of the time I was joining other school's lessons, going over past papers, and doing revision, just to make sure I did the best I could. If we had to go into another lockdown, it obviously wouldn't be ideal. And I really enjoy being



Dani Furman

in the classroom, communicating with my teachers, and asking questions."

"I would feel bad for the people around me," Furman says, "because not everyone has access to facilities like Wi-Fi or computers. Some of my friends don't have cell phones, computers, or books, so it's very hard for them. They can't even interact with friends, and it's difficult to get the work. But the school assists them, and as friends, we help each other out."

"My hope is to do as well as I can, given the circumstances of COVID-19," she says. "It's a whole new world we're living in and it's tough to adapt to these changes and new ways of study. Obviously, everyone hoped the year would be normal, but I did accept that this year was going to be different. We're still going to be wearing masks, we're not going to be having close contact with people, and we can't hug our friends when we see them – which is part of the school environment and just being human. I'm still accepting every day that things aren't going back to normal anytime soon."

Regarding missing milestones, Furman says, "In all honesty, the matric dance is the least of my concerns. All I want is to finish my school year, and for everyone to pass and do well." Not seeing friends would be hard for her. "I'm very much a people person, I love interacting and seeing friends – I'm a social butterfly." Under lockdown, she and friends with internet access

met on a Zoom call once a week to catch up and check in with each other.

"If you managed to get through mentally last year, you got an 'A' in life," she says. "It wasn't about putting pen to paper, it was about being able to cope with the year."

Shaina Resnik, 17, of King David Linksfield says, "My hope for my matric year is to reach my full academic potential but still have some balance and spend time with my friends and family doing things I love."

"I fear that I may not have the volunteering opportunities I would have had, and won't be able to gain the experience that would aid me in the medical field due to the pandemic. I do fear that COVID-19 may mean the cancellation of major events like the matric dance, but it's more important for everyone to be healthy."

Although there has been endless debate about the merits of online learning, Resnik feels that a sudden switch to Zoom classes during her matric year probably wouldn't trip her up. "I worked very well during online school [last year], and I found myself more productive and having more time for myself. However, I fear for the students who are less privileged than me as they don't have the facilities for online school. If schools close, they will be at a huge disadvantage."

If schools closed suddenly, she would miss seeing her friends each day. "However, I will keep in touch with them through WhatsApp and social media." She points out that there are "definitely benefits to not being able to go out and socialise every weekend, as this will give me more time to focus on school work".

## Frazzled matrics face last-minute choices

NICOLA MILTZ

After a mammoth wait for results, matriculants are now speedily preparing to go to university or take time out following what some have called the "worst year ever" to graduate from high school.

With exam results of both National Senior Certificate (NSC) and the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) coming out far later than previous years because of COVID-19 hurdles, school leavers are having to make a last-minute scramble to make plans for 2021.

It has been a week or two of crack decisions and a crazy run around for some, with life changing decisions about whether to work, study, or take a gap year. All of these decisions take months to plan normally, but only days or minutes in the time of coronavirus.

The much-anticipated gap year has taken many twists and turns as countries vacillate between opening and shutting international borders for travel and tourism.

These matriculants faced anxiety over their matric results to begin with, compounded by further stress about whether to register for university or not. Still unsure about whether their overseas gap year would materialise, they had to decide whether or not to register for university in case travelling became impossible.

"My son has faced his first real adult dilemma," said Johannesburg social worker Stephanie Urdang, "to register

in time for university or wait for Israel to eventually open its borders so that he can go on Limmud."

"He was accepted into the two university courses he applied for and needed to register for his degree. He only had a few days to decide whether to register or not. It was very stressful. It was a hard decision to make, but he is hopeful he made the right one." His university registration process has now passed, so that makes it official – he won't be studying this year. In the meantime, he waits."

Stacey Swartzberg's son is enrolled at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom (UK), and was going to Israel before the start of the UK academic year.

"All the delays have made his Israel plans unfeasible, so he has changed plans completely and is going to the University of Cape Town (UCT), where he will be with a lot of his friends. You can plan all you like, but COVID-19 has taught us that plans often come to naught."

"This week, there is more clarity, but now there is a rush to settle in Cape Town, find an apartment, rail a car, and sign a lease. It's all very last minute," said Swartzberg.

One Johannesburg mother who wished to remain anonymous is worried about getting her son to Cape Town on time before the start of the academic year at UCT.

"My son wasn't sure he was going to get enough points for his desired course



The University of Cape Town

at UCT. He had to wait to hear from the university, which he did only a few days ago and fortunately, he did get into the course of choice. Now he is trying to find flat mates at the last minute and a place to live that's affordable. He has only had a short time to do all this as orientation begins this week at UCT, and lectures begin in two weeks. These are all serious adult issues."

Many matriculants received provisional acceptances from their universities of choice following applications made last year, but they weren't guaranteed acceptance until the release of their matric results. It added to the stress of waiting.

One Johannesburg mother said her son, who obtained six distinctions, was anxious about being accepted into engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). While he got more than enough points to get into his desired course, he didn't receive provisional acceptance on his Grade 11 marks which were very good, she said.

"The long wait for matric results was torturous," she told the *SA Jewish Report* this week.

"He was ecstatic when he did so well, but anxious about whether he did well enough. It was a huge relief for him when Wits made him a firm offer the day after the matric results came out, but the stress leading up to this was unforgettable. There are few places for students doing engineering and so many applications so you are never secure in your choice until the last minute."

One King David student who also wishes to remain anonymous found the

wait for matric results unbearable.

"I was very stressed. I wanted to study for a BCom at the University of Johannesburg and because I did maths literacy, I needed to outperform on my other subjects to acquire enough points to get in."

"Fortunately, I did very well, and I got in easily, but it was very stressful," he told the *SA Jewish Report*. "Unlike many of my friends, I didn't have the option of a gap year or to study in another city, so I really needed to work hard and make it happen. I was worried that I would need a plan B."

Going into the big wide world is challenging and daunting at the best of times, but 2021 is on another level.

"A lot of kids are still debating whether to take a gap year after the horrendous year they had last year, just to have some time off. Kids are frazzled," Urdang says. "I believe every kid who passed matric in 2020 is a hero. Some children thrived, and some slipped through the cracks. Many didn't cope emotionally and academically."

"Besides learning on their own and pivoting to be online, they were surrounded by the stress of parents being retrenched, the loss of family members, people around them getting sick and not being able to visit them, huge financial worries, and of course, things like crime and youth unemployment have all taken their toll. They are heroes in my eyes."

In years to come, writing matric in 2020 will be worn as a badge of honour.

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# Principals award matrices 20/20 for resilience and tenacity

**King David High School Victory Park, Andrew Baker**

At King David High School Victory Park, we celebrate the outstanding achievement of our entire matric class of 2020 in the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) final examinations. They have all surpassed our expectations in a year filled with seemingly insurmountable challenges.

We salute their tenacity and determination to achieve such significant results. This remarkable group of students all achieved a personal best, and the steep upward trajectory in their marks from Grade 11 finals through to the preliminary examinations and into their finals is testament to their attitude and work ethic. At the same time, we recognise the academic excellence of our top performers. No fewer than 10 candidates achieved averages exceeding 90%, and six students were recognised on the prestigious IEB listings of commendable and outstanding achievement. It's certainly no mean feat of accomplishment for 96% of the grade to achieve averages of 60% and over. *Mazaltov* to the entire group, and *kol hakavod* to all their teachers.



**Herzlia, Marc Falconer**

We celebrate our 2020 matric group and its achievements – the best ever by a Herzlia matric cohort. There were 97 matric scholars and a 100% pass rate, with every candidate who entered the National Senior Certificate being awarded a Bachelor Degree pass (university exemption). There were 416 individual subject distinctions, with an average of 4.3 distinctions per candidate. All 15 pupils on the educational support programme passed with a Bachelor Degree pass, with not one subject failure. In any year, these results would have been exceptional, but in the context of the global pandemic and the extraordinary challenges this brought, the results of the 2020 group are astonishing.

Every pupil, irrespective of distinctions, deserves to be commended for their resilience, grit, focus, and dedication in a year characterised by change, loss, grief, but also by adaptability, determination, innovation, and camaraderie. It's important to note that during 2020, the dedication, adaptability, and unquestioned investment by each of the teachers was far beyond the norm. It's also important to recognise the extraordinary work of the educational support department and the counsellors who supported so many students (and their parents), not just academically but in every aspect of their last challenging year at school. Parents have also played a vital role in supporting, encouraging, and nurturing their children at this highly stressed time. While it's fitting to celebrate outstanding results, these statistics don't, however, tell the whole story. For many pupils who are part of our inclusive school, their matric results need to be understood in their

specific context. We are often more proud of these difficult-to-discern triumphs than the more obvious achievements. Education is about results as well as the values, skills, habits, and relationships that our pupils take out into the world after they leave school. *Mazaltov* to our matric group of 2020!

**Torah Academy Boys High School, Rabbi Motti Hadar**

I take my hat off to the matrices of 2020! Last year was the opposite of the typical and what we think of as "ideal". Yet somehow, among the chaos, uncertainty, and ever-changing landscape of education, our matric students inspired me every day with their grit, determination, flexibility, and commitment. In spite of all the setbacks, the matrices of Torah Academy Boys High School excelled, reaching their goals, exceeding our expectations, and making us truly proud! With a 100% pass rate, multiple distinctions, and marks into the 90s, they have truly outdone themselves. All while not compromising on their full curriculum of *limudei kodesh*, Jewish Studies.

Matrics, far more important than your results – which will stand you in good stead – are the lessons you have learnt this past year. To maintain focus when chaos surrounds you, to be flexible and adaptive to change, to learn new things, to learn old things in new ways, to remain positive in the face of difficulty, and to strive for your goals and do your ultimate best no matter the circumstances. If matric is the first step towards a successful future, the matrices of 2020 have not just stepped into a bright tomorrow, they have all taken an admirable leap forward. Their tenacity, courage, determination, creativity, and resolve this past year has inspired me.



**Hirsch Lyons, Rabbi Steven Krawitz** Matriculants in a normal year experience pressure and anxiety. Matric during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 was exponentially more demanding.

It's in this context that the matric year and all schools' results of 2020 need to be appreciated, and all our students and staff recognised for their superhuman efforts. Hirsch Lyons High Schools moved to online classes before the end of March, and didn't return until after prelims in late September for a few lessons and oral moderations. The majority of all syllabi were taught over Zoom, as were most assessments. Teachers went far beyond the call of duty to ensure that all aspects of their subject were understood. When the matric results finally came out, Hirsch Lyons celebrated the unbelievable results of our outstanding students. There were a total of 58 distinctions from 15 students, an average of 3.8 distinctions per student. More than half of all results were distinctions, and 81% of all results were above 70%. All Hirsch Lyons students can progress to tertiary study.

But what makes us at Hirsch Lyons so proud of our graduates is not only the number of distinctions they achieved, but also the distinction of personality that they embody. They are proud Torah Jews, who have refined *middos*, character traits, a dedication to the Jewish nation, and the desire to improve the society within which they live. At Hirsch Lyons, we believe we are like an airport runway, preparing airplanes for take-off, giving students the necessary Torah and academic knowledge, skills, and character refinement for life. We are proud of the students, and wish them and all the matriculants of 2020 every *brocha* of success as they continue the next part of the journey of their life.

**Yeshiva College, Rob Long**

At Yeshiva College, we are exceptionally proud of our matric class of 2020. Not only has it produced outstanding matric results, the class has also grown into fine young men and women who we believe will make a profound and positive mark on society. The class of 2020's achievement of 100% pass rate and 100% university entrance is indicative of its hard work, dedication, and resilience during what has been a challenging year.

Paramount to the success of our students is the special relationship between our dedicated staff and motivated students. The grade average across 17 subjects of 76% demonstrates that our students are motivated to do well in a school culture that promotes excellence. Our academic staff has high expectations for our students, and our teachers encourage and support them to achieve their potential. The grade distinction average of 3.5 distinctions per student, and the fact that we had six students in the top 1% in English, Life Orientation, and Life Sciences is indicative of the level of excellence for which teachers and students strive. Matric is the culmination of 12 years of school in which each year builds on the year before it. We thus acknowledge all our teachers who have taught our students over the past 12 years. We wish the class of 2020 all the best as they embark on their studies and future endeavours in Israel and around the world.



**Torah Academy Girls High School, Morah Rebecca Sarchi** As Chabad *chassidim*, we strive to live by the saying *l'chatchila ariber*. Simply explained, if you cannot crawl under an obstacle, try to leap over it.

The fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe said, "Leap over it in the first place. Just go for it!" That's exactly what the matrices of 2020 from Torah Academy Girls High School did. With each obstacle they encountered, they jumped, and each time they jumped higher and higher. Seemingly no obstacle was too big to deter them from achieving their goals. They lived and learned in spite of COVID-19. Each of them aimed high, worked hard, and played hard. They took

nothing for granted, and appreciated every online lesson, extra lesson, and every single teacher. They invested endless hours into revising and practising past papers. With exams behind them, and uncertainty the new mantra of the world, they started planning the next steps in their life journey. We all know that a diamond is a chunk of coal that did well under pressure. So to each of my matrices, I say your sparkle lights up the world. Your value is tremendous, and your matric achievements are excellent and humbling. Keep shining and striving and make this world a brighter and better place. You can do it – remember *l'chatchila ariber*.

**King David High School Linksfield, Lorraine Srage**

King David High School Linksfield 2020 matriculants have brought credit to themselves, their families, the school, and the community at large.

We know that writing matric during the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't an easy time for them and their families, but the buzzword of 2020, "pivot", and all it entails belongs to this group of students. They understood the sacrifices that keeping themselves and their families safe entailed, and they graciously gave up sports matches, musicals, matric dances, and 18th birthday parties, and joined the responsible adult world a year before it was absolutely necessary. I commend the courageous way in which the matrices pivoted and focused on getting through the year as best as they could. Even more so, all of these sacrifices are evident in our outstanding matric results that King David High School Linksfield has achieved.

All 149 students passed, with all except one receiving a university entrance. A total of 504 distinctions were obtained, that is 3.4 distinctions per student. Seventeen percent of students achieved a "full house" of seven distinctions or more. Twenty-three students were placed in the top 1% in the country in certain subjects. One student was placed on the IEB Outstanding Achievements List (within the top 5% in six subjects or more and 80% or more in Life Orientation) and two students were placed on the IEB Commendable Achievements List (within the top 5% in five subjects and 80% or more for Life Orientation). What's particularly outstanding is that all of our students in the educational support programme obtained a university entrance. However, our success isn't just measured in distinctions, it's measured in the meeting of potential, in fulfilled dreams. We measure success also in the students who didn't believe that they could pass matric, and did; the students who didn't believe that they could obtain a university entrance, and did; the students who didn't even believe that matric was a vague possibility for them, but who did it. Winston Churchill said, "Success isn't final, failure isn't fatal: it's the courage to continue that counts." And continue we did. With courage. The matrices inspired me. The matrices are my success. Our students were able to reap the benefits of a privileged education, and my sincere wish is that they will all make their mark as well as make a difference.







YESHIVA COLLEGE BOYS & GIRLS HIGH SCHOOLS

# MATRIC RESULTS



100% PASS RATE & 100% UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE • 3.5 DISTINCTIONS PER LEARNER  
OUR MATRIC GRADE AVERAGE ACROSS ALL SUBJECTS WAS ABOVE 76%

## YESHIVA COLLEGE CLASS OF 2020

בִּי בְשִׁמְחָה יֵצְאוּ וּבְשָׁלוֹם תּוּבְלוּן  
You shall go out with joy and be led forward with peace  
(ישעיהו נה יב)



**44 Learners • 16 girls and 28 boys**

**THE CLASS OF 2020 AMASSED AN INCREDIBLE 154 DISTINCTIONS IN TOTAL**

*It is a remarkable achievement that our Matric classes have maintained an average of above 3.5 distinctions per learner for the last 8 years.*

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF 'DISTINCTION'

- 2 learners attained 9 distinctions each
- 2 learners attained 8 distinctions each
- 4 learners attained 7 distinctions each
- 2 learners attained 6 distinctions each
- 4 learners attained 5 distinctions each
- 5 learners attained 4 distinctions each
- 6 learners attained 3 distinctions each
- 7 learners attained 2 distinctions each
- 5 learners attained 1 distinction each

- 154 distinctions across the grade from 44 students
- English achieved 66% distinctions
- AP Maths achieved 67% distinctions
- Life Orientation achieved 82% distinctions
- Drama achieved 88% distinctions
- IT achieved 100% distinctions

### LEADING FROM THE TOP

- 5 students achieved a full house of distinctions.
- 90% of all students achieved at least one distinction across 17 subjects.
- Matric Grade Average across all subjects in excess of 76%.
- 5 students placed in top 1% in English.
- 2 students placed in the top 1% in Life Orientation.
- 2 students placed in the top 1% for Life Science.

#### IEB Commendable List

Ben Swartz achieved within the top 5% in 5 subjects and achieved a rating level of 7 in Life Orientation and features on the IEB Commendable List.

REMARKABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC, EXTRA MURAL AND TORAH GROWTH FOR ALL LEARNERS

### The Next Step



80%

80% of our matrics will be spending their first year after school in Israel.



70%

Over 70% of our learners will be going to spend their gap year learning in Israel.



100%

Proudly contributing to the future of the Jewish people.

YESHIVA  
COLLEGE

The Torah School of Excellence





# Waiting and waiting to go to Israel

JORDAN MOSHE

Students are raring to get to Israel to begin their gap-year programmes, but until Ben Gurion Airport reopens fully, they have no choice but to wait for their long-anticipated flight.

Like many others, they are stuck in South Africa because of the closure of the Israeli airport which began in January.

On Tuesday, 2 March, Israel’s coronavirus cabinet approved the partial reopening of the airport, beginning on Sunday, allowing a limited number of Israeli citizens to enter and leave the country aboard authorised flights.

Foreigners, however, still have to apply for special permission to enter the country, and flights remain limited to New York, Paris, Frankfurt, and Kiev.

According to Livnat Katz, the regional representative of Masa Israel Journey, gap-year programmes are on track in spite of the delays, with some having already departed in January prior to the closure of Ben Gurion. The umbrella organisation is responsible for many of the gap years popular amongst South Africans.

“Some groups left in January, but for others, it’s a matter of waiting for the skies to open again,” she says. “We’ve been told that flights could resume in early March, but nothing has been confirmed.

“We are working closely with the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency. Masa programme organisers are in close contact with participants and are keeping them up to date with any changes.”

According to Katz, 80 South African youngsters have signed up for the gap-year programmes, most of them from Bnei Akiva. “The programmes are still running as

before, with some adjustment,” says Katz. “We are being creative to keep the programme as normal as possible, ensuring safe and comfortable 14-day quarantine conditions for all incoming fellows. During quarantine, they will have an opportunity to stay engaged and active through virtual enrichment activities like orientations, Hebrew-language courses, and educational seminars.”

Nonetheless, those stuck in South Africa remain in limbo, their suitcases packed and ready but unable to get to the holy land to commence their gap-year programmes.

“I was supposed to leave on 10 January, but due to the closure of the airport, this date has been postponed many times,” says Ruby Gimpel, who signed up for the Aardvark Israel programme. “I’m not sure when I will be leaving.”

“Initially, my family and I were refreshing our emails for updates every five minutes as everything felt so up in the air. We then moved on to weekly email check-ins which never gave any satisfactory information due to the restrictions in place in Israel and in South Africa.”

While programme organisers are doing their best to keep participants informed, the situation is extremely volatile, says Liron Horowitz, who is waiting to go on Bnei Akiva’s Limmud programme.

“It’s difficult to get information regarding when the airport will open as it’s a state matter,” he says.

The wait has caused understandable frustration, with students waiting to leave at a moment’s notice but unable to plan anything in the meantime.

“I feel like my friends are getting their lives together by starting university while I feel stagnant at the moment,” says Daniel

Rome, a participant of Habonim Dror’s Shnat programme.

“I’ve been able to keep myself busy by going to gym and seeing my friends. Unfortunately, I expect to leave only after the next Israeli election because I believe Bibi won’t be taking any COVID-19-related risks until the election.”

Shayna Goss, who hopes to spend the year on Ohrsom’s Israel programme, agrees.

“Because our departure has been imminent, I haven’t been able to commit to doing something productive. Although the uncertainty is frustrating, I’m thankful to have been home to receive my matric results and to have celebrated with my school.”

Some programmes have enabled students to begin activities from South Africa, including shiurim and ulpan classes.

Erin Midzuk, who is waiting to attend the

Bnei Akiva MTA programme at Midreshet Harova, has for the past two weeks attended online shiurim and training sessions hosted by the institution and Bnei Akiva.

“We have also had shiurim with local rabbonim and teachers, and learning opportunities with fellow MTA participants,” she says. “While having a packed suitcase stare at me for almost a month has been frustrating, I know that this frustration is being felt by all students attending various programmes, including the programme organisers themselves.

“The taste of MTA I’ve got from online and in-person classes has given me the inspiration needed to keep my levels of excitement and optimism high enough.”

Horowitz says Bnei Akiva has also organised

Continued on page 25>>

## Understanding the matrices of 2020

JORDAN MOSHE

Social media demands responsibility, marijuana has incredible potential, sex before marriage is a personal choice, and novelty isn’t always a good thing.

These were some of the opinions voiced by students of the matric 2020 cohort. A panel of 16 youngsters weighed in last week on a variety of subjects in an online discussion hosted by the *SA Jewish Report*.

While Instagram seems to be the platform of choice, some students suggested that social media does potentially more harm than good.

“There are definitely good parts of social media,” said Julian Gordon, who attended Redhill. “From a business perspective, many use it to market themselves. But there are negatives

like cyberbullying and scamming. If I had to pick, I’d say it does more harm than good.”

Amira Cohen from Yeshiva College believes that almost everyone follows social influencers online, something these influencers need to be aware of.

“Influencing creates a job opportunity, and many people get far with it as a career,” she said. “Still, a following comes with a lot of responsibility. It bothers me when influencers say that they didn’t sign up to be a role model. Maybe you didn’t sign up for it, but you definitely are, whether you choose to be one or not.”

On the COVID-19 front, a number of panellists felt that the recent Matric Rage festival may have been unadvisable, although that could be said only in hindsight. Five panellists attended the event, four of whom were infected with COVID-19.

Sam Maron, who attended King David Linksfield (KDL), regrets taking part.

“At the time, I was adamant about going after the tough year we’d had, but looking back, it’s something I would avoid as ethically, I think it was incorrect,” he said.

King David Victory Park’s (KDVP) Bethia Milner agreed.

“In the moment, we thought the cases were a lot lower,” she said. “We were perhaps a bit naïve when we thought there’d be better precautions. Looking back, we see how irresponsible we were. We didn’t fully grasp how bad it could be. It’s easy to look back and say now that we shouldn’t have gone.”

Said Brad Gottschalk, a KDL graduate, “With the pandemic, we can’t say, ‘lock yourself up in your room’, but we also can’t go to a super spreader event where drunk teenagers are spreading COVID-19. It’s illogical, and it wasn’t right. The government should have stopped it. Still, we can’t look back now and accuse people.”

Most panellists believe that alcohol isn’t a problem amongst youngsters. As for drugs, a majority approved of the legalisation of cannabis.

Said Gordon, “I’ve always believed that when you have a substance, the more you try to ban it, the more resistance there will be, and it will continue to be used underground. It gives South Africans more freedom to

have it legalised.”

KDL graduate Josh Pimstein believes that as long as consumption is controlled, it’s acceptable.

“The worry is what it leads to,” he said. “Often, it’s step one to things that aren’t great, but if done with control, it’s fine. If people want to experiment with harder drugs, it’s a problem.”

Fellow King Davidian, Jake Rudnicki, however, believes that psychedelic drugs enable people to unlock their potential.

“Today’s society is designed to shut down 90% of a human potential,” he said. “This is a revelation that comes from working with psychedelics. They reconnect us to the spirit, something which society lacks. These drugs aren’t all perfect, but certainly are an agent of liberation.”

On the subject of race, almost every panellist agreed



A screenshot from the *SA Jewish Report* webinar

that their parents weren’t racist. They also said that if their parents voiced a racist or discriminatory remark, they would discuss it with them.

Dani Sack, a Yeshiva College graduate, said, “Because of the apartheid society [my parents] were brought up in, they have learned prejudices they have yet to unlearn, but they want to get out of that racist past.”

A Hindu by birth, KDVP graduate Kabir Singh said that he had never experienced prejudice attending an almost exclusively white Jewish school.

“When I first joined, it was a bit of a surprise for a lot of people,” he said. “Everyone else was white, but my colour never came into anything. It was a regular school, where I got to learn Hebrew and Jewish Studies and look into another culture. My race was never an issue.”


Asked about their future, a majority believed they will still be living in South Africa in five years’ time, while only half predicted that they will still be here in 10 years’ time.

Said Gottschalk, “The situation in South Africa is very demotivating, and it’s hard not to get upset about it. But that said, the Jewish community tends to live really good lives here on a global scale, and we should be the ones improving society.”

Shui Hoppenstein, who graduated from Torah Academy, agreed. “I love South Africa. It’s very beautiful but with a ton of awful problems. I want to go to Israel but that makes me kind of sad. I should be staying here and not ditching the country I’ve been in my whole life.”

“We need to give credit where it’s due,” said Milner. “We’ve maintained a democracy after our very tough history. Yes, there’s corruption and disappointment, but I feel that I have a responsibility to the country, and I want to contribute. I want to experience the world, but South Africa is my home.”

Every child a Masterpiece



Congrats  
Matrics of 2020!

- 100% PASS RATE
- 96% BACHELOR’S DEGREE PASS
- 2.63 DISTINCTIONS PER CANDIDATE



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# Let's not go back to "normal" in education

OPINION

JOSEPH GERASSI



For many of us in education, 2020 would be the year in which we expanded our vision, innovated our offering, and showcased the many ways we continued to integrate technology into our students' day-to-day learning.

What began as an exciting start to the year quickly transformed into a time of uncertainty, change, and a complete rethink about how we educate students remotely instead of on campus.

Before the pandemic, technology had mostly become an innovative addition to the classroom, including robotics, coding, and drones. Very few educational institutions had made the courageous leap into the mostly unknown world of online learning. They cited concerns about the social and emotional well-being of students, a lack of time to build the necessary platforms, and an overwhelming belief that teachers should be in the classroom where they have always been.

COVID-19 was the unexpected and unwelcome push that derailed our collective objections and drove us forward into exploring the largely uncharted educational waters that technology had to offer. As the well-known proverb says, "Necessity is the mother of invention". Or, as I like to say, "We had no choice!"

During those early days of recording lessons, setting up Google Classroom and virtual live classrooms, I was struck by how much progress can occur when people have no choice but to power through and get the job done.

It wasn't easy, and it definitely wasn't perfect, but we soon realised that as long as students had an electronic device and data, they could continue to be educated. So, educate them we did – with a fair amount of trial and error amidst the uncertainty about how long we would all have to do this and when life would return to "normal".

However, I don't believe that school life will ever return to what we once saw as "normal". Nor should it. Instead, the global pandemic has been the disruption that we so desperately needed, under undesirable circumstances, to move education forward in ways we might never have had the time, drive, or courage to do.

As such, we have learnt new methods, new ways, new advantages, and new possibilities of educating our children in a manner that adequately prepares them for a world that doesn't yet exist. This is a future where they will continuously be required to change, adapt, pivot, unlearn, discover, and recreate.

Therefore, it doesn't make sense to go back to what we once thought was normal in the same way that it doesn't make sense to go back to communicating with our parents through the post office.

Here's what we have learnt and why I think it's worth keeping even after COVID-19 is a distant memory; and why education in general and matric in particular will never be the same:

















- 1. Having a beginner's mindset**  
The pandemic forced most teachers to adopt a beginner's mindset when the old ways of doing things were no longer an option. Having a beginner's mindset allows educators to rethink their material and how they present it, approach teaching, and learn with a different perspective.
- Teachers who successfully adopt a beginner's mindset will reimagine the learning environment in its many forms without the pressure of having to conform to previous pedagogies. This openness to new possibilities and outcomes will spring-clean outdated, preconceived ways of doing things and be a breath of fresh air for all involved. In essence,

- it's the perfect breeding ground for curiosity and innovation in education to thrive.
- 2. Finding new ways to educate vastly different students**  
COVID-19 resulted in many teachers pre-recording videos of their lessons, which allowed students to pause, rewind, and replay challenging sections and learn at their own pace. Stronger and more advanced students also had the opportunity to speed through the content and move onto self-study or practical tasks without getting bored.
- We would be remiss in losing this unprecedented insight and practice, which could be a gamechanger for students long after COVID-19. I'm confident that it will reduce the number of students falling behind and those needing extra lessons as they will be able to review, revise, and relearn the relevant content at their own pace and in their own time.
- 3. Finding new ways to connect with students and parents after school**  
The pandemic allowed us to reimagine how we connect with both parents and students outside of the classroom. For example, parents' evenings can be held effectively online without parents needing to spend hours at the school.
- In the same way, students will be able to schedule a quick 15-minute Zoom call with a teacher to ask a question or go over a specific section of work without needing an "extra lesson". In this way, teachers will be able to streamline their time and use it more efficiently.
- 4. Finding new ways to assess students**  
There is a very definite roadmap that teachers have used over the years: teach and test. Education in

- the time of COVID-19 allowed us to find new ways of assessing students in a way that allowed them to relearn and revisit content until their understanding and grasp of it became more important than an assessment itself.
- 5. A hybrid learning model**  
Having said all of the above, I don't believe that a post-pandemic education will mean an end to traditional face-to-face learning. Instead, online learning taught us that students missed campus life and face-to-face teaching and learning, and that a hybrid model of learning will be the way to go moving forward.
- This will include days on and days off campus, learning content at home with pre-recorded videos that will allow students to learn at their own pace, and classroom time spent applying skills to content already learnt.
- There is no doubt that the disruption to traditional education brought about by COVID-19 has inspired the rethinking of traditional education. Changes that would have been inconceivable before the pandemic, have been made due to necessity. This has made it possible to reassess educational models that were assumed to be fundamental and unchallengeable in the past.
- Progressive schools and educators will never be able to return to "normal", and will instead harness the disruption that has occurred in education to have a beginner's mindset and continue to innovate and make education more suitable for the evolving needs of our world.
- Joseph Gerassi is the executive head of Redhill School, former principal of King David High School Victory Park and the Absa Jewish Achiever Professional Excellence Award 2019 winner.

CRAWFORD INTERNATIONAL


MATRIC 2020 TOP JEWISH ACHIEVERS

 <div>Savanna Cohen (Sandton) <b>8 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Indigo Douglas Pedersen (Sandton) <b>8 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	<div>Top 5% Commendable Achievement</div>  <div>Jade Smith (Sandton) <b>8 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Charlotte Abrahams (Sandton) <b>7 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Gregory Maselle (Sandton) <b>7 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Daniel Cohen (La Lucia) <b>6 IEB Distinctions</b></div>
 <div>Erin Dodo (Sandton) <b>6 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Jordan Swartzberg (Sandton) <b>6 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Jaime Altshuler (La Lucia) <b>5 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Jaime Katz (Sandton) <b>5 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Alexa Schneier (Sandton) <b>5 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Adam Abro (Sandton) <b>4 IEB Distinctions</b></div>
 <div>Adam Kramer (Sandton) <b>4 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Ruben Morris (Sandton) <b>4 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Erin Serman (Sandton) <b>4 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	 <div>Leah Roy (Sandton) <b>3 IEB Distinctions</b></div>	<div><b>2 IEB Distinctions</b> Rachel Dannheisser (Sandton) Jessica Gering (La Lucia) Tyra Lee Nackan (La Lucia)</div>	<div><b>1 IEB Distinction</b> Cade Neuhaus (Sandton) Eli Powell (Lonehill) Dylan Trevis (Sandton) Gidon Utian (Sandton)</div>

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KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL LINKSFIELD

King David Linksfield excels in every subject: Number of students: 149 • Number of distinctions achieved: 504 • Average: 3.4 distinctions per student. • 17% of students achieved a full house or more. 47% of the subjects written resulted in 80% or higher. Number of students qualified for BD (university entrance): 148 • Number of students qualified for diploma study: 1



**Daniel Class** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Joshua Pimstein** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Music, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Gavriel Burgin** English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Accounting, Information Technology, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Gabriel Diamond** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Gabriel Hirschowitz** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Dylan Kuming** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Daniel Lurie** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, Advanced Programme Mathematics



**Leora Porter** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Information Technology, Music, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Shaul Asayag** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Geography, Life Orientation



**Yonatan Asayag** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Rotem Barashi** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Kiara Behr** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Business Studies, Life Orientation



**Montana Boon** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Micaela Cohen** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Shayna Goss** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, History, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Demi Gruskin** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Tana Herson** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Consumer Studies, Life Orientation



**James Hirschowitz** English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Accounting, Business Studies, History, Life Orientation



**Tyla Kahn** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Consumer Studies, Life Sciences, Life Orientation



**Noah Kallner** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, History, Life Orientation



**Julian Katz** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, History, Life Orientation



**Kayla Kotzen** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, History, Life Sciences, Life Orientation



**Carly Rachelson** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Shane Silverman** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Information Technology, Life Orientation



**Erin Atie** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, History, Life Sciences, Life Orientation



**Daniel Frankel** English, Mathematics, Accounting, History, Information Technology, Life Orientation



**Montana Goldberg** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Life Orientation



**David Goshier** English, Mathematical Literacy, Business Studies, Dramatic Arts, History, Life Orientation



**Samantha Gottschalk** English, Hebrew, Mathematical Literacy, History, Visual Arts, Life Orientation



**Maya Katzen** English, isiZulu, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Orientation



**Nikita Krost** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Orientation



**Gina Levi** English, Mathematics, History, Physical Sciences, Visual Arts, Life Orientation



**Gabriella Morein** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Accounting, History, Life Orientation



**Bianca Rosen** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Business Studies, History, Life Orientation



**Dina Segal** English, Mathematics, Dramatic Arts, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Shai Segal** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Orientation



**Ashlea Smith** English, Mathematics, Accounting, Information Technology, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Gila Taurog** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Orientation



**Kayla Walt** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation



**Camilla Cohen** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, History, Life Orientation



**Deena Gaddin** English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Accounting, Life Orientation



**Brad Gottschalk** English, Mathematical Literacy, Dramatic Arts, History, Life Orientation



**Mikayla Levick** English, isiZulu, Hebrew, Mathematical Literacy, Dramatic Arts



**David Michaels** English, Hebrew, Mathematics, Information Technology, Life Orientation



**Joshua Norman** English, Mathematical Literacy, History, Visual Arts, Life Orientation



**Leor Novick** English, Hebrew, Business Studies, History, Life Orientation




































**Shirili Rosenberg** English, Business Studies, Dramatic Arts, History, Life Orientation



**Michal Sacke** English, isiZulu, Hebrew, History, Life Orientation



KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL LINKSFIELD

<div>FIVE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Danielle Shafer English, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Sciences, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FIVE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Sarah Swartz English, Mathematics, Dramatic Arts, History, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Tayla-Jayde Baron English, Mathematical Literacy, Business Studies, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Geena Benater English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Mathematics</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jesse Bondi English, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Sciences</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Dylan Chimes English, Mathematics, Accounting, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Daniella Dozetos English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Liron Horowitz English, Hebrew, Geography, Life Orientation</div>
<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Anna Kayla Joffe English, Hebrew, Life Sciences, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Sarah Lessick English, History, Visual Arts, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Lior Meir English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jed Nesbitt Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Sciences, Advanced Programme Mathematics</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Tanya Perel English, Dramatic Arts, History, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Daniel Rome English, Hebrew, History, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Kaylee Rudman English, Business Studies, History, Life Orientation</div>	<div>FOUR DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Shane Sher English, Business Studies, History, Life Orientation</div>
<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jesse Behrmann Mathematics, Business Studies, Geography</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Shely Hadar Afrikaans, Hebrew, Life Orientation</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Channing Haefner Mathematical Literacy, History, Life Orientation</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Galit Harris Mathematics, Geography, Life Orientation</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Danya Kinross Hebrew, Accounting, History</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jonty Mer Accounting, Business Studies, Life Orientation</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Danielle Ogus English, Hebrew, Life Orientation</div>	<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Hannah Rome English, History, Life Orientation</div>
<div>THREE DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Joshua Wilensky English, Dramatic Arts, Life Orientation</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Avraham Asayag Hebrew, Mathematical Literacy</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Shani Avramov Afrikaans, Hebrew</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jordan Brener Mathematical Literacy, History</div>	<div>WE ARE BURSTING WITH PRIDE</div> <div>King David High School, Linksfield's matric class of 2020 achieved a <b>100% pass rate</b></div> <div><b>504</b> distinctions with an average of <b>3.4</b> distinctions per student</div> <div><b>17%</b> of students achieved a 'full house' of 7 distinctions or more</div> <div>124 students achieved at least one distinction – <b>83%</b> of the total student body</div> <div><b>40%</b> of students obtained an overall <b>A average</b></div> <div><b>96%</b> of students achieved a <b>C average</b> or higher</div> <div>IEB <b>Outstanding Achievements</b> – Daniel Class</div> <div>IEB <b>Commendable Achievements</b></div> <div>– Gabriel Hirschowitz, Tyla Kahn</div> <div><b>23</b> students placed in the <b>Top1%</b> of their subjects</div> <div>Gavriel Burgin – <b>100% Mathematics</b></div> <div>Rotem Barashi – <b>100% Hebrew</b></div> <div><b>Over 60%</b> of the grade offered <b>Hebrew</b></div> <div><b>74%</b> of <b>Hebrew</b> students obtained a <b>distinction</b></div>			
<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jordyn Budd Hebrew, Life Orientation</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Jared Cramer Mathematical Literacy, Tourism</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Liora Eitzman English, Life Orientation</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Deandra Grevler Mathematical Literacy, History</div>				
<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Levi Kavonic Business Studies, Life Orientation</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Joshua Kress Business Studies, Life Orientation</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Shir Meiry Mathematical Literacy, Hebrew</div>	<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Andi Milwidsky Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation</div>				
<div>TWO DISTINCTIONS</div> <div></div> <div>Sam Sweidan Mathematics, Business Studies</div>	<div>ONE DISTINCTION</div> <div>Aaron Bayhack Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Ryan Behrmann Business Studies</div> <div>Ricky Cimring Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Kiara Druyan Mathematics</div> <div>Gina Fine Mathematical Literacy</div>	<div>ONE DISTINCTION</div> <div>Jenna Gelman Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Zachary Gerber Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Shira Heyns Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Shane Meltz Mathematics</div> <div>Matan Nafte Mathematical Literacy</div>	<div>ONE DISTINCTION</div> <div>Dylan Plitt Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Leor Rabu Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Noam Shani Mathematical Literacy</div> <div>Adam Symons Mathematics</div> <div>Jonathan Urdang Life Orientation</div>				





KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL VICTORY PARK

							
Kira Asher	Jenna Baleta	Talya Bartal	Jessi Bloch	Aaron Bonert	Gabriela Bonert	Jake Bonner	Alexa Bortz
							
Brent Butkow	Luca Clark	Danit Cohen	Ruby Gimpel	Daniella Goldblatt	Darren Gomer	Zane Grieve-Fitzell	Lauren Gruzd
							
Sarah Herr	Chad Horwitz	Judd Israelsohn	Kayla Jacobs	Tamar Jasven	Jake Joselowitz	Ruby Kapeluschnik	David Kaplan
							
Jenna-Lee Kilov	Jonah Kollenberg	Tzipora Krawitz	Savyon Kwasnik	Samuel Lager	Raizel Lampert	Ofek Levi	Georgia Lewis
							
Sam Lisssoos	Amy Lowenthal	Michaela Mansur	Julie-Anna Marcolongo	Dylan Martheze	Samuel Matisonn	Ben Mendelowitz	Daniella Meyerowitz
							
Erin Midzuk	Bethia Milner	Gidon Molin	Natasha Monty	David Mowbray	Eve Novick	Cleo Ochayon	Daniel Phillips
							
Jamie Phillips	Demi Putziger	Sophie Radford	Sydney Reicher	Dan Rom	Atara Rudnick	Cheli Sher	Santhosh Singh



## KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL VICTORY PARK



Cameron Solarsh



Jaden Solarsh



Justin Stein



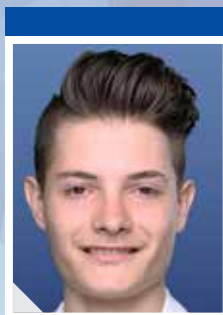
Daniel Stoller



Judd Sundelson



Shayna Sundry



Dante Trinchero



Ariella Urdang



Jonathan Utian



Chloé Valkin



David Van Meelis



Alex Wainer



Noah Wittels



Samara Wolf



Matan Yakobovich

## MAZALTOV 2020 MATRICS!



HIGH SCHOOL  
VICTORY PARK

**100%** pass for the 37th consecutive year  
**71** candidates wrote the NSC Examinations  
**28** subject results were in the Top 1% of all IEB candidates  
**1** student placed on the IEB Outstanding List  
**5** students placed on the IEB Commendable List  
**95.77%** of all students achieved an average of 60% and above  
 Average of **3.48** distinctions per candidate  
**247** individual subject distinctions out of 528 subject results  
 (This represents 46.78% of all possible individual subject results)

### 10 Students with averages above 90%



**JUDD ISRAELSOHN**  
 Dux Award  
 IEB Outstanding List  
 Top 1% in English, History,  
 Life Orientation, Life Sciences,  
 Physical Sciences



**JONAH KOLLENBERG**  
 IEB Commendable List  
 Top 1% in English,  
 History,  
 Life Orientation



**BRENT BUTKOW**  
 IEB Commendable List  
 Top 1% in  
 Information Technology,  
 Physical Sciences



**DANIT COHEN**  
 IEB Commendable List  
 Top 1% English



**TZIPORA KRAWITZ**  
 Head Girl  
 IEB Commendable List  
 Top 1% in English,  
 Life Orientation, Life Sciences,  
 Mathematics



**JONATHAN UTIAN**  
 IEB CommendableList



**DAN ROM**  
 Head Boy  
 Highest number of  
 Distinctions (9)  
 Top 1% English



**CHLOÉ VALKIN**  
 Top 1% in English, History,  
 Life Orientation



**LAUREN GRUZD**  
 Top 1% in History



**MATAN YAKBOVICH**  
 Top 1% in History

**OPEN DAY:**  
**26 MAY 2021**



# Succeeding in her dad’s name

JORDAN MOSHE

King David Linksfield student Danielle Shafer lost her father to cancer almost two weeks before she began her prelims last year. In spite of her loss, Shafer achieved exceptional results in her final matric exams, drawing inspiration from her father and following his example in a way that would doubtless have made him proud.

Shafer was in Grade 7 when her father was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2015.

“At first, he was still able to work, but as the years progressed, he became bed bound, especially during the last two years,” Shafer says. “The only time he left the house was to go for oncology consultations. For the first few years, he was still capable of looking after himself, but near the end, he required assistance.”

Instead of chemotherapy, Shafer’s father took cancer medication, experiencing constant side effects which led to degeneration of his health.

“The medication made him weak and tired,” she says. “Every day, I would go to my parents’ room and spend a few minutes talking to my dad, but it would only ever be a short chat as he would get tired easily and needed to rest. This was very hard on me and my family as we weren’t able to spend a lot of time with him.”

Following a stroke in December 2019, Shafer’s father was admitted to hospital, making matters more difficult.

“It was hard to see my dad in a hospital bed with all the machinery,” says Shafer. “I always tried to accept the fact that my dad would pass away from cancer, yet he was in this situation because of a stroke caused by the side effects of the cancer medication.”

Shafer and her family visited the hospital daily, but it became especially challenging when her matric year began in January 2020.

“It was hard to come back home, and have reality kick in. Throughout my high school career, I always tried to keep myself busy and I almost used school as an escape where I could focus on something other than my dad,” says Shafer.

“I was worried that people would know about my situation, not because I was embarrassed about it but because I didn’t want people to treat me differently or ask about it. It was too hard to talk about, and as soon as someone would bring it up, I would start to cry.”

Shafer’s father underwent several surgeries, but suffered further strokes as time went on, moving frequently between hospital and home. The pandemic complicated matters further still.

“I worried that I would bring COVID-19 home from school during the weeks that my dad was at home,” says Shafer. “At the beginning of online school, it was hard to concentrate, and I missed lessons due to helping to take care of my dad while he was at home.”



Danielle Shafer

“I had always used school as my escape from home, but now school was at home and I could no longer have a break from reality. Eventually, when the matrics were allowed back to school, it became easier to focus, but my dad was getting worse, and I constantly left school early because I couldn’t get through the day.”

Sadly, Shafer’s father passed away in July, the shiva week ending less than two weeks before the start of prelims. In spite of her loss, Shafer drew inspiration from her father as she approached her exams.

“My dad was always invested in my schoolwork and encouraged me to do my best,” she says. “I was motivated to study hard and try my best during prelims. My dad was extremely smart, and received academic honours in school, so he inspired me to study hard and put effort into my work.

“Whenever I would stress about a test or an exam, he was the person I would go to. He would reassure me that I shouldn’t stress because ultimately, it didn’t matter what mark I got, and I knew my work.”

Shafer believes that she coped with her final year because she was determined to do well for her father.

“In spite of all the challenges, it was my dad who inspired me to achieve the highest marks I could,” she says.

Beyond scoring five distinctions, Shafer also got honours for dancing, a passion of many years.

“It was a great success for me because my dad had also received an honours blazer in his matric year, so it felt as if I was following in his footsteps,” she says.

Shafer will study Biomedical Science at the University of the Witwatersrand this year, eager to assist others by discovering new medications, vaccines, and diseases.

“In tough times, it can be hard to stay motivated, but you should always remember what your end point is and what you wish to achieve. In spite of the cliché, things do get easier,” she says.

# Torah Academy pupil conquers his fears

JORDAN MOSHE

If you thought navigating matric during a pandemic was a challenge, imagine doing it while battling an anxiety disorder. This was the reality for Torah Academy matriculant Avi Cobb, but for him, defeat was never an option.

“Anxiety has affected nearly every aspect of my life, but I felt it most profoundly in my school career,” he says. “During my matric year, I needed certainty, but external and internal forces made me vulnerable. My disorder has often made me feel powerless, and I’ve questioned just about everything.”

COVID-19 didn’t make it any easier.

“Going into matric, I had so many expectations of myself and my work ethic,” he says. “COVID-19 shook any sense of confidence I had. I was in the unknown, flooded by matric and the virus.

“The matric year, which usually has such a rigid schedule, was in a constant state of flux. Most of the time, it was hazy and difficult to hold onto something factual as with every news update, there was usually further calamity.”

In spite of his fears, Cobb rose to the challenge, and set out to leave his mark on his final year.

“At the beginning of 2020, my maths teacher told me that I must make matric the best year of my life,” he says. “Although it wasn’t the best year, I still made it the best it could possibly be. When I couldn’t find answers, I had to

make my own.”

Cobb realised that he didn’t have to tackle his challenges by himself. “I sought out a psychologist and psychiatrist, and began working on myself. Even during finals, I tried to continue my weekly appointments as much as I could.

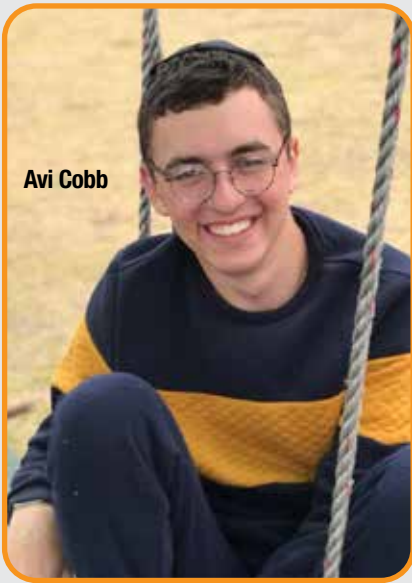
“Although many people disliked online learning, I tried to keep in mind the opportunities I had. I could stay at home and continue my studies online while so many were left helpless and confused. I knew how much work I needed to do after school in order to do well.

“I don’t think there ever was a ‘right’ way to do it, which comforts me, because I know that I genuinely tried.”

Equally central to his success was recognising and accepting his limitations, he says. “One of my greatest matric successes was dropping my extra subject. It sounded like I was giving up, but in actuality, I was prioritising myself and personal achievement rather than purely academic results.

“Growth of any kind is success,” Cobb says. “I believe that a genuine desire to see success will result in some form of physical achievement. When we realise our own limitations and potential, we can refine it into results, and we will continue to do that only when we realise that at a certain point, things are out of our hands and actually in those of G-d.”

Cobb points out that you aren’t powerless, although the pandemic can make you feel that way. “Living in a global pandemic caused so many setbacks, but it also created as many opportunities,” he says.



Avi Cobb

# Invention is chemistry for high school achiever

JORDAN MOSHE

High school science doesn’t have to be a chore. Just ask Jonathan Utian, the brain behind a unique programme that helps students to unlock their true potential in chemistry.

Pairing his love of science with coding, Utian devoted himself to creating a Java programme that provides a valuable learning experience in a subject that many students battle with. This, in addition to scoring eight distinctions and featuring on the Independent Examinations Board’s (IEB’s) commendable list in his final year of high school.

“In Grade 11, I wrote a programme called Periodic Practice, which was designed to assist Grade 8 and 9 students with the foundations of chemistry – naming and identifying molecules together with their compositions.

“With this in mind, I decided to revamp Periodic Practice in my matric year, this time for Grade 10 and 11 students.”

Periodic Practice generates its own quantitative chemistry questions in a way that mimics the style of questions asked in testing situations, exposing students to the way core concepts are tested before they’re examined. Consequently, any confusion can be addressed well in advance as the programme has a detailed solution tab which walks the student through how the final calculation was achieved.

“They can become more confident in their abilities, which was my initial goal,” says Utian. “Over my high school career, Physical Science became one of my favourite subjects. My early frustration with the subject lead to the development of Periodic Practice, as I

wanted to help others avoid the same confusion and frustration I felt when first encountering chemistry orientated concepts.

“Once you understand what’s happening, the true beauty of science emerges.”

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects) are extremely important, says Utian, as they encourage critical thinking and problem solving, the benefits of which run into other aspects of life.

“A majority of my choice subjects were STEM orientated, which positively influenced the way I approached problems and fostered my love for understanding the way things operate,” he says.

“Unfortunately, there aren’t enough students taking higher level maths and science due to the notion that these subjects are too difficult. They are challenging, but anything worth anything in life comes with a challenge.”

Utian believes that if more practical demonstrations and tasks were performed by students in younger grades, it would encourage more of them to take up these subjects as they move into Grade 10.

“They would get a glimpse of the real-world applications of the subjects, which could help them to develop a more positive attitude towards these subjects,” he says.

Following his matric success, Utian looks forward to studying mechanical engineering this year. In spite of the difficulty of doing matric in a pandemic, he believes true success means achieving the goals you set for yourself in spite your challenges.

“Success means managing to keep moving forward even when everything around you seems to have stopped,” he says.



Jonathan Utian

# Activist succeeds on many fronts

JORDAN MOSHE

Sasha Rodenacker is a rebel with many causes. A staunch activist who has always had strong opinions, this Herzlia matriculant showed a level of social consciousness throughout high school and championed various campaigns aimed at making the world a better place.

“Any sort of social consciousness began for me in Grade 10 upon joining the United African Society (UAS) committee at school,” Rodenacker says. “Soon thereafter, I joined the African Climate Alliance (ACA), and increasingly got involved

with Habonim Dror and Extinction Rebellion Youth – the environment committee at school – and the Gay-Straight Alliance.”

Rodenacker maintained his involvement in activism in matric, using the activity to stay energised and take a welcome break from schoolwork. He even managed to head up the UAS during this time.

“On Women’s Day, we highlighted the arduous experiences of women in South Africa via harrowing statistics of gender-based violence and rape. During the nationwide protests in 2019 following the murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana, we held a

week of consciousness raising about gender-based violence. Every day, we did something different, ranging from talks, videos, discussion groups, to poster making, and we wore black in remembrance.”

Rodenacker was struck by the amount of constructive conversation this generated at the school.

“It really took hold of the week,” he says. “People were having motivating talks about the #MenAreTrash movement, the problem with gender stereotypes, and the fragility of the male ego.”

Rodenacker also played a pivotal role in

Continued on page 19>>



# Group effort paid off

JORDAN MOSHE

Matric may be demanding, but you don't have to lock yourself away in solitude and struggle through the workload by yourself. By working with others, you might not only solve the equation over which you've agonised for hours, but could also find a willing ear for your panicked venting.

Such was the case for King David Linksfield students Leora Porter, Gavriel Burgin, Daniel Class, and Gabriel Hirschowitz. Rather than work exclusively alone, these four friends established a study network which resulted in them achieving an astounding 33 distinctions collectively.

"We didn't have a weekly study session around a table or over Zoom," says Class. "We developed a special group, coming closer as we went through high school.

"We created a space where we could speak if we weren't sure of anything and could ask questions knowing that someone would be there to help. It was about communication and discussion."

The four began working together in Grade 9, sharing knowledge and resources as they progressed through high school, while maintaining personal routines as well.

Says Porter, "We had independent ways of learning, different schedules, and some different subjects, but we shared a common goal of wanting to push ourselves to do the best we could. To have people who understand what your goals are and who want to help you achieve them is incredible."

No matter the question or time of day, each member knew that they could depend on their teammates to help. This often extended beyond academics, says Hirschowitz.

"We could rely on each other emotionally, motivating each other to get through any issues as well as the work," he says. "Everyone was there for me if I was struggling. They encouraged me, and I knew I could call any one of them. I had the reassurance that I wasn't alone."

Porter agreed. "Matric is a rough year as it is, and to know that we could message each other and speak about something not related to school was very important. It's nice to know that there are people there for you."

Although they didn't all take the same subjects, the four collaborated on those they had in common, each contributing their strengths to the group.

Says Burgin, "We used each other's resources. Lolo had poetry notes and Gavi had cheat sheets of hard maths questions that he'd picked up over the years. We could have two-hour calls talking about what could come up in a paper."

"Often, people get caught up in the competitiveness of matric," says Porter. "There's really no reason to as we all have different goals. If you achieve your goal, it doesn't mean someone else doesn't. We were willing to share and play to our strengths."

In spite of pooling resources, the friends made sure to push one another to work hard and succeed.

"I'm not one to just give an answer if asked a question about the work," laughs Class. "I really like to understand in my own head a concept from the start, and that you don't skip middle steps. When I explained, I learned, making it a form of concept-based revision for me."

Following their success, the friends agree that their approach is definitely one other matrics should consider adopting.

"It gives you a network you can fall back on," says Class. "You're in matric with plenty of other people who are going through virtually the same experience. You need to understand that you can ask for help, and will find people to help you."

The real key is to strike a balance, says Porter. "You can't rely on others completely, you have to work yourself. Still, having a network of people who want you to do the best you can is very motivating."

"Having someone there to speak to about anything, especially during COVID-19, was amazing," says Hirschowitz. "I don't like working in a group, but I worked with a group that helped me. None of us are so clever that we know it all. It helps to put heads together, and it shows you're not alone. It makes the isolation less isolating."

# Activist succeeds on many fronts

>>>Continued from page 18

raising awareness of climate change. "We held three climate-change marches and rallies which had on average 1 500 to 2 000 people protesting at each demonstration," he says. "Organising and seeing the protests come to fruition was such a rewarding experience.

"We protested to create a sense of urgency in the government for more climate action before it's too late. We also held beach and river cleaning sessions, created a community garden, and wrote numerous articles for publication."

Beyond his activism, Rodenacker was also involved in organising a partnership between Good Hope Primary School and

Herzlia, resulting in students from the latter being tutored in maths once a week.

"My role was to motivate Herzlians to sign up for tutoring, and to ensure the classes were set up and taken down after the tutoring session," he says. "I got involved as I saw an opportunity to aid some students in their school journey, hopefully making maths a bit easier, and to use the privilege that I have to give back to the community I live in.

"Sometimes it was hard to explain certain concepts to the students, but that's what a teacher has to deal with daily. The reward was the *nachas* we got from seeing the 'click' in their mind when they got a concept, and

witnessing their progress."

Beyond achieving seven distinctions, Rodenacker considers his activism a major success of his final school year.

"Success is personal," he says. "A successful life isn't achieved by measuring against what you perceive others to be doing. You have to introspect based on your own yardstick."

Success is two-fold, he says. "You must be satisfied knowing you have done your best at whatever you had to do, regardless of the outcome. Whether you go for a run or watch a series, if you did what you needed to do in that moment, that's a success.

"After that, success can be about having an uplifting impact on the people around you."

# Online matric has its blessings

OPINION

DANI SACK



I remember quite clearly my first day of matric. My mom positioned me in our garden, made me pose for some "last first day" photographs, and whisked me off to school. My classroom was electrified, all of us anxiously bouncing up and down, sharing disbelief and excitement that we had made it to our final year of school. Hugging my friends hello, lugging our heavy files through the halls, and settling into class, that day was charged with expectation.

At break, my friends and I discussed our upcoming year. Somebody said they were looking forward to the matric dance. Another wondered how many nights we'd spend in our classroom, doing past papers and finishing syllabi. Most discussed excitement for extravagant 18th birthday parties, or plans for matric holidays with all our friends. Somebody probably made a passing comment about that virus going around in China, something disconnected from our matric year entirely. How naïve we were!

Throughout 2020, I wrote for the *SA Jewish Report* about my matric experience. Zoom lessons and socially distanced classes aren't foreign concepts to me nor to you readers. However, something I never fully touched on was my expectation of the year. I'm trying not to focus on what could've become a large part of my philosophy of 2020. If I had sat around and lamented all the opportunities, events, and experiences that COVID-19 stole from me during matric, I would have gone insane (well, more insane than I was locked away at home).

But as I come out of the final stage – receiving my results – I find that I have to confront the fact that my matric year did happen, and it happened in a totally different way to how I envisaged it would.

In 2020, I went to two parties. I attended night lessons from my dining room and had a matric valedictory on my school field. I recorded oral assignments on my laptop, and learned how to

use Google Classroom. I would've laughed at the thought of any of this being real this time last year. However, in 2021, as I wait (rather impatiently) to embark on a gap year in Israel, I recognise the impact all of this has had on my upcoming year.

In Israel, I will have to become independent, an adult of sorts, quite the transition considering how much I rely on my parents. But is it such a transition? During matric under COVID-19, I had to learn to become self-sufficient in my learning as my teachers weren't simply a two-minute walk away.

I learned the value of selflessness and generosity as I sat with my friends who explained concepts to me on Facetime, or shared their detailed notes with me via WhatsApp. I learned the value of being around friends and family, who

Going into a gap year, my primary goal is to find myself further. I want to increase my independence, strengthen my relationships with my loved ones, and become closer to Judaism.

I couldn't see during such a pressured year. But probably most importantly, while stuck in my room for days on end, I learned about myself – what I stand for, what I love, what I dislike, what my values are.

Going into a gap year, my primary goal is to find myself further. I want to increase my independence, strengthen my relationships with my loved ones, and become closer to Judaism.

The great thing about this is that, due to COVID-19, I'm already well on my way to achieving this. In a way, COVID-19 has prepared me the most

# Shooting the lights out with a passion for learning

JORDAN MOSHE

Becoming top student of her matric year at Crawford Sandton wasn't a foregone conclusion for Savanna Cohen. In fact, when she entered high school, she wasn't even in the top 20.

Thanks to a tremendous effort and change of perspective, however, this Dux scholar walked away with an overall average of 91.85%, eight distinctions, and a spot in the top 1% nationally for History, English, and Life Sciences.

"Over the years, I saw my marks start to rise," says Cohen. "I did this by realising the importance of doing well in school and having a work ethic. I also started to understand concepts in class, and I found that I really enjoyed learning.

"I remember counting down the days until school started again during the December holidays. I turned school into something I was passionate about. From then, my marks increased purely because of my love of learning and my desire to challenge myself."

Cohen's success is also remarkable in light of her diabetes, a condition which put her at some disadvantage because it forced her to learn online throughout her matric year.

"I have type 1 diabetes," Cohen says, "so I have to use a diabetic pump and give insulin injections from time to time.



One of the problems with my diabetes is that when I get stressed, my blood sugar levels skyrocket and rarely come down. It makes my vision blurry, causes headaches, nausea, and it becomes hard to concentrate.

"I had to stay at home and learn online for the entire year. It was hard for me not to have interaction with my teachers or peers when they went back to school. Learning from a computer screen wasn't easy, and I was often scared of falling behind when my friends went to class and received face-to-face lessons."

The symptoms of high blood sugar made it especially difficult for Cohen to study, especially during exam sessions.

"I was worried about my blood sugar going high during an exam but luckily, my final exams went well and there were rarely any problems," she says. "Diabetes is a difficult disease to manage at any age, and the pandemic coupled with the stress of matric made it hard to work and study.

"I had to teach myself some of the syllabus and while that was hard, I still earned the highest marks I have ever achieved in school. Resilience is the most useful tool. By overcoming these challenges and problems, I have learned lessons I will carry with me throughout my life."

Cohen certainly excelled. Beyond her academic success, she was elected to serve on her school's student executive body and even played provincial touch rugby during her school career.

"I recognised the importance of having a balanced work, sporting, and social life during high school, and made sure that I put time aside to play matches and go to practices and tournaments while still ensuring that my marks were at their usual standard. Although some nights I would come home late from a touch rugby game at Zoo Lake, I made sure I never went to bed without doing my work."

"It was important to maintain a balance between the different spheres of my life, and I managed it well by knowing my limits."

An aspiring scientist, Cohen will study astrophysics at the University of Cape Town this year. Having succeeded beyond her imagining, she believes students should focus on what they enjoy, whether that be art, history, or mathematics.

"Once you start discovering what you are passionate about, you might become more willing to dive a bit deeper into other subjects," she says. "I recommend exploring your interests and even topics you might have no interest in yet. The world is a treasure chest filled with knowledge and opportunities to learn, you just have to be willing to find the key and open it up."

For Cohen, success is the feeling you get when you have worked incredibly hard for something and achieved results that make you happy.

"Success is something that's earned and makes you proud," she says. "It doesn't have to be something anyone else is proud about. As long as you are happy with your accomplishment and you know that you deserved it, you are successful."

for my gap year, more than any packing lists or advice from past MTA attendees ever could.

Please G-d when I return from Israel, I will be able to attend university in person. For those who are going straight into studying, succeeding in doing matric through a screen has definitely given them an advantage as they navigate online varsity. Socially, it's a different story.

Many of us have hardly ever explored beyond our Jewish bubble. Throw multiple lockdowns into the mix, and you're looking at a lack of broader social skills. Getting to know people of different backgrounds and cultures is important, but after months of no human interaction and only seeing one another through a screen, integration into university life is only made harder.

Similarly in regard to work, COVID-19 has hindered us, making it scarier and potentially harder to adapt to an entirely new way of living.

That's not to say it won't help as well. We all have a common ground. I can discuss lockdown with the Australian girls on MTA with me, and my friends can discuss COVID-19 with their fellow university attendees who hail from different areas of South Africa.

And so, it's hard to place the impact of COVID-19 on our future into one box because it comes with blessings and curses. What I know for sure is that we got through matric under COVID-19, and I believe we are all stronger for it.

That strength, resilience, determination, and selflessness will stand us in good stead as we enter into a new stage of life. To my fellow matrics, I say good luck, and I can't wait to see where this year takes us.


• Dani Sack has been writing a column in the *SA Jewish Report* for the past year, documenting her experience in matric at Yeshiva College.



# ‘Groping in new circumstances’

PERSONAL STORY

DR ELIZABETH LEAVER



January 2020. The new school year starts well. The King David Victory Park (KDVP) English Department seems set for another good year. We have now been the same team of English teachers for six solid stable years; we haven't had a single resignation in that time. Our 2019 English and AP (Advanced Programme) English matric results were excellent. Everything is looking auspicious. From across the ocean, from China, we hear vague mutterings. Mutterings about Wuhan, wet markets, bats, viruses, and sickness. But we are too busy settling into the rhythm of the new term, getting debating and public speaking up and running, welcoming our new Grade 8s, to listen attentively to the jungle drums. Suddenly, the world lurches and falters. The vague mutterings become more insistent, more urgent, more sonorous. A strange and uncontrollable virus called COVID-19 stalks the world. It's time to batten down the hatches. On 10 March, the South African Board of Jewish Education announces that its schools will go into lockdown three days later. Overnight, online teaching becomes the new normal, the default button. At KDVP, things happen fast, but in a structured and orderly fashion. In three brief but intense days of instruction, we, the teachers, master the fundamentals of teaching on Microsoft Teams. We prepare our individual subject-specific grade Teams pages; we meticulously invite all our students as guests to our pages; we upload our teaching material; we create videos for our students to watch. We are the owners of our new virtual kingdoms. And then, on 13 March, online teaching commences. KDVP is now officially a remote-learning school. It is, as Miranda observes in 'The Tempest', a brave new world. Looking back now to those first days of remote learning, I recall both the profound challenges as well as the extraordinary possibilities lockdown created.

In our final departmental meeting on campus, we reviewed the core values and teaching methodologies that the English department holds dear. We were determined to continue with the key activities that define our department. For example, we are proud of our reputation as a literature-rich department, whereby our students across all grades read widely, enjoying an eclectic mix of literature from different genres and countries. Every year, each grade writes a CAT (Common Assessment Task). The CAT is essentially a home-reading assignment which requires candidates to read two or three novels that align with a prescribed learning area. The candidates then write a long research essay on their findings. We didn't want to drop the CAT because we believe so implicitly in the benefits that stem from reading. In 2020, the grade 8s wrote a creative piece based on *The Little Prince*; the grade 9s read novels to do with Jewish identity – the so-called Jewish project; the grade 10s considered the issue of cognitive estrangement in literature; and the grade 11s focused on the decolonisation of literature in the South African secondary school English syllabus. In spite of the difficulties of teaching and studying the CAT texts online, the English teachers and students persevered, and the CATS were successful. As the year progressed, it was obvious that the younger grades found online learning to be substantially more arduous than the older grades. Grade 8 and 9 teachers developed new strategies to keep their young pupils alert and focused: frequent breaks; a mix of face-to-face teaching and watching of teaching videos; calling pupils privately on Teams to help them with their individual learning difficulties. It was certainly a novel experience for me, an older,

less tech-savvy individual, to suddenly be thrust into this new world. But, thanks to sustained support from my friends and IT experts, I adapted surprisingly quickly to the new demands. Teaching the matric novel, Elizabeth Gaskell's Victorian novel, *North and South*, online, was most enjoyable. All our matric oral tasks were held online, and I loved the new freedom of communicating so directly with my students on the chat function of Teams. *North and South* describes the struggles of Victorian society to adjust to the new ways of the industrial revolution, a struggle which Gaskell describes as "men groping in new circumstances". We too, thanks to the pandemic, were "groping in new circumstances". Everyone, teachers and students alike, did their best. That "best" was vindicated last week when the 2020 Independent Examinations Board matric results were published. Nine KDVP matriculants placed in the top 1% of the approximately 11 500 students who wrote English Home Language. A sterling achievement, and ample evidence that online learning can succeed.

- Dr Elizabeth Leaver is head of the English department at KDVP High School. She has been employed at KDVP High School for 34 years.



# Remote learning teaches us importance of connection

Herzlia High School Principal **Marc Falconer** spoke to his matric teachers to find out how they weathered the 2020 year. This is what he gleaned:

As we celebrate the topsy-turvy madness of Purim, there seems to be some kind of resonance between the world of the Persian King Ahasuerus, the genocidal Haman, the disasters threatening the Jewish people thousands of years ago, and our own COVID-19 decimated world.

It's a parallel Tanya White makes in a recent article in the *Times of Israel*.

Teaching in the time of COVID-19, while it may sound melodramatic, did in fact call for looking into the abyss of chaos and reimagining education and all its components: engagement, stimulation, responsiveness, assessment, and human connection.

At some point during the nearly one year of online or blended learning of Google Meets or Zoom or Microsoft Teams (or whatever platform was chosen), we all tried to see beyond a screen of silent icons and no amount of threatening, cajoling, begging, or bribing seemed effective in getting kids to emerge from behind their chosen symbols into the dazzling light of virtual connection. We all had to penetrate layers upon layers of digital obfuscation.

I hope I'm not alone in admitting to saying possibly scandalously provocative nonsense in the hope of evoking some outraged response. Any response actually. This seldom



happened, the screen remained a constellation of shimmering icons with the little red microphones resolutely and unwaveringly muted. There were times when it seemed like insanity, and we were all teaching to ourselves in a dark and empty cave.

There were advantages though. Dressed appropriately from the waist up, the southern slopes could be cosy in a blanket and furry slippers in the winter, or draped in a cotton sarong and flip flops during the warmer months.

There were also dark rumours of some teachers in the later afternoon classes fortifying their coffee with something a little more bracing. These stories are, however, almost certainly monstrous *losh*.

What can be said with absolute certainty is that no recorded lesson or YouTube video of longer than 12 minutes stood any chance of being watched in its entirety.

And as for formal testing, we all, happily, had to find other – and better – ways of determining how effective learning and teaching was.


I know I'm not the first person to make the point, it's a realisation that resonates for almost any teacher: teaching is very much less about content or information and very much more about relationships and human connection.

And even though our faces are smothered in masks at the moment, we're all celebrating the opportunity to connect once again in our schools – places of learning, but also where learning communities are.

# ‘Unleash the beast in you’, maths teacher urges

PERSONAL STORY

ILANA FLAUM



As I sat on my bed watching my twin girls sleeping peacefully, I was anxious and wide awake, waiting for the stroke of midnight to feel the true impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown on the 2020 academic year and its matriculants. As expected, and now confirmed, my other children (my students) made me exceptionally proud, achieving the excellent results that they did in these extremely difficult, fearful, and trying times. As the phone calls of gratitude and appreciation from my pupils and their parents come streaming in, I felt the tension of this very challenging past scholastic year lighten in my feet and shoulders. Fear and uncertainty about the unknown not only caused me much anxiety as to how I would manage my own biological children, but also for the many other pupils in my care. As a single mom, a Grade 11 form supervisor, as well as a matric mathematics

teacher and head of department at Yeshiva College, I felt like I was dropped in the deep end of a fast swirling whirlpool. I chose to swim successfully and with a positive attitude on the rather complicated route to the finishing line. Within a short time, I had to upgrade my internet access to run four devices at a time in my house. Realisation set in that I didn't have the hardware for four people to be in different Zoom meetings concurrently. I quickly made a plan to ease this unexpected extra expense. Teaching online was my next challenge. First, I was a frustrated technophobe of note, and second, how were my pupils going to watch me write the maths on a board I didn't have at home? This is essential for effective and successful maths learning to take place. I was extremely grateful when my oldest brother lent me his rather sophisticated iPad for an indefinite period that still hasn't been exhausted. In my limited

spare time, I attended Zoom lessons and webinars to become proficient in the use of this tablet, and the most appropriate apps for teaching maths. The benefit of my new skills fast became apparent to my children and myself. Now back in the classroom in 2021, I'm still teaching using this device. There are many pros, which I now strongly believe outweigh the cons. Learning and absorbing maths is closely related to your emotional state. Adding to the turmoil of uncertainty and concern about family members' health, I noticed a difference in the emotional connection made with pupils sitting in front of me, compared to online classes. I lost eye contact over Zoom, and was unable to read body language, making it difficult to read the level of concentration and acquisition of knowledge. I also struggled to gauge the emotional well-being or lack thereof of my pupils. They also lost out on my facial

expressions and hand gestures, which speak volumes in my explanations, and create an exciting vibe for learning maths. To remedy this disconnect, I sent many videos and voice notes explaining to individual pupils where their shortfalls were. I calmed many parents' and children's anxiety over the finals and results. Two of the most important lessons we all learnt were to be patient with one another, and to be kind to ourselves and others. You truly have no idea of the obstacles in their path. Even though we were all taking strain with the "new normal", we still managed to have some fun in our online classes. We had visitors (friends that have emigrated) from around the world join our sessions. It was fascinating to catch up with these former students, and to discuss the different approach of their learning systems.

Continued on page 21>>



# When the student became the teacher

PERSONAL STORY

JOCELYN ANGEL

The year 2020 was the year my students became my teacher.

The world as we know it changed last March when, in the middle of the first preliminary exams, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a two-week lockdown and the closure of schools.

Our principal, Lorraine Srage, took the brave decision to continue with prelims. She understood that it's preparation and revision for these internal examinations that gives our matrics the edge in the Independent Examinations Board final exams.

Therefore, in spite of the chaos erupting in every country of the world, in came our matriculants for the next few weeks to finish what they had started.

When I saw my class again in April, we had moved online. I took the huge white board (so generously provide by the school) into my pyjama lounge. This area of the house, which had always been used for TV watching, popcorn eating, and children relaxing, became the site of discussions about the Cold War, South African Defence Force troops in Angola, and Martin Luther King Junior's bus boycotting exploits. It was also where we debated the violent resistance to apartheid in the turbulent 1980s South Africa.

Plunging head first into a new world of technology, I needed my pupils' help to discover how to unmute myself; mute members of the group; share my screen; share my slides; and make myself the focus of the lesson. They



also taught me to upload work, mark it, and download it.

I will forever be indebted to this group of 18-year-old boys and girls for making me much more tech-savvy.

This was a group of young men and women who had experienced their matric year ripped out from under their feet. Their matric dance was cancelled, all their sports fixtures were obliterated, their 18th birthday parties didn't happen. The vibey matric year – for which King David Linksfield is famous – faded into oblivion. Yet they kept their spirits up, making sure that they had the best matric year they possibly could.

Even though we were behind screens, teaching was still teaching. We were still able to have vibrant debates about feminism (courtesy of Channing, Hannah, and Gina). We were still able to relate most of our topics somehow to sport (thanks Daniel and Ilan). We still had the boys who kept the lesson fun with humorous comments (Julian, Matan, and Josh, you know

who you are). We also continued to have the undercurrent of teenage drama and angst running through everything (yes Deandra, Chiara, and Sarah, I'm looking at you).

I can say with certainty that the lessons were able to go “deeper” than ever before. Taking away the drama of the bells, the latecomers, the drawn-out breaks, and the sports meetings of everyday school life gave us more time for

teaching.

Pupils were asking historical questions at a level I hadn't seen in 20 years. I was consulting more research books, internet sites, and historical writings than ever before. I do believe

that those who were able to concentrate during online school attained a level of knowledge and education that was absolutely unique.

Thank you to these 30 wonderful young adults who coped with more than their fair share of life's challenges and who looked for the magic in small things. Whether it was dress-up Fridays on Zoom, having a cup of tea together on Teams, merging with the other classes for a last minute recap on the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (yes I've become something of an expert after all your questions), this is what kept me sane!

I will always think of this class as my pillar of fire. Thank you for your guidance, energy, and light.

• *Jocelyn Angel is a director at King David Linksfield and in her 17th year of teaching history at the school.*



## ‘Unleash the beast in you’, maths teacher urges

>>>Continued from page 20

We were privy to appearances made by people's pets and parents in our Zoom classes, giving us insight into each other's backgrounds. This created tolerance, mindfulness, and respect for each other. Forgetting to mute and unmute oneself, or leaving your camera on or off invoked some good humour and banter among the pupils.

Due to the ban on social gatherings which caused a decline in social interaction, our Saturday night jols transformed into doing past papers over Zoom. A lot of fun was had by all. This process definitely added to the successful results our pupils achieved as many more papers were done.

On Friday morning, we acknowledged our matric class of 2020 and their parents by hosting a tea at

Yeshiva College. I had the opportunity to tell them how proud I am of them for grabbing their horse by the reins, and taking charge of their holistic development. I commended them on their resilience, strength, determination, and ability to adapt and soar to heights we thought were unobtainable.

To motivate them further, I say, “Unleash the beast in you. You have the power. Travel far on your unique tangents, and make your rainbows shine bright in the world.”

These wonderful young adults touched my heart. I cried as I waved goodbye.

• *Ilana Flaum is a Yeshiva College matric maths teacher, head of the maths department, the Grade 11 form supervisor, and a single mom.*

THE TORAH ACADEMY

# MAZEL TOV

## TO THE TORAH ACADEMY 2020 MATRICULANTS

BATSHEVA RABIN

CHANA KUSHNER

CHANI BOOKATZ

DANIELLA DINER

HODI SACKSTEIN

LAKEY ZLOTNICK

LEAH MELTZER

LIRON COHEN

AVI COBB

NA'AMA KAY

NECHAMA BERMAN

NECHAMA FOX

RACHEL GINSBERG

RACHELY NAPARSTEK

SHAYNA ASH

TALIA KOTZEN

Yael KORZIA

AVIGAIL KIRSH

AKIVA ROSEN

LEOR NETZER

20

Students in Matric 2020

83%

of papers written achieved C and higher

Future Leaders of Distinction

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

1 Learner achieved 8 Distinctions

1 Learner achieved 7 Distinctions

1 Learner achieved 6 Distinctions

1 Learner achieved 5 Distinctions

1 Learner achieved 4 Distinctions

1 Learner achieved 3 Distinctions

Full

Jewish studies curriculum

90%

of students achieved a distinction for Hebrew

Highlights

1 Student with an overall average of above 90%

5 Students with an overall average of above 80%

Mazel tov to our 2020 matric students and educators for achieving a

100%

pass rate and multiple distinctions

At Torah Academy, we consider Torah Studies and a life of Value to be our greatest success. Our holistic approach takes pride in realising the potential of each individual student.



# When DraMetrics becomes a drama

PERSONAL STORY

RENOS SPANOUEDES

The year 2020 began much like any other for the DraMatriculants: three seminal texts, three planned live theatre experiences, and three practical performance pieces – a monologue, dialogue, and an own choice (which is an opportunity to highlight one’s specific talent such as musical theatre or movement).

March, too, began like any other on King David Victory Park’s campus – the major production, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, in the wings and mini-prelims upon return at the start of term two.

Then it hit. A pandemic in our time, in our lifetime. Unprecedented and unfathomable. Locked down and online. Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, Skype. How does one teach dramatic arts in cyberspace? Maybe theory to a certain extent could be taught online, but practical skills?

We all remember, I’m certain, that period of trial and error and the logistics of blended pedagogy, hybrid teaching, and distance learning. Every subject and every discipline grappled with this new discombobulated world.

At first, plans were made to read the texts and watch any productions of said texts on the internet during the online meetings (shared screens – “Can you hear me?” “My Wi-Fi is erratic.” “My camera isn’t working.”) Recording lessons became second nature, and studying adapted and progressed. Notwithstanding the challenges of bandwidth and device capacity alongside accessibility, progress was being made with regards to the dramatic arts matric theory.

However, the dramatic arts practicals were the greater challenge.

Drama means a stage. Acting means live in person. How can practicals be performed online via a screen, big or small? Filming practicals means the subject is now not drama but film study. The IEB (Independent Examinations Board) COVID-19 adjustments start being formulated, and before they knew it, the DraMatriculants were making movies of their performances which now had to be submitted online.

Research on the internet and the following of dramatic arts establishments on the one hand and the experiencing of what industry professionals were doing to try and survive on the other, led to a plethora of strategies. In Cape Town, a film, *Lockdown Heights*, shot entirely online during lockdown, makes history.

The DraMetrics were now required to perform just two practical pieces, and these both had to be solo pieces because of corona. For the mini-prelims and the

**Continued on page 26>>**



## HIRSCH LYONS

Hirsch Lyons writes the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) matric. Two students achieved seven distinctions; two students achieved six distinctions; three students achieved five distinctions; and three students achieved three distinctions.

The English average was 81%; Hebrew 85%; IT 86%; Life Orientation 87%; Life Sciences 75%; Maths 74%; and Visual Arts 87%.

### SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



**Rebecca Myerson** English, Hebrew, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Sciences, AP Maths. Top 1% of English students.

### SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



**Talya Sieff** Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Maths, AP English. Top 1% of English students

### SIX DISTINCTIONS



**Miriam Goldfein** Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Maths.

### FIVE DISTINCTIONS



**Shmuel Beebe** English, Hebrew, IT, Life Orientation, Maths

### FIVE DISTINCTIONS



**Yehoshua Hoppenstein** English, History, Life Orientation, Maths, Visual Arts.

## THEODOR HERZL

### SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Theodor Herzl High School pupil **Ariela Leibowitz** came in the top 1% in the country in the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) exam for Business Studies.

Leibowitz, who got seven distinctions, in Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Maths, Physical Sciences, Life Orientation, and Business Studies, was also a prefect at the school and the financial manager of the Junior City Council of Port Elizabeth. In addition, she captained the first tennis team, and played at provincial level for a few years.

## REDHILL

### SIX DISTINCTIONS



**Zianda Goldstuck** English; Afrikaans; Life Orientation; Accounting; Business Studies; History

### FOUR DISTINCTIONS



**Emma Brooking** English; Life Orientation; Information Technology; Visual Arts





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Crawford International Pretoria (Grade 000 – 12)

Crawford International La Lucia (Grade 0000 – 12)

Crawford International North Coast (Grade 000 – 12)

Boarding available from Grade 7 – 12)



# Crawford

International



# MAZALTOV HERZLIA CLASS OF 2020



Jemma Diamond  
7 Distinctions



Ruby Epstein  
7 Distinctions



Daniel Jacobson  
7 Distinctions



Raquel Kappel  
7 Distinctions



Samantha Levetan  
7 Distinctions



Elan Novick  
7 Distinctions



Chad Pribut  
7 Distinctions



Sasha Rodenacker  
7 Distinctions



Daniel Rubin  
7 Distinctions



Michal Sacks  
7 Distinctions



Kayla Wilck  
7 Distinctions



Ashleigh Wingerin  
7 Distinctions



Jay Barnett  
6 Distinctions



Bobbi Bieber  
6 Distinctions



Zachary Brivik  
6 Distinctions



Dana Chiles  
6 Distinctions



Liron Cohen  
6 Distinctions



Jordy Dibowitz  
6 Distinctions



Sebastiano Franco  
6 Distinctions



Paul Gluckman  
6 Distinctions



Rachel Heilbron  
6 Distinctions



Julia Kappel  
6 Distinctions



Emma Kibel  
6 Distinctions



Matthew Koton  
6 Distinctions



Eva Maraney  
6 Distinctions



Jonathan Polakow  
6 Distinctions



Shayna Tarlie  
6 Distinctions



Sasha-Lee Wolfsohn  
6 Distinctions



Gia Hasson  
8 Distinctions



Sarah Katz  
8 Distinctions



Ariel Levy  
8 Distinctions



Sarah Stein  
8 Distinctions

4 Matrics achieved 8 Distinctions

12 Matrics achieved 7 Distinctions

16 Matrics achieved 6 Distinctions

15 Matrics received 5 Distinctions, 14 Matrics received 4 Distinctions, 15 Matrics received 3 Distinctions. 100% Bachelor Degree Pass\*

100% Subject Pass Rate. 416 Individual Subject Distinctions. 4.3 Average Subject Distinctions per pupil.

\*Herzlia is an Academically Inclusive School.





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- Fluid thinker who is quick to adopt and execute new strategies;
- Must be tech savvy and possess a good understating of digital and social-media broadcasting and analytical metrics such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Zoom, website, Google trends, Google Analytics, and Google Forms, as well as experience in monetarising these platforms;
- Solid financial acumen and the ability to analyse, manage, and report back line items involving the organisation's cash flow, debtors, revenue, and expenditure, and create financial forecasts;
- Must possess an advanced understanding of marketing trends, analytics, and be able to have high-level discussions with marketing directors, planners, and strategists in both corporates and advertising agencies;
- Experience in managing sales teams to achieve targets;
- Experience in using sales reporting and management systems such as Salesforce or Zoho;
- Willingness to work extended hours.

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- Leading its sales team to achieve KPIs and sales targets;
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- Developing the SA Jewish Report's digital footprint, and managing and developing its broadcasting potential, which includes webinar sponsorships, organising key speakers, all advertising related to webinars, and running the technical components of webinar broadcasts;
- The CEO will also be responsible for managing the national distribution of the SA Jewish Report print publication.



# Green light for ICC war-crimes probe into Israel ‘not antisemitic’

JORDAN MOSHE

Confirmation by judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC’s) of the court’s jurisdiction over the situation in Israel and Palestine cannot be considered antisemitic, according to legal scholar and author Phillipe Sands.

On Sunday, 28 February, Sands addressed the heated debate over the possibility of the Jewish state facing war-crime suits for actions carried out by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

He explained that while the green light had been given for an investigation to ahead, it wasn’t yet guaranteed that an indictment of either side would be forthcoming.



Early last month, the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber ruled 2-1 that the court’s chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, had the jurisdiction to launch an investigation into potential Israeli and Palestinian war crimes on territory over the pre-1967 lines in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Although the investigation has yet to be undertaken, tempers are flaring, with Israel supporters calling the move politically motivated and antisemitic.

It spurred social-justice organisation Jewish Democratic Initiative and Yachad United Kingdom to co-host Sunday’s event, outlining exactly what the ICC’s decision means.

“The ICC was established in 1998 as the culmination of 50 years of negotiation,” said Sands. “It followed the trials at Nuremburg and Tokyo held after World War II.

“It was established to have jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and aggression, the last only recently agreed on,” he said. “It operates on the principle of complementarity, used only if national courts didn’t investigate. Its jurisdiction is limited in terms of territory and nationality to states that are party to its statute.”

Israel hasn’t ratified the statute, meaning that it doesn’t attach to Israeli territory. Palestine, however, ratified it in 2015.

Cases can be brought only against living individuals, said Sands, not against governments, states, or corporations.

“To date, the ICC has indicted 30 individuals and addressed 30 cases,” he said. “Every individual has been black and African. On this basis, it has been said that the court is anti-black, and while this isn’t the case, it’s a problem that only one continent has really been brought into the ICC’s scope.”

According to Sands, there are currently nine preliminary inquiries into violations by countries including Colombia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Thirteen investigations are taking place following preliminary stages in Sudan, Libya, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and others.

Regarding Israel, the issues on which the ICC must decide at this stage relate to preliminary examination only, Sands said. “After Palestine became a party to the statute in 2015, it referred to the prosecutor the matters taking place in its territory for which it held Israel responsible, primarily in Gaza.”

Bensouda began a preliminary examination to see if anything could be done. In December 2019, the prosecutor concluded that there was reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation.

“She did so in relation to a single question: the scope of territorial jurisdiction of the ICC,” said Sands. “This precondition of exercise of jurisdiction is that the crime occurred in a territory subject to the treaty. She sought conformation that the territory in question comprised the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza.”

“At this stage, Bensouda is of the belief that there are reasonable grounds to say that war crimes were committed in 2014 in Gaza. This includes the actions of both the IDF and Hamas.”

Regarding the IDF, crimes include intentionally launching disproportionate attacks, wilful killing and causing serious injury, and intentionally directing attacks against objects or persons using emblems of the Geneva Convention. When Hamas and “Palestinian armed groups” are concerned, the crimes include intentional targeting of civilians, using people as shields, wilfully depriving people of their right to trial, and torture or inhuman treatment.

Sands said that within the context of the West Bank, Bensouda also felt there was reason to believe Israel had committed war crimes by transferring Israeli citizens into the West Bank since 2014 and in attacks by the IDF against protestors on the border in 2018.

The request was sent to the ICC and brought before a panel of three judges to decide in the pre-trial chamber. They issued their decision on 6 February.

“It was limited to the question of whether Palestine is a state under article 12 of the ICC statute. The court concluded by majority that Palestine was a state within the meaning of the article, but made clear it had no view on whether it’s a state for other purposes under general international law.”

The court also concluded that the scope of jurisdiction applied through the entirety of the territory, including those areas occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Said Sands, “It was decided 2-1 that the prosecutor may proceed to investigate any acts before her that occurred in the territory of Palestine.

That’s the extent of the decision that has been taken.”

Branding this move antisemitic or anti-Israel is an unfortunate charge to make, Sands said.

“A court isn’t antisemitic or anti-African but is made up of the individuals who are part of it. The court had a job to do, and I’m quite certain that the three judges went about their decision without any prejudice on either side in relation to the crimes which may or may not have been committed.

“All that has been decided is the scope of possible future investigation. It doesn’t mean there will be any indictments, but an investigation. After an investigation, it will need to go before another panel of judges to get any authority to issue an indictment, and only then will the issue proceed.”

Even then, the ICC won’t have the power to arrest anyone – it depends on the co-operation of the state or entity concerned.

## Waiting and waiting to go to Israel

>>Continued from page 12

activities for the Limmud group, including hiking, mini golf, food making, as well as a daily shiur.

“It makes up for lost time in Israel as well as keeping us busy while we wait,” he says.

Apart from starting some classes, Gimpel has used the time to obtain her driver’s licence. She and others have also spent much time with their families.

“My parents have been dealing with their own frustration,” says Midzuk. “From their perspective, I know that they want the best for me and for my gap year, yet they also try and see things realistically, with concern that I may be waiting around for far longer than planned.

“In spite of this, the additional time has meant more time with my family, time that was especially limited during my gruelling matric year.”

In spite of the frustrations and lost time,

participants remain positive that they will enjoy their time in Israel when it finally starts.

“I’ve always looked forward to celebrating *chaggim* in Israel, having heard about how much more impactful they were in Israel and on MTA,” says Midzuk. “Spending Purim at home this year definitely left me feeling slightly defeated, and I found myself swiping through the HaRova page with longing. However, my hopes of being in Israel for Pesach haven’t faded.”

“We’re hopeful that the time we missed on the programme will be added on,” Rome says. “I’m looking forward to finding a lot of new ideals and making great connections.”

“Purim in Israel has always been something I have looked forward to and the programme was meant to commence with skiing on Mount Hermon,” says Goss. “The delay has brought some disappointment, but as the class 2020, we’re used to it!”



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# Powerful Jewish women who made history

JORDAN MOSHE

The theme for this year's International Women's Day (on Monday, 8 March) is #ChooseToChallenge, which conveys the message that people with power need to stand up against gender inequality.

Here are a few women who chose to challenge gender stereotypes. They will be remembered for being some of history's most daring, influential, and noteworthy Jewish women, who left their mark on the world.

**Golda Meir**

Who can forget Golda Meir? Born Goldie Mabovitch in 1898, she was Israel's fourth prime minister, and the first woman to be elected leader of Israel. Hailing from Kiev, she and her family emigrated to the United States (US) in 1906, where they settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She emigrated to British Mandate Palestine in 1921 with her husband, Morris Myerson, and settled in Kibbutz Merhavva.

Later elected to the executive of the Jewish Agency, Meir was active in fundraising to help cover the costs of the Israeli War of Independence, and became one of the state's most effective spokespeople.

In 1948, David Ben-Gurion appointed Meir a member of the provisional government. A few days before the declaration of independence, he sent her disguised as an Arab on a hazardous mission to persuade King Abdullah of Jordan not to attack Israel. The King, however, had already decided his

army would invade the Jewish state following the British departure.

Ben-Gurion would call her "the best man in the government", and she is portrayed as being strong-willed and straight-talking. Meir was minister of labour and foreign minister for the Labor Party before coming out of retirement in 1969 – at the age of 70 – to lead Israel as prime minister.

**Gertrude Elion**

Gertrude Elion was a Nobel Prize recipient, biochemist, and pharmacologist who helped to develop medicine that treated leukaemia, malaria, AIDS, and kidney transplant rejection.

Born in 1918 in New York City, Elion was an avid reader from the start, and graduated high school at 15. While furthering her education at Hunter College, she lost her beloved grandfather to stomach cancer, leading her to choose chemistry as "a logical first step in committing myself to fighting the disease".

Elion received her Bachelors in chemistry from Hunter College in 1937, but found work opportunities scarce for a woman chemist. After several unfulfilling jobs, she entered graduate school at New York University, receiving her Master of Science in chemistry in 1941. She found work as a quality control chemist at Quaker Maid Company, and then later as a research chemist at Johnson & Johnson. Elion finally found a rewarding and

challenging career in 1944 as a research chemist at Burroughs Wellcome, a noted pharmaceutical company.

Although she never completed her PhD, Elion's biochemical work resulted in chemotherapies for leukaemia, immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplants (azathioprine), treatments for gout, lupus, and severe rheumatoid arthritis, and the important antiviral drug acyclovir used to treat herpes. She received a Nobel Prize in 1988, and 20 honorary doctoral degrees.

**Rabbi Regina Jonas**

Rabbi Regina Jonas broke the religious mould, becoming the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in 1935. Born in Berlin in 1902, she displayed a passion for Jewish history, Bible, and Hebrew in high school. Many people supported Jonas's interests, among them the Orthodox rabbis Isidor Bleichrode, Felix Singermann, and Max Weyl.

Jonas pursued her studies, submitting a thesis on whether women could hold rabbinic office in 1930. The paper is the first known attempt to find a halachic basis for the ordination of women.

She didn't follow the reform movement, which was willing to achieve modernisation by abandoning halacha, but wanted to deduce gender equality from Jewish legal sources.

She continued to pursue ordination, and after receiving it in 1935, she was employed in Berlin as a "pastoral-rabbinic counsellor" in its welfare institutions and even delivered sermons in more liberal shuls.

In 1942, Jonas and her mother were deported to Theresienstadt, and even there, she continued preaching and counselling. Tragically, they were later deported to Auschwitz in 1944, where it's believed they were killed on the day of arrival.

**Ruth Bader Ginsburg**

Affectionately known as RBG, this diminutive and soft-spoken US Supreme Court justice (who died in September 2020) was a voice for gender equality and the rights of workers. She ruled on a landmark case that made same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states of the US. She was the second female Justice in the US and the first Jewish female to hold this position. She served 27 years on the nation's highest bench.

When she began her career in law, women were treated worse than men. They were restricted by law, barring them from jobs, rights, even jury service. By the time she became a judge, she had made many changes to women's rights.

In 1996, she overturned the men's only attendance at Virginia Military Institute in the US. Hailing from Brooklyn, she attended Harvard Law School with her husband, Marty, and was one of nine women in a class of more than 500. The dean asked her

why she was taking up a place that "should go to a man".

She was an academic star, but she battled to find work because law firms weren't interested in taking on a woman even though she was recommended for a Supreme Court clerkship.

Her mentor managed to get her a clerkship in New York by promising a judge that if she didn't work out, he would find someone else. That was her beginning.

Ginsburg – who died at 87 – was a woman who defied stereotypes.

**Emma Lazarus**

Emma Lazarus left her mark in the literary sphere. Born in 1849, she was one of the first successful Jewish American authors, part of the late 19th century New York literary elite and recognised in her time as an important American poet. She later wrote bold, powerful poetry and essays protesting the rise of antisemitism and arguing for Russian immigrants' rights, and even

called on Jews to unite and create a homeland in Palestine before the term "Zionist" had even been coined.

Famous lines from her poem, *The New Colossus*, are displayed on the Statue of Liberty and still welcome newcomers to America: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free."

**Hedy Lamarr**

Hedy Lamarr, often touted as the most beautiful woman in the world, was not only famous, but Jewish and scientifically gifted to boot. Born Hedwig Kiesler in Vienna in 1914, she was given her new surname by Louis B Mayer when she signed with MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) in 1937.

Although she achieved international fame as a Hollywood movie star, Lamarr wasn't satisfied with acting. Between takes in her trailer and staying up all night at home, she practised her favourite hobby: inventing.

## When DraMetrics becomes a drama

>>>Continued from page 22

prelims, the DraMetrics were fast learning how to film and edit effectively – this app and that programme.

The relief at having filmed their prelim prac was palpable because there was a sense of achievement and survival. Or so we thought. We embraced no audience, we accepted the acting for camera requirement. What we didn't expect was the mid-year change to the requirements of the dramatic arts COVID-19 final prac exam. All filming had to be done on campus – all protocols observed, teacher invigilator present.

Then it's announced that the camera has to be static – no zooming, panning, or editing. A static camera makes it theatrical!

What about the schools' policies regarding the wearing of masks, or should I say the removal of masks? Is it allowed for a DraMatriculant to film the one piece in The Black Box Theatre and the second piece in The Auditorium or a corridor or on the field? One piece filmed in landscape with the camera a fair distance away from the performance because it's physical theatre, and the second piece filmed in portrait with a closer, much more intimate placement of camera position?

South African playwright Lara Foot comes to mind because the DraMetrics have studied

her plays. She has said that in a South African post-apartheid, postmodern theatrical realm, one must engage with the darkness to see the light. That is what the DraMetrics of 2020 (and their teacher, who is acutely aware that the war isn't over ... spell vaccine) did.

The 2020 DraMetrics excelled. Their theory was strong and their prac even stronger. The vast majority brought home a distinction in this subject. The others were Bs. What a year 2020 was, and what a year (with a second wave subsiding and a third wave predicted) 2021 is proving to be!

At least this time round, we know right from the start what the requirements and challenges are. We have learnt how to teach, direct, and perform dramatic arts in spaces cyber and locations masked; the embrace of "it is what it is" is a survival tactic (like no other, read option).

• Award winning actor, writer, director, teacher, and presenter, Renos Nicos Spanoudes, holds a BA (Ed), BA (Hons) and an MA from the University of the Witwatersrand. He is head of dramatic arts, arts & culture at King David High School Victory Park. He is also a dramatic arts WitsPlus mentor, and a directing lecturer at the University of Pretoria.



Golda Meir



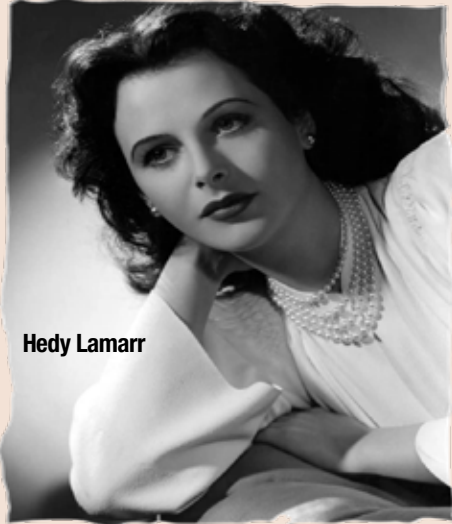
Emma Lazarus



Rabbi Regina Jonas



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Hedy Lamarr



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## MOST SA JEWS (BOTH OF ASHKENAZI AND SEPHARDI HERITAGE) ARE ELIGIBLE TO REINSTATE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT.

A common misconception is that European citizenship and EU passports can only be obtained if one has documents providing his/her lineage. The fact is that not having any documents proving lineage, doesn't lead to disqualification of eligibility. Jews of Ashkenazi heritage can rely on documents obtained in Lithuania or Poland. Jews of Sephardi heritage need no proof at all!

In his experience, the majority of South African Jews are descendants of Jews whose European citizenship was illegally deprived, and therefore they are entitled to reinstate it, and accordingly obtain an EU passport.



Adv. Horesh has been operating in SA market with the Jewish community since March 2018. He arrives regularly to South Africa, and can meet in person with Jews who are interested to do so.

**Ashkenazi:** This ad refers to Jews of Polish & Lithuanian heritage only. The most important thing is the understanding that prior to the end of WW-I, the European map was very different than the one we know today. Countries like Poland and Lithuania did not exist as independent countries, and until 1918 these territories were only known as Lithuanian or Polish regions/counties of the Great Russian Empire who ruled all of north eastern Europe. Accordingly, until 1918, residents of these territories were Russian citizens, as Polish and Lithuanian citizenships didn't exist. Therefore, since applications for reinstatement of these citizenships can only be based on whether one's ancestor was a Polish or Lithuanian citizen, whoever is a descendant of an ancestor who left Europe prior to 1918 will not be eligible.

In addition, it is highly important to remember that since borders in Europe were shifted once again during and after WW-II, one's eligibility for Polish or Lithuanian citizenship depends on the city from which his/her ancestor hailed. Horesh explains: Shifted borders resulted in cities changing nationalities, and that the resultant effect for descendants of Jews left Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined whereas a similar



Adv. Avi Horesh is an Israeli attorney, who lived in Poland for seven years. Horesh is recognised in Israel as one of the leading lawyers in the field of reinstatement of European citizenship.

application for reinstatement of Polish citizenship may very well be approved!

**Sephardi:** This ad refers to all Jews of Sephardi heritage – Jews who arrived from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, as well as many descendants of Jews who arrived from Holland and the UK. Most descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are eligible to reinstate Portuguese citizenship and, accordingly, an EU passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh will apply for (on behalf of the applicant) an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which, an application for Portuguese citizenship is most likely to be approved.

Horesh has an in-depth knowledge and a full understanding of European immigration laws.

Horesh resides in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – enabling him to travel to Poland and Lithuania, as well as to Portugal, where he collaborates with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications of reinstatement of European citizenship.

Adv. Horesh closely collaborates with professionals who assist him in tracing documentation in Europe required for successful applications of reinstatement EU citizenships.

**My travel schedule has been postponed due to COVID-19, at the moment I plan to arrive in May. I'm offering to review and advise your case for free. You are most welcome to contact me on [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com) or whatsapp +48783953223**



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