

18K yellow gold ring, set with a cut Emerald,  
surrounded by a cluster of round cut diamonds  
**R10,000 - R15,000**



18th Century  
detachable Dutch  
Marquetry Bombé bureau  
**R8,000 - R12,000**



Norman Clive Catherine,  
mosaic tile on concrete prefab tile  
**R55,000 - R80,000**



Unattributed,  
Large Senufo  
(Ivory Coast) Style Bird  
**R7,000 - R10,000**



# south african Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

■ Volume 26 – Number 10 ■ 17 March 2022 ■ 14 Adar II 5782

[www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## SA Olim bring refugees in from the cold

TALI FEINBERG

**S**pending a night in a bus stuck in the snow in a remote area of Moldova is not the place you would normally find a South African-born *Olah*, therapist and mother of five children, Liza Kramer.

But trying to save the lives of Ukrainian refugees is not an everyday activity for anyone.

Kramer was born in South Africa, grew up in Australia and made aliya to Israel. She has a busy family therapy practice in Ra'anana. The night on the bus last week was her second without sleep on an emergency mission to assist Ukrainian refugees.

On 7 March, Kramer, who is a trained psychotherapist, got the call asking if she could join a mission that would be leaving in a few hours. "It wasn't a great time to be leaving. I'm heading to South Africa for a wedding next week. But I called my husband. He's South African and is a passionate Zionist. He said, 'You have to go. There are few times in Jewish history where Jews have been able to stand up and say, 'We've got you.' This is one of those times.' I also feel that if you're able to help, you have an obligation to do so. So I agreed."

Tanya Kuchar is a busy lawyer, a mother of four, and a volunteer medic living in Ra'anana. Even with these commitments, when she got the call to be at the airport in two hours to take part in an emergency

mission assisting Jewish Ukrainian refugees, she didn't hesitate. Within hours, her small Israeli airplane carrying tons of humanitarian aid landed at a tiny airport in Romania.

Born in South Africa, Kuchar attended Yeshiva College before making aliya with her family as a child. Now, she found herself standing in the freezing cold on a deserted airstrip on the border of Romania and Moldova, unloading tons upon tons of humanitarian aid with her own bare hands.

"This is only the second time an Israeli plane has landed at this airport, which has only one runway," she says. "The airport wasn't equipped for this kind of rescue effort, but we went ahead. We were the only ones there."

Both women were there as volunteers of United Hatzalah, an Israeli volunteer-based emergency medical services (EMS) organisation based in Jerusalem. It's one of many Hatzalah organisations in various parts of the world. They were sent to assist refugees on the ground and travel with them back to Israel as part of "Operation Orange Wings", named after the colour of the organisation.

Kramer got the call at 11am and had to be at the airport at 5pm.

"I cancelled my clients and called all my friends who had ever been skiing saying I needed winter clothes! I called my kids (aged six to 17) and they came to say goodbye. We landed in Romania and then had a four-hour drive to Moldova."

Without sleep, she went to help in the kitchens. "Everyone just helps where we're needed. That night, we drove out to the northern border which was another four-hour drive." There, they set up a big tent with a huge Israeli flag "so people know where to come for help". They wore orange gear and Kramer says people call them "the angels in the orange jackets".

But she doesn't feel like an angel. "On the ground, it doesn't feel heroic. We're so limited in what we can do and there's almost no way to fix it. The devastation is so in your face and for what? But I was proud to be there as a representative of Israel. The Jewish state has a tremendous presence on the border.

"You see yourself in the refugees," she says. "These are people with jobs and homes, leaving with a tiny suitcase. You see people your parents' age and you wonder how anyone could be starting a new life at that age when they have lost everything."

"That night, it was about offering blankets and something warm to drink and helping them to take the next step. It was about saying, 'I'm sorry this is happening to you. Israel is waiting for you. You are wanted somewhere,' although so many people just wanted to go home."

That night, they had to head back to their base, which was another four-hour drive. "It was snowing, and the drive was off-road for about 30 minutes. Our bus got stuck and we had to spend the night there. I



Liza Kramer with a Ukrainian refugee girl on arrival in Israel

was so tired, I did sleep, and we had enough petrol to keep us warm. Only the next day did I realise how isolated we were, in a very remote area. It wasn't the safest thing," she says. United Hatzalah offered to send emergency teams to get them, but they turned it down, not realising how precarious the situation was.

A lot of her time was spent in the medical tent, providing psycho-trauma support day and night. "In a war situation, people

are still in the actual trauma, so it's just about being there with them, looking them in the eye, and reminding them that they're human and that whatever they're feeling is appropriate in this abnormal situation," says Kramer.

Kuchar's trip was a whirlwind 24 hours, but she's in no doubt that it was worth going. Five years ago, she took an EMT (emergency medical training) course with United Hatzalah to become a medic and

first responder. She's now deputy head of United Hatzalah in the Ra'anana and Herzlia area.

Assisting with emergencies has become part of her daily life and, in many ways, was preparation for this humanitarian mission. "My family and kids are used to it. It could be in the middle of a Shabbat meal or bath time. Before I left, I explained to my kids where I was going. My six-year-old daughter ran to her room, chose six dolls, and asked me to give them to children from 'Ukrania' [Ukraine in Hebrew] who don't have homes and toys."

Those dolls, with huge bags of more toys, food, medicine, blankets, clothes and equipment travelled with Kuchar to Romania. "Once we unloaded everything, we had to load it on to buses. Half of our team went with the buses and half of us stayed at the airport and waited for the 160 refugees that would fly back to Israel with us."

As the refugees arrived, they were given food, blankets and medical attention. "There were many mothers with children and old people. The mothers had no prams or equipment to help with their children and they were exhausted."

Even with the language barrier, she understood their stories of displacement, multiple border crossings and leaving their husbands behind, not knowing if they would see them again. Meanwhile, the children "were just happy to be running around an

**Continued on page 3>>**



# THANK YOU FOR PARTNERING WITH US THIS PURIM

[www.jhbchev.co.za/ml](http://www.jhbchev.co.za/ml)

  
**ChevrahKadisha**



# Three principles for surviving a chaotic world



CHIEF RABBI DR WARREN GOLDSTEIN

It feels like the world is in a constant state of chaos. Just as we start to emerge from a global pandemic, a major war breaks out in Europe. How do we face all this chaos and uncertainty?

Purim has the answers. The very word “Purim” refers on a literal level to the random lottery method Haman used to select the date for the genocide of the Jewish people. But on a deeper level, the word captures the chaos and

uncertainty of those times.

One moment, the Jews in the Persian empire were living in relative peace and comfort, the next, they were targeted for annihilation by the emperor and his prime minister, Haman. And then, through a miraculous sequence of events, they were saved from this fate.

There are three key lessons we can learn about surviving uncertainty which emerge from a pivotal conversation recorded in the Book of Esther, when Haman “bought the rights” from King Achashverosh to annihilate the Jewish people by paying 10 000 measures of silver.

The Talmud (*Megilah* 13b) says that the intent of this evil transaction of silver was counteracted by the merit of the silver of the mitzvah of the half-shekel, which was donated each year to purchase the materials needed for the daily temple services.

The half-shekel silver donation thus serves as the symbol of Jewish survival and teaches us how to survive forces of chaos in three ways.

doing his mitzvahs and living with his values. Says the Maharal (Prague, 1526-1609), Haman couldn't buy us from Achashvarosh because we already belonged to Hashem. This has been an unshakeable pillar of Jewish history and carries us through the most turbulent times, nationally and personally.

developing a sense of shared destiny and realising our deep connection to one another.

Of course, we're all Hashem's children. Therefore, our solidarity, which begins with our fellow Jews, doesn't end there. We need to offer love and support to every human being created in the “image of G-d”.

The third aspect of Jewish survival represented by the half-shekel is faith in the future. Rabbi Yonatan Eibenschutz (Krakow, 1690-1764) says that the Jewish people continued to give this half-shekel coin even while they were under the rule of King Achashverosh, who had stopped the temple services in Jerusalem. So, they were donating it to the treasury of the temple, even though the temple was no longer functional, because they knew deep down that G-d would one day redeem them and they would be able to resume temple services. And, in fact, this is what happened when Queen Esther's son, King Daryaveis, became emperor. He was devoted to his people, opening the gates to Israel and to Jerusalem, and through him, G-d redeemed the Jewish people.

This fundamental optimism and faith in the future is thus a key element of Jewish survival. The ongoing story of our people is a G-d-given guarantee, a pledge made by the creator of the world, Himself, to our forefathers and through our prophets. To be a Jew is to know that no matter what travails we're facing, we'll endure and, ultimately, divine redemption will come to the world.

Our connection to Hashem and his mitzvahs, solidarity with one another and faith in the future are the three secrets to Jewish survival. And with Europe at war, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and the instability of the pandemic, we need them more than ever.

The world is a chaotic place right now. But these three principles give us a solid and unshakeable framework to guide us through it.



The second lesson of the half-shekel is our connection to one another. Each person gives a half-shekel, “that the rich shall not give more, and the poor should not give less”. Only by combining our contribution do we create a whole. The lesson here is that we need to view one another as partners and not as competitors. This goes to the heart of Jewish unity.

In a sense, we're all on the same team, seeking the same objectives. And whether we face crisis or opportunity, we need to work together, looking to one another for support. This solidarity, the idea that we are “guarantors for one another”, is the second key pillar of Jewish survival.

It's all about cultivating a sense of community. This means supporting and partnering with one another locally, as well as supporting Jewish communities around the world, especially in times of crisis. It means

**Appliance Repairs on Site**

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

Call Jason  
082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532

**FREE QUOTATIONS**

**KBM CARPET CLEANING SERVICES**

13 Years Experience

Gauteng based specialist cleaners of:

- Wall to wall carpets & rugs
- Upholstery
- Persian rugs
- Deep cleaning of mattresses

Get ready for Pesach!

Batya 060 809 9559

email:mcmillanbatya420@gmail.com

**VETERINARIAN REQUIRED**

to join our busy, warm small animal practice in Sea Point. Salary and hours negotiable.

Contact me directly on cell: 083 306 1959 or on reenacotton@gmail.com

**VET POINT**  
Dr Reena Cotton

**FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE**

**Have a love at first sound experience.**

**Phonak Audéo™ Marvel**

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

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

**AFFORDABLE RANGE FOR PENSIONERS**

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

Fairmount  
6 George Ave,  
Sandringham

Additional branches in Benoni and Germiston

We are COVID-19 compliant

**VEHICLES WANTED**

Any make, any model, any condition  
**Best prices guaranteed!**

Arnold Orkin 082-823-7826

**AUTO AFRICA**

## Torah Thought

### The wisdom of kindness

This week's Haftorah (Jeremiah Chapter 7 & 9) concludes with the powerful verse: “Thus says the Lord: let not the wise man praise and boast of his wisdom, nor the strong man of his strength, nor the rich man of his riches. But in this one should praise and exult, that he understands and knows Me, for I am the Lord who practises kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.”

This, of course, advocates that we all study Torah regularly and vigorously to grow in our knowledge and understanding of G-d.

An observation of Jeremiah's divine prophecy is how after G-d says that praise and exaltedness is appropriate only in the “understanding and knowing of G-d”, G-d then goes on to state that He practises kindness, justice etc.

Being proud of one's wisdom, strength and riches can lead to a skewed and self-serving approach to life, people and creation. The wisdom of G-d leads to emulating G-d's attributes of kindness, justice, etc.

The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 27:1) tells us that when Alexander the Great visited a province in Africa, he told them he had come to see their laws.

As they were sitting, two men came before the king of the country for judgment. One said, “King, I bought a carob tree from this man and in scooping it out, I found a treasure underneath, so I said to him, ‘Take your treasure, for I bought the carob tree not the treasure.’” The other argued, “When I completed the sale, I sold you the carob tree and all that is therein.”

The king called one of them aside and asked him, “Do you have a son?” He replied, “Yes.” He then asked the other, “Do you have a daughter?” He replied, “Yes.” “Go and let them get married to each other and they can both enjoy the treasure,”

the king said.

Alexander the Great was surprised. The king asked him, “Have I not judged well?” “Yes,” he assured him. “If this case had arisen in your country, what would you have done?” Alexander replied, “We would have removed both men's heads and the treasure would have gone to the king.” He inquired of Alexander, “Does the sun shine in your country?” “Yes.” “Does rain fall in your country?” “Yes.” “Perhaps there are small cattle in your country?” “Yes.”

He then said to Alexander, “Woe to you. It's because of the merit of

the small cattle that the sun shines upon you and the rain falls upon you. For the sake of the small cattle, you are saved!” As it is written, “Man and animal do You rescue G-d.” (Psalms 36:7).

The king's message to Alexander was that when the inhabitants of a country conduct themselves improperly, they are devoid of merit to be helped by Hashem. Their animals, however, did nothing wrong and deserve Hashem's attention. Thus, the inhabitants are helped through the merit of their animals.



Reverend Ilan Herrmann, Soul Workout Shul

**Shabbat Times** brought to you by

**Spencer Schwartz from You Realty**  
**Residential Property Sales and Rentals**

	Starts	Ends
Johannesburg	18:03	18:51
Cape Town	18:42	19:33
Durban	17:52	18:41
Bloemfontein	18:11	19:00
Port Elizabeth	18:14	19:04
East London	18:04	18:54
Jerusalem	17:09	18:25
Tel Aviv	17:31	18:27

Spencer Schwartz • 084 524 4616 • spencer@yourealty.co.za

**You. Realty**

It is customary that women accept Shabbat when lighting.  
If they plan to do actions forbidden on Shabbat after lighting, they must make a stipulation that they aren't accepting Shabbat right away.  
They should only make such a stipulation when necessary.  
This stipulation can be done mentally.



# Living hand to mouth under Russian occupation

TALI FEINBERG

Most of Ukraine is fighting back against the Russian invasion, but some towns have fallen and have been occupied by Russian forces.

One such city is Kherson in the south of Ukraine. Some news reports say it was surrounded and occupied in the first hours of the invasion, while others say it was officially taken over on 3 March.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Wolff is there, and said, “By Thursday afternoon [24 February], every entry and departure point were closed off. There was nothing coming in or out of the city. What we had was all there was. I understood we were on the cusp of a tragic catastrophe, G-d forbid.”

Wolff, who is director of Chabad-Lubavitch in the city, was speaking on a webinar hosted by Chabad of the West Coast on 14 March in an evening of “Torah, tefillah and tzedakah in the merit of peace and safety in Ukraine and around the world”.

Kherson is an administrative and economic centre and an important port on the Black Sea and the Dnieper River. Speaking in Hebrew, Wolff’s account was translated by Rabbi Asher Deren, who hosted the evening.

“I called the supermarket where we have a running account and asked if they were still open,” said Wolff. “The owner said yes, except instead of being open 24/7, it was open only morning to evening. So I asked, ‘What can I buy?’ and he responded, ‘there are just some oranges and apple juice. We’ll sell that, and then we’re closed.’”

Wolff told his wife, Chaya, “We’re standing

before an emergency situation.’ I realised this was the moment I needed to activate every connection I had made in the past 30 years.”

He reached out to a contact and told him he needed access to tons of basic foodstuffs. The contact responded, “Give me 10 minutes,” and then told Wolff where to go. Wolff followed the instructions and landed up at a warehouse owned by a friend of the contact. “No one can normally just go there,” he said. “It was literally an emergency storehouse built underground.”

Wolff was given access to the



supplies to provide food for his community. Now, every three days, more than 1 000 packages are sent out. Most people come to the shul to collect their parcel. But some are too old and sick, so volunteers walk for hours to deliver food to them as there’s no petrol to drive.

Wolff said he got calls from all over the world giving moral support and many people said, “Don’t worry, soon it will be Purim and you’ll celebrate.” “My answer is I have no doubt we’ll celebrate, but my job is to make sure we’re all still alive on Purim. And that’s all we’ve been doing the past – two and a half weeks – keeping people alive.”

He said many people who aren’t Jewish come to him too. “Five days ago, a 19-year-old girl came to the shul with her father. She looked at me and I could see the feeling of death in her eyes. Her father told me she had juvenile diabetes and needed insulin urgently. I said, ‘I don’t have any, why did you come here?’ He responded that he had a friend in Israel who told him to go to the shul as it would help.”

Wolff called up a director of a big hospital and he told her to send the girl there. “Fifteen minutes later, the father called me and said,

‘You saved my daughter’s life.’” Since then, the shul library has become a makeshift pharmacy, with medicine on some shelves instead of books.

Wolff said there were many stories like this. He got a call from Germany about 35 students from Nigeria and Cameroon who had just finished the last of their food. He was asked to help. They came to the shul starving and he gave them enough food to keep going. “So, in the next week, none of those kids are dying.”

Wolff describes a city that’s eerily quiet. He said things were slowly getting back to “normal”.

“It’s ironic that in terms of safety and security, this is one of the safest places to

be in Ukraine right now, because there’s no war happening here.” People can access basic essentials if they stand in long lines. There are Russian soldiers, but as long as you don’t provoke them, they don’t treat people badly.”

However, on 5 March, the media reported that about 2 000 people marched through the city centre, waving flags and singing the Ukrainian national anthem. They shouted patriotic slogans including “Russians go home” and “Kherson is Ukraine”. Videos of the protest on social media show Russian troops firing into the air to deter the approaching crowd.

Rabbi Wolff is convinced they will celebrate Purim peacefully and joyfully and is even starting to prepare for Pesach.

Looking back, he considers that he could have fled in the early hours of the invasion or even before. “But I knew if I left, everything would fall apart. I’m talking about the lives we’re taking care of. So, my wife and I took the hard decision to stay. This is where we need to be. The past two and a half weeks have been the most important decision of my *shlichus*.”

To support, visit <https://fjc-fsu.org/centers/ukraine/kherson/>

## SA Olim bring refugees in from the cold

>> Continued from page 1

airport. They received toys, sweets, and chocolates and we kept them busy to help their parents.”

In one photo of the mission, Kuchar is carrying a little refugee girl. Her arms may have been aching from unloading tons of aid, but she doesn’t show it. She’s calm and composed, a symbol of safety and the epitome of why a Jewish state is needed and the role it must play in tragedies like these.

“When we say, ‘never again’, it must be for everyone and anyone,” Kuchar says on what motivates her. “So many people have been displaced and, especially in Europe, it hits home. Humanitarian help has always been the Jewish way.”

Kramer says the experience showed her it could happen to anyone. “You can go from a comfortable life one day to a refugee the next. And you hope

to G-d that someone will come and help you. Ukrainians would come and say to us, ‘Is there a way to be the Jewish?’ because they knew Israel would help.”

Kramer flew back to Israel a week later with 130 refugees. “It was chaotic because their needs were so great. But, in between, I paused and thought that 130 people have just been given a place to come home. Israel isn’t easy – I’ve been here 20-something years – so I know. But it’s a place of safety.”

Asked how she feels about being part of something so historic, she says, “This is one of the few times in our 3 000-year-old history that we’ve been able to choose to help. When I stood at the border with the Israeli flag, I don’t think I’ve ever felt prouder to be a Jew.”

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

FOR SALE

GLENHAZEL | R 1 999 000

Asking More. “Precious Gem”. 3 Bed north-facing apartment. Safe and convenient, this apartment is in a well-kept complex with beautiful gardens. 3 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms (main en suite), well-fitted kitchen, enclosed sunroom, spacious lounge and dining room with beautiful parquet flooring, balcony overlooking garden, lift in building and 2 secure parking’s.

3

2

Joel Harris 082 926 0287  
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

Web Ref: RL82714

INVEST IN PROPERTY IN ISRAEL  
FROM R5 MILLION

Contact Herschel Jawitz in strict confidence  
082 571 1829 | [herschel@jawitz.co.za](mailto:herschel@jawitz.co.za)

FOR SALE

FAIRMOUNT | R 2 699 000

Accommodation galore in this character-filled home situated in a quiet location in Raedene Estate bordering Fairmount. This charming home offers 4 bedrooms and 3 modern bathrooms (2 en suite). The finishes boast a fashionable trend. Lounge with fireplace and inter leading dining room. Very spacious eat- in kitchen. Small covered patio and large open patio, off street parking. Ideal for large family. Close to all amenities.

4

3.5

Joel Harris 082 926 0287  
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

Web Ref: RL85828

REAL LIFE

Real Estate.

FOR SALE

OAKLANDS | R 4 995 000

Embracing elegance and practicality, this home is perfect for a large family offering generous rooms and a good flow for entertainment. Lounge, dining room and family room, open to the pool area. 4/5 beds, 3 baths, study with wood kitchen and scullery. Outside Gazebo for ‘al fresco’ living and entertainment overlooking pool and tennis court. Superb private cottage. Excellent features including security, generator and gas geysers. All set in a quiet road.

4

3

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

Web Ref: RL85854

Registered with the PPRA

FOR SALE

STRATHAVON | R 4 100 000

Inviting offers from R 3 900 000. A cluster offering character, space & timeless elegance. This unique home is perfect for the family looking for 24hr security & a lock up and go lifestyle. Comfortable reception rooms all north facing with hallways all sky-lit, gracefully flow throughout this home. The indoor / outdoor patio beckons you to the beautiful garden setting with the pool taking center stage. Walking distance to the Virgin Active, Grayston Shopping centre & quick access to all major arterial routes. So much to enjoy!

3

2.5

Jeremy Craig: 076 246 4900  
Linette Oosthuizen: 082 572 5314

Web Ref: RL85645



# Russian Jews mostly side with Putin

OPINION

PAULA SLIER



This has turned out to be one of those articles for which more people declined to be interviewed than agreed. The Russian Jewish community numbers about 145 000 people and, as the old joke goes, one Jew, two opinions.

However, it's worth noting, as an elderly Jewish engineer who lives in Moscow, Eduard Feiman, told me, "Our views are much the same as the general Russian public."

If he's correct, this means about 70% of Russian Jews support Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions in Ukraine.

Official polls published at the beginning of March, after the Russian military had launched its operation, pointed to just less than three-quarters of Russians approving the military invasion.

While many analysts insist on taking official Russian polls with a pinch of salt, they do nonetheless suggest that most of the Russian population, regardless of the actual percentage, supports Putin's actions in Ukraine.

Certainly, most of the Russian Jews I've

met so far support him, although aside from Feiman, none wanted their real names to be published. They fear that by publicly supporting Putin, they will be seen to be condoning what's happening in Ukraine and this isn't true.

They emphasised that they were heartbroken and anguished by the reports and pictures coming out of Ukraine, but to say this publicly could be interpreted as a refute of their president.

"I have close friends living in Dnepropetrovsk and other cities in Ukraine, and I fear for their safety," said Feiman, whose wife was yelling in the background for him to get off the phone. It was only after he explained to her that I was a journalist from South Africa that she calmed down. She was afraid he was once again posting videos on Facebook, where he's received death threats for speaking out in support of Russia.

"The last time I spoke to some of my Ukrainian friends, they were worried that the Nazi Ukrainians who have taken over many cities will open the gates to a dam near where they live and it will flood and

destroy their homes."

Feiman's wording echoes Putin's rhetoric. He repeatedly talks of "denazifying" Ukraine and "Western propaganda". It's a charge levelled against him and those Russians who share his view - that they think the way they do because of the media blackout in Russia that leaves them exposed only to what the Kremlin is thinking.

"People have a very short memory," says Feiman, who lost 33 close members of his family in Belarus during the Holocaust.

"People forget that the Ukrainians were among the worst to the Jews. What do you think happened to their children and grandchildren," he asks. "These are them!"

Maxim\* agrees. We met in the elevator of a Moscow hotel where I have been staying, after I returned from inquiring at three banks

if they could change dollars into rubles All three had run out of local currency.

That morning, Visa and Mastercard stopped working, and the hotel staff, who are forbidden by law to accept payment in dollars, had locked me out of my room. Thankfully, Maxim had a few rubles he could give me.

A successful businessman, he immigrated to Israel with his family when he was 14 and now divides his time between Israel and Russia. He

sees himself as "equally Israeli; equally Russian" and wholeheartedly supports Putin's operation in Ukraine. He believes most Russians, including Russian Jews, do so too.

"We don't have any hatred towards the

Ukrainian people," he said. "They are our brother nation; we are the same people. Ukrainians live in Russia, and we are a multinational society that embraces minorities. But, for the past 30 years, Ukraine has been building an identity that's based on hatred towards Russian people. The Kyiv government is corrupt and undemocratic.

"In 2001, it stopped Russian-speaking media from broadcasting in Ukraine for the first time. It later re-imposed the ban in 2014, and it exists today. People say, 'Ah Russians, don't see other media.' Well, how many know that Ukrainians don't? And how many people in the West do? People say we're influenced by Russian propaganda. I say no, you are influenced by Western propaganda. The charge goes both ways."

For Russians who support Putin's war, Putin is doing what he needs to do to protect Russia. And the endless stream of media coverage showing the destruction of Ukrainian cities and the killing of civilians?

"A lot of it is fake," says Misha. "Yes, people are dying, but they aren't being killed by Russian soldiers. The Ukrainians are using civilians as human shields. They deliberately put people in harm's way, making it difficult for the Russian army to avoid collateral damage. Israelis, more than anyone, know about this. It doesn't matter how moral an army is - and I believe the Russian army is moral and trying to avoid civilian deaths - you have thugs on the other side who know that once they're captured by the Russian army, they face a death sentence. So, they have nothing to lose by killing civilians."

Misha makes a distinction between the Ukrainian army and the Ukrainian National Guard, the latter of which is supported by tens of thousands of Azov and Aidar members. Both are battalions with neo-Nazi leanings.

"The Ukrainian military is conscripted. They aren't fighting this war from an ideological point of view. The neo-Nazis are. People are asking why the Russian operation is taking so long? Russia could just carpet bomb neighbourhoods, but it doesn't. It's trying to avoid civilian deaths. It's the other side that isn't."

But perhaps the real damage is what will come - not just to Ukraine, but to Russia.

Denis\* is a married father of a teenage daughter. We met in a coffee shop in Moscow where his mood was so sombre, I was soon feeling down too.

"What future does my daughter have," he asked sadly. "When the war started, my sister in Paris said, 'Leave immediately!' My father in Israel said, 'Come!' But my wife isn't Jewish, and how does running away help? Russians all over the world are being targeted; even in Israel, I've heard of Ukrainian Jews attacking Russian Jews.

"My opinion changes by the minute. I think Putin is right, but then I see the destruction in Ukraine and I think maybe he's wrong. But then I know our history and I know the bigger plan by America is to have Ukraine join Nato [the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation]. Why should we, as Russians, accept that threat on our border? But come again tomorrow and ask me then, and maybe I will have changed my mind again," he says with a sigh.

\*Not his real name

• Paula Slier is the Middle East bureau chief of RT, the founder and chief executive of Newshound Media International, and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Women in Leadership Award of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

*Most Russian Jews... fear that by publicly supporting Putin. They will be seen to be condoning what's happening in Ukraine. and this isn't true.*

## Love in the time of COVID and war

NICOLA MILTZ

A South African man met the love of his life on an online Jewish dating site, but has no idea when he'll see his Russian fiancée again as she's in Moscow and the country is at war.

Dean Friedman, 37, is living in limbo with his parents in Cape Town while he eagerly waits for his fiancée, Anna Gurovich, 32, to join him so they can tie the knot and begin their lives. He might have a while to wait.

It's one thing to meet the girl of your dreams online during a global pandemic with crazy travel restrictions, but it's another to get together after war in Eastern Europe is thrown into the mix.

"If our relationship can survive what we have already been through in such a short time, we'll be okay," Friedman told the *SA Jewish Report* this week.

In October last year, they were just two ordinary souls looking for love. She a religious Russian Jewess working in human resources for a tech company in Moscow; he is a risk analyst for an online Australian sports betting company, working remotely but basing himself at the time in Bulgaria.

On a visit to his sister in the United States for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur last year, he added his profile to the dating website called The World's Largest Jewish Singles Group.

"I had tried a number of other dating sites as I lived in many places for work, including the United Kingdom, Malta, Germany and Bulgaria," said Friedman.

His profile somehow landed on Anna's radar through a friend of hers who thought they'd make a good match and set about hooking them up.

"Anna phoned me from Russia while I was sitting on the beach in Florida with my sister," he said. "I could speak a little Bulgarian and we managed to strike up a conversation."

The two continued to speak regularly on WhatsApp and Facetime, and he told her that when he returned to Bulgaria, he would fly to Russia and meet her face to face.

"Everyone said I was mad," he said, "You hear all these scam stories like *Tinder Swindler*, especially ones involving Eastern Europeans."

However, he had a good feeling. So on 6 October, with butterflies in his stomach, he flew to Russia.

"It was nerve-racking because I didn't know what to expect. She was nervous too, and was surprised I went," he said.

The first thing she noticed was his smiling face when she caught his eye in arrivals at the Sheremetyevo Pushkin International Airport.

"He looked very happy," said Gurovich this week.

They spent 10 whirlwind days together in Moscow and the rest, as they say, is history.

"She cooked a meal for me that first day of Turkish meatballs, Israeli salad and a parev cheese cake, which she had spent days planning," he said.

"We visited the Kremlin, went horse riding and enjoyed a boat cruise. There were sparks flying, it was very exciting," said Friedman.

The couple had Shabbos at Rabbi Sergov and Rebbetzin Esther Friedman (no relation), linked to the Bolshaya Bronnaya Synagogue, and there was even early talk of marriage, which he said he didn't want to rush into even though he "knew she was the one".

"From the beginning, I knew she was right for me. She's intelligent, kind, caring and you just know," he said.

The couple said their goodbyes with a view to continuing their romance come what may.

Not long afterwards, Friedman gave notice on his flat in Bulgaria and packed up his life there, moving with his dog to Russia to be with Gurovich, who also has a dog.

Several more Shabboses spent with the rabbi and his wife and marriage became high on Gurovich's agenda.

She didn't want to wait too long, although Friedman was still cautious, thinking of his family and how they were going to be able to travel to be with them during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also had a 90-day tourist visa which was going to expire, posing yet another problem. Then came the outbreak of Omicron, which further complicated international travel.

On Boxing Day on 26 January, Friedman took Gurovich, her mother, and her friend to lunch at the Misha Fisher in Jaffa kosher restaurant at the Afimall City shopping mall. Feeling courageous, he bought an engagement ring from one of the jewellery stores in the mall while the others went shopping after lunch.

"I know it wasn't the most romantic thing, but I proposed to her in a shopping mall. We were there, and the moment just seemed right," he said.

It was a blur of heady, intoxicating excitement, but then reality set in. He was able to live anywhere in Europe and South Africa, but where was she able to join him? So began several discussions and meetings with immigration attorneys finally

looking at her prospects of living in Cape Town.

Since then, the couple have run into several seemingly insurmountable stumbling blocks such as Omicron-imposed tight travel restrictions and the expiration of his visa, forcing him back to South Africa. Then Russia invaded Ukraine.

"It has been one thing after another," said Friedman.

Intense discussions has ensued over where they will live and how they will eventually reunite, given the situation worldwide.

He tried to get back to Russia without success. The country hasn't lifted its travel ban on South African passport holders. So they scrapped the idea of getting married there, instead opting for her to join him in South Africa. Immigration comes with overwhelming requirements, including a mountain of paper work, with police clearances and dozens of original and apostilled documents. Meanwhile she's in Moscow and he's in Cape Town as war rages around her and European upheaval plays havoc with their plans.

"War shouldn't exist. To live in a time of horror! If the situation was stable, leaving my country of birth wouldn't be so bad because it would be about missing my loved ones, but now I'm worried about what will happen to them," Gurovich said.

"I feel sad for the situation everywhere. People are worried about being able to buy things and about losing their jobs; it's uncertain."

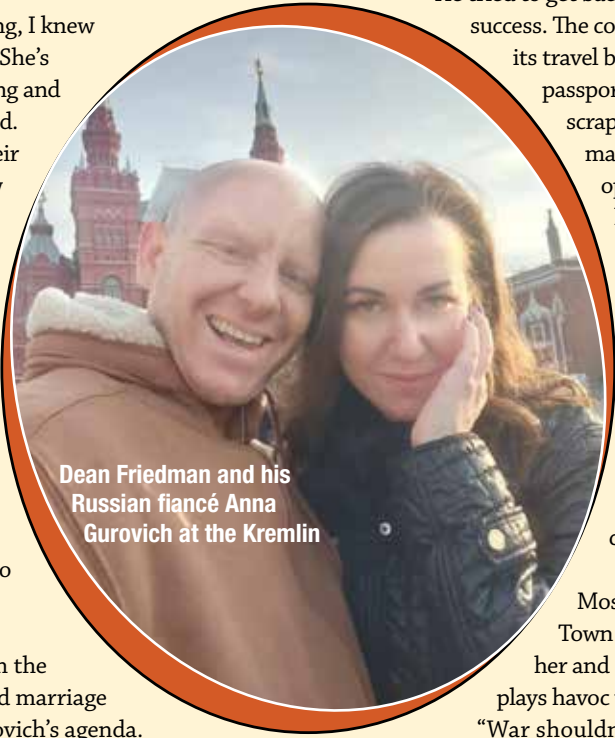
She finds comfort in knowing that she has met the man of her dreams.

"He is unique, he is my other half, my person," she said.

Gurovich who has lived in Russia her whole life and whose family dates back many generations to Tzarist times, said she wasn't afraid to come to South Africa although "I know it will be another world to me".

"It has been stressful and our love has been put to the test, but if we can overcome this, we'll be fine," Friedman said.

The couple is hoping to be married in July under a chuppah in Cape Town in front of his friends and family.



Dean Friedman and his Russian fiancée Anna Gurovich at the Kremlin



# SA Olim reach out to refugees

TALI FEINBERG

As bewildered and distressed Ukrainian refugees land at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel, *Olim* – some of whom are from South Africa – are there to welcome them.

“It’s hard making aliya under the best conditions. We can’t comprehend these conditions,” says Andi Saitowitz, a South African *Olah* who took time out of her busy life to welcome a plane load of new immigrants.

“Knowing that you have your people waiting for you with open arms enveloping you with love and unity makes the hard times that much brighter,” she said.

Saitowitz made aliya from South Africa more than 20 years ago. Now, she’s one of the many *Olim* who chose to be at the airport to welcome the refugees.

“We decided to go to the airport to welcome the new *Olim* and encourage them with love, song and support,” she said after being there last week to meet those arriving from Ukraine to rebuild their lives in Israel.

“The love we experienced at the airport was unbelievable ... total strangers coming together like family, embracing in tears. It was such a special feeling,” Saitowitz says. “It was amazing to witness people coming together, human to human, sending a message that ‘you’re not alone’. That’s the most important message one can send. Israel is this. No matter what hardship you face, there’s a constant value of ‘you’re not alone’.

“Singing together at the airport amid the heartache, pain and tears, there was tremendous gratitude, joy and appreciation for what we have; where we’ve been as a nation and people; and a huge sense of pride in who we are and what we stand for.”

As well as going to the airport, “we’re doing what we can. Our shul and community are incredibly special. We have so many *chesed* [kindness] initiatives under way now and the outpouring of kindness is extraordinary,” Saitowitz says. “Watching the news, one feels so helpless. So we do what we can and donate, help, collect, reach out and show up. That’s what it’s about - showing up however we can.”

Flying to Israel is just the beginning of a long journey of integration for these refugees. In the short and long term, they’ll need support every step of the way.

Eli Rudolph is one South African *Olah* trying to provide these different layers of care.

On a personal level, Rudolph is acting as a kind of middleman, coordinating donations and providing information about what’s needed where. “There are thousands of refugees arriving. If they have family, they stay with them. If not, the government pays for them to go to a hotel, where they get breakfast and dinner. So we’re working to give them lunch and meet other needs like vouchers, toiletries and clothing.”

Rudolph, who has lived in Israel for nine years, works for the organisation Myisrael, which “raises money for small, incredible charities. We’ve just launched an emergency campaign for refugees to help them with both immediate and long-term needs,” she says. “People are really amazing. They want to help, but sometimes you’re giving and you don’t know where to, or you’re helping and there is just too much. A lot of what has been donated is being thrown away [because there’s too much of it].

“So the organisation is being very specific about where the funding is going and in making sure that donations have the maximum impact. The immediate need is to provide food vouchers, activity kits for kids while their parents are busy dealing with bureaucracy, blankets and clothes. Long-term care includes cultural integration and therapy.”

In between all this, she receives calls from people across the country trying to do their bit.

“For example, a man who runs a small yeshiva called to ask how he can make Purim special for the refugees. He’ll now visit them on Purim so they can hear the Megillah and receive *mishloach manot*.”

Telfed is also working around the clock to assist the refugees on top of its mandate of caring for South African and Australian *Olim*. “We’re working in coordination with the ministry of aliyah and integration and it has asked us to focus our efforts on two hotels in the Netanya region,” says Telfed chief executive Dorron Kline.

“There are collections all over the country. Every Facebook and WhatsApp group has been filled

with requests for assistance and, in true Israeli spirit, the hotels have been overwhelmed with donations and some have even requested that people stop bringing! In anticipation of this and with our knowledge of the challenges of integration, we decided to focus our efforts on children. By extension, we hope to give the moms some ‘time out’, remembering that they’re here alone as men between the ages of 18 to 60 haven’t been allowed to leave,” says Kline.

“We’ve already begun a collection of new school supplies, games and sports equipment through our network of regional volunteers and our Ra’anana office will be the centre for collections. The children will need supplies when they start school [backpacks, books and stationery]. Aware of the language barrier, we know that sport, music, dance and games can be played in any language.

“In recent meetings with our team, including our social worker, discussing where we can make a real, meaningful and practical contribution, we looked at trauma and the importance of social interaction in building confidence and easing integration.

“Together with our PRAS and SASI students [recipients of Telfed scholarships through our PRAS volunteer-based programme and SASI – South Africans Studying in Israel] we’ve already begun arranging activities for children,” he says. “As things stand, our plans include a Pesach holiday camp for the children. The situation is dynamic, but we’re in contact with government officials and we’ll keep the community updated about upcoming projects.”

Josie Lutrin, who made aliya just seven short months ago, is another South African olah who can identify with the challenges of building a new life

in a new country. On Sunday, 13 March, she and her daughter went to pack *mishloach manot* for refugees, focusing on children. The event was organised by Just One Chesed, a kindness-outreach movement connecting volunteers and those in need.

Lutrin says it was meaningful for her to do this because, “It’s important for me that my kids have an awareness of others around them, not just in their immediate community. It helps them to have compassion for people who are suffering. It’s easy to live in a bubble in Glenhazel or Ra’anana [where she lives]. Hopefully, by bringing a bit of joy to these kids, my own children will also gain an appreciation for all that they have.”



A refugee arriving in Israel after having lost everything



SA Olah Andi Saitowitz (far right) with British Olim welcoming Ukrainian refugees arriving at Ben Gurion airport. The sign says ‘welcome home’

THINKING ABOUT INVESTING IN ISRAEL? We can help you find the perfect home.



BOOK AN APPOINTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA 8TH-15TH MARCH 2022

Since 1985 - Hold is the premier real estate firm for property investment in Israel.

With a global portfolio of clients, Hold also manages over 170 rental properties in Israel.

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

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

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

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

HOLD REAL ESTATE

SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL



Contact  
Julian Nathan  
Managing Director  
Hold Real Estate  
✉ julian@hold.co.il  
☎ +27 87 551 0734  
📠 +972 58 631 9754

Visit our website: [www.hold.co.il](http://www.hold.co.il)

## THE WHITE HOUSE GALLERY

WE BUY AND SELL ARTWORKS BY SOUTH AFRICAN & INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS



SEEKING TO PURCHASE ARTWORKS BY:

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

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

Artworks (l-r): Joan Miró, Cartel para la Apertura del Taller Mourlot en Nueva York / Marc Chagall, Les Amoureux dans le ciel St-Paul / Joan Miró, Les Voyants



south african

Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

We can make a difference

As I write this, Ukrainians are being battered and their homes destroyed by Russian soldiers, all in the name of recolonising areas that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

Some people might side with Russia in the battle, like those in our government, but I find what’s happening abhorrent. Seeing innocent and unarmed civilians under attack and fleeing for their lives is shocking.

Amazingly, as this war accelerates rather than dies down, I have a growing sense that South Africans have got bored with the subject. It’s far away and out of sight, out of mind, especially these days, when many choose not to follow the media.

Our ability to focus on any one thing has diminished and we now have what I call a ‘Twitter attention span’, which doesn’t last much more than 40 characters.

Seriously, on three occasions this week when I mentioned “the war”, I got blank looks and people asking what I was talking about.

Meanwhile, Ukraine continues to be under attack, people are dying, being maimed and fleeing everything they know to find safety across borders.

As I sit here, on the southern tip of Africa, I can’t help but wonder what I can do to help. What can I do to make a difference?

So, today, I’m fasting. Yes, I know it’s the fast of Esther and Jewish people around the world are doing the self-same thing, but in all honesty, I’m not usually one of them. I’m generally a once-a-year, Yom Kippur faster, but this year is different.

I have dedicated my fast to the people of Ukraine in general and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in particular. I cannot claim the idea, I read about a rabbi in the United States who called on Jews around the world to fast today.

His reasoning was related to the original reason for the fast of Esther on the day before Purim. Queen Esther called on the Jews of Shushan to fast to give her the strength to persuade King Achashverosh to stop the murderer, Haman, from carrying out his plan to kill all the Jews.

I cannot tell you whether my fasting is going to make one jot of difference or whether it will give Zelenskyy and the Ukrainians any additional strength to push back the Russians. However, the fact that I’m not alone in doing this and there are Jews around the world fasting makes me feel like I’m doing something rather than nothing. Also, as in prayer, there’s power in numbers.

Rabbi Ben Berger, another American rabbi, said in the same article I read, “The fast of Esther”, reminds us as Jews that to make change in the world, we must look inward as well as outward.

“Fasting aligns our bodies, our minds, and our spirit with the deep pain and need present in the world, awakening our souls to the role we might play in providing comfort and healing for ourselves and for others.”

Throughout the day, which happens to be our newspaper’s deadline day and the busiest of the week, I have felt somewhat closer to the Ukrainians. You see, every time I felt peckish or felt the desire for a cup of coffee, I reminded myself that any food or drink I wanted was just down the passage. It was there for the taking if I wanted it. However, Ukrainians who have fled their homes, have had their cities bombarded by Russian soldiers, or have been left homeless, don’t have food in the next room. In fact, so many of them don’t know where their next meal is coming from or when they’ll get it.

So, though I would love something small to tide me over until this evening, I want to stand by the Ukrainians today to show my solidarity with them. I want to give them strength.

Now, admittedly, we’re in a country where our government has chosen to side with the Russians, and I can’t see it changing its mind any time soon. With that in mind, I can’t see our government taking in Ukrainian refugees or setting out on any rescue missions.

So, what can we do to help?

A dear friend sent me a Facebook post about two young Harvard students, Avi Schiffmann and Marco Burstein, who developed UkraineTakeShelter.com, a public platform connecting refugees with potential hosts and housing. It enables refugees to get in contact with potential hosts as soon as they possibly can. I imagine it works best in Europe as it’s easier for refugees to access these homes. However, there are several South Africans and other Africans who have offered accommodation.

I’m sure there are many other innovative ways that we can reach out and help. Any ideas – let me know. I will sift through what comes in, and I would love to be able to be a part of our community making a difference. So, send me an email at [editor@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:editor@sajewishreport.co.za).

In this edition, we introduce you to some incredible people who are making a difference, some of whom have literally stayed in a war zone to protect their congregation when they don’t have to (page 3).

Others have dropped everything to fly into the war zone to help save lives (page 1). Some have done what they could to make newly arrived refugees feel welcome and comfortable (page 5).

That horrible sense of helplessness is unnecessary. Everyone can do something. And if you can’t find something physical to do, you can donate money to help. Every cent is counts.

Think about it. What can we do? Let’s make a difference!

If you are reading this newspaper on Thursday, I wish you chag Purim sameach! Otherwise, may you have a meaningful Human Rights Day on Monday.

Shabbat Shalom!  
Peta Krost  
Editor

# SA govt’s Russia ‘mediation’ a big red herring

OPINION

STEVEN GRUZD

Russian soldiers have continued to bombard and destroy Ukrainian towns and cities relentlessly in this terrible war. To date, close to three million Ukrainians – mostly women, children and the elderly – have fled to neighbouring states in sub-zero temperatures. Thousands have been killed and injured.

Last week, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa tweeted that he had called Russian President Vladimir Putin. Ramaphosa said South Africa had been “asked” to mediate in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It’s unclear who asked. Reading the Kremlin’s anaemic report on the call certainly doesn’t suggest that it was Russia doing the asking. Did anyone actually ask or is this a red herring? And why does South Africa behave so differently to Russia compared with its dealings with Israel?

South Africa tried to sit on the fence on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but it has leaned Russia’s way. Pretoria said nothing as Russia massed troops on its border with Ukraine from late 2021.

The department of international relations and cooperation (Dirco) issued a bland statement on 23 February, calling on both sides to continue dialogue and avoid war.

The invasion began early the next day, prompting a second, stronger Dirco statement that clearly called for Russia to remove its troops from Ukraine.

But, save for this lone utterance, South Africa has been extremely reluctant to point a finger at Russia and has called for the United Nations to step in, for dialogue, and to address both sides’ security interests to end the crisis.

South Africa was one of 17 African states to abstain from a UN General Assembly resolution condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which received support from 141 countries.

Looking more closely at Ramaphosa’s tweets from 10 March, he thanked Putin for taking his call “so [he] could better understand the situation that was unfolding”. It’s not a “situation”, it’s the invasion of one sovereign state by another. He tweeted, “President Putin appreciated our balanced approach. We believe this position enables both parties to subject the conflict to mediation [and] negotiation. Based on our relations with the Russian Federation [and] as a member of BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa], South Africa has been approached to play a mediation role.”

However, it seems to have stopped there. Unless there’s activity behind the scenes, nothing more has appeared publicly about this peace initiative. And there’s been no dialogue with the Ukrainian ambassador to South Africa, or a call to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It’s Mediation 101 to speak to both sides. There was no call for a ceasefire, humanitarian corridors or a neutral venue.

South Africa isn’t serious about this potential mediation, neither is Russia. Also, prospective mediators are piling in with little coordination -

from France, Germany, Israel, and Turkey among others.

South Africa has been extremely careful, diplomatic and euphemistic in its choice of language, bending over backwards not to offend its good friends in Russia.

Contrast this with the vitriolic verbiage that spews when Dirco issues statements about Israel. They are peppered with emotive accusations and allegations against Israel, eschewing diplomatic conventions. To take just one of many examples, on 24 February Alvin Botes, the deputy minister of international relations and cooperation, wrote an article in *Daily Maverick*.

Here’s a sample of his words: “From the time that Israel was established in 1948, its policies and legislation have been shaped by an overarching objective: to maintain a Jewish demographic majority and maximise Jewish Israeli control over land to the detriment of Palestinians. To achieve this, successive Israeli governments have deliberately imposed a system of oppression and domination over Palestinians. The key components of this system are territorial fragmentation, segregation, and control, dispossession of land and property, and denial of economic and social rights.”

He lauds the recent Amnesty International report labelling Israel an apartheid state, saying that “the report concluded that the actions from Israel across a broad spectrum undermine the Palestinian people and deprive them of their universal and inalienable right to self-determination and equality. It goes against internationally adopted human-rights instruments, violates international law, further provoking political tension, and endangers international peace and security.”

The African National Congress routinely issues statements accusing Israel of “atrocities”, “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide”.

Though Pretoria engages in verbal gymnastics to support Russia without really seeming to support it, it has long ago picked its side and cheered it on heartily in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. There’s never a hint of condemnation of any fault on the side of the Palestinians. South Africa makes no bones about supporting them in this struggle. This partisanship clearly disqualifies South Africa as an honest broker in the eyes of the Israelis.

There have been occasions when South Africa has attempted to mediate in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In 2002, President Thabo Mbeki convened Palestinians and Israelis for informal talks at the Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch. In 2014-15, President Jacob Zuma appointed former deputy foreign affairs minister Aziz Pahad and the late minister Zola Skweyiya as “Middle East emissaries” to help resolve the conflict. Neither amounted to a hill of beans.

If this war has taught us anything, it’s that there’s no monopoly on hypocrisy. However, the contrasting tone, language and posture of South Africa in these two conflicts is in sharp relief for anyone to see.

• Steven Gruzd is a political analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg. He writes in his personal capacity.

President Cyril Ramaphosa and President Vladimir Putin



# Thank Jewish education for great leaders

OPINION

RABBI RICKY SEEFF



It goes without saying that the primary outcomes of a Jewish education are Jewish knowledge, Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish community.

Parents who make the decision to afford this opportunity to their children generally do so with a long-term goal in mind – to give their children the tools and experience that imbue them with a deep sense of who they are, where they come from and a sense of belonging for the future.

I'm a product of a Jewish education and, driven by the same goals described above, my wife and I made the decision to ensure that our children are too. I was surprised to read an article on [ejewishphilanthropy.com](http://ejewishphilanthropy.com) recently which revealed an intuitive but, at least to my mind, unarticulated benefit of a Jewish education.

In a five-month span in 2021, 2 079 respondents representing American Jewish communal leaders, both lay and professional, were surveyed online by Research Success Technologies. These communal leaders hold positions across the full spectrum of Jewish life - schools, shuls, federations, welfare, youth camps and more.

The survey had several interesting findings.

First, the younger generation of Jewish leaders had a deeper and more substantial Jewish education than older leaders. This education takes the form of Jewish day school attendance, summer camps and trips to Israel. Twenty five percent of the leaders aged between 55 to 64 attended a Jewish day school, whereas this number in leaders 20 years their junior jumps to 44%. This indicates either that more Jewish children attend Jewish day schools and have Jewish experiences than in the past, or that taking a leadership role in the Jewish community today is more dependent on having a Jewish education than in the past.

Second, Jewish leadership is far more exposed to Jewish educational experiences than the Jewish American public at large. As many as 33% went to Jewish primary schools and two-thirds of those went to Jewish high Schools. Fifty nine percent went to overnight Jewish summer camps.

Third, among the leaders with children of high-school age, there is a significant intergenerational increase in participation in Jewish education. Though only 33% of all these adults attended Jewish day schools, 62% of their children attend Jewish schools. In every leadership sector, the children's rate of enrolment in Jewish schools exceeds that of their parents.

I would assume that a similar statistical study of South African Jewish leadership would yield even higher percentages.

It makes complete sense that it's more likely for leaders in Jewish organisations to have had a Jewish education. This is intuitive. The revelation for me was the underlying message of this piece of research. Most of us living in our fantastic South African Jewish community treasure the richness of the Jewish life we have. Our Jewish needs - educational, security, welfare, medical, political and spiritual - are taken care of by the plethora of superb organisations that have been built to serve us. We have a Jewish infrastructure that surpasses many larger and more established Jewish communities. Our community is a unique one on the global Jewish stage. We're blessed.

Until reading this article, I hadn't given any thought to who runs these organisations. Where did they come from? What schools did they attend? What role has Jewish education played in the lives of the people who run these superb organisations?

So, I thought about it further.

Most of the leaders of the Chevrah Kadisha, Community Security Organisation, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, South African Zionist Federation, Jewish schools, the *SA Jewish Report*, Hatzolah, Beth Din and the rabbis and rebbetzins of our shuls are all products of a Jewish education (primarily a South African Jewish education). I'm sure I've left several illustrious organisations off this list, for which I apologise, but I have no doubt that the findings would be the same. There are, undoubtedly, many committed leaders in our community who didn't attend Jewish schools. This article in no way detracts from them or the possibility of future leaders coming

from non-Jewish schools. It's just far less likely.

I'm confident that the alumni of South African Jewish schools and educational institutions have also assumed leadership positions in many global communities in Australia, America, England and Israel – but that's an article for another time.

Jewish education is more than Jewish knowledge, identity and belonging. Jewish education is longevity. Jewish education is the root of Jewish communal success. Jewish education is the essential ingredient for a vibrant Jewish communal life.

Through a Jewish education, our children develop a deep sense of communal awareness and responsibility, which becomes part of their psyche.

They feel like they belong and they feel like they want to give back.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks said, "The world our children inherit tomorrow is born in the schools we build today." We are indeed blessed to have a community that's so steeped in Jewish education, not just because our children will be raised proudly Jewish, but because with this foundation, our community and those the world over will be the beneficiary of a bright future.

• *Rabbi Ricky Seeff is the general director of the South African Board of Jewish Education and King David Schools.*

It is hard to watch a child struggle. It is harder not knowing why.

seek\*

What if you could know the cause and extent of a child's learning struggles and find out how to intervene effectively? It is never too late to help a child, but it is close to impossible to do so without the right information. Schools and parents need to know and not guess the answer to the question, "Why does this child struggle?"

**Book an assessment with a skilled, multi-disciplinary team at Bellavista S.E.E.K.**

Children struggle to read and learn for a reason. Until you get a better understanding of what the reason is, you will play 'hit and miss' with the solutions and interventions, costing the school and parents time, money and emotional energy.

Will it be a new tutor? A different school placement? Accommodations or concessions? The introduction of an assistive device? An alternative way of doing school? Therapy? A reading programme?

Further medical investigation?

**Until educators and parents know WHY, they can't know WHAT to do and how best to find the right help.**

Medical specialists use scans, EEGs and other diagnostic examinations to guide people towards wise health decisions. They look beyond the visible symptoms to understand the problem.

The same applies to understanding the barriers to learning that a child experiences in a classroom. Cutting edge, standardised assessments can be applied to get the best possible insight into a child's strengths, weaknesses and personal learning style.

There may be well intended interventions at play in the form of extra lessons and small classes, but are these targeted to meet the very specific needs of the individual learner in question?

Every child has the potential to learn. How, where and when are the variables. Listed below are just a few symptoms that struggling learners present with:

- inability to focus and pay attention
- low reading competency
- limited written output
- poor Mathematics results
- protracted hours spent on homework
- disruptive or withdrawn behaviour
- failure to follow instructions
- falling behind peers scholastically
- anxiety and fear of failure
- school refusal or task avoidance
- poor grades and low motivation
- social problems

Notwithstanding poor instruction, challenging home circumstances or a breakdown in the teacher-child trust relationship, there may be cognitive, esteem, emotional and perceptual reasons for the difficulty.

Bellavista S.E.E.K. uses the latest test editions, cognitive, speech-language, occupational and scholastic assessments to create a rich profile of a learner and so guide practitioners, educational or otherwise, towards relevant and effective interventions.



Call Bellavista S.E.E.K. to be guided through the process of application for assessment on 011 8802674, e-mail [seek@bellavistaschool.co.za](mailto:seek@bellavistaschool.co.za), or take a look at the website, [www.bellavista.org.za](http://www.bellavista.org.za). 35 Wingfield Avenue, Birdhaven, Johannesburg, Gauteng.



# Italian student pleads with SA to help Ukraine *chaverim*

TALI FEINBERG

Like many Italian youngsters, 19-year-old Viola Turone looked forward to travelling as a high school exchange student. But unlike many of her peers, she chose to spend six months in Cape Town, where she attended Herzlia High School. There, she formed bonds that would stretch across the oceans and now she's calling on the South African Jewish community to help her compatriots in Ukraine.

As a member of the youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair, Turone is working daily to help her friends in the east who are enduring the war. Some are hiding underground while others are refugees on the run. From one day to the next, these youngsters went from being teenagers enjoying their youth movement to escaping an invasion. Turone and her friends even helped some of their compatriots escape to Warsaw.

Turone, who lives in Milan, was in Poland when the first refugees began arriving. "My *kvutza* [year group at Hashomer] was in Poland when the war started. We were there for a seminar to visit concentration camps and explore the cities that used to have big Jewish communities. While in Poland, we saw the arrival of the first refugees, the traffic and lines for petrol. Seeing these things firsthand made everything feel a lot more real.

"Our movement has three *kenim* [centres] in Ukraine," she says. "We've all met them during seminars and online activities - they're kids and young adults like us who used to lead

normal lives in school and university. Leaving them alone wasn't an option. We started out helping just them, and then as the situation worsened, many of us went to Poland and started helping in refugee camps on the border while also sending things into Ukraine for the people still there."

Turone hopes the South African Jewish community can support these efforts.



She explains how she came to be close to the Jewish community in Cape Town. "It's quite common in Italy to spend a semester or year abroad during the fourth year of high school, at age 17. The most popular destinations among English-speaking countries are the United States and United Kingdom, but I became curious about South Africa.

"I felt there was no better place to

have an interesting experience than in a beautiful country with a completely different culture and history to the one I grew up in. Through the Jewish community in Milan, we found a Jewish family in Cape Town willing to host me for six months.

"I arrived in Cape Town on 1 July 2019 and fell in love with the city right away. My host family was incredibly nice and helpful, especially during the first adjustment period. I went to Herzlia, where I met a group of friends that I still talk to daily more than two years later. I learnt so much in my six months there. I was so in love with South Africa that I came back to visit in September 2021, hosted by some high school friends."

In her last two weeks of living in South Africa, Turone went to Habonim camp, "because all my friends were going and because I grew up in Hashomer Hatzair, a similar Jewish youth movement in Italy. When I was looking for ways to spread the story of my *chaverim*/ot in Ukraine, I instantly thought of the South African Jewish community."

She says Hashomer Hatzair in Ukraine has hundreds of *chanichim* (members that are children). "Some remained to hiding in basements in Kharkiv, Lviv and other cities, and some became refugees. On WhatsApp groups, we have been given a glimpse into what life looks like in the middle of a war.

"Valera from Kharkiv sent a picture of a missile that landed not far from her shelter. Katya told us about the 10-hour wait at the Polish border. She said that if she could have stayed in Ukraine to assist medically, she would have, but she had to take care of her family. We received videos of residential buildings turned to dust by bombs and pictures of kids readjusting to life in underground shelters.

"Teenagers are having to worry about things no one their age should have to think about. One time they shared with us the method they've adopted to keep track of one another after an area of the city has been bombed - they have a group chat where everyone sends a '+' sign if they're still alive and well. It's horrible, but it shows the kind of worries they have on a daily basis now."

She says that on the first day of the invasion, her friend, Denis' apartment was reduced to rubble shortly after he escaped. "Then, he and his neighbours teamed up and tried their best to survive together. Many wanted to leave the city but had older relatives who couldn't withstand a trip like that.

"There's no way to quantify what the most traumatic experience has been for them because they haven't even had time to reflect on what has happened to their lives," she says. "Most of them are still living this nightmare and they have no idea when it will end."

She says helping people escape entails "sending cash into bombarded cities, renting apartments and helping people prepare safe places to hide and find refuge. Many people call us regarding loved ones so

that members of Hashomer can help locate them. Volunteers also help those who can't get to the train or find a better shelter."

As an educational youth movement, another important part of their work is to provide activities for young refugees. "Last Thursday [10 March] we sent our first international delegation to the refugee station in Przemyśl, next to the border of Ukraine and Poland. Hashomer, with the Natan humanitarian aid organisation, set up a kindergarten area for children. We're working to send them materials to keep the children as happy as possible in this situation."

Knowing what her compatriots are enduring has been tough. "It's upsetting to think that the people who escaped are never going to get their lives back. When someone escapes a war-stricken country, it sounds like a success story, but it really is much more complex than that. Most people initially left thinking it would be only temporary - they'd be away for a month and then they'd get back to their homes. But many of their homes aren't there anymore."

To the community, she says, "In Italy, we're much closer to this war than South Africa, but I think the stories of my *chaverim*/ot will resonate with everyone there just as much as they did here. I hope that by reading what they're going through, people will be compelled to help."

To help Viola support her friends in Ukraine, visit: [tinyurl.com/DonateHHUkraine](https://tinyurl.com/DonateHHUkraine)

To follow the youth movement's updates of the situation in Ukraine, visit [tinyurl.com/UpdatesHHUkraine](https://tinyurl.com/UpdatesHHUkraine)

## 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! 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 has an in-depth knowledge and 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.

WhatsApp me on +48 783 953 223 • Email Avi Horesh [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com)





*The*  
South African  
Gold Coin  
Exchange  
THE MARKET LEADERS

# WE'RE ALWAYS READY TO BUY YOUR KRUGERRANDS

**BULLION & PROOF  
ALL DENOMINATIONS  
BEST PRICES PAID  
CONTACT US NOW**

VISIT US AT: THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD COIN EXCHANGE HEAD OFFICE -  
TOWER 2 AT THE MARC, 129 RIVONIA ROAD, SANDTON • BROOKLYN MALL  
SANDTON CITY • WALMER PARK • EASTGATE • SOMERSET WEST • GATEWAY  
MALL OF THE NORTH • PAVILION MALL • CANAL WALK • V&A WATERFRONT



**CALL 011 784 8551 OR VISIT [SCOINSHOP.COM](https://www.scoinshop.com)**

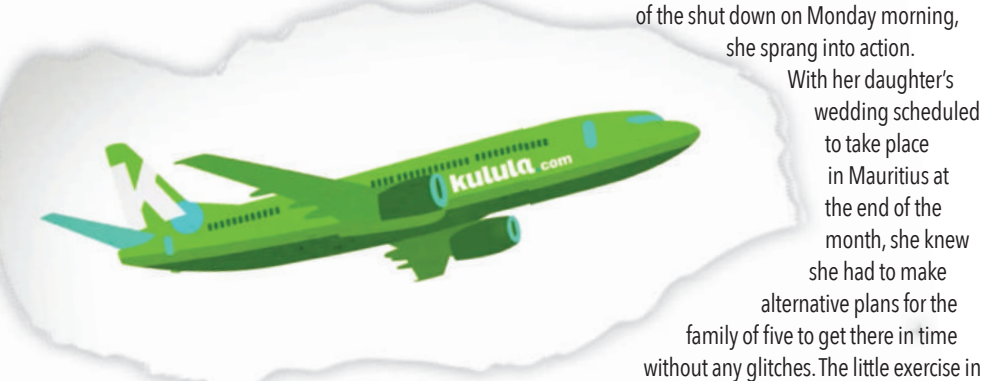
**T'S & C'S APPLY**



# Flight chaos as airlines shut down

NICOLA MILTZ

It has been a week of chaos and anxiety for local travellers affected by the sudden shut down of Comair's British Airways and Kulula. There is story after story of people affected by the inconvenience, expense and hassle of having missed flights or rebooking flights to make it on time to business meetings, family functions or just wanting to get home.



Passengers were left stranded as Kulula and British Airways flights were indefinitely suspended at the weekend by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) due to safety concerns.

Adele Jossel and her husband, Anthony, 74, of Johannesburg are relieved to be back in Johannesburg after spending more than nine hours at King Shaka International Airport on Monday, 14 March.

"It was one of the most horrible days of my life," said Adele, 72, who has type 1 diabetes.

The couple were due to fly back home in the afternoon knowing that their flight had been cancelled, but they had received notification from the airline that they would be accommodated on an alternate flight.

"When we got there just after noon, the Kulula and BA counters were locked up like a jail and there were no representatives. The lack of communication is what really got on my nerves and caused so much stress," she said.

Fortunately, they managed to re-book on a later Safair flight which left at only 9.15pm and costing them a fortune.

"We got home around midnight and my sugar levels were haywire. I spent Tuesday drinking a litre of coke to stabilise from all the stress and aggravation."

She said the writing was already on the wall when they flew to Durban on Kulula as the plane's intercom system wasn't working and the flight attendant had to use sign language to demonstrate the safety procedures.

Johannesburg resident Alyse Vituli is bitterly disappointed after missing her beloved mother's 84th birthday this week in Port Elizabeth.

"I decided when she turned 77 that I would never miss being with her on her birthday, and I haven't missed one since," she said.

However, when her flight was cancelled "at the last minute", Vituli could get a flight only with a different airline costing a whopping four times the amount of her original ticket.

"I know that if, G-d forbid, something else happened, I'd have found the money to go," she said.

"I also know that this is a small thing in the grand scheme of things, but I'm feeling sad. What a blessing it would have been to celebrate 84 years with my mother."

When Bev Shapiro of Cape Town woke up to the news of the shut down on Monday morning, she sprang into action.

With her daughter's wedding scheduled to take place in Mauritius at the end of the month, she knew she had to make alternative plans for the family of five to get there in time without any glitches. The little exercise in forethought has cost her family an extra R15 000 in local tickets alone to get from Cape Town to Johannesburg.

"Weddings are stressful at the best of times, this has added another dimension and put us out of pocket," she told the *SA Jewish Report*.

"We were booked on Kulula from Cape Town to Johannesburg en route to Mauritius on an extremely tight timeline. I couldn't chance it by waiting to hear what was going to happen, so I had no choice but to book five brand-new tickets on a different airline. It was this or no wedding, and we have waited long enough for this *simcha*," she said. She's hoping to get a refund.

One mother who wished to remain anonymous said her son, who is in matric at King David Victory Park, had a traumatic travel experience.

"He went to Cape Town with his father who was riding the Cape Town Cycle Tour [the Argus] and was due to fly home on Sunday afternoon, when flights were cancelled just like that with no warning."

Her son was sent an SMS telling him to go to the airport anyway as there was an extra flight available later that night at 9.15pm. However, by 10.30pm, there was no sign of any flight. "Everything was closed, and there were no planes, people were just sitting around waiting. There was no staff, no communication, nothing. So, he left the airport," she said.

"The next day, I spent hours trying to get him onto a flight home, but every flight was booked, I guess because it had been the weekend of the Argus. I was frantic to get him home. He's in matric and it's no joke, he can't miss school."

Eventually, she booked him on a CemAir flight on Monday afternoon at an inflated cost, but when he tried to check in, he had been bumped off the flight, even though he was several hours early.

The next available flight was at 9.15pm]. This flight was delayed, and he finally got home at 1.30am on Tuesday morning.

"I woke him up in time for school, but the ordeal was awful to say the least," she said.

To rub salt into the wound, her husband landed up not riding the cycle race as it was too windy and misty, and the roads were wet and too slippery.

In a statement, the SACAA said, "The suspension follows the visit by the SACAA to the operator to investigate and determine the cause of a spate of occurrences affecting a concerning number of flights operated by Kulula.com and BA Comair. The SACAA sought to confirm Comair's compliance with applicable civil aviation regulations.

"The inspection was also aimed at reviewing Comair's quality control management system and safety management systems to establish compliance related to reporting, analysis, and follow-up on

occurrences and corrective action plans to prevent recurrence."

SACAA said it was committed to ensuring that Comair got back in the air and had dedicated a full team to review the evidence as it was submitted.

"The commitment to safety, in this case, supersedes any other need. This is to ensure that South Africa maintains its record of zero fatal airline accidents on South African soil in more than 30 years. The lives of our aviation personnel and the users of civil aviation services are paramount and it's a responsibility the regulator doesn't take lightly."

According to reports, Comair went into business rescue in May 2020 after the COVID-19 pandemic decimated the airline and travel industry. It resumed flying in December 2020, while in business rescue.

It has subsequently been forced to start and stop flights several times in the past 18 months because of ongoing lockdown restrictions.

## Ukraine war - how did we get here?

OPINION

HARRY JOFFE



With the unfolding human tragedy in Ukraine worsening every day and the civilian situation in some Ukrainian cities approaching absolute crisis status, it's worth taking a step back and asking, how did we get to this point?

Amazingly, it seems to be mostly due to a series of miscalculations by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Putin, normally the master tactician and strategist, has made the following miscalculations:

First, it's clear that Putin grossly underestimated the reaction from the West. Having got away with his previous Ukraine campaign in 2014 in which he annexed Crimea, he no doubt expected a similar response - strong condemnation and inefficient sanctions. This time, however, he has been faced by a West more united than at any time since World War II.

It took all of five days for Russia to become the most sanctioned country in the world. Sanctions that were being bitterly debated and faced much resistance, like cutting Nord Stream 2, a new pipeline supplying Russian gas to Germany that wasn't yet on stream, were suddenly implemented overnight.

Putin no doubt has also underestimated United States President Joe Biden. Biden, although strenuously avoiding any direct military response from America or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato), has been able to unite all Western countries in supporting sanctions. For once, there are no holdouts. Biden has gone a lot further than many expected. He hasn't shied away from implementing tough sanctions, even at economic cost to the US. He's also openly supplying arms to Ukraine and assisting other Nato countries in doing the same.

Second, Putin seems to have underestimated Ukraine. From the way the campaign started, it looks like he was

expecting Ukraine to collapse quickly and the campaign to be short and quick. He didn't expect such fierce resistance and has been surprised at how Ukrainians have united as a nation. From all accounts, he genuinely expected the war to be over within a week.

Third, Putin has overestimated his army. In spite of spending vast amounts in the past decade on equipment and modernising the army, it has still faced major logistical and equipment issues. In many cases, vehicles have run out of petrol and have even been forced to stop due to faulty tyres. In addition, the army hasn't performed particularly well against a highly motivated adversary and has suffered heavy losses in manpower and equipment.

Fourth, Putin has been surprised by Europe. As many commentators have been being saying, in the space of two weeks, we are seeing a vastly different Europe. Germany has gone from supplying only helmets to Ukraine before the war and has started supplying anti-tank missiles and, for the first time, agreeing to increase its military spending to the 2% of gross domestic product that Nato requires.

Germany has dropped its pacifist, unwilling to get involved stance, and has now announced that its military is to be massively upgraded. The armed forces are to be brought up to speed with a special fund of €100 billion (R1.6 trillion).

Countries like Sweden and Finland are now openly discussing the prospect of joining Nato. The United Kingdom, long a source of oligarch money, has sanctioned the main oligarchs and pushed through the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Bill in the House of Commons in a single day. The Bill will be used to clamp down on individuals already sanctioned by other Western countries.

Finally, Putin vastly underestimated the world's reaction. After two years of COVID-19, the world is far more sensitive, involved and simply unwilling to accept an unprovoked invasion of a country by a far bigger and stronger neighbour. The number of businesses pulling out of Russia, from McDonald's and Coke to IKEA, as well as the oil majors, has been swift and unprecedented. Russia is finding itself isolated and financially squeezed. While two major powers, China and India, have tried to remain neutral, they won't risk being exposed to US sanctions themselves and are unlikely to assist Russia in circumventing sanctions in any meaningful way (apart from buying Russian oil at probably discounted rates). In any event, even if they continue buying Russian oil, they cannot on their own buy sufficient quantities to replace Western demand.

Apart from the tragic loss of life, humanitarian catastrophe and the absolute devastation of Ukrainian cities and civilian population, this war will have huge economic consequences. Not only is Russia the second-largest crude oil exporter behind Saudi Arabia, but together with Ukraine, is a major exporter of wheat, corn, barley and sunflower oil (the two exporting almost 80% of the world's supply in the case of sunflower oil). Inflation around the world will rise sharply and there might be food shortages in many countries, especially the poorer ones which will struggle to find alternative supplies. It's hoped that there will be no more miscalculations and a way is found to end this war quickly.

• *Harry Joffe is a Johannesburg tax and trust attorney.*

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN  
CAPE TOWN!

ON THE MILNERTON  
SYNAGOGUE PROPERTY

4 Nieuhof Rd, Tijgerhof

**WILLOW LANE**  
MILNERTON ECO VILLAGE

**SIGNATURA**

**SIGNATURA**  
www.signatura.biz

**JOIN US AT THE LAUNCH**  
**WED 23 MARCH!**

**Two & Three-bed Townhouses from R2,2m**  
10% deposit; price includes VAT – no transfer duty

**Invest in a secure eco-village duplex – and get  
the best of Milnerton on your doorstep!**

**SIGNATURA**  
www.signatura.biz

**REGISTER  
HERE**  
SCAN ON YOUR  
PHONE TO  
REGISTER  
INTEREST

- Now selling off plan for completion in 2023
- 10% deposit; price includes VAT – no transfer duty
- Two or three-bed from 98 to 130 sqm including garage
- Lushly landscaped private gardens from 20 to 90 sqm
- Private lock-up garages and additional parking bays for sale
- Secure eco estate with solar-powered electricity
- Sustainable design aimed at EDGE certification
- Full water treatment and garden irrigation systems
- Pre-installed WiFi by Bunny Digital



# Down with masks

**OPINION**

Leave it to the Jews. The entire country is reeling in frustration at yet another extension of the State of Disaster. We cannot wait for the right to finally rip those dreaded masks off our faces. Two days later we willingly don face covers in celebration of the Purim festival. Literally, as the Book of Esther (9,1) records, "It was the opposite."

Disguise seems to be a theme right through the story of Purim. Beginning with Chapter One, in which King Achashverosh dresses up in the garments of the high priest, part of the spoils of the destruction of the First Temple seven decades earlier, during a lavish party to celebrate his accession to the throne.

We are then introduced to Haman, a former barber and bath attendant in the small village of Karzum, who turns himself into a megalomaniac control freak who'll stop at nothing to cover up his humble origins.

A few chapters in, we meet the queen, the Jewess in the palace, who goes to great lengths to hide her religion and true identity. Her real name is Hadassah but, in this story, she's known as Esther, from the Hebrew *hester* for concealment. We also meet Mordechai, her close family member and confidante, who reminds her to keep their relationship secret throughout their clandestine meetings.

The ultimate facial masking is that of Hashem, who appears totally

absent and disengaged throughout the Purim plot. So much so, that the Talmud, when looking for a Torah reference to Esther, quotes the verse, "And I will conceal [*haster astir*] my face on that day" - more than just a play on words.

Our classic commentaries explain that this paralleled the attitude of the Jewish people, who had lost pride in their identity and wore a "mask" to cover themselves, hoping for acceptance in the highest echelons of Persian society.

The plot unwinds when the masks begin to fall, when each of the protagonists in the story of Purim is uncovered for who he/she really is: Achashevorsh is nothing but a gullible, easily led, weak monarch; Haman a wicked, self-serving former hairdresser; Esther an altruistic Jewess, prepared to throw her life on the line for her people's salvation; Mordechai her kin and worthy successor as second-in-command to the king.

The Jews of the Persian Empire are proud of who they are and true to themselves. They recommit to the study of Torah and performance of its precepts.

Between the lines, we also discover that beneath the mask, Hashem has been there all along. It's more than just a turn of events with the right people in the right place at the right time but rather a divine



RABBI YOSSEI CHAIKIN

## Buy a pair of multifocals with an anti-reflective coating and get a second pair of clear or sunglass multifocal lenses absolutely free

\*Offer ends 25 March

**T: 011 440 9001 • 063 915 0722**  
**eyecare@theopticalstudio.co.za**  
**Midways Mall • 280 Corlett Drive**

orchestration of providence.

Let the masks now fall!

May Hashem reveal his countenance to us by performing miracles over this Purim season, ridding us of lethal viruses as well as wicked, dangerous megalomaniacs. May we all be able to reveal our true faces once again, proud of who we really, truly are, so that we can smile again and have our smiles seen by others.

• Rabbi Yossi Chaikin is rabbi at The Oxford Synagogue Centre.

# Esther's scroll: a Purim Story about Jewish, Jozi women

**OPINION**

In the centre of this article is a *klaf*, a scroll of Esther. This megillah was owned by a woman named Esther Teeger who, unusually for her time, studied Torah every day of her life with her grandfather, the renowned Jewish educator in Cape Town, Reb Moshe Helfand. Helfand was instrumental in starting the Hebrew High School, the first Jewish day school in Cape Town, sowing the seeds for the Jewish day school system in South Africa.

In early 2011, Esther's great granddaughter, Rachel, was preparing for her Batmitzvah by learning to chant from Megillat Esther. Out of the blue, Esther said, "We have a Megillah in our family." Her daughters and granddaughters were directed to the back of a high shelf in a cupboard. They pulled out the most beautiful Megillah that had been given to Esther by her mother-in-law Annie Teeger (nee Bloch) whose family had brought it with them when they came from Lithuania. The family couldn't believe they had discovered an heirloom of such religious significance. Rachel used this Megillah for her Batmitzvah and thereafter, the Megillah was loaned to women in Johannesburg to *lein* the Megillah every year. What started as the story of one woman has evolved to become a story about Jewish women in Johannesburg and their religious lives and longings.

Women have an obligation equal to men to read the Megillah of Esther. We're told in the Talmud, Tractate Megillah 4a, "*Af hen hayu be'oto hanes*", the women were also part of the miracle (of Purim). This has important halachic implications as it suggests that women can read the Megillah for themselves (and even for men) to fulfil the *mitzvah*.

Our story begins in 1995, when a group of women in Johannesburg divided up the Megillah and prepared to *lein* it (in the traditional chant) for Purim. Having grown up in South Africa, where girls aren't usually taught

*leining*, none of them had ever learnt how to *lein*. Using a tape recording of the Megillah, each woman prepared for hours, breaking her teeth over the difficulty and newness of the tune. A large number of women gathered for the reading of that particular Purim. They were dressed up for Purim, but they were so nervous, they forgot to bang for Haman! Legend has it that one of the

take their *leining* seriously and Purim has become a religious and spiritual highlight of the year for them. It's fun to bake hamantaschen in anticipation of Purim, but preparing the melodious tune of the Megillah, festive with undertones of the mournful Eicha peeking through, surpasses even one's favourite mon confection.

The reading of the Megillah by women and for women is mainstream practice overseas in orthodox communities but for years in South Africa it remained an underground experience until five years ago, when the Greenside Shul studied the sources around women *leining* the Megillah and then held its first women's Megillah reading, first in a room and, the following year, in the main sanctuary of the shul. The event was a huge success, drawing women from Sandton to Glenhazel. Since then, women's readings have taken place in Glenhazel. The Greenside Shul women's reading has become a favourite fixture of the calendar. This year, the Greenside Shul women's reading will return to our community's roots and be read from the magnificent Lions Shul in Doornfontein, connecting to our fathers and mothers before us who built this community and to the generation of Teeger and her grandfather, Reb Helfand. We will read from Esther's scroll there.

A sister Megillah reading has been running in Cape Town since 1992. Spearheaded by Rivkah Lubich at the Kaplan Centre, it was taken over by the South African Union of Jewish Students. Since then, a group of women has been meeting at private houses for this very special rendition of the Megillah. Originally, they used a *klaf* from the Marais Road Shul and now they borrow a *klaf* from a private family. Because access to *klafim* and Torah scrolls for women isn't an uncomplicated matter

in South Africa, it has become deeply significant that in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, private families have always been generous enough to loan their beautiful scrolls to women for what has become a sacred and highly resonant ritual.

It's heartening that more than one woman's Megillah reading now takes place under the auspices of orthodox shuls in Johannesburg. It has been 26 years since that original reading took place. Women are more confident of their abilities and understand what they are saying so well that they add tone, inflection and intonation so that the Megillah becomes an engaging, varied, one-hour meditation and piece of religious theatre, connecting us all to the story of the holiday. Where engagement is the buzzword on everyone's lips, this is the kind of engagement that places women and girls in the centre of their spiritual life and practice, up close and personal with the scroll, with their Torah learning, and with their voices.

The *klaf* in this picture tells the story of one family, but it also traces the arc of female religious empowerment in Johannesburg. It tells the story of Esther Teeger and links to her great granddaughter's Batmitzvah and the discovery of the scroll. Enfolded in this Megillah are the stories of many B'notmitzvah, who never dreamed they would have the opportunity to *lein* on Purim to mark their coming of age. And, this Megillah also reveals a much wider story about Jewish women in Johannesburg who have sought deeper engagement in Jewish religious life and were able to connect through the chanting of Megillat Esther. Empowerment, learning, community and Jewish women's spirituality have encircled this Megillah for many years. Our story is still being written.

• Adina Roth is a clinical psychologist in private practice, and a teacher of Jewish Studies.



ADINA ROTH



women's grandfathers returned from shul a little early and stood quietly behind the door listening. Afterwards he told his granddaughter, "You ladies were better than the men."

Since then, women have been gathering every year in private homes to chant the Megillah. Many have their own chapter that they have mastered and been reading for years. Each woman's reading is musical, expressive and unique. But we encourage new readers and every year a new woman or two prepares a section and participates. It has also become an opportunity for Batmitzvah girls, such as Rachel, to mark their Batmitzvah by chanting a chapter of the Megillah and learning its meaning. A quiet yet rock-solid gathering, these women

LAUNCHING  
27 MARCH 2022

## NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE HEART OF GLENHAZEL



Where community and lifestyle meet

1, 2 or 3 bed from

# R849 000

Come view our show unit today!

Jordan 083 677 7721 | [www.reedterrace.co.za](http://www.reedterrace.co.za)

This document does not constitute part of any agreement of sale and no reliance is placed on any aspect of this document in any agreement of sale. All images are a combination of photography and artist renderings. Images and property specifications are for illustrative, conceptual, and representational purposes only, are subject to variances and may feature items which may not be standard for the finished product. Golan Property Investments Proprietary Limited, registration number 2016/432973/07 (landowner), Investec Property Proprietary Limited, registration number 1947/025753/07 (registered with the PPRA) and Shefa Residential Management Proprietary Limited, registration number 2018/076541/07 (developers).



# Wearing a mask to save a life

SAUL KAMIONSKY

There are a number of reasons why we wear masks and fancy dress on Purim, one of which is to hide our identity, much like Esther and Mordechai, who weren't upfront about who they were, hiding their identity to save the Jewish people. Historically, they weren't the only ones who felt the need to hide their identity – especially as Jews – for their safety. There are many times that being Jewish has been life threatening. Here are a few vignettes of people who hid their Jewish identity to save themselves.

Ruth Posner

Ruth Posner became a well-known actress, dancer and choreographer as adult, but as a Jewish child during World War II, she survived by hiding her identity, pretending to be a Polish girl named Irena Slabowska. When Posner told her aunt she intended to become an actress, the reply was, “Don't be silly. You did your best acting when you were 12. During the war, you acted better than Sarah Bernhardt.” She and her parents were sent to the Warsaw Ghetto. In 1942, Posner's father arranged for his nine-year-old daughter and her aunt to go to work at a Jewish-owned leather factory outside the ghetto walls. Once a week, the factory workers were taken to wash at a bathhouse outside the Jewish area. It was then that Posner and her aunt made a run for it and escaped. “We knew that if we were noticed, we would be shot. If we stayed, we knew we would die anyway,” said Posner. Posner survived the remainder of the war by pretending to be Slabowska. Her Polish was pure and unaccented, as her family didn't speak Yiddish at home. Starting in the 1990s, she pursued acting, starring in several plays about the Holocaust, and went on to work with the Royal Shakespeare Company and do television and film.

Edith Hahn Beer

Edith Hahn Beer, born in 1914, became a judge at the Brandenburg district court, but survived the war by assuming the identity of a Christian friend of hers and taking on the persona of a poorly educated nurse. Initially, Beer spent a few months of World War II never staying in the same place for more than one night to ensure she wouldn't get caught. Then, with duplicate copies of her friend's identity papers, Beer went to Munich. There, she assumed the identity of Grete. She married and had a child with Werner Vetter, a young Nazi officer. She became the model Aryan housewife, never speaking out or attracting attention to herself. During the war as a Nazi officer, Vetter was captured by the Russians and imprisoned in a Siberian labour camp in March 1945. Once the war ended, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany had a dearth of trained lawyers, so it installed Beer as a judge at the Brandenburg district court. She successfully pleaded with the Soviet occupation authorities to free Vetter, but their marriage ended shortly afterwards. She remarried and later made aliya.

Roman Polanski

Multi-award-winning, French-born Polish actor, producer, screenwriter and film director Roman Polanski shares something with the protagonist of his 2005 film, *Oliver Twist*. Like Twist, he knows what it's like “to walk for kilometres without socks in boots with bloody feet”.

Whereas Twist was escaping the Sowerberry's house, Polanski did so to escape Poland's Krakow ghetto during World War II. It was in 1943 that the 10-year-old Polanski fled the Krakow ghetto thanks to his father smuggling him out through barbed wire. Stefania and Jan Buchala, devout Catholic peasants with three small children in the village of Wysoka, eventually took him in until the end of the war. Before that, Polanski meandered around the Polish countryside, hopping from orphanage to orphanage, living with different families, and frequently sneaking into cinemas. All the while, he pretended to be Roman Catholic. Polanski attended church, learned to recite Catholic prayers by heart and behaved outwardly as a Roman Catholic, although he was never baptised.

Ida Krayz

“My bedding was the field and the forest,” said Ida Krayz. “My sustenance consisted of sorrow and lice.” Krayz survived World War II to save many young lives as a director of an orphanage in Kyiv. She became a Ukrainian partisan, using a false identity. She roamed across villages and towns under her assumed persona, in constant danger of being found out and handed over to the Nazis. Once, she posed as a doctor, another time as a seamstress. On one occasion, she was captured by the Nazis and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp. There, she took on the name of Lidia Wladimirowna Tyszczenko to hide her Jewish identity. Assisted by Russian partisans, Krayz managed to escape from the camp. Krayz continued her meanderings, calmed

HISTORICALLY, THEY WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO FELT THE NEED TO HIDE THEIR IDENTITY – ESPECIALLY AS JEWS – FOR THEIR SAFETY

by her feigned credentials and the cross she sported. She also memorised Christian prayers. “I did everything I could so they wouldn't suspect me of being Jewish, but psychologically, I was depressed,” she said. Antonio Fernandez Carvajal Born in about 1596, Carvajal, dubbed “the first English Jew” by some, was a Portuguese merchant in London. Having been baptised as a child in Portugal, where practising Judaism was a

crime, he and his wife conformed to Roman Catholic practice while secretly observing Jewish rites in their home. Outwardly a Roman Catholic, Carvajal played a leading role in the secret Jewish community, which met at the clandestine synagogue he opened in London. Benjamin Melendez Born in 1952, Melendez was a Nuyorican activist, musician and gang leader. He and his family were Marranos (Sephardic crypto-Jews), practising their religion in secret while being part of a Hispanic community. On Fridays, Melendez's father drew the living room shades before reading to his children from the Torah, wrapping himself in a white sheet, and praying silently. Melendez's mother secluded herself in the bedroom to light Sabbath candles.

## How to stay sober during the ‘drinking holiday’

RACHEL ROMÁN - JTA

When Jerry was 21, he was invited to a “white kiddush”, a twist on the Shabbat eve service that substitutes vodka for the traditional wine or grape juice. It took place during Purim, the Jewish holiday when alcohol isn't just permitted but often encouraged. While there, he was poured 16 ounces of straight vodka in a glass. As he became inebriated, he grew belligerent and, rather than help, his fellow congregants egged him on. “I definitely blacked out,” said Jerry, who asked that his real name not be used. “My only memory is yelling obscenities at the top of my lungs during the service and getting a lot of encouragement for doing so. Everyone thought it was funny.” At the time, he didn't realise that he was an alcoholic, but he spent the next 12 years battling the disease. “If you're wondering if you're an alcoholic, then you are one,” he said.

early stages of recovery who can be triggered by easy access to alcohol. “All Jewish communities kind of create a normalised view of drinking on the holidays, which can be problematic. It's so embedded in our tradition that people are supposed to drink to excess on Purim,” said Rabbi Michael Perice, the rabbi at Temple Sinai in Cinnaminson, New Jersey, who has documented his own struggle with an opiate addiction. “For people who are alcoholics or have substance-abuse issues, that excess can lead to a lot of problems.” “Our tradition provides so many opportunities that are alcohol-fuelled,” said Marla Kaufman, the founder and executive director of the Jewish Addiction Awareness Network. “There's kiddush twice a week. In some communities on Shabbat there are kiddush clubs where some of the men disappear to have schnapps together [during services]. There's also a lot of events not attached to religious ritual that use alcohol to bring people in, and some of these are aimed at young adults,

in or considering recovery. Steinberg said he wrote the book to mould the Alcoholics Anonymous' 12-step programme to Judaism by aligning it to Jewish texts and values. Steinberg first drank to excess when he was 11 at a Shabbat party run by the hasidic Chabad-Lubavitch movement. He said no one noticed or cared. When he later tried to kick his issues with alcohol, Steinberg found that AA was rooted in the Christian faith. Though there were recovery books for Jews, he couldn't find any based on first-hand experience. (Chabad offers information and resources on Judaism and recovery, as well as a list of Chabad rabbis who focus on recovery, on its website, and runs a residential treatment centre in Los Angeles.) “The other piece that motivated writing a book was to reduce stigma,” said Steinberg, now a rabbi at Congregation Kol Shofar in Tiburon, California. “In AA, you're supposed to stay anonymous, but I made a conscious decision to put my name and ‘rabbi’ on the book to try to be a model who is not giving in to the shame or stigma of it. This is something that humans deal with and I've dealt with it. I want there to be a comfort in that.” Kaufman, Steinberg and Perice all dispute the folk saying that “a shikker is a goy”, a Yiddish phrase suggesting “real” Jews can't suffer from alcoholism. “The Jews that I serve are Americans and they suffer from all the same problems and blessings of other Americans. They're no less alcoholic than anybody else,” said Steinberg. “Alcoholics aren't bad people; they're sick.” Even if they're in recovery, Jews might feel pressure to drink because they don't want to be the odd person out. Some justify that one glass of wine, beer or a shot will help them save face at celebrations. But that sip of alcohol can cascade into two, then four. Jews can avoid situations where there's drinking, or get used to being, as Jerry put it, a “little weird”.



Most Jews consider Purim, which began this year on the evening of Wednesday, 16 March, to be a time of drinking — and some believe heavy drinking. The holiday's story in the Book of Esther begins with a drinking party thrown by the king of the Persian Empire, Ahasuerus. From there, it's the tale of the Jewish Queen Esther and her cousin, Mordechai, who team up to defeat the treacherous Haman, the court adviser who has plans to wipe out all Jews. The upbeat holiday celebrates Esther and Mordechai's victory over their enemy. In the Talmud (Megillah 7b), Jews are commanded to *l'vasumai* (become intoxicated) on the holiday to the point that they cannot tell the difference between Haman and Mordechai. There's a debate about how far “intoxicated” should go. What is festive to some can be a nightmare for others — especially those in the

dreading getting a phone call that her son had overdosed and having nightmares about his funeral. Before that, Kaufman's family regularly attended synagogue, volunteered on the synagogue board and fundraised for the Jewish day school. But after word got out that her son was suffering from the disorder, she said they were stigmatised. People pulled away and some wouldn't look her in the face. “I was devastated,” she said. “I love the Jewish community, but we are behind on this issue.” After sending her son to treatment — he's in long-term recovery — Kaufman read *Recovery, the 12 Steps and Jewish Spirituality: Reclaiming Hope, Courage & Wholeness* by Rabbi Paul Steinberg, a self-described recovering alcoholic. She said the book changed her life and inspired her to form JAAN, which offers resources, events and programmes, a blog and personal stories for those

such as [Chanukah parties called] latkes and vodkas.” At the same time, said Kaufman, too many Jews are in denial about the toll of addiction in their own communities. When her then teenage son slipped into alcohol and drug abuse, she remembers dreading getting a phone call that her son had overdosed and having nightmares about his funeral. Before that, Kaufman's family regularly attended synagogue, volunteered on the synagogue board and fundraised for the Jewish day school. But after word got out that her son was suffering from the disorder, she said they were stigmatised. People pulled away and some wouldn't look her in the face. “I was devastated,” she said. “I love the Jewish community, but we are behind on this issue.” After sending her son to treatment — he's in long-term recovery — Kaufman read *Recovery, the 12 Steps and Jewish Spirituality: Reclaiming Hope, Courage & Wholeness* by Rabbi Paul Steinberg, a self-described recovering alcoholic. She said the book changed her life and inspired her to form JAAN, which offers resources, events and programmes, a blog and personal stories for those



# Michael Abrahamson breaks his own Pi record

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Michael Abrahamson is South Africa's longest-serving mentalist and the only broadcaster in the country's sporting history to win the prestigious SAB Radio Broadcaster of the Year award more than three times.

Yet, this King David Linksfield alumnus's proudest and most difficult achievement came this week, when he recalled the first 2 000 digits of Pi in a world-record time of five minutes, 12 seconds, beating his own world record.

On Pi Day, 14 March 2022, (the first three digits of Pi being 3.14), he accomplished this feat while sitting blindfolded at his home in front of three judges he invited. They were world-renowned cricket statistician Andrew Samson, magician and mentalist Andre Hermanus, and Sheryl Benjamin, "the doyen of maths teachers", according to Abrahamson.

"I've been practising recalling Pi," says Abrahamson, "but when you do it for real in front of judges, you realise how hard it is. They watched and timed me. They made sure I didn't make a mistake. They had a printout in front of them with all the numbers."

Abrahamson says preparation was different from 2019, when he recalled the first 1 500 digits of Pi in a time of four minutes, seven seconds to attain the South African record.

"I had to go at a much faster pace this time. I had to record myself saying it in bits and pieces, and then played it back, trying to get used to the speed and increase my speed every day."

Abrahamson went much faster than he expected. He had aimed to beat five minutes, 30 seconds, which would have been faster than his equivalent speed three years ago. "When the judges showed me my time, I thought, 'You're kidding me. It's impossible!'"

Hermanus told Abrahamson's YouTube channel, "The very first computer, the ENIAC, calculated Pi to something like 2 037 digits. That was the maximum its memory [could capture]. But Michael has just shown with some evidence that the mind is unlimited."

Every year, people all over the world try to beat different records of Pi. Abrahamson considered attempting to reclaim his South African record. St John's College pupil Douglas Brown currently holds that record after recalling 3 004 digits of Pi in 45

minutes last year.

"So, I thought to myself, 'Let me do something that nobody else in the world has attempted,'" says Abrahamson. "I had to go at almost six and a half digits per second without a mistake for 2 000 digits. Nobody anywhere in the world has come even close to that."

Abrahamson would be very surprised if anybody ever beat his record. "You have to speak fast and have an amazing memory and the motivation to do it. I've been trained as a broadcaster, so I can speak pretty quickly."

Abrahamson will now submit his world record attempt to the official judges. "There's no problem. They're going to ratify it," he says.

The current leader of the Pi world ranking list is India's Suresh Kumar Sharma, who recalled 70 030 digits in just more than 17 hours. "Nobody



has the inclination to sit and listen to somebody calling out numbers for, like, 24 hours," says Abrahamson. "It's far better to do something where you can upload a video of five minutes. People can watch it quickly. It's far more impressive to go at a fast speed than to say lots of digits at one digit per second."

Abrahamson says the key behind memorising Pi is being *meshuga* (mad). "It takes so much time and effort. You just break it down. Every day, you learn a few digits and see how much you can match. As for me, I have a very good memory. I use memory in my broadcasting work, in all the other things that I do. I won *Noot vir Noot* after memorising about 3 000 Afrikaans songs in a week. When I was commentating on the World Cup in 2010, I had to commit to memory the names of every team, all the information about every player. I teach memory courses at schools and universities."

Born in Johannesburg, Abrahamson matriculated with five distinctions, "an amazing thing in those days as you could really only do six subjects", he says. "I missed English by 1% on the remark, so that was a bit of a sore point."

"What I remember of Michael at school was he hardly opened his mouth, but since he has left, he hasn't stopped," Benjamin told Abrahamson's YouTube channel.

In addition to being a professional mentalist, Abrahamson has been a sports commentator since the early 1990s. He has met many famous sports people. Former Australian cricketer Shane Warne, who died earlier this month, sat with Abrahamson in the commentary box at Centurion Park in the 1990s. "He was interested in magic," says Abrahamson. "He was captivated by the tricks I taught him."

• You can watch Abrahamson breaking the Pi world record on his YouTube page. "Once people see this video, it's going to motivate a lot of people to improve and do memory work," he says.

# SA-Israeli thriller examines trouble in Paradys

TALI FEINBERG

A local Jewish-led production company will join Israel's Keshet International (KI) to produce a murder mystery series based in South Africa. The show, titled *Paradys*, explores what happens when two black police officers investigate a murder in a "whites-only enclave in the rainbow nation".

"We saw the potential for incredible drama in imagining two black cops walking into a whites-only town. It's a fascinating world full of secrets and a brutal collision of our past and present. The themes of discrimination were close to our hearts as Jews, with antisemitism on the rise around the world," says Nimrod Geva of Quizzical Pictures, the production company he heads with Harriet Gavshon. Keshet will join them as a global distribution and production partner.

Geva says the show is about "a whites-only enclave in the new South Africa, the horrific murder of an elder's son, and two black cops drawn into a dusty town that refuses to let go of the past. It's a moody and complex murder mystery unfolding in one of the strangest places on earth. In South Africa's arid Northern Cape, you'll find a small town built in the middle of the desert by Afrikaner 'survivalists' as the last stronghold of extreme white nationalism.

"This town, called Paradys, projects the image of perfect peace and safety. But its attempts to keep the outside world at bay are undermined when a horrific murder takes place there. This brings in the 'unwelcome intrusion' of the police and threatens to expose some of the community's darkest secrets.

"Like *True Detective* and *Top of the Lake*, this moody show is set in an isolated, physically arresting world, populated by twisted and compelling characters," he says. "The story explores political and racial divisions, the wounds of the past that have never healed and the psychology of extremists trying to keep their dark ideals alive."

He points out that "*Paradys* is a frighteningly relevant story in a world facing a resurgence of white supremacy across the

United States and Europe. *Paradys* gives audiences a unique and haunting angle on racial politics through the deeply troubled South African experience. But it's also a beautiful, emotional story of human beings grappling with their own demons."

He believes the series is relevant to our times. "In the age of xenophobia, Trump and QAnon, we feel this is part of our reckoning with where we are as a country but also as a world, how we treat one another, whether we expand our circle of compassion or retreat into fearful laagers."

Indeed, KI's Anke Stoll says the film "feels incredibly relevant. By shining a spotlight on a community that's a homogenous cultural time-bomb, *Paradys* is a compelling and entertaining examination of the scourges of institutional racism."

KI is the global production and distribution arm of Israeli media company Keshet Media Group. It was established in 2012 and is led by chief executive Alon Shtruzman. The company has subsidiaries in the United States, United Kingdom and Germany that develop and produce Keshet properties with local talent. They also have a distribution hub in Asia.

KI sells third-party properties and develops and produces localised versions of popular television formats. Programmes distributed by Keshet International include *Prisoners of War*, the Israeli show from which *Homeland* was adapted. So, Geva and his team are in good company.

*Paradys* was written by South Africans Darrel Bristow-Bovey and Anton Visser, who say the film is a critique of South Africa. "As two white South Africans who came of age through the

end of apartheid, we know what happens when individuals and societies choose separateness rather than connection. We're still coming to terms with the legacies of our own past and the truth of what our own fathers did in our names, so we're disturbed to notice that the world is increasingly looking more like the old South Africa, rather than less.

"We're powerfully drawn to examine how good people do bad things, how forgiveness can be a double-edged sword; above all, we want to tell a moving, exciting, sexy story that questions the easy answers."

Asked how the partnership with KI came about, Geva says, "We reached out to Keshet, one of the most dynamic companies in the international space. It has achieved great success in taking its stories globally from a small country, something we are keen to learn about. It was also responsible for *Our Boys*, a beautiful and sensitive dramatic examination of the conflict in Israel, which aired on HBO."

*Paradys* is still in development, so it could take a little while before it hits our screens. The show will be shot on location in South Africa, and will be directed by John Trengove (Manodrome), with Jesse Eisenberg and Adrien Brody (Inxeba). Quizzical's Harriet Gavshon, Arrested Industries' Anthony Kimble, Keshet's Avi Nir, and KI's Alon Shtruzman are executive producers.


They don't want to be too didactic about what the audience takes from it. "We're hoping to find the greys - that the truth isn't always black and white," says Geva. "But at the same time, we're hoping to remind ourselves that the past isn't dead, vigilance against injustice cannot waiver and that we have a lot of work to do to bring about *tikkun olam* [repairing the world]."



Harriet Gavshon




Nimrod Geva



**PAM GOLDING**  
PROPERTIES

**Pam Golding Properties (Pty) Ltd – Bedfordview**  
Registered with the PPRA. Holder of a Business Property Practitioner FFC. Operating a Trust Account.  
W: +27 011 455 6666 E: bedfordview@pamgolding.co.za




**Senderwood** R16,5 million  
5 5.5 3  
BED1531901

Contemporary elegance for opulent living, sophistication with exceptional finishes and fittings.

**Yolande Goldman 083 381 8690**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC


**Jeanette Grunes 082 852 6910**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC



**Waverley** R11,990 million  
4 4 4  
BED1563372

A superb newly-built contemporary residence with bespoke designer interiors. Exceptional inspirational spaces designed for those seeking quality and luxury lifestyle.

**Mike Mosselson 082 942 4242**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC




**Linksfield** R5.750 million  
4 3.5 2  
BED1557744

Perfect to live and entertain in. This secure cluster is well positioned on a stand of 591m².

**Yolande Goldman 083 381 8690**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC

**Jeanette Grunes 082 852 6910**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC




**Glenhazel** R3.399 million  
4 2 2  
BED1559676


Spacious tiled inter-leading receptions flow out onto entertainers covered patio, pool and garden. Gourmet chefs eat in kitchen, with separate scullery and laundry.

**Mike Mosselson 082 942 4242**  
Registered with the PPRA - Full Status FFC

Live Remarkable.




BEST INTERNATIONAL  
REAL ESTATE AGENCY 2020-2021  
INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY AWARDS



45 years  
of Remarkable  
people & properties

pamgolding.co.za





# Lithuania honours South Africans for distinguished service

STAFF REPORTER

Johannesburg attorneys Raymond Joffe and Ivor Feinberg were on 11 March given one of the highest honours from the president of Lithuania for nationals outside of the country. These two former honorary consuls of the Republic of Lithuania received the Cross of Officer of the Order of Merits to Lithuania from the Lithuanian ambassador to South Africa, Dainius Junevičius, at the Lithuanian Independence Day commemoration on Friday.



Raymond Joffe and Ambassador Dainius Junevičius

The decorations were awarded to Joffe and Feinberg for their distinguished service in promoting the name of Lithuania as well as assisting Lithuanian citizens and the Lithuanian diplomatic service, by the decree of President Gitanas Nausėda.

“I express my sincere gratitude for your long-term work and effort in strengthening Lithuanian-South African relations, for helping Lithuanian citizens, mobilising the community, developing bilateral business relations and representing our country’s interests in the Republic of South Africa,” said Junevičius.

“As a result of your effort and outstanding work, today we can be proud of the friendly, strong relations between Lithuania and South Africa.”

A Lithuanian and South Africa citizen, Joffe was appointed honorary consul of the Republic of Lithuania on 30 May 1994. He is the first and longest-serving honorary consul of the restored Republic of Lithuania in South Africa.

As early as November 1988, Joffe addressed the Lithuanian consul-general in New York, Anicetas Simutis, offering his assistance to strengthen the relations of Lithuanian emigrants living in South Africa with Lithuania. Having taken up the position of honorary consul at a time when Lithuania didn’t yet have its own diplomatic mission in South Africa, Joffe was the most important representative of Lithuania in this country until 1998. After the accreditation of the Lithuanian Embassy in Israel to the Republic of South Africa in 1998, he continued to take care of Lithuanian citizens in distress and assisted the Lithuanian Embassy in Israel in carrying out diplomatic and consular functions in the South Africa.

A Lithuanian and South Africa citizen, Feinberg was appointed honorary consul of the Republic of Lithuania on 22 July 2005.

During 16 years of his service for Lithuania, Feinberg helped Lithuanian citizens, their businesses and the Lithuanian diplomatic service, as well as mobilising the South African Jewish community of Lithuanian descent.

Both honorary consuls made a significant contribution to the establishment of the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in South Africa in 2015, and provided assistance in the first years of the embassy’s activities in South Africa.

## Greenside Shul paints pic in late congregant’s honour

Greenside Shul unveiled a new mural on Wednesday, 16 March, for Purim in honour of its congregant, Myna Pretorius, who died suddenly of COVID-19 on 4 January. Pretorius was a key part of the shul community, and her family regularly attend services and learning programmes.

“Though Myna was an understated person, she was incredibly kind and giving,” said Nina Cohen, a director of the shul board.

The mural, which was painted by a team of congregants, hangs centre stage in the shul’s newly refurbished hall. Drawn from the Book of Ruth, it reads (in translation): “Where you go, I will go; where you live, I will live; your nation is my nation, and your G-d is my G-d.”

It joins the shul’s many other colourful murals painted by the congregation displayed in the hall.



Tammy Morris puts the finishing touches to a mural at Greenside Shul in honour of congregant Myna Pretorius, who died of COVID-19 in January

## Chevrah Kadisha thanks selfless burial team

At times during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were about nine funerals in a day. Each was carried out with respect, efficiency and compassion, according to Darren Sevitz, the general manager of Chev Burial Services. He was speaking about the 70 Chevrah Kadisha burial staff at its annual celebratory service and meal on Zayin (7) Adar (the seventh day of the month of Adar).

This is the date of the birth and passing of Moshe Rabbeinu. And because Hashem Himself buried Moshe up on Mount Sinai, it has become a date of special significance to burial societies worldwide. Every year, those involved in burial work for the Chev commemorate this by fasting to atone for any inadvertent disrespect to the deceased. In the evening, the Chev hosts a celebratory meal and tribute to their service.



Though suspended during the pandemic, this year the dinner was a beautiful and meaningful event, graciously hosted by the Glenhazel/Mizrachi community. The dinner was held outdoors in a setting beautifully lit by dozens of candles. Taharah volunteers, mitaskim, gabboyim, Chev cemetery staff and Chev leadership all attended. Chev Group Rabbi Jonathan Fox led the moving *selichot* service asking Hashem for forgiveness.

The chief rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva Nechemya Taylor spoke about the importance of *kavod hameis* (honouring the departed) and paid tribute to the Chev burial team. Fox thanked the Chev staff and volunteers for their incredible bravery in the past two years when COVID-19 presented them with enormous challenges. He also thanked the Chev leadership for its guidance and vision.

## Torah Academy gets tech-wise

The Torah Academy recently introduced new iPads to its classrooms as part of its “Up-Tech” project, which ensures that every classroom has access to up-to-date technology. The project is part of the school’s prioritisation of innovation in education, fresh techniques of teaching, learning and curriculum development.



## Mina Lopato wears Grade 0 with pride

Parents from last year’s Grade 00 class at Mina Lopato Nursery School were determined to extend their children’s Mina Lopato experience by banding together to engage with the Grade 0 class for 2022 - and what an incredible class it is! So when the kids got to wear their Grade 0 T-shirts as the leaders of the school, it was done with the pride and satisfaction appropriate to the magnificent class they are. The good news is that things are looking good for a 2023 Grade 0 too.



Marissa Koffler and two of her Grade 0 children showing off their special T-shirts

## Yeshiva counts is maths whizz blessings

Yoel Krassner, a pupil at Yeshiva College, was placed second in Gauteng and seventh countrywide at the Wits Mathematics Competition last year.

But, although Krassner’s talent, enquiring mind and love for maths are remarkable, he’s not alone. Multiple Yeshiva College pupils made it into the final rounds of the competition and many were chosen to represent Gauteng in later rounds, some of them for the second year in a row. As a school, Yeshiva was placed in the top 10 in every division in Gauteng and in two divisions nationally. These talented pupils have made the school proud and it challenges more budding mathematicians to participate in this year’s events.



Yoel Krassner and Ilana Flaum

AUDIT • ADVISORY • TAX

CLARITY.  
ORDER.  
DIRECTION.

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

www.bdo.co.za

© 2019 BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd.

TL6802Z



# When it’s all just pretend

It sounds like the start of a bad joke. Or a dad joke. But it isn’t. It’s a serious question. What do air fryers, fish braais, cauliflower mash, and Beyond cheeseburgers have in common? The answer is that they all pretend to be what they aren’t.

And in almost all cases, there seems to be a social contract that I haven’t had sight of or signed, that everyone is obliged to go along with.

This makes me feel like the kid that calls out that the emperor has no clothes. And worse, that he’s naked.

But it’s the week of Purim and it’s the time of year when masks slip, when the hidden is revealed and when truths are revealed.

So here we go. Air frying isn’t frying. There’s no amount of pretending to yourself, your kids, or your CrossFit friends that it is. It might be healthy, might make you live longer than you would have, but it’s still food that has been prepared in a hairdryer.

Every fish braai wants to be a meat braai when it grows up. Without exception, at every fish braai I have been to, someone will say, “This Cape salmon or hake or kabeljou is unbelievable. It actually tastes like chicken.” And everyone will nod in agreement. Exactly like chicken. Which not only proves the aspiration but begs the question why we aren’t braaing chicken in the first place if that’s what we wanted.

Either way, there’s an unwritten rule of fish braais that each invitee is obligated to repeat at least four or five times before they’re permitted to leave how much they

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



absolutely love fish braais. The sad truth is that no one does. No one has ever liked a fish braai, and no one ever will choose to be hungry. It’s not who we are. Even if we pretend otherwise.

Cauliflower mash is just cauliflower. And whereas I’m as fond of the tasteless vegetable as a plate filler as the next person, pretending that it’s rice or potato doesn’t change the fact that it isn’t. The construct might be good for the cauliflower’s self-esteem and might make us feel superior to the glutton heaping carbs with an actual flavour on their plates, but cauliflower will never be mash or rice. Never.

Just as vegetarian burgers don’t bleed, and just as non-dairy cheese will never cause us a lactose-intolerant reaction. Because they are just pretend.

One of the magnificent things about Jewish festivals is that they not only punctuate the year, give us reason to celebrate, they also offer a platform on which to reflect on the world around us. Purim is the festival of masks, a festival that celebrates the hidden.

For a moment or two, the masks fall, truth is revealed, and we see everything for what it is. And although we know a limited amount about the food of the era, we know for certain that the feast of Achashverosh wasn’t a fish braai.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Humanitarian aid for Ukraine

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” This comment by famed American television host and author “Mister Rogers” is frequently quoted in the wake of major disasters, natural or man-made. For many, its underlying message is that when tragedy strikes, doing something to assist helps the victims in a practical way and lessens the sense of despondency and impotence that one typically feels when confronted with such events.

The Mister Rogers quote is surfacing once more, now in the context of helping the victims of Russia’s war against Ukraine. Last week, Wendy Kahn, the national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and I met Ukrainian Ambassador Liubov Abravitova to express our community’s solidarity with the Ukrainian people during this time and to offer whatever assistance we can. Should you wish to contribute to the ambassador’s humanitarian fund, the details are as follows: Embassy of Ukraine, FNB, account number 62938629849, Branch Brooklyn, code 251345.

A number of global Jewish bodies, among them the Joint Distribution Committee, World Jewish Congress, IsraAID, the Jewish Agency and Cadena, are now engaged in humanitarian relief efforts on behalf both of Jewish and other Ukrainians. Together, they are assisting displaced persons by providing food, water, shelter and medicine, and arranging transport and resettlement, while also working with agencies on the

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

## ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



ground to ensure that critical assistance reaches people of all ages in distress across the region. The board is in the process of collating the relevant information on these and other organisations for those wishing to contribute. For details, see our Facebook page and website (<https://www.sajbd.org/>).

## Jewish Affairs journal

The latest issue of *Jewish Affairs*, the go-to journal for anyone interested in Jewish history and heritage, in particular relating to our own community, is now out. The journal, which has been produced under the auspices of the SAJBD since 1941, is now published online and is freely accessible at [www.jewishaffairs.co.za](http://www.jewishaffairs.co.za). In addition to the latest articles, the site provides easy access to all material published since 2009, grouped under categories such as Jewish history – South Africa; Israel and Zionism; antisemitism and the Holocaust; and fiction and poetry. I encourage everyone to visit the site to see the rich diversity of material, historical, cultural and otherwise, that it offers, and to consider signing on (likewise without charge) to the mailing list to receive regular updates.

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

Read the South African Jewish Report online [www.sajewishreport.co.za](http://www.sajewishreport.co.za)

# 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.

WhatsApp me on +48 783 953 223 • Email Avi Horesh [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com)



# Gutman reflects on good innings in Israel

SAUL KAMIONSKY

South-African *Oleh* Herschel Gutman has put cricket on the map in Israel. This former captain and coach of the Israel national cricket team wasn't just named International Cricket Council (ICC) European Coach of the Year for 2013, he also helped to establish the Israel Night Cricket league.

"Cricket is a very small sport in terms of popularity in Israel," Gutman told the *SA Jewish Report*. "Not many play the game. I think they struggle with the concept of cricket and standing on the field for a certain amount of time without doing anything. That's why we developed night cricket."

Many cricketers in Israel can't play on Shabbat for religious reasons. With Sunday being a workday in the holy land, time is precious. In 2010, night cricket was introduced as a way for cricket lovers in Israel to play the game without having to dedicate even half a day to playing. The league also enables *Olim* to stay connected to the gentleman's game.

"The league has become quite popular in Israel," says Gutman. "A big community plays in it. During a game, everyone is involved all the time."

Each match takes 90 minutes, and involves two teams of eight players competing against each other based on the rules of the traditional indoor leagues played around the world. "Every batting pair bats for four overs," says Gutman. "Every very bowler bowls two overs. If you're out, you don't actually go out. A few runs are just subtracted from your team's score."

Due to the lack of suitable outdoor facilities, the league is played on a double basketball court in the relatively new Israeli city of Modi'in, in the Shephelah, halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

"It's a good space for people to be introduced to cricket," says Gutman. "We've seen maybe seven junior Israeli players starting cricket in this format and then playing for Israel and at Maccabiah."

Today, Gutman is an award-winning wedding photographer who still runs night cricket. "I was employed by the Israel Cricket Association [ICA] for about four years," he says. "I left that to do photography. I'm still involved in cricket day teams on a small scale, helping them out and coaching when I can."

In 2000, ICA brought Gutman to Israel with a colleague, who now lives in Australia. "We were sent to Israel to try to boost junior cricket involvement," says Gutman. "We went to different schools and towns to promote the sport."

He had played cricket in South Africa for Green Point Cricket Club before getting coaching qualifications through organisations like the United Cricket Board, English Cricket Board, ICC, and even the Union of

European Football Associations (UEFA).

In 2001, the ICA named Gutman director of cricket coaching. "I tried to get children involved in cricket. I played for and coached the national teams as well."

Eight years later, he became ICA national cricket development officer. "Through that, I was sent into England every five or six months to do more cricket coaching courses."

In 2013, Gutman received the ICC European Coach of the Year award for leading ICA's training development programme. He beat competition from the likes of Andy Flower, who coached England to an Ashes series win at home that year.



Herschel Gutman in action for Israel against France

Whereas the South African-born Flower played cricket for Zimbabwe, Gutman did so for Israel. A memorable moment for the man the media nicknamed "Gutters" was smashing 51 off 37 balls in Israel's European play-off Twenty20 match against Croatia in Zagreb in 2011.

By then, "Jonty Rhodes and Adam Bacher [had] come to Israel in 2007 swith a few other international players to play in an Israel invitational team for Israel's 60th anniversary," says Gutman. "We played against India A. Four of their players went on to play test cricket for India. We lost four of four, but after the first game, we competed."

Asked how far cricket can go in Israel, Gutman says, "Without funding, it can't grow. You need money to employ coaches, invest in the youth, and get more locations to play cricket. At the moment, we're almost treading water. European cricket helps us to a small degree, but we're pretty much on our own. It's a miracle to have survived until now."

That said, many of the cricketers coached by Gutman have gone on to play for the national team and perform well. "Israel plays against a lot of European teams, which always have an influx of Pakistan, Afghanistan, or Sri Lankan-born players who have come to countries like Sweden, Norway, and Germany," says Gutman. "Their leagues are always expanding, but Israel competes well against them."

# MARCH MADNESS

**Big discounts on Sealy Posturepedic Base Sets**

Free mattress protector with every Double, Queen and King base set

## YOUR DISCOUNT STORE

☎ 011 887 5456 | 011 440 9571  
Nathan: 082 854 5706

**Midways Mall,**  
280 Corlett Drive, Bramley Gardens

Monday to Friday 8:30 – 17:00  
Saturday 8:30 – 13:00 | Sunday 10:00 – 13:00

**i-deal**

FURNISHERS

## Israel Rugby team turns up heat in SA

MYRON MICHEL

The Tel Aviv Heat (TAH), Israel's first professional rugby union team, are scheduled to tour South Africa this month.

The team, made up of South Africans, Israelis and players of other nationalities, was invited by the Blue Bulls Rugby Union (BBRU). They will play against Northam Rhinos at Northam in Limpopo this Saturday. Then, they take on ABE Midas Naka Bulls at Naka on 23 March and finally, the big game against the Loftus 200 Invitational Squad at Loftus Versveld on 26 March for the Robert Denton Cup (the former BBRU administrator).

TAH's South African-born head coach, Kevin Musikanth, said, "We're grateful to the BBRU to tour and give our talented squad exposure in one of the strongest rugby regions globally. This will give them an amazing momentum builder as we prepare for the upcoming play offs in the European Super Cup (ESC) next month."

"We've built an inclusive culture at the Heat, with players from around the world, featuring South Africa, England, Israel, Argentina, Namibia and Fiji," he said. Meanwhile, TAH is going to play in the ESC play-offs by default. The Russian champions, Enisey TSM, have been suspended because of the conflict in Ukraine. Despite TAH being knocked out in the play-offs of the Super Cup, they are now planning to show their muscle, determination, discipline, creativity and skill. The Heat has gained the respect and admiration of their Georgian and Russian opponents. In the first round, in their away fixtures, the Heat won two out of three games

in their pool. They beat Enisey 34-31 and Lokomotiv 29-23 (both from Russia), while losing to Black Lion from Georgia 33-10.

The second round, home games were scheduled to be played at the modern and innovative Shlomo Bituach Stadium in Petah Tikva. However, two of the games had to be played in Georgia due to COVID-19, while the final fixture was contested in Israel. The Heat defeated Lokomotiv 33-14. They claimed a bonus point, increasing their chances of qualifying for the semifinals.

Nick Groom, the captain, and Sottish international Josh Strauss, were unable to travel due to the pandemic. Jeremy Jordaan, the South African lock, and Niall Saunders, the scrumhalf for Harlequins, replaced them. The captain's armband went to Jordan Chiat, who was on loan from the Sharks

U/21. In the penultimate encounter, the Heat came up short against Enisey in a tough and tense encounter, losing 34-31. It was down to the final game against log leaders, Black Lion, in Israel. Hundreds

of fans turned out to support the Heat. Said Musikanth, "The first professional game on home soil, it's a must-win match for us." Filled with Georgian internationals, Black Lion overcame the Heat 52-28 in a pulsating game. The Eastern Conference standings were: Black Lion in first place with 20 points, followed by second-placed Enisey on 16 points, with TAH in third position on 14 points, and last, Lokomotiv on five points.

The suspension of Enisey has given the TAH a new lease on life, having qualified for the play-offs.



Tel Aviv Heat

# KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER

## PURIM SAMEACH

MISHLOACH MANOT FROM R32<sup>99</sup>

### KOSHER **AT** EVERYDAY PRICES

Offers valid till **23 MARCH 2022** or while stocks last

**MANY MORE SPECIALS IN-STORE**

CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE  
orders@kosherworld.co.za

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

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown.  
We reserve the right to limit quantities.  
While stocks last. E&OE