

Dear Members and Leadership of the Milnerton Shul and Sephardi Shul,

This is the most difficult letter that I have ever had to write and the most important one as well. It is required if I wish to do full Teshuva and help relieve the Suiza family of the pain that I have caused them. I also need to do this in order to find respite from the spiritual anguish I am experiencing as a consequence of my actions and to start anew for myself and my family.

Over the last year or so I found myself in a very dark place struggling in many ways including with depression. This culminated with the death of my mother. For reasons that are absolutely irrelevant to this communication I embarked on sending a series of emails to the Suiza family causing them immense pain. I will only say in this regard that these were a complete fabrication. The rumours that continue to swirl spreading these allegations against them are a source of great pain knowing that they continue to suffer as a result of my transgression.

I did a terrible, unjustifiable thing and am trying to go through the process of repairing and repaying for my actions. The first thing I need to do is to say that Rabbi Suiza is not guilty of anything that has been alleged against him as a result of my actions. Rabbi and Mrs Suiza have closed the case that had been opened against me, they have been gracious to me and have treated myself and my family with kindness. For this, I will be eternally grateful.

Taking all of this in to account I have resigned from my position as Rabbi at the Milnerton Shul and at the UOS as part of taking responsibility and embarking on the path that I am walking.

I realise that many people are and disappointed and shocked that a Rabbi could do this and I regret the aspersions that might be cast on the rabbinate. The Rabbis in our country are fine people and great leaders. It is through their leadership that I have been encouraged to go through this process and to write this letter.

I would also like to apologise to the Milnerton Hebrew Congregation for the distressing events that they had to cope with and endure due to my actions. I realise that for this fine community that have grown so much in the last five years this has been an enormous set back and they have been placed in a very difficult predicament and traumatised. I wish them only blessing for the future.

If there is one thing that comes out of this letter outside of clearing Rabbi Suiza's name, it is that Teshuva can and must be done for personal redemption to take place. This process of self-reflection over the last month has not been an easy one and I am aware that at certain earlier points along this path I have not been entirely forthcoming with all of the facts to some of those with whom I discussed this. In all honesty, I have been struggling even with my closest friends to share the full gravity of my wrongdoings. But ultimately Tshuva is about admitting the transgression and in that regard I must take full and unqualified responsibility for this entire episode. I hope that you too can forgive me and I apologize for any pain or confusion that I may have directly or indirectly caused you in these last few weeks.

If anyone wishes to speak to me privately about this I am more than willing. I have fallen and am so very sorry for the thing I did and all I wish is to to relieve the pain of those I have hurt and get up once again to a better day. From crisis please G-d will come redemption.

I and my family love the Cape Town Jewish community and hope to stay as it would be our choice to rebuild ourselves as fellow members within this fine kehilla.
With humility,

Bryan Opert