PERSPECTIVES

ISSUE 10 | Rosh Hashanah 5781 | September 2020

the magazine of Qish

ROSH HASHANAH

TURKISH TREATS
SUMPTUOUS RECIPES
FESTIVE <u>TABLE DECOR</u>

EXCLUSIVE

INTERVIEW WITH

RABBI LORD SACKS

ON HIS BOOK MORALITY

ANTI-SEMITISM

THE INFECTIOUS SCOURGE IN OUR MIDST

ALL THINGS DIGITAL

DATING IN THE DIGITAL AGE TRIAL BY TWITTER

CHIEF RABBI DR WARREN GOLDSTEIN

A VISION OF LEADERSHIP - PRACTICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS

TIME TO

RESET













































Waluations Solding Finchley
Hendon and Solding Finchley
Hendon Toperty
Hendon Top

Josh Tenenblat MNAEA Director

- **(**) 020 8202 7222
- © 07877 123 978
- josh@jt-homes.co.uk
- www.jt-homes.co.uk

BUY AND SELL WITH THE EXPERT

Wishing everyone a Shana Tova











Welcome to the High Holy Day bumper edition of Perspectives Magazine.

It has been my great privilege and honour to have been invited by Rabbi Daniel Rowe to partner with Editor-in-Chief, Rabbi Ari Kayser and the entire Aish UK team to produce this jam-packed publication. I have loved every minute of collaborating with Rabbi Kayser, a brilliant chief. We hope and pray that our inspiring content will rouse within you a deep desire to push the RESET button in your lives.

When Rabbi Ari and I hopped on a Zoom call to discuss the theme of our magazine, the word that sprung to mind was RESET. After having been through the last few months of what I like to call the 'Corona Cocoon,' what theme could be more appropriate for the Hebrew year 5781?

The time in lockdown provided us with a golden opportunity to reset our clocks and pivot into the new year with a clearer vision as to where as our spiritual travel destinations need to take us. It is indeed our unified aspiration to start this new year afresh with a real sense of purpose as the impetus to inspire the journey forward.

Growth demands of us to be bold and courageous. Change is always daunting and embarking on new journeys is challenging, but the trademark of the Jew is one who embodies courage and of course the ability to trust in God even when the path ahead seems intimidating. We need these two qualities in abundance if we are to reset ourselves with panache. Cowardice keeps us crawling in the mire, but courage and trust allow us to rise and reach ever higher to achieve our goals – and achieve them we must!

God in His great mercy gifted us with *teshwa* – loosely translated as repentance. I like to think of it as the notion of a second chance. In a world that does not often give us a second chance, the spiritual world is a rare phenomenon whereby each year, every Jew is offered yet another opportunity to remap his journey by resetting and returning to his highest self. *Teshwa*, this second chance, is the ultimate testimony to God's mercy and desire to see us succeed in our lives as He literally wipes the slate clean, year in, year out, on condition we play our part too.

We hope that this issue of PERSPECTIVES motivates you to RESET your spiritual GPS, so that you and your families will enter this auspicious time facing the very best version of YOU.

On behalf of Rabbi Rowe, Rabbi Kayser and the entire Aish UK team, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a *gmar chatimah tova* – *L'chaim* to a sweet year filled with all of God's richest blessings.

To second chances, God's gift to mankind.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rabbi Daniel Rowe

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rabbi Ari Kayser

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Shira Druion

SUB-EDITOR

Michelle Shalom

DESIGN

Andrea Neeleman

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

Blake Ezra

Contributors

Rabbi Eli Birnbaum Darren Cohen Shira Druion Rabbi Daniel Epstein Ilana Epstein Gideon Falter Rabbi Moshe Friedman Rebbetzin Shalvie Friedman Steve Herz Leah Hoff Rabbi Ari Kayser Gareth Kobrin Chaya Necha Milun Ayala Maurer-Prager Nicci Menashe Raphael Poch Rabbi Daniel Rowe Yarin Weltsman **Emily Wigoder**

Trustees

Jeremy Newman (Chairman)
Adrian Cohen
Simon Fine
Daniel Green
Anthony Moshal
Jacqueline Rashbass

Thoughts? Contact us at perspectives@aish.org.uk

Want to advertise with us? advertising@aish.org.uk

020 8457 4444

www.aish.org.uk | info@aish.org.uk 379 Hendon Way, London NW4 3LP Registered Charity no. 1069048





CAN'T GET TO SHUL THIS HIGH HOLY DAYS?

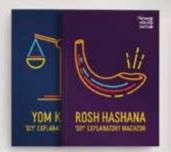


WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!



















STANDARD BOX:

£7.99 (including p&p)

FAMILY BOX:

£11.99 (including p&p)

FAMILY PLUS BOX:

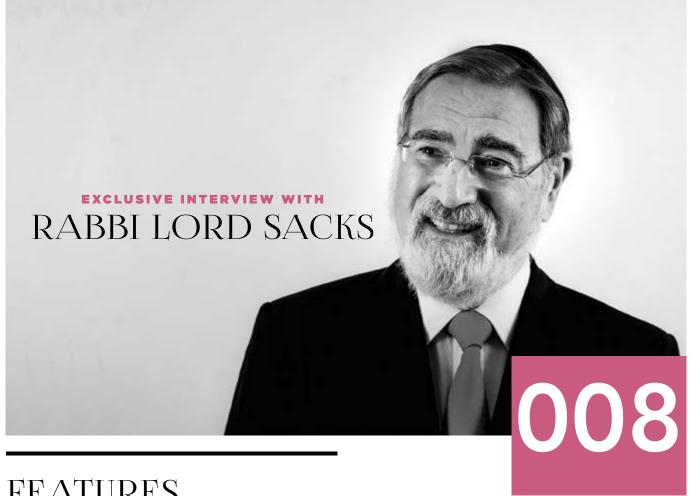
£14.99 (including p&p)

AVAILABLE NOW FOR PRE-ORDER*

bit.ly/HHDBoxAishUK







FEATURES

- 008 RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS -**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**
- 016 FROM AUSCHWITZ TO THE PROMISED LAND - A Holocaust survivor's story of triumph over adversity

A VISION OF **LEADERSHIP** Chief Rabbi Dr

Warren Goldstein



- ARE YOU RELEVANT IN A POST-COVID 034 WORLD?
- 090 TABLE SCAPES FOR THE NEW YEAR

ANTISEMITISM

- 072 CLAIMING COMPLEXITY: Fighting antisemitism in the modern age
- 074 HOW THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM DEALT WITH WILEY
- 078 ANTISEMITISM: The scourge in our midst

ROSH HASHANAH

- 050 STAND UP AND BE COUNTED Rabbi Daniel Rowe
- **052** A SOLAR REVOLUTION Rabbi Moshe Friedman
- 054 TRACK AND TRACE Rabbi Daniel Epstein
- 056 PRAYER: THE HEARTFELT SONG OF THE JEWISH WOMAN Rebbetzin Shalvie Friedman

026



LOCKDOWN LESSONS

030 A NEW WORLD ORDER

022 FINDING PURPOSE IN THE PANDEMIC

026 HEALTH, HUSTLE AND HEART

RELATIONSHIPS

064 CORONA CRUSH:

The Matchmaking Algorithm

068 THE ART OF JEWISH MATCHMAKING

YOM KIPPUR

060 TRIAL BY TWITTER

Rabbi Eli Birnbaum

WIT & WISDOM

104 DON'T BURST YOUR BUBBLE

ISRAEL

44

WINNERS AND
LOSERS OF THE
ISRAEL-UAE PEACE
AGREEMENT

082 UNITED HATZALAH'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



AISH

080 THE AISH PERSPECTIVE

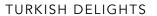
086 MAIMONIDES COURSES

TEENS

088 TIME TOLD ME

RECIPES

94





EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

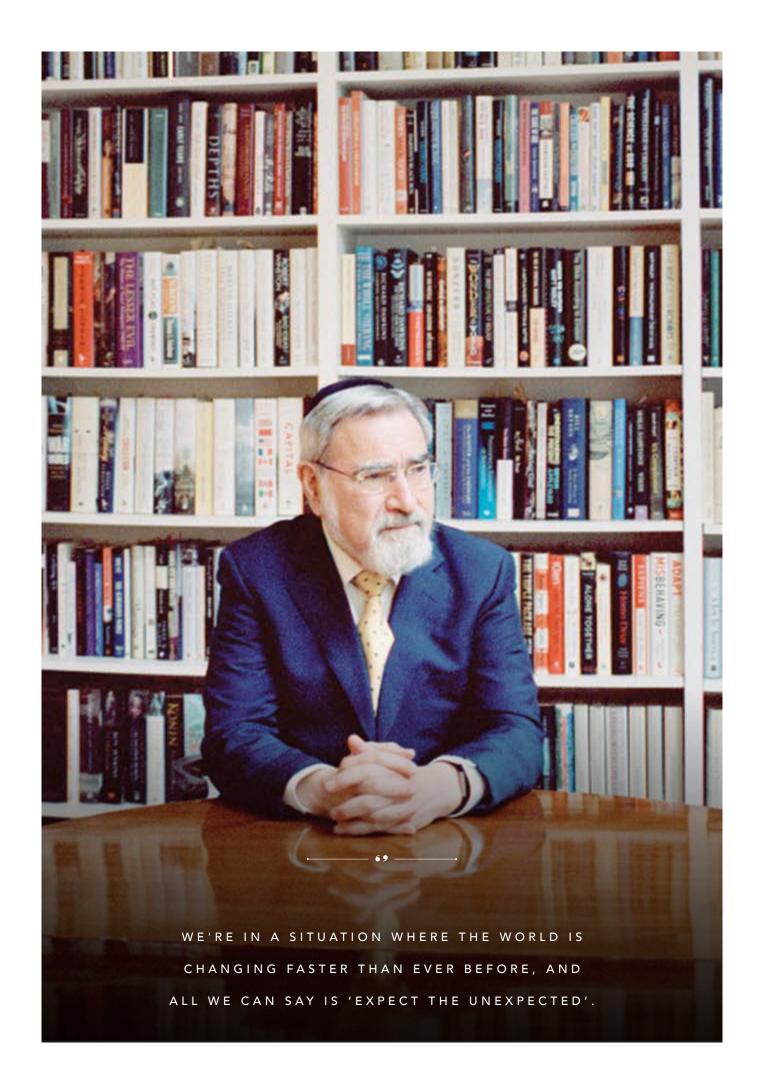
RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

ON MORALITY, CORONAVIRUS, ANTISEMITISM,
AND THE CHALLENGE OF UNCERTAINTY

by RABBI ARI KAYSER

An international religious leader, philosopher, award-winning author and respected moral voice, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks was described by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales as "a light unto this nation" and by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as "an intellectual giant". Rabbi Sacks is a frequent and sought-after contributor to radio, television and the press both in Britain and around the world.

Since stepping down as the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth – a position he served for 22 years – Rabbi Sacks has held a number of professorships at several academic institutions and has been awarded 18 honorary doctorates including a Doctor of Divinity conferred to mark his first ten years in office as Chief Rabbi, by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey.



ON MORALITY AND CORONAVIRUS

Sitting by his computer in the loft-come-office of his North London home, in his tieless white shirt and rimless glasses, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks had agreed to talk to me about his new book, Morality, in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the greatest challenges facing humanity in the 21st Century.

He began by reflecting, "Genesis begins the human story with isolation. And God steps in and helps us out of that isolation."

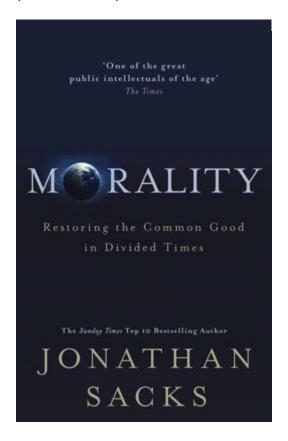
Sacks' latest book, "Morality", was published in the UK in March 2020. Ever-fascinated by his expansive perspectives, I had pre-ordered the book, and it arrived promptly the following day, thanks to billionaire Jeff Bezos and his team at Amazon Prime. I read the book that week, but it wasn't until a few months later, in preparation for my interview, that I noticed just how timely its messages had been. For a book whose first chapter describes loneliness and social isolation, whose primary concern is 'cultural climate change': the movement from 'We to I', and whose suggested remedy is a return to the covenant of cooperation and collective responsibility held up by a moral code, I quipped to

Rabbi Sacks that these words had been somewhat prophetic in their timing.

Offering him the chance to reflect on the book post-Corona, he began by saying, "You know, life is with people, life isn't with Zoom! I love Zoom, but what was the first thing God says about human beings? It's not good for us to be alone'." (Genesis 2:18)

He continued, "There were some conspicuous examples of people who acted according to what they thought was right for them without thinking what was right for others in the nation." On the other hand, he noted the exceptional 'We behaviours' that had come to our rescue in our time of need, "The medical teams, the nurses, the delivery people, the people who kept the supermarket shelves full; all the 'We people' suddenly made life possible and I do hope that going forward we will recognise them much more than we did until now. Because the "we people" do not tend to be the best paid people in society and yet they deserve to be."

ON COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY



When pressed on how to find the balance between individual identity and communal responsibility, he answered me with a story. On a cold evening in the early 2000s, Rabbi Sacks and his wife Elaine sat at their dining table with an esteemed guest, discussing his particular area of expertise: the Jews. Their guest was Catholic historian, Paul Johnson, who had written the acclaimed book "A History of the Jews". Rabbi Sacks was keen to determine what had most impressed Johnson about the Jews. Johnson's reply was telling, "Somehow or other, you have successfully combined the concept of individual responsibility and collective responsibility".

Rabbi Sacks was no stranger to these ideas. In his 2015 book, Not in God's Name, he made the observation that the West had

become the most individualistic era in all of human history. He wrote, "Its idol is the self, its icon the 'selfie', and its operating systems the free market and the post-ideological, managerial liberal democratic state. In place of national identities we have global cosmopolitanism. In place of communities we have flash-mobs. We are no longer pilgrims but tourists. We no longer know who we are or why."

As he sat there at his dining table, pondering the words of Paul Johnson, he thought to himself, is this what Hillel the Elder meant when he famously said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?" (Ethics of the Fathers, 1:14)).

GENESIS BEGINS THE HUMAN STORY WITH ISOLATION.

AND GOD STEPS IN AND HELPS US OUT OF THAT ISOLATION.

Rabbi Sacks looked up into his webcam directly at me and said thoughtfully, "For us, the tzibbur [community] and the yachid [individual] go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other. And we should be aware that the ability to maintain that balance is very rare indeed."

He paused, and said, "Somehow, during the pandemic when we're all in our bubbles, there's not a single shul that I can think of that was not finding ways of helping those who needed help."

ON EGOISM

This idea, of ensuring our focus is aimed at others, is essential in achieving a healthy society, but also in acquiring a healthy sense of self. Rabbi Sacks smiled and noted, "My favourite passage for the firstperson singular is the second chapter of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). Remember, King Solomon is talking about all the things he builds and acquires. And what happens as a result of that attitude? All he can say is 'it's all meaningless."

Rabbi Sacks had another story to back up that claim. In the summer of 1968, he had his first private meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994). Just before his turn to enter came, one of the hassidim in 770 Eastern Parkway, the Chabad Lubavitch World Headquarters, told him a story that had just taken place. Somebody wrote a letter to the Rebbe. It read, "I need the Rebbe's help. I am very depressed. I am very low. I find little meaning in anything. I do mitzvahs and I don't feel it. I pray but I can't concentrate. I need the Rebbe's help." Rabbi Schneerson gave him the most perfect

reply and it didn't take a single word. He put a circle around the first word of every sentence "I", that was the problem. And as Rabbi Sacks told me, "If every sentence begins with the word I, of course you're going to be depressed and miserable, because life is about more than I."

STORYTELLING

This got me thinking that on an individual level we can all do our best to be less focussed on our own personal needs, but what about on a communal or national level? Surely religious groups or political entities must, by definition, be primarily concerned with the needs of their community. How do we navigate divisions between groups and begin, as the tagline of Morality reads, 'restoring the common good in divided times'?

For Rabbi Sacks, the answer always lies in the traditions and teachings of Judaism. He said, "The situation is really serious; that Britain and America have fallen apart in different ways over Brexit and over the 2016 presidential election. You know how we do this as Jews? We do it on Pesach: we tell our story, and it is part of what makes all of us Jewish."

He continued, "Seder night is the world's oldest way of maintaining a sense of national identity. You know what it is to be a Jew because you eat the bread of affliction and taste the bitter herbs of slavery."

ON NATIONAL IDENTITY

In fact, Rabbi Sacks sounded the warning to other nations on this very point in his 2007 book, The Home We Build Together, which is about creating a collective story and a national identity, despite the fact that we are culturally and religiously diverse. That book made its mark, with two Prime Ministers, Gordon Brown and David Cameron, remarking that the book helped shape their thinking on these issues.

Rabbi Sacks opined, "Britain and America have failed to tell their story." He did find some solace in the attempts of the acclaimed playwright, Lin-Manuel Miranda, in his Broadway musical, Hamilton. He said, "It tells the story of one of the founding fathers of America, Alexander Hamilton, in an incredibly modern way, using rap music for instance. And a lot of the characters, like Washington and Jefferson, are either black or Puerto Rican. He has made this incredibly inclusive and it's the classic American story but told in such a new way that it really is remarkable!" Rabbi Sacks suggested this should be compulsory viewing for every school in America.

The identity of a group is granted to those who tell their own story. Rabbi Sacks was keen to point out that, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the 18th Century philosopher, says quite simply that Moses was the greatest political leader who ever lived because he endowed people with an identity that it kept throughout thousands of years of exile and dispersion."

FAITH IS NOT CERTAINTY, FAITH IS THE COURAGE TO LIVE WITH UNCERTAINTY

SEDER NIGHT IS THE WORLD'S OLDEST WAY

OF MAINTAINING A SENSE OF NATIONAL

IDENTITY. YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE A JEW

BECAUSE YOU EAT THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION

AND TASTE THE BITTER HERBS OF SLAVERY.

WE NO LONGER KNOW WHO WE ARE OR WHY

ON BLACK LIVES MATTER

Perhaps with a strong sense of identity such as this, the rioting this summer in America may have been avoided. He suggested, "You would not need people rioting to say black lives matter. Black lives do matter! So make sure that you have a way of showing this to the nation at least one day every single year without fail."

Rabbi Sacks, true to his beliefs, has suggested to Prime Ministers that Britain make Remembrance Sunday into a national day of Britishness. By televising a live BBC production in the Royal Albert Hall, where the morning would be about remembering those who fought in the wars and lost their lives, and the afternoon would focus on peace and the future, we can pass on the flame of our heritage to our children.

ON TWITTER. WILEY AND HATE SPEECH

The words we use about ourselves are the key. We can convey our sense of identity by describing our shared story over and over again. In fact, words have been the subject of every media outlet in recent weeks and months. The discussion about where to draw the line between freedom of speech and hate speech re-emerged when British grime artist, Wiley, had his Twitter account suspended and eventually deleted, after a 24-hour antisemitic rampage. Rabbi Sacks was emboldened enough by this, as were we at Aish UK, to boycott Twitter and Facebook to mark his protest. I took the opportunity to ask his thoughts on freedom of speech and his answer was emphatic. He said, "We all have freedom of driving, but we do not allow dangerous driving. So it's no inhibition on freedom of driving to say you cannot drive in such a way that endangers others." The same, he says, is true for speech, "We are totally and unconditionally committed to freedom of speech, but not to hate speech, because you cannot use speech to harm other people in other groups."

We face a unique problem in the 21st Century with keyboard warriors hiding behind their screens, feeling emboldened to say what they want, even if it is harmful to others. Rabbi Sacks likened hate speech to the Jewish idea of lashon hara and used this as an example of how to deal with its perpetrators.

He remarked, "Lashon hara has to be brought to public attention. In biblical times the consequence of hate speech was being afflicted with tzara'at (leprosy); because when you try to speak ill of someone anonymously and in private, the public must be made aware."

"It's about not allowing people to hide behind a cloak of anonymity. This had one form 3,000 years ago, and it has other forms on Twitter and Instagram today. If you can hide behind anonymity, then social media has a 'disinhibition effect': you can be much ruder to people than you would be face to face."

ON ANTISEMITISM

As someone who has led hundreds of students on Aish UK trips through the gates at Auschwitz, infamously emblazoned with the words 'Arbeit Macht Frei' or 'Work Sets You Free', I am acutely aware of the ever-evolving scourge of antisemitism. Throughout the ages, Jews have been blamed for all the world's problems. At times, the Jews were thought to be too rich, owning and controlling global financial corporations and the media; at other times, we were too poor -a drain on the society and a peasant people to be despised as untrustworthy. Jews have been too rich, too poor, too right-wing, too left-wing, too powerful, too oppressed, and sometimes, just too Jewish. Since 1948, antisemitism has largely taken the form of anti-Zionism, but what will be its next evolution? Are recent online tweets an indication of the next metamorphosis of the world's oldest hatred?

On this, Rabbi Sacks commented, "I think what we are seeing on social media means that what previously might be said between a couple of people who've had too much to drink in a pub, or maybe shouted from the window of a passing car, are now entering the public domain." However, he suggested, "That doesn't mean to say there's much more antisemitism today than there was in the past, we are just more conscious of it."

The solution to him seems clear, "In an age of artificial intelligence, it is not difficult to construct algorithms to detect antisemitic or racist tweets and posts which can be identified and removed immediately. It is simply the companies themselves that have to take responsibility for doing just that."

...THE GREATEST GIFT WE CAN POSSIBLY GIVE OUR KIDS IS BEING JEWISH



Pope Benedict XVI, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, and Swiss Cardinal Kurt Koch, pictured in 2011 at the Vatican



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks joining Prime Minister David Cameron for the lighting of the Chanukah lights in Downing Street

ON THE FUTURE

If so, I pressed, what will be the greatest challenge our grandchildren will face in the world of tomorrow? Rabbi Sacks paused to think, and said, "Mervin King, who was the governor of the Bank of England at the time of the 2008 crash, wrote a book called Radical Uncertainty. That is the biggest challenge our grandchildren are going to face." He continued, "For most of history people have lived and died, and the world they see at the end of their life was recognisably the same world they saw at the beginning of their life. Today, the pace of change is completely unprecedented in all of human history and it's going to accelerate. Just imagine that a few years ago there was no such thing as Airbnb, there was no such thing as smartphones, there was no such thing as Google or amazon.com. Social media is not that old. These things have completely changed our world in the last 20 to 25 years.

"The world is going to continue to change very, very rapidly. We are going to add to the mix artificial intelligence, whose impact we really can't tell. We're in a situation where the world is changing faster than ever before, and all we can say is 'expect the unexpected'. And that is going to be the challenge, because people can get used to all sorts of things. They can get used to

poverty, they can get used to lockdown, they can get used to disease, but they can't get used to change. Permanent, relentless, ever increasing change."

I asked, how then, do we anticipate that challenge and best prepare for the unknown? He smiled, "All I can say is this: the greatest gift we can possibly give our kids is being Jewish. Jews have faced more uncertainty than any people in all of history. Throughout century after century, Jews did not know if they will still be here next year. Jews have known every kind of uncertainty and we survived the whole lot. Not only did we survive the whole lot but there is also something really unusual about Jews and Judaism; as it says in Exodus 1:12 'The more they were oppressed, the stronger they grew.' That is what I call super-resilience. Resilience means you survive the pressures. Super-resilience means you grow stronger with the pressures. That is really the gift we give our children. The gift of saying 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me' (Psalms 23:4)."

Rabbi Sacks ended his thought with the following words, "Faith is not certainty, faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. Once you have that faith, you're going to handle all the changes. They will not defeat you; they will make you stronger, and that is the gift we really should be giving our grandchildren."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is to feature in an innovative, interactive, voice-led, online experience, enabling people to converse directly and enjoy virtual time with him, one-on-one.

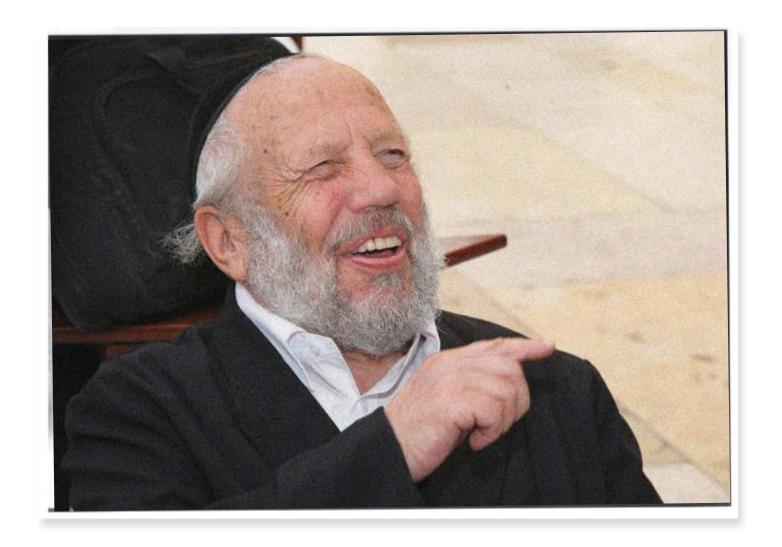
We are inviting you to submit your questions, big and small, to be included in the experience. If you were able to sit with Rabbi Sacks right now, what burning questions would you want to ask him about Judaism and Jewish identity?

Use the link Rabbisacks.org/askRabbisacks to enter your questions in the form.

This project is being run by The Office of Rabbi Sacks in partnership with The Forever Project and supported by Maimonides Fund.



Rabbi Ari Kayser is the Director of Online Education and the Editor-in-Chief of Perspectives magazine. Ari leads the Aish Online team in producing a wide range of media and publications, including short inspirational videos, podcast series and developing online courses. He relishes the challenge of conveying authentic Jewish teachings into the language of the 21st Century. Aside from qualifying as a Rabbi, Ari also has a BSc in Economics from UCL and certification as a professional cocktail bartender. His interests include backpacking across the world, writing poetry and meditation.



F R O M

Auschwitz

T O T H E

Promised Land

by SHIRA DRUION

A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR'S HEROIC STORY OF TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

As I stood in my kitchen baking brownies for Shabbos, I tried to crystallise my thoughts about the previous day's interview with Mr Herskovic or Reb Hershel as he is fondly known. The contrast of mundane baking was almost irreconcilable, but Jewish history is like that; full of jarring truths that battle against our 21st century lives. As I stirred in the sugar and the cocoa, my mind kept hauling me back to his living room, a place that reverberates with the kind of energy that belongs to the great men of a generation gone by.

I arrived in Stamford Hill that sunny Thursday morning and for the hour and fifteen minutes I sat there with Mr Herskovic, observing and listening to him, it felt like I had stepped into a time capsule. I don't think I will ever see the world in the same way again, which is ironic because Mr Herskovic is blind and has not seen the world since 1945 when he lost his sight after a battle with typhus, which in rare cases leaves the patient blind. At one point in the interview I looked at him and said, "Mr Herskovic, you haven't seen the world since the war. So the world you see in your mind, your memories are all up to 1945." He smiled and said, "Yes, those are my memories of the world." His words went through me like a lightning bolt. Imagine for a moment, surviving the horrors of the Holocaust, contracting typhus and then have those be the last memories you ever witness. But the joy of his smile tells not of a bitter man, but rather of one of the happiest people with whom I have had the privilege of engaging. He emits a deep joy that seems to flow freely from a Godly wellspring. He is the kind of person who is happy because he lives with the presence of God in every fibre of his 93-year-old body. I found it almost incomprehensible that he could be this way after everything he had been through, so I candidly asked him if he was happy and he replied with a line that I will never forget, "There is no price tag on happiness. It doesn't cost you a penny. So why not?"

His roots are in Czechoslovakia, near the Carpathian Mountains. He grew up one of 11 children and his father owned a mill. One can imagine the tranquility of that life before the venomous Nazi regime devoured its way through Europe. "I was 16 years old when we were taken away. I remember how we were put onto cattle cars, not trains but cattle cars, used for cattle, all 90 of us." It is obvious that he still finds it hard to digest "not trains but cattle cars." His words echo through every crevice

of my mind as they testify to the atrocities committed against innocent men, good men. Sitting there, I can see the pain that still torments him and I have to hold back my tears.

"We arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau at five in the morning. I recall how we were immediately taken for selection. I never saw most of my family again after that. My father and two brothers survived the war with me. My sister survived Auschwitz but died from over-eating in Bergen Belsen." The pain is so piercing that even now, 76 years later; it still chokes him up as he remembers it.

It is clear that God wanted Mr Herskovic to live as he recalls one of the miraculous vignettes of his story. "In the days after Yom Kippur there was a mass selection of 500 boys chosen to go to the gas chambers. We had been selected to die. But on Simchas Torah, my birthday, as we were standing there, undressed and waiting, in an unprecedented move, three SS officers walked in and chose 51 of us to live. I was one of those 51 taken out of the gas chamber. That had never happened before. People who went to the gas chambers went in, never to be seen again."

"Mr Herskovic, were you terrified standing there in the gas chambers?"

"No, I never for a minute believed that I was going to die. I had full belief that I was going to live. As the Talmud Tractate Brachot teaches: 'Rabbi Yochanan said, even if a sharp sword is at your neck, you should not give up on mercy, as the verse in Job states: 'Though He slay me, to Him I shall hope'". Mr Herskovic's son, David, recalls how he would tell them that he recited this verse as they were walking towards the gas chambers and that he always says he has two birthdays, his second being the day he left the gas chambers.

He tells me how, after the war, together with his younger brother, he made his way to Pressburg, Bratislava, where he was reunited with his father who then took him back to a hospital in Prague. There the doctors told him that he had optical atrophy and that there was nothing they could do to help restore his eyesight. He was 18 at the time.

Miraculously, a doctor in Prague gave him documentation that claimed his blindness was temporary. This became his passport to England and so together with his younger brother and cousin they came to new shores, leaving his father and older brother in Soviet occupied Munkacs.

"Mr Herskovic, it must have been very hard not to see your father after the war?" I ask him, trying to wrap my head around the seemingly unending cycle of loss.

"Well, I did go back to visit my father in 1962. He was living there with my older brother in Munkacs."

The devastation of the Holocaust was immense, but the after effects were too. It didn't end in 1945. It snaked its marauding head into the lives of its victims even years later.

David tells me that his father had no fears in helping his brother to leave the Soviet Union, he was relentless. "His brother had got trapped behind the Iron Curtain because

he stayed to look after my grandfather. Towards the end of the 1960s they started permitting some Jews to leave and my father desperately wanted to get my uncle and his family out of Russia and campaigned to get them out, even appearing on the BBC. He then visited the Soviet Union to make sure the job got done, despite the obstacles he faced trying to do this being blind. (My grandfather was no longer alive by then.) My father has a truly indomitable spirit, and is indefatigable when he wants to achieve something. And so miraculously in 1971, my uncle, his wife and two children came out of Russia, which was quite a few years before the Iron Curtain fell, all thanks to my father's efforts."

Mr Herskovic continues, "When I arrived in England, I was immediately taken in by the Jewish Blind Society. It was not simple for me because they heavily discouraged religious observance. They didn't think it was necessary to hold onto my faith and observant ways. They wanted to anglicise me and constantly balked at me to be less careful with Shabbat and kashrut. But I told them to leave me in peace because I was not going to give them up. On Shabbos I would get someone to accompany me to synagogue and I would go and eat the meals at others or come home and eat on my own."

Rarely in my life, have I encountered a person so devout in their religious beliefs. His commitment is steadfast and his faith flows from a deeply embedded heritage. One would imagine that he would have had all the reasons in the world to wage a war on God after losing most of his family, his eyesight and independence. But as I sit in his humble living room with its signature turquoise velvet sofas and files of braille Hebrew texts, it is clear that instead of his enemy, God is indeed his closest ally.

When I speak to his son David, a barrister in a private practice, he confirms for me my observations. "My father lives with

> Hashem as a reality right there beside him. The words of Torah and Tehillim [Psalms] are constantly on his mind and on his lips. He recites them all the time. I recall the morning after Entebbe. I woke up to hear my father reciting Shiras Hayam [the song at the Sea when the Children of Israel were saved from the Egyptians] – in thanks to Hashem for the great miracle

He performed. He saw it as a cause for personal celebration especially after having experienced the horrors of Holocaust.

"When my brother and I would go off to learn in Yeshivas Belz in Israel at age 13, my father would gift us with verses of Tehillim as a leaving gift. Most parents give their children money or presents, he gave us pesukim [verses]. One of the verses he gifted me is in Chapter 18, 'You light my lamp, Hashem my God, You light up my darkness.' My father always adds, "The darkness remains there and Hashem's light is within the darkness. He also loves Chapter 139: Darkness does not darken for you and the night lights up like the day..."

"The Blind Society facilitated my studying law. I met my wife, Daphne at a get together and she offered to help me with my studying. She was a very lovely person and I asked her to marry me and she agreed." Mr Herskovic tells how his late wife's mother had been killed in The Blitz. I can't even begin to imagine the kind of wedding they must have had, one bereft of any semblance of normalcy, just two young people, ready to forge their own way in a world so broken. David tells me that their wedding was graced with the presence of some of London's most illustrious rabbis at the time...



With his son Dovid Yosef in the former gas chamber of the Mauthausen concentration camp, Austria, in May 1995 at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of its liberation. Credit: Harry Weber



In his younger years with his late wife Daphne

a job at a law firm because of his having to leave on Fridays. So together with his young wife, they travelled to America and spent a year there trying to set themselves up. "I had already decided that my blindness would not be a hinderance to me in any way. It was a decision." When he first arrived in the UK, he spent some time in a home for blind children where he was taught English and braille. His son David tells me that his father said that he felt the children there were institutionalised and not encouraged to realise their ambitions whereas his father was and remains fiercely independent. He affirms for me that his father's blindness has never ever prevented him from achieving his goals. "In fact, it is quite the opposite! My father has not only lived like a normal person but could probably outdo most people who had their sight. Some of the things he has done have included scaling trees to collect walnuts, literally like a squirrel! He has jumped off a boat off the coast in Eilat and swum all the way back to shore and loved riding his bike. I often went riding with him and acted as his eyes, instructing him on when to turn and when to stop. He cooks and when we would lose things as children, he would say he would find it and he did! I even recall how one day, the hot water geyser broke and he climbed into the loft to turn off it off. There was nothing he could not do."

After finishing his studies

to become a solicitor. Mr

Herskovic could not find

He then came back to London from America and began investing in property. Mr Herskovic tells me, "In those days, banks did not give loans to purchase properties. It was too risky. But I spoke to the bank manager at Lloyds and managed to secure the necessary funds which I needed in order to invest in the property business." As he narrates this part of his story to me, I wonder to myself how a person manages to build a property portfolio without being able to see. How does one view potential properties? How does one read the relevant material? It seems an enigma to me. So I ask him how...

"My wife helped me and I managed. I had already decided that my blindness would not get in my way." Today he runs his own property portfolio and while I am sitting there, he gets up several times to leave the room with only his hands to feel his way, no stick, no fuss. His home phone rings, his mobile rings and I am witness to fiery tenacity. He is unshakable. David tells me, "my father is fully aware of his surroundings. When I would go with him to view potential properties, he would feel out the leveling of the floor by stepping from one foot to the other or tapping his foot on the floor boards and listening to the sounds it would make. Even when he is in Eilat,

he has a deep appreciation of the dry desert air.

He is acutely aware of his surroundings and takes great pleasure from them."

His grandson, a software engineer and Cambridge graduate, sits in the room to assist me in case of my not being able to understand his thick European accent and he tells me that his grandfather loves Eilat. I enquire, "Mr Herskovic, I hear you like to travel to Eilat."

He smiles a magical smile that warms my heart...

"Yes, before Corona I would go every two weeks. I love to go and swim in the sea there. I have friends, a shul and I am happy there." How he manages to swim in the sea while not being able to see, I wonder. But I should know by now, it's Mr Herskovic, nothing stands in his way. "Most of our problems are imaginary," he tells me. "I don't allow myself to surrender to them. Our minds can take us to dark places if we allow them to, but we have to give them permission to do that and that is our choice, as it says in Tehillim, 'Goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life.' He also quotes some other wellknown passages by heart, 'God makes my darkness light,' and 'God is my shepherd and I will not be afraid.' I have no doubt there are many more that have been on his lips to comfort him through his many trials and tribulations.

His grandson tells me that his grandmother tragically passed away many years ago while the children were still young. "Mr Herskovic how did you manage to look after your young children after your wife had passed?".

OUR MINDS CAN TAKE US TO DARK PLACES IF WE ALLOW THEM TO, BUT WE HAVE TO GIVE THEM PERMISSION TO DO THAT AND THAT IS OUR CHOICE AS ITS SAYS IN TEHILLIM - 'GOODNESS AND MERCY WILL FOLLOW YOU ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE'

He tells me, "I sent my two sons to yeshiva in Israel and my other two children remained at home with me. There is no doubt that it must have been very challenging on many levels. But he said something to me that I found deeply inspiring "On Shabbos, we would sit at the Shabbos table for a good two or three hours, talking and singing Shabbos zemiros (songs). You don't have to see your children to be there for them. I listened to them and if they had problems, I encouraged them." After talking to his son David, it is clear that indeed they share a very deep and close relationship and he tells me how his father knew everything that was going on in their lives and was very involved. I was left-handed and, in those days, the school would try 'to correct' your left handedness. One day, my father called the school and insisted they let me be and asked why they felt the need to change me. He was very invested in our wellbeing."

After our formal discussion, Mr Herskovic asks me about life in South Africa and some other questions about myself and it is clear to me that he is a wonderful listener and as we chat I can see how his sharp his mind pieces the puzzle together like an astute solicitor. "Mr Herskovic, I think your listening skills have become became your eyes." He smiles.

There are good men, there are great men, and then there is Mr Herskovic. Over the course of my career as a journalist I have met many extraordinary individuals, but Mr Herskovic towers above them all. His approach to life is simply remarkable and one can't help but be deeply inspired by his courageous stamina, extraordinary faith and unwavering tenacity. These sterling character traits have partnered with him to overcome the seemingly insurmountable odds that he has faced, time and time again. He may not see through his eyes, but his soul sees with perfect clarity. If only us millennials and Gen Z had an inkling of this conviction, the world would be a different place. Generally, when I finish an interview, I can close the door and leave it behind me. But this was not that kind of interview because what Mr Herskovic's shared with me that sunny day will stay with me always. He is that kind of man, a giant in our midst.

MR HERSKOVIC'S LIFE ADVICE:

- It doesn't cost you to be happy. Happiness doesn't charge any money.
- Jealousy is a quality that makes people very unhappy.
 But it is also a quality that can drive you. In fact, I can't imagine how the world would look without it because it is a driving force and it pushes people to achieve. But one needs to monitor it.
- Don't give up when you face difficulties. If you
 decide to be strong and strengthen yourself when
 facing adversity, then you will see that your small and
 incremental stepping stones over your difficulties will
 propel you to keep going. But if you give up from the
 outset, then you will have nothing to keep you going and
 you will give up. So push yourself through.
- I ask him if he is afraid of getting the virus? "No, I am not scared. When it is your time, it is your time."









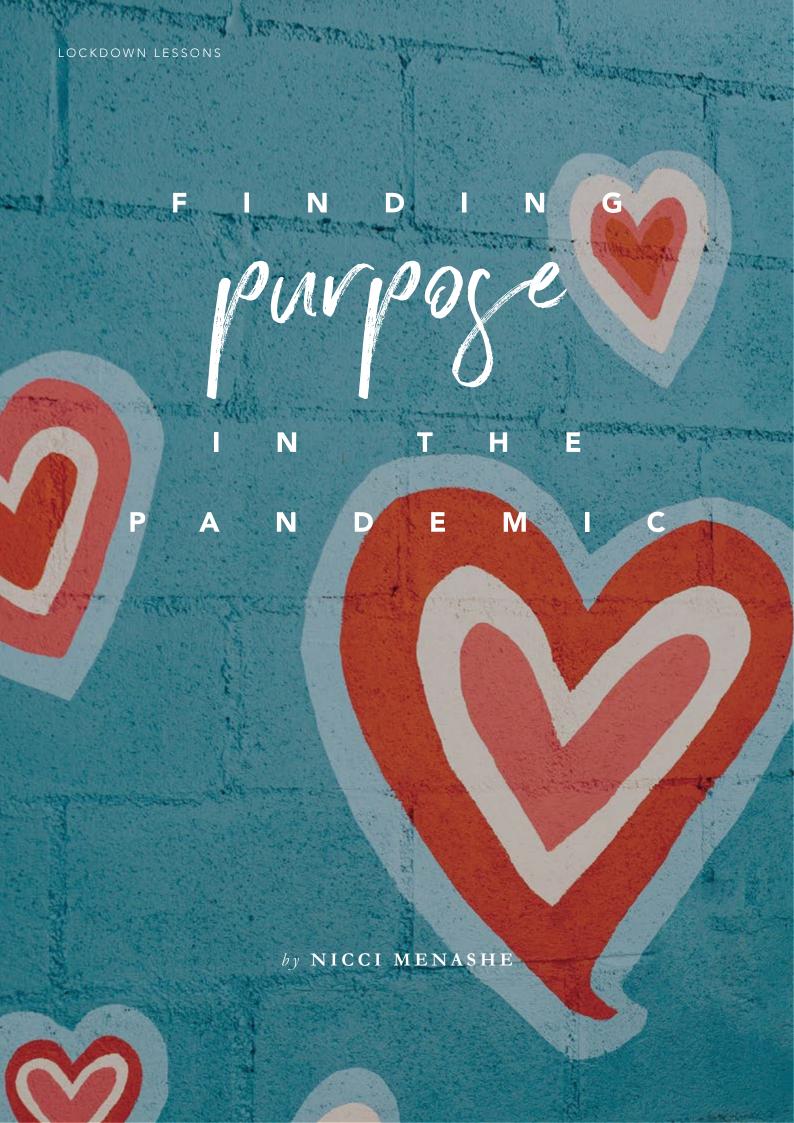
With his grandson's family at the bar mitzvah of his oldest great grandson, Yossi Schwartz

DAVID'S REFLECTIONS ON THE LESSONS HIS FATHER HAS TAUGHT HIM:

- My father does not hate. He has a deep passion for right and wrong but generally he doesn't hate. Even the Germans, I have never heard him say, "cursed be their memory".
- He conforms to his own sense of what is right and wrong and he has a strong sense of integrity. He does not conform to societal demands set out for him. He simply does not take them on or recognise them. He follows his own locus of control.
- Never look back, have no regrets, just move forward. What was was, no point wallowing in the past, just go on.
- His emunah and bitachon (faith and trust) in God is palpable. For my father, Hashem is not a promise that will come, He is a constant presence.
- My father remembers telephone numbers by linking them to chapters of Tehillim.
- He never allowed you to feel sorry for yourself, self-pity doesn't exist for him.
- He has immense Jewish pride. I recall how on motzei Yom Kippur he would listen to the financial reporting on the radio and he would be so proud that he they would announce there had been little activity on Wall Street "due to the Jewish Yom Kippur". Being a Jew is fundamental to who he is.
- He sees things the way they are and handles them that way. Whenever I have had to help him with business or legal situations he always tells me "Don't you worry what the other side says, you worry about what you have to do and they will do what they have to do."
- To him, Hashem is not a God of reward and punishment. To him, Hashem is his shepherd as it says in Tehillim, "The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want."
- He is a chossid of Hashem, he doesn't see himself in any specific camp. He loves all Jews and when he goes to Eilat, he is happy to go to the Sephardi shul or the Chabad shul.



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English, Education and Psychology. She then trained as a Speech and Drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former Editor of YALLA magazine and the current Executive Editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery to university, where she lectured on writing and communication skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, teaching a broad age group of students. Shira is passionate about women's education and runs women's programmes in the community.



A LONDON MUM SHARES HER UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF COVID-19

When COVID-19 unleashed itself on the world in 2020, the devastating news of a global pandemic was like a strong magnet for me. I was immediately attracted to the negativity. I sensed that death was looming and I focussed all my attention on the negativity that was accumulating around the world.

I remember listening to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson make the first news announcement to the United Kingdom and recall how in a sombre voice he told us to 'be prepared to lose our loved ones before their time'. It was a feeling that evoked a deep panic and sadness within me for what my mind imagined was to follow in the months ahead.

We locked down our home weeks before the official announcement was made by the government. We declined invitations to attend any large functions in March. We did not attend any celebrations that we had previously committed to and we cancelled a large event that we had arranged to host and sat constantly glued to the television screen, watching the numbers and the daily death rate rise.

Then we prayed. I don't think there has been a year in which I have prayed so much.

On the 12th of March, I joined a very small group of ladies and helped to co-ordinate The Great Challah Bake to pray for the world, and this would become the first of many large-scale challah bakes and other Tehillim (Pslams) virtual events that I attended.

I also recited the prayer of Pitum Haketoret Hasamim religiously each day, praying with all my heart that this prayer would protect me and my family during this time. (Many are not aware that this prayer was actually given as a gift by the Angel of Death to Moses as a protection.)

I was already on one *Tehillim* group when the pandemic started, but by mid-April, I had joined four groups! I learned Tehillim 121 off by heart, because the sound of the ambulance sirens outside my door plagued my ears and praying was the only thing I could do that would calm me down. For weeks, I cried as I prayed but over time, I calmed down and got into a routine of prayer and as my splashed tears dried on those holy pages, I realised how integral prayer and faith had become to my life and how it helped me to navigate the challenges of life.

I had already fallen in love with the meaning of Tehillim 67 a year before the pandemic, but the daily reciting of this psalm helped me to grow stronger inside and certainly calmed my insides down when the storm was raging outside.

The pandemic invited a slow motion pandemonium to dance across our world, however from within that dance in the dark, sparkled some of the most brilliant shining lights and initiatives to guide others who were grappling with the chaos into a world overflowing with meaning and purpose.

Over a year ago, on the 28th August 2019, Rabbi David Geffen (author of The Loving Classroom textbook) set up a Loving World WhatsApp group to help synergise a massive, pure positive energy to help build a more loving word.

He did not set this group up because of the pandemic. It is important to realise that it was set up six months before anyone had even heard of COVID-19 and the reason for the group was purely to see if it would be possible for people to keep their posts positive at all times, no matter the news and negativity around them. The idea was that every interaction on the group would be an opportunity to help one another strengthen and release a massive, pure, positive energy throughout the world. The aim was also that it would empower one another and others to overcome the many individual and communal challenges we would face as a humanity being.

For a start, pure love that could only have come from God started to happen on the Loving World group. Many who joined the group were from different religions, races and cultures and from different continents in the world. Most were strangers to one another, living on opposite sides of the earth, never having met. Yet all of us on the group seemed to be able to share their stories and points of view on the pandemic and everyone seemed to know innately how to converse with respect to one another.

Many of the stronger participants on the group began to unveil their strength to others and this taught me so many important lessons on how to change my perspective on things and how to find inner strength to cope with the changing world.







THANK YOU

TO OUR INCREDIBLE GARBAGE COLLECTOR

WHO ARE KEEPING LONDON CLEAN AND TIDY DURING THIS TERRIBLE TIME.
THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE WITH YOU IN IT!
WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR US!

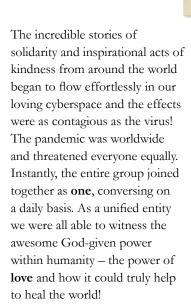
THANK YOU!!! **WE LOVE YOU**

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR S WHO ARE ON THE FRONT LINE TO KEEP

GOING DURING THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF ALL YOU DO FOR US!

THANK YOU



When COVID-19 hit us all in 2020, I truly saw how darkness met light and recognised the enormous opportunity to find the beacons of pure truth. I thought about why we existed in the form of teachers, comforters and inspirers. I clearly remember thinking (in the height of the peak when things seemed to be getting out of control with the virus) how adversity, war and ego seemed to have been swallowed up by altruism, prayer, unity, hope and faith. The pandemic helped us to find meaning in our lives and to redefine the way we saw things.

We were all so focussed on how one person was infecting others, but what we should have been concentrating on was how every person in the world mattered! We could have chosen to focus on the negativity and to see only contagion, death and depression around us or we could focus on the positive light and be guided by prayer and people, that had an inner power to get us through this. From what I saw happening in Jewish communities around the world, I truly witnessed that we all have a spark of Godliness within us and an infinite potential to light the candle of God in others.

That was when I believe I found the true purpose of the pandemic. **We** have been presented with an opportunity to grow to new heights because of this crisis and to reach a different dimension by choosing to change our perspective. It has been a blessing to be able to join the army of love with organisations of people such as GIFT and others who



came into their own during this pandemic. These leaders went into direct competition with the virus and helped kindness to go viral to thousands during this time. While world leaders and the medical profession battled the virus, they offered us the real antidote and enabled thousands of volunteers to help shine a light for humanity and offer a special part of themselves to the cause.

I learned that it is so much easier to cope when we find the good in everything instead of focussing

on the bad and I think this was the most powerful weapon for me to access against the strongest and most negative of forces.

After this realisation, it became effortless to write countless cards of care to the elderly and vulnerable in isolation, and to thank the NHS and the pharmacies, the shopkeepers, amazon and food delivery services, the local farmers and fruit and vegetable sellers, the service and the public transportation workers, the garbage collectors, post and the delivery men and women who were all on the front line keeping the UK going, connected, well fed, calm and well cared for during the global pandemic.

Storms don't last forever and I know that this too shall pass, but the rainbow of light that shone from so many within humanity at this time was truly everlasting and will stay with me my whole life.

This coronavirus has tested our principles, values and shared humanity for most of 2020 and possibly well beyond. We have faced indescribable pain, but we have also been blessed enough to choose to be a part of something so much greater than ourselves and the reward will be infinitely stronger than the challenge. My intention for Rosh Hashanah is to continue to put myself in a good place, no matter the circumstances I find myself in and to turn any obstacle I encounter into revealed goodness.



health, hustle & heart

LESSONS LEARNT FROM A GLOBAL PANDEMIC



by YARIN WELTSMAN

Living a five-minute walk from shuk [market] Mahaneh Yehuda Jerusalem, Israel means I am always connected to the heartbeat of the city and I can feel the ripples of the hustle and bustle from my home. The usual scene of screaming vendors, hundreds of people, a rainbow of colours and aromas had transformed overnight into what felt like an eerie horror scene. The most painful part in the few weeks transitioning out of lockdown was seeing the desperation of the vendors who were forced to close shop for all that time and watching them slowly recover with a stricken spirit. I also unfortunately witnessed a lot of police drama from the side as they were trying to enforce new regulations that even they were confused about.

It is July and we are in the second wave which has brought a lot of civil unrest and protests, again just around the corner of my house on Balfour. However, I have kept my distance, not feeling that for me personally it would be the most effective way to bring about change and rather I chose to focus on other ways to try to create positive change in a time like this.

#COgive

From the moment COVID-19 hit, we saw brands from all around the world, innovating and committing to 'paying it forward'. We decided to create an initiative showcasing a collective of companies who during this time were leveraging their resources, skills and potential to collectively do GOOD.



As business strategists and designers, we decided to offer our consulting services for free to companies that wanted to think of creative ways to #COgive. #COgive gave us the momentum to really think about how we could use this time productively and turned our mindset from "survive" to "thrive".

One of the organisations we were lucky to get the chance to help was "emotionalconnections.org" which offers free emotional support during the pandemic. Their website is essentially a hub of international support groups, telehealth counselling and other mental health support for those in need and specifically those working in the frontlines. We created a media kit that allowed them to spread the awareness about their campaign in a trendy and engaging way.

Mental health awareness is something incredibly close to my heart. My younger sister has been fighting an array of mental health diseases and issues for almost a decade. Through it all she still manages to be an advocate, support others that are struggling, as well as be involved in mental health policy reform in South Africa as the youth representative of The South African Federation of Mental Health. The special thing about this period was that my sister and I spoke 80% more than we normally did before Corona - when I was running from meeting to meeting over-worked.

Corona slowed things down and that helped transform our relationship. On a call to my mother in South Africa a few weeks ago she mentioned how the energy in the home has changed since my sister and I have strengthened our relationship. I don't think that would have happened if my relationship to work and productivity would not have shifted, and I didn't now dedicate that new time to her.

Up until then we had worked out of WeWork Jerusalem. We loved our office and the people we got to spend time with every day — but when we started working from home, we realised that many of our beliefs about a lack of productivity at home were unjustified. There are obviously pros and cons to working from home, but we personally found that we spent less time schmoozing with fellow co-workers (it's hard when your 'colleague' is a coffee machine) actually made us more productive.

There might have been less 'networking', but that forced us to actually target the network we wanted to collaborate with. This has also positively impacted our work/life balance. Since we no longer have to go into the office and commute to meetings around the country, while working shorter hours, we remarkably achieve more.

Corona also allowed us to not just 'achieve more' but 'reach more'. Shifting from 'offline' to 'online' workshops added the benefit of not being limited to the amount of people that could fit in a room, but rather we could have a global audience, infinite number.

One of the avenues that we pursued was a collaboration with 50InTech, a platform based in France focussed on connecting women in tech and allies to make the tech industry better and equal for everyone. We gave a workshop on 'How to Brand & Pitch to Investors' which was attended by a multitude of female entrepreneurs from all over Europe and the US. This month I will also be giving a workshop to 'Women in Tech', a female-only community of women in tech that shares a passion for technology and innovation. The workshop is called Cycle Central and it teaches women how to 'BioHack Your Body & Crack Your Career'.

This extra time gave me the opportunity to also work on a Corona side-project that allowed me to connect between my passions for design, tech, mentoring, female leadership and Judaism. I created 'MyBatMitzvahJourney' - an innovative and holistic online Bat Mitzvah course created for a meaningful journey between mums and daughters in preparation for the Bat Mitzvah. My focus was on experiential education with modules varying from mitzvot, mental health and menstruation. With celebrations being quite different this year (to say the least), we are living in a time with no more 'sweet sixteen Bat Mitzvahs' and this course is an opportunity to dive into what becoming a Bat Mitzvah really means. Bat Mitzvah or not Corona, is definitely begging us to look beyond the party, and if, we can, embrace; it I think the potential for positive change and a unique journey lies ahead.





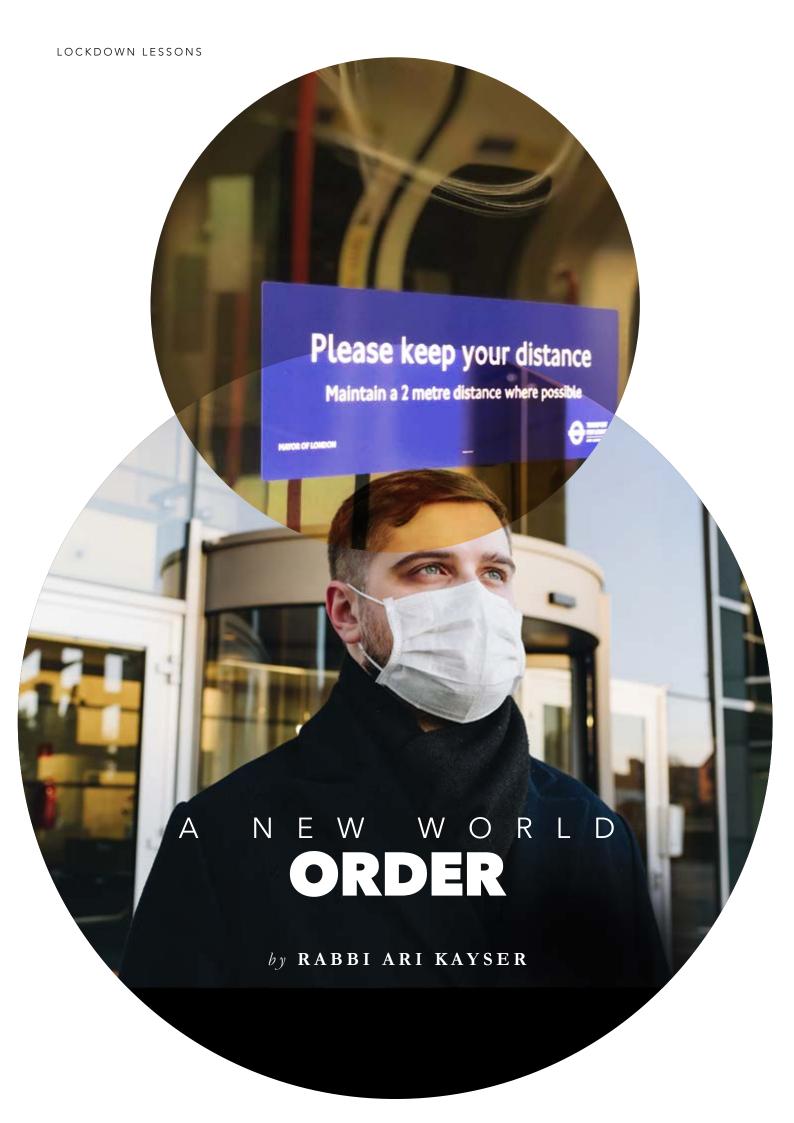
WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- Continue helping global clients create more user centric products and experiences by weaving storytelling and design
- Make "MyBatMitzvahJourney.com" the go-to platform for mums and daughters that want to transform the Bat Mitzvah experience and create a deeper and more open relationship
- Launch "CycleCentral.io" and continue educating women on how to bio-hack their female bodies, crack their careers and leverage their divine femininity to enhance every area of their life
- Help my sister create an online course focussed on mental health in the times of Corona
- Stay happy, healthy and focussed (And find a husband)



Yarin Weltsman is a multidisciplinary designer and educator who thrives at the intersection of technology, storytelling and design. She spent the past two years as the Chief Design Officer of HiPitched, a business design and branding agency. When not in the office, Yarin teaches a unique dance/movement technique she developed focussing on embodiment practices and connection to self. Yarin grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa and currently resides in Jerusalem, Israel.





WHAT ABOUT OUR LIVES BEFORE LOCKDOWN WILL WE CHOOSE TO LEAVE BEHIND? AND WHAT HAS THIS TIME GIVEN US TO TAKE FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE?

_ 69 _

As we emerge from months of lockdown, and as many of us begin to step outside into the sunlight uncertain of the road that lies ahead, we reflect on the changes we have made and what the future may hold.

We have been introduced to a whole dictionary of words since March. We all have to social distance, stay in bubbles, wear gloves, face-coverings, PPE, and hand sanitiser. We may be on furlough, or in quarantine or isolation. We have heard or read about flattening the curve, about the fluctuating r-rate, about hospitals needing ventilators. We aren't sure if we are infectious or contagious, if it matters if we are symptomatic or asymptomatic, about shops being covid-safe and whether this pandemic will even be over next year. Adding to that, many have reported having Coronaphobia, an anxiety about leaving the house and going to their usual haunts such as shops, hairdressers and the like.

With all these changes forced upon us, we have all had to rethink the way we work, socialise, interact with our families and perhaps had a chance to re-evaluate those aspects of life that could be done better. What about our lives before lockdown will we choose to leave behind? And what has this time given us to take forward into the future?

We have already seen major signals of how changes are beginning to take shape. In April, only weeks after the pandemic shook the world, NASA reported a 30% drop in air pollution over the Northeast of America. Paul Monks, professor of air pollution at the University of Leicester, former chair of the UK government's science advisory committee on air quality, said "We are now, inadvertently, conducting the largest-scale experiment ever seen".

In May, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey announced the company will allow its employees to work from home "forever". In July, the BBC reported that more than one million people had quit smoking, with almost half saying it was a direct result of the pandemic.

As we move into the world of tomorrow, perhaps at a faster rate than we anticipated, we have to stop to think. Each year, as we move towards Rosh Hashanah, we have a chance to reset, to rethink, and to re-evaluate. This is a time to take stock of the year that passed and to step forward into the future with renewed resolve.

Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the birth of humanity. On the day that Adam and Eve were fashioned from the dust of the yet-untainted-earth, we pronounce the importance of our relationship with our Creator. One of the first things God says about humankind is "It is not good to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). It was instantly apparent that we need relationships to feel complete. That observation echoes throughout the generations and is particularly poignant today, when so many of us have spent the past few months lonely or alone, isolated from view.

In the story of creation, the Torah states "Let us make humankind in our image" (Genesis 1:26). That is traditionally understood to mean that God consulted with the angels to create humankind, teaching us the importance of humility, that even God Himself consulted with the celestial beings (when clearly, He did not have to). The first humans were also told that they will have dominion over the whole of the creation. That is classically understood to mean that humans will rule over the earth and all that is contained within it.



92 IRISH TOWN GIBRALTAR

(+350) 200 64704

INFO@HYPERION.GI

WWW.HYPERION.GI

AS THE WORLD OUTSIDE HAS DESCENDED INTO THE UNKNOWN, WE ARE TASKED WITH RESETTING OURSELVES INSIDE

I would like to suggest a different understanding. 'Let us make humankind in our image' could mean that God was consulting with all of creation. The stones, organic life, the animal kingdom, all of it. Adam and Eve were, after all, the final part of all the creations. What is the significance of this? Humankind wasn't created simply to rule over everything, but rather as a composition of everything. That changes everything. It means that instead of relating to the world around us as something to use and abuse, we must relate to every aspect as a part of our very essence. It doesn't mean we must rule over creation, it means we must look after creation. Because it is a part of you. It is a call to action to look after our world.

When the first sentient being, Adam, was created, we tend to think of him born into a lush evergreen garden of beauty. The truth is, he was born into a wasteland. The Midrash tells us that when Adam walked along the barren earth, he called out in prayer and the heavens opened, triggering a downpour of rain. That downpour resulted in the growth of luscious plant life and the Garden of Eden we know. As we have stepped back out to reunite with our world after months of isolation many have commented how the air smells fresher. The world is resetting.

The lessons of Rosh Hashanah become more relevant than ever. Perhaps we are being tasked with re-evaluating these two essential relationships we have: with each other, and with the very earth itself. Perhaps the past months have allowed us to untangle ourselves from the psychological constrictions that a post-moral, post-truth society has placed us in. Perhaps we are being afforded the opportunity to reset. To rethink. To reassess what is important to us. As the world outside has descended into the unknown, we are tasked with resetting ourselves inside. As we collectively turned inward, and the dust and fumes of our human footprint begin to settle, the fish are returning to the seas, the birds sing once more, and the smog hovering above our concrete jungles begins to dissipate – and we can smell the freshness of the air that once was – we prepare ourselves for the new world order. As this happens outside, it happens within us too.

As we emerge from lockdown and breathe the crisp air of a world reset, will the old 'me' return to life as it was, or will we simply go back to business as usual?



ARE

YOU

RELEVANTIN

A POST-COVID



by STEVE HERZ

HOW TO STAY INDISPENSABLE IN A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

After a record-breaking streak of job growth we are heading into the sixth month of Covid. The UK unemployment rate is now expected to rise to 11.7% even without a second Corona wave which would drive unemployment over 15%. Either way, it's expected to be the worst job market since 1984 in Great Britain.

If you're lucky enough to still have a job, you are probably worried about holding on to it. And if you're currently out of work, you want to bounce back as quickly as possible. You can't control how this shock to the economy affects employment prospects. That means it's more important than ever to refine the number one thing that will get you ahead in any career: your ability to communicate and make deep human connections.

According to a seminal study from the Carnegie Foundation, only 15 percent of your professional success is causally related to your technical proficiency and knowledge. The rest of the pie is made up of what we might call "soft skills" — your personality and your ability to communicate, negotiate and lead. In a word: your connectability. Most of us spend our entire academic and professional careers exclusively focussed on the 15 percent and largely ignore the 85 percent. The problem is that in almost any job, your co-workers probably also have the right knowledge, experience and technical skills: They're the price of entry. So in order to differentiate yourself — to ensure you're seen as indispensable — you must master the art of connectability.

This career-defining skill is based on three key communication strategies that I lay out in my book "Don't Take Yes for an Answer" (Harper Business 2020): the authority you exhibit, the warmth you convey, and the energy you exude and bring out in others.

AUTHORITY

Authority signifies competence. We know it when we see it. We know it when we hear it. Authority is commanding. Whether it's delivered softly or loudly, it sounds confident. The most successful salespeople, businesspeople, broadcasters



and politicians — all people — embody authority. There are a few key elements of authority: voice, presence, body language, dress, alignment and detachment. First, consider the quality of your voice. Is your pitch properly placed? Are you too nasal? Resonant? Does your accent obscure your message? Do you use too many filler words? Do you speak with a sense of purpose, or do your comments and questions trail off? Now consider your physical appearance. How's your posture? Your attire? Do you make eye contact when you're speaking to someone? When you present with authority you feel it internally and you recognise it externally based on how people respond to you.

In my experience as a talent agent and executive coach, I have seen many people sabotage their careers due to a lack of self-awareness over a communication flaw that compromised their authority. Conversely, I have seen many others become aware of that flaw and change their professional trajectory simply from eradicating a bad habit. In my book, Reid Pakula, a young talent agent in my firm is profiled. His career has skyrocketed in the past few years since he stopped saying the word "like" which seriously undermined his authority. By using the techniques we teach, he has completely stopped using it and both his authority and his confidence have grown immeasurably.



Canali
Paul and Shark
Eton Shirts
7 for All Mankind
Bugatti
Gran Sasso Knitwear



69 GOLDERS GREEN ROAD
LONDON NW11 8EL
T: 020 455 6607

www.boutiquehomme.co.uk

WARMTH

Warmth is communicated through humility, vulnerability, empathy and by your attentiveness - your listening ear. That's because effective connection isn't just about output, or projecting your message outward into the world. Input, how you receive the crowd, group or single individual you're communicating with, is equally important to making an effective connection. Warmth is necessary to create trust, as well as relatability, which is crucial to solidifying your position on a team. To assess your warmth, ask yourself a few key questions. Do your colleagues trust you? Do you make them feel acknowledged in your interactions? Do you welcome feedback from others so they can feel open enough to challenge your ideas? Do you listen when others are speaking? Does your body language belie your interest? Pay attention to the signals: Your life provides all the answers to these questions.

In my experience, the best "trick" to come across as warmer is to feed your own curiosity about other people. Use your interactions as an opportunity to learn something new. In a job seeking situation, don't forget it's *not* about you. You're being hired to fill a need of someone else, and if you embody that in your mindset and communication you'll convey that you care.

ENERGY

This is that dynamic quality that gives you power. The more energy you have, the more power you have to influence, illuminate, educate or engage. Authority earns other people's respect; warmth earns their affection and trust. Energy compels people to follow. The components of energy are conviction, enthusiasm, engagement and emotional commitment to your message. When you believe in and trust what you're saying, your audience inevitably will, too. You must be genuinely all in — present, authentic and fully engaged. Your emotional commitment makes an emotional connection that can be extremely memorable, impressionable and persuasive.

That doesn't mean you always have to be "on." There are benefits to high and low energy; what matters is how it's communicated and received. How's your energy? Do you overpower people by talking too fast? Too much? Not pausing to let others have their voices heard? Do you truly listen in a way that makes others feel energised by your interest in them? Again — all you need to do is pay careful attention to the way

people react to you and you'll know if you're energising or deflating.

Remember: Energy is about a dynamic you create with your audience. It's not simply about output. Great listening can create warmth and energise your companion.

Google's Project Oxygen, which researched its own pool of top employees since the company was founded in 1998, surprised everyone when it reported that out of the eight qualities considered most important, STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and math) came in eighth. Absolutely last! Hovering at the top were qualities like good communication and empathy. Google knows there are many candidates who can code. It's more rare to find someone who can code and collaborate with others, lead a team or follow someone else when needed. Someone who can do any and all of those things and code really well is not a commodity. They are indispensable.

You may not be a software engineer, and your job has its own specific challenges. But what is clear from the research is that every job requires authority, warmth and energy. The business world will likely be permanently changed as we emerge from this crisis, and there will be a Darwinian thinning of the workforce. Will you be fit to survive in this new reality? That answer will depend on how you act now and nimbly adapt to the uncharted future that will emerge.



Steve Herz is President of The Montag Group, a sports and entertainment talent and marketing consultancy. He is also a career advisor to CEOs, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and young professionals. Prior to joining TMG, Steve was the President and Founding Partner of IF Management. Herz received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Michigan and his J.D. from Vanderbilt University Law School. Herz is involved with several charities, including serving on the local leadership council at Birthright Israel. Steve is married with two children and lives on the Upper West Side of New York City.

THOUGHT LEADERS



A VISION OF LEADERSHIP

PRACTICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS

by SHIRA DRUION

CHIEF RABBI DR WARREN GOLDSTEIN SHARES HIS VISION ON LEADERSHIP IN A CANDID INTERVIEW WITH PERSPECTIVES

Leadership is a fascinating phenomenon. Our societies are shaped by leaders as they pioneer the way forward, stimulating us to think, motivating our actions and lifting our spirits. They create infrastructures and if they are righteous, they ensure sustainability. The Jewish communities that have taken their seat at the global table are those with great leaders at the helm, and the South African Jewish community has its seat at the main table of that banquet. It boasts a zeitgeist that is renowned worldwide and pulsates with a fierce commitment to Jewish and Zionist values.

Over the past few months, the pandemic has wreaked havoc on the lives we once knew and we have watched in awe as the best of our leaders have risen to the surface and those less worthy have fallen from their glass pedestals. The signature mark of a true leader is one who stands up to be counted, steps up to the plate boldly, with courage, tenacity and a definitive commitment to see their undertakings through to the very end. Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein is ubiquitous on the leadership playing field, always at the forefront, setting the trend, paving the way for South African Jewry by ensuring that on all fronts the communities' multitude of needs have been accounted for – a feat he continuously undertakes with a drive that quite simply put is...unmatched.

I have had the great honour and privilege to share a special relationship with both Rabbi Goldstein and his wife Gina and am a great admirer of his many worthy and wonderful projects. He is the quintessential maverick, leading from the top as he navigates often uncharted waters with an uncanny ability to make miracles happen. It is a sunny day and our conversation is as candid as it gets - transparent, enlightening and moving. I am always uplifted by Rabbi Goldstein for so many reasons, but what I find most inspiring is his purity of intention.

As we discuss leadership, he shares a treasure trove of golden nuggets, "A leader does what he has to do for the good of others. If you are in a position of leadership and those around you are in need or are suffering, you are obligated to step up and make a contribution." And step up he does. As we discussed the pandemic and the key role he played in creating a task force and infrastructure, it is clear that he is a man of his word. One may think, what does the role of Chief Rabbi have

to do with broader communal issues? He answers me before I could ask the question. "Torah is broad, it encompasses everything. Torah is not limited. It pertains to all aspects of life and therefore, my responsibilities as a Torah leader are similarly holistic. Being a true Torah leader means looking out for the safety, security, welfare and overall wellbeing of the community. Leadership is first and foremost about caring for people. This has to be the prism through which you engage with your community.

"Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch was against using the word 'religion' to define Judaism because Torah is about so much more than that, it has something to say on everything."

Over the past 15 years, Rabbi Goldstein has put this philosophy into action. He is the founder of Community Active Protection (CAP), a community-driven crime-fighting initiative that protects 30,000 homes and upwards of 200,000 people in Johannesburg, which has reduced contact crime across the city by between 80 and 90 percent. He was also a founder of ORT/JET- an organisation that helps empower local Jewish businesses.

In 2013, he introduced one of his signature projects – the Shabbat Project. What began as a local "unity initiative" bringing together South African Jews - observant and not, young and old - to observe a full halachic Shabbat, soon became a full-blown global grassroots movement that last year reached more than 1,500 cities and 106 countries around the world. There's also Sinai Indaba, perhaps the largest annual Torah convention of its kind in the world. Every year, the event brings together an array of leading international Jewish thinkers and speakers, and thousands of South African Jews of all persuasions. Then there's "Generation Sinai", a platform for parents and children to connect and learn Torah ideas with one another in preparation for each Jewish holiday, which has become a fixture in many schools, including here in the UK.

On the political front, Rabbi Goldstein has been a vocal advocate for Israel, and a staunch activist against antisemitism and anti-Zionism. He has also been a forceful critic of the South African government when it has dealt unfairly with Israel, and during the corrupt presidency of Jacob Zuma,

FIRST, YOU WORK ON YOURSELF, REFINE YOUR CHARACTER, BECOME A MENSCH. AND THEN YOU WIDEN YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE TO INCLUDE A SPOUSE, A FAMILY, FRIENDS, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY IN EVER-EXPANDING CIRCLES OF LEADERSHIP.

during which time he joined marches on parliament, spoke at national rallies and even went so far as to amend the traditional prayer said in shuls every Shabbat morning for the welfare of the government. A recent public conversation with the Chief Justice of South Africa on the subject of racism underlined his commitment to racial justice, and when there was a public outcry over Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng's perceived "pro-Israel bias", Rabbi Goldstein leapt to the Chief Justice's defence with a series of searing op-eds in one of the country's main newspapers.

The breadth of Torah - this idea that Torah "has something to say on everything" is reflected in the books and other works Rabbi Goldstein has written. With a PhD in Human Rights and Constitutional Law, his doctoral dissertation explored the Torah's "Vision for a Moral Society", and dealt with issues such as human rights, political power, women's rights and the criminal justice system. Soon after taking the reins as chief rabbi, he wrote the "Bill of Responsibilities" - adopted by South Africa's Department of Education and taught in schools nationwide, and then co-authored a book with Dumani Mandela (Nelson Mandela's grandson) on the importance to society of values and morals. At the same time, Chief Rabbi Goldstein - a qualified Dayan (Jewish Judge) - is also the author of Sefer Mishpat Tzedek, a halachic work (in Hebrew) discussing Torah business law and ethics, with a particular focus on competition law, and The Legacy: Teachings for Life from the Great Lithuanian Rabbis (with noted historian, Rabbi Berel Wein), exploring Lithuanian Jewry and its heritage and values.

"Torah is the blueprint for the world," says Rabbi Goldstein. As the *Midrash* says, 'God looked into the Torah and created the world', meaning the world is an expression of everything contained in the Torah, and therefore there is nothing within human experience that is outside the framework of Torah."

LEADERSHIP STYLE

"There are different models of leadership. Western leadership is typically top-down, hierarchical. African traditional leadership is bottom-up. A classic example of this is the *Imbizo* custom – whereby everyone states their opinion, and from those opinions the chief formulates a consensus for the way forward. The Jewish model of leadership is inside-out. First, you work on yourself, refine your character, become a *mensch*. And then you widen your sphere of influence to include a spouse, a family, friends, community and society in ever-expanding circles of leadership. But the starting point is the self. The *miztvot* (commandments) are the framework for helping us to create a better version of ourselves. Nachmanides' entire philosophy of the *miztvot* is based on how they change us and make us into better people. And for me, this is a principle that guides me in everything I do.

"Leadership is about creating partnerships, about collaborative relationships that are not top-heavy. When leadership is top-heavy, it holds people back and doesn't achieve the intended outcomes. The Torah outlook on leadership is very interesting. The Talmud teaches that God wants us to be His partners in creation. Torah itself is a framework for forming that partnership with God. We see from God's own example that leadership should not be top-heavy. This form of collaborative, consultative leadership is a style I adopted from the outset in 2005 when I first took office. The incredible thing is that when we recognise our partnership with God, we by definition become partners with one another. Building a community requires leaders to believe in their community and the community to believe in their leader. So, at the heart of leadership is this partnership model."

Rabbi Goldstein tells me that when he creates new projects, he first creates the infrastructure and ensures it is solid and then he empowers others to take responsibility on the implementation, because that is how you build a sustainable model. "When I embark on projects, my goal is to build partnerships and work

collaboratively, communicating clearly, leading proactively and always empowering others as we go along. No leader has all the answers and no leader is fully self-reliant. You will only be successful if you build bridges, have faith in others and give them the respect they deserve. If you empower people, you allow them the chance to become great. Nelson Mandela exemplified this. He believed in people and this opened doors for them to rise up and actualise their potential. When I met him I asked him to sign a children's version of his autobiography 'Long Walk to Freedom'. He wrote - "To a future great leader." That note epitomised how he saw potential greatness in the people around him. We are all created in the image of God and therefore have all been imbued with the spiritual gift of malchut, an innate majesty. The Torah tells us that Moses was "the humblest of all men." The commentators explain that his greatness came from being able to recognise the greatness in the people around him. That is true humility, true greatness, true leadership."

0 Ν H E D F M I

"As part of my mandate as Chief Rabbi, I try to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the community. So when we realised that South Africa was weeks away from a full blown outbreak of Covid-19, I immediately endeavoured to establish protocols that would ensure that it was addressed as effectively as possible."

In all his endeavours as Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Goldstein has always tried to work with experts in any given field, and the pandemic was no different. Fortunately, South Africa is blessed with a remarkably resourceful Jewish community with leading experts in many professional spheres. From the beginning of the pandemic, Rabbi Goldstein enlisted the guidance and support of Professor Barry Schoub, Founding Director of the National Centre of Disease Control and a world-leading virologist, and Dr Richard Friedland, CEO of Netcare, the country's leading private healthcare provider. Later he brought on board Professor Ephraim Kramer, a leading expert in emergency medicine, with a specialty in mass gatherings, who recently oversaw all of the medical operations for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Of course, Covid-19 is more than just a health crisis. The institution of mass lockdowns to curtail the spread of the disease has engendered financial, social, political and spiritual upheaval on an unprecedented scale. "Dealing with Covid-19 as a leader requires a multi-faceted approach. This is the approach I've tried to take".

- MEDICAL: Rabbi Goldstein formed a task force of renowned experts, including Professor Schoub, Dr Friedland and Professor Kramer to address the acute medical emergency that the pandemic caused, ensuring the community were pre-emptive and proactive in closing shuls before lockdown and implementing protocols that would protect the community. The medical team also established the scientific criteria for when the reopening of shuls could take place in a responsible way, also providing the protocols for how that should be done.
- POLITICAL: Rabbi Goldstein has engaged with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and senior cabinet ministers throughout the pandemic. Many of these engagements have involved discussing the implications of the lockdown for the country's religious communities and ensuring the provisions of the lockdown were manageable.
- FINANCIAL: Within the community, the Chief Rabbi has been particularly anxious about the issue of Jewish-owned small and medium-sized businesses surviving the harsh lockdown restrictions. From the beginning of the pandemic, he worked behind the scenes with a number of philanthropists and business leaders to help set up a special community fund to assist these businesses. The outcome of these efforts was the Gesher Fund, offering interest-free loans to ensure Jewish businesses weather the storm so they can get back on their feet when the Covid-19 crisis subsides.
- SPIRITUAL: Chief Rabbi Goldstein coordinated a variety of prayer initiatives, as well a series of Shabbat campaigns, with the focus on how Shabbat can be a source of comfort and strength at a difficult time. These campaigns culminated in a global Shabbat initiative bringing together Chief Rabbis across the world and centred on Shabbat HaGadol (the Shabbat before Pesach). He then joined a number of these chief rabbis in issuing a call for Jewish communities across the globe to set aside their differences and unite in honour of the festival of Shavuot, and in recognition of the common challenges that have beset communities in the wake of Covid-19.
- EDUCATION: The Chief Rabbi published and distributed a series of books comprising articles written by the South African community Rabbis and Rebbetzins for each of the festivals. This, he says, was of particular importance with shuls closed and the usual avenues for spiritual connection limited. He is producing a Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur guide to help the community through the high holy days, though it is anticipated that



shuls will be reopen by then, albeit with strict safety protocols and restrictions.

- ONLINE: Rabbi Goldstein set up a WhatsApp group and Facebook page to spread words of Torah and provide comfort and guidance to the community. There has also been a weekly webinar to provide regular Covid-19 updates to the community, alongside advice from special guests dealing with Covid-19-related issues, such as managing stress, dealing with loss, and coping with financial challenges during the crisis.
- CONVERSATION: He is also about to launch the "Lessons from Lockdown" campaign: a community-wide conversation in which people are invited to share what they have learnt during the coronavirus crisis – "so that we can draw strength and inspiration from each other as a community."

Rabbi Goldstein explains how the strategy for the way shuls will exit lockdown will also fall in line with this collaborative principle of leadership: "I don't take a paternalistic approach of ordering shuls what to do. Rather, together with Professor Kramer, we have put together the guidelines that ensure it is medically sound and responsible to reopen and then I invite the Rabbis to decide together with their communities about how and when they want to reopen. I have made it clear to them that to open a shul without complying with our health and safety protocols would be a violation of *balacha* and so the

ultimate decision of whether to open is theirs. This means they are obliged to take full responsibility for the decision and to be accountable for that decision to their communities. I have also encouraged individuals to take responsibility for their own decisions to attend shul. And if they notice that their shul is not complying with the protocols, they must raise the issue with shul leadership, or even find somewhere else to pray, if needs be. This approach empowers shuls to lead their own communities and also compels congregants to act as equal partners with co-responsibility in the process."

LEADERSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD

"Rabbi Mordechai Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth New Jersey used to say, "The Torah speaks in the language of tomorrow." The Torah is by its nature always ahead of its time in how it relates to our world. God, Himself, is in a sense democratic in how He wants us to partner with Him in His creation of the world. He left the world in a state of imperfection precisely for this reason; He leaves room for us to partner with Him in perfecting it. Consider this: the Talmud teaches that a doctor is given permission to heal. One may think, how can a doctor change the status quo and essentially overrule the authority of God's own Hand in a person's life? But the Talmud is teaching us a very important principle: God Himself wants the doctor to be a partner in bringing healing."



Chief Rabbi Goldstein with South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa

Rabbi Goldstein emphasises the great importance in believing in people and relinquishing control in order to empower. He is emphatic in his belief that no one person can offer all the answers and quotes a Mishna in Ethics of the Fathers, "Make many students." He explains this to mean that every Jew should play a role in teaching Torah and thereby have many students, not just rabbis and officials. "God wants us to work with him in making this world a better place, which requires leaders to let go and make space for everyone. The truth is this is not always easy for the layman who then has to assume more responsibility that they might be accustomed to. So the paternalistic model of leadership is often a safer bet, because it absolves people of having to make a contribution. People need to feel the weight of responsibility and find solutions together - solving problems as equal stakeholders."

LESSONS FROM MY REBBE AND TEACHER – RABBI AZRIEL GOLDFEIN

"I learned in Yeshiva Gedolah in Johannesburg under Rabbi Azriel Goldfein who was very influential in shaping me into the person I am today. He gave me a deep appreciation of Torah as the divine design of the world, and the way I have strived to lead and serve in my tenure as Chief Rabbi is always by using Torah as the blueprint. Torah has formed the basis of every single thing I have set out to do.

"Rabbi Goldfein was also remarkable in how he dispensed advice. Whatever problem I brought to him, he never told me what to do. We would analyse the situation together, and he would probe my motivations for taking a particular line, and also explore all the options available to me. He was brilliant at asking penetrating questions to help me to understand my own

train of thought and how I had arrived at my decisions. This process would help me refine my thought process and arrive at an answer. He was exceptional in this regard.

He also taught us to think for ourselves, and when we wanted to delve into Torah topics, he would passionately encourage us to examine the sources and to spend time with the texts, working hard to make sense of it. Of course, this was always done through the lens of *mesorah* (tradition passed down from rabbi to student) which links us back to Sinai. But we were given the freedom to explore the Torah in our own unique way.

LITVISHE HERITAGE

"The Litrishe derech (Lithuanian approach) is very much centred on character development, connected to the Mussar movement, founded by Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. This approach encourages a person to put in the effort to work on one's character because good character and pristine integrity is the starting point of leadership. We can never dismantle the traits that do not serve us, but we can mould them and refine them and eventually gain control over them. The Mussar approach compels us to address head-on our vested interests, our egos, the resentments we may carry - these are all part of who we are - and to transform them by redirecting them. This is another reflection of the breadth of Torah; that it encompasses every aspect of life, every dimension of us."

Rabbi Goldstein constantly emphasises the universal relevance and moral weight of the Torah's message. He lives and breathes this credo and through his extraordinary example he has been able to impact hundreds of thousands of Jews in the global Jewish community and is renowned as a leader by both Jews and gentiles alike. What is most impressive about him is his extraordinary ability to create such a fluid intersection between the Torah and secular world and with a symbiotic combination of gentleness and boldness that could only come about through the consistent character refinement that underpins the noble ethos by which he lives.

To quote Nelson Mandela, "A leader...is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind." Rabbi Goldstein exemplifies the very essence of leadership as he shepherds the flock home.



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English, Education and Psychology. She then trained as a Speech and Drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former Editor of YALLA magazine and the current Executive Editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery to university, where she lectured on writing and communication skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, teaching a broad age group of students. Shira is passionate about women's education and runs women's programmes in the community.

WINNERS & LOSERS OF THE ISRAEL-UAE PEACE AGREEMENT

by DARREN COHEN

Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the author and do not necessarily express the views of Aish UK.

This article was written on 18 August 2020 and is therefore reflective of events up to this date.

The notion of peace, *shalom*, is at the heart of the Jewish yearning for a better world. In Israel, the modern Jewish state, the word has in recent years been missing from the national discourse. The Israeli peace camp has traditionally advocated the principle of 'land for peace' – territorial concessions to the Palestinians, in exchange for recognition and security for Israel. However, this movement has dwindled in size and relevance over recent years, partially due to a wave of terrorism in the early 2000s and several rounds of hostilities with the Hamas terrorist group that rules the Gaza Strip, which followed Israel's withdrawal from the territory in 2005.

It was therefore with great elation that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that not only had he resisted the 'land for peace' principle, but he had totally undermined this paradigm and achieved 'peace for peace' with the United Arab Emirates without uprooting a single Israeli from their home. While undoubtedly a historic moment in the decades of strife-ridden Israeli-Arab relations, Netanyahu paid a price for the deal – he was forced to suspend his plans to apply Israeli sovereignty to parts of the West Bank, known as annexation.



HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH

On 13th August 2020, the United States brokered a historic agreement between Israel and the UAE to normalise full diplomatic relations. Known as the 'Abraham Accord', the landmark deal constitutes Israel's first public breakthrough with an Arab Gulf state and only the third normalisation agreement in its history with a major Arab country following peace accords with Egypt and Jordan, in 1979 and 1994, respectively. The UAE, which is located thousands of miles away from Jerusalem and has never fought a war with Israel, is the Gulf

region's second most powerful and wealthy state. Although the terms of the agreement are unclear at the time of writing, the normalisation of relations is expected to extend to all spheres, including an exchange of ambassadors and cooperation in all fields. The accord is thus a major strategic asset for Israel, and recognition that "70 years of not communicating with Israel has led us nowhere...", as Emirati Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash made clear. However, the decision to officially and publicly reach a peace agreement with Israel did not emerge from nothing.

Over recent years, there has been a gradual and largely covert process of rapprochement between Israel and major Sunni Muslim-led, Arab Gulf states, principally, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Primarily thanks to a shared antipathy towards the Shiite Iranian nuclear and regional proxy threat, and the Arab states' desire to gain access to innovative Israeli technologies and formidable intelligence capabilities, Jerusalem has enjoyed increasingly warm ties with prominent Gulf countries. This has included publicly breaking previously unthinkable taboos on implicit recognition of Israel. For instance, in 2018, the first-ever official state visit by an Israeli minister to Abu Dhabi was recorded when Miri Regev was welcomed in the Emirate. More recently, an Israeli delegation was invited to the UAE's Expo 2020 in Dubai.

ANNEXATION: OFF THE TABLE?

However, this progress towards normalisation seemingly grounded to a halt upon the Israeli government's stated declaration to apply sovereignty to, or annex, parts of the West Bank from 1st July as part of a coalition agreement between Netanyahu, and former IDF Chief-of-Staff, Benny Gantz. Bibi, as he is known to Israelis, had pledged at several elections to annex parts of the West Bank and envisioned a golden opportunity to implement this vision when the Trump administration released its peace plan. Known as the 'deal of the century', it includes US recognition of Israeli sovereignty in approximately 30 percent of the West Bank.

The Israeli leader aimed to reap the benefits of the deal, namely the unilateral annexation of territory, without pursuing dialogue with the Palestinians that would entail concessions further along the line in the form of a Palestinian state.

ANNEXATION VS APPLICATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The terminology used to describe the Israeli government's plan has implications for its meaning. **Annexation** indicates the acquisition of another entity's territory, often by force. In this case, it implies that Israel is seizing land that does not belong to it and is the language frequently used in the international community. **Application of sovereignty**, the language preferred on the Israeli right, is indicative of a process of applying Israeli law to a territory that always belonged to Israel, emanating from historical, legal, and religious rights.

Nevertheless, together with reports that Washington was opposed to unilateral Israeli moves without engagement with the entire Trump plan, Netanyahu's merger with Gantz's 'Blue and White' party put a further spanner in the works. Gantz has persistently conditioned any declaration pertaining to territory in the West Bank on coordination with Israel's allies, primarily the US, and its regional neighbours, Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians. Meanwhile, as the 1st July deadline grew closer, Netanyahu faced immense domestic challenges, including a second coronavirus wave, the economic ramifications of the pandemic, and demonstrations against his government's alleged failure to manage the crisis, which was bolstered by a preexisting protest movement that demanded Bibi's resignation over corruption allegations against him.

Domestic opposition was not the only cause for concern. Alongside growing international rejection of any potential Israeli annexation (British PM Boris Johnson even wrote an op-ed in a major Israel newspaper to convey his concerns), in an unprecedented decision to publish in an Israeli newspaper, the UAE Ambassador to the US stated "Israeli plans for annexation...and normalisation are a contradiction". The Emiratis presented Netanyahu with a stark choice: normalisation or annexation. This may have been a hint of what was to come, because Bibi clearly chose to go down the path of normalisation.

OPPOSITION TO ANNEXATION

Subscribers to the two-state solution hold that annexation would destroy any lingering hopes of establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel. This would compel Israel to choose between being a Jewish state or a democratic state. In the former option, Israel would maintain its Jewish character and majority, but by formally withdrawing political and national rights from another people under its control, it would cease to be a democracy. By going down the latter path and extending citizenship to all Palestinians under its control, Israel would lose its Jewish majority and thus its *raison d'etre*.

THE UAE ALSO STANDS TO GAIN A **GREAT DEAL FROM THE AGREEMENT**

___ 69 ____

CONFLICTING MESSAGES

However, although the official joint statement issued by Israel, the US, and the UAE makes it very clear that Jerusalem has agreed to suspend the annexation plan, the messages emerging from the three countries' leaders present a slightly distorted picture. While Netanyahu insisted that there is "no change" to his plan to apply sovereignty to the Jewish people's ancestral homelands in Judea and Samaria, President Trump unequivocally stated that annexation was "more than just off the table". Casting more doubt on the dynamics, Mohammed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, framed the agreement as halting "further Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories", while adding as a side note that the two countries will establish a "roadmap towards establishing a bilateral relationship."

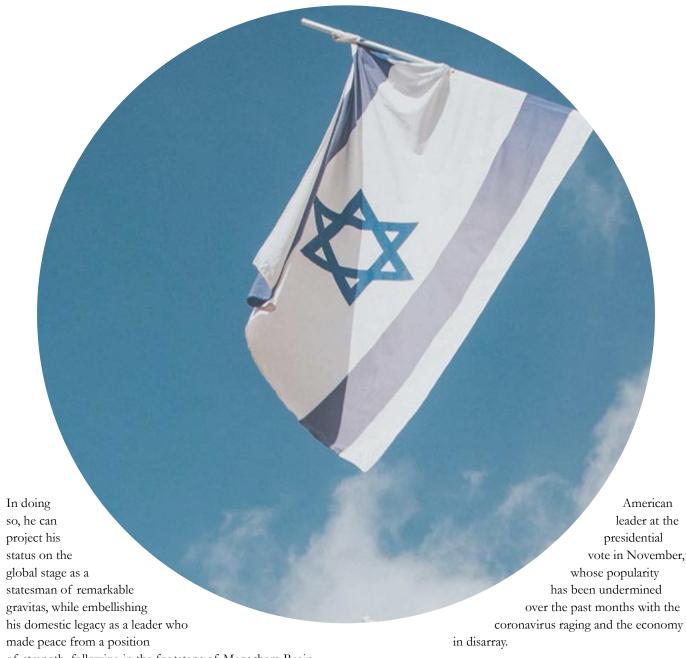
This illustrates the likely difficulties in implementing the agreement moving forward, as well as the challenges posed to leaders of both nations in successfully reconciling their commitments to each other while simultaneously not alienating key stakeholders. For the UAE, this is the Muslim and Arab world, while in Bibi's case, it is the right-wing voters who supported his annexation pledge. Regardless, annexation appears off the table for now, and in the event of a Joe Biden victory at the polls in November, who has stated his opposition to the plan, it would likely be both undesirable and unfeasible for Israel in the foreseeable future.

LAND FOR PEACE? THE DOMESTIC **RESPONSE**

Netanyahu is a divisive figure in Israel and while the agreement with the UAE was welcomed across the political spectrum, it also prompted condemnation. Most acutely, the leaders of the West Bank settler movement and the right-wing Yamina party, led by Naftali Bennett, hurled criticism at the PM for failing to deliver on the annexation front. Bennett accused Netanyahu of "missing the opportunity of a century". Meanwhile, while welcoming the peace accord with an Arab state, those on the left noted the grand irony in the Israeli leader's declaration that Jerusalem had secured 'peace for peace'. The peace camp emphasised that only by making concessions and "giving up" on the annexation of land, and thus leaving a window open to create a Palestinian state, was Netanyahu able to gain recognition from the Emirates. In other words, what we had witnessed was indeed the very 'land for peace' principle that Bibi so derided his political rivals for.

WINNERS AND LOSERS

So, who are the winners and losers of this deal? In the immediate term, Netanyahu emerges from this new chapter of Israel-Arab relations with evident success. He has undoubtedly moved the goalposts. Prior to this agreement, his detractors on the left insisted that he would not be able to gain Arab states' formal recognition of Israel until the Palestinian question was revolved, which would require painful concessions. He has thus altered this equation and achieved normalisation with a major Arab state prior to ending the conflict with the Palestinians and therefore gained implicit acceptance of the status quo and Israel's continued control of the West Bank.



of strength, following in the footsteps of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin, who reached agreements with Egypt and Jordan, respectively. However, time will tell if the move translates into success at the ballot box. Alongside rightwingers who prioritise annexation and may now be persuaded to vote for Bibi's rightist rivals, many Israelis have much more tangible concerns than a trip to Dubai at present, such as their diminishing livelihoods.

President Trump can finally boast a foreign policy coup after almost four years at the helm. He will portray his administration's ability to broker the agreement as evidence of its vision of a strong Middle Eastern alliance of anti-Iranian and anti-terror nations committed to a brighter future. Nevertheless, in the same vein as Netanyahu, it is unclear whether this will yield electoral success for the mercurial

The UAE also stands to gain a great deal from the agreement. In addition to being recognised as a pioneer in the region by embarking on a ground-breaking journey of peace, it will increase its access to both state-of-the-art Israeli technologies and American weapons. The US has adopted a 'Qualitative Military Edge' policy wherein Washington ensures that Israel receives more advanced weaponry than its Arab neighbours. By making peace with Israel, the UAE may be able to upgrade its military arsenal. All of this will position it better to tackle regional challenges, primarily, Iran.

The big loser of the Israel-UAE deal are the Palestinians. The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority (PA) and Gazabased Hamas have become increasingly sidelined during the Trump era. Successive US policies have been perceived by the Palestinians to be wholly one-sided towards Israel, most notably the decisions to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem and recognise the city as the capital of the Jewish state. The last straw for the Palestinian leadership was the Trump peace plan and Israeli declaration to annex territory in the West Bank on which the PA seeks to establish an independent state. This ultimately led the Palestinian leadership, of its own volition, to sever all ties with both Israel and the US.

This self-ostracisation has left its leadership largely powerless. The only remaining leverage it had over Israel was the conviction that Arab states would never establish full relations with Israel without the Jewish state making concessions to the Palestinians. Now, even this asset is seemingly slipping away. While the UAE and its supporters deem the removal of annexation a major achievement for the Palestinians, for the latter, Israel's ability to gain recognition without relinquishing control of the West Bank is an indication of their plight. For this reason, PA leader Abbas called the UAE's decision a "betrayal".

LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN TO AN ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS?

This begs the question: will peace with the UAE help to resolve the real intractable issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Although Trump's advisor and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, stated after the agreement was announced that "President Trump was able to get Israel to agree to a two-state solution", Netanyahu continues to insist that he will annex territory in the West Bank. Meanwhile, the weak PA has been persistently undermined over recent years and much of the Arab world are reportedly increasingly frustrated by the former's rejectionism. It is therefore unlikely that any breakthrough will emerge on the Palestinian front until leaders of both peoples are replaced.

Thus, it would be naive to talk of the dawn of a new era of peace, even in the likely situation that other Gulf states follow suit in normalising relations with Israel. Nevertheless, this does not take away from the achievement by all parties involved in the Israel-UAE agreement. As Emirati Minister Gargash stated, the Arab world has gained nothing by refusing to talk to Israel, and we should all welcome the return of the words *shalom*, *salaam*, peace to the international discourse.





HELD UP BY THE NATION, OR HOLDING UP THE NATION?

by RABBI DANIEL ROWE

Like so many Rabbis, I have been contacted by numerous people concerned with this year's Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. For some, these are their highlights of the year. For others, it is their Jewish lifeline that keeps them and their families connected to the Jewish people. This year under Covid rules, many synagogues cannot fit all their members. Some might be forced to offer abbreviated services, with facemasks, with less singing and no children. Many people are wondering whether to go at all, whilst others worry that their children will miss out.

I actually think that, fascinatingly enough, the prayers of Rosh Hashanah themselves offer a perspective that can really help. At the centre of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf ('additional') service

is the blessing 'Zichronot' usually translated as 'memories'. We talk about the memories we would like God to consider when judging us. Yet these are not personal memories, but national collective memories: Noah standing singlehandedly against the moral depravity of his time; Abraham's family teaching ethical monotheism; and the 'Children of Israel' marching out into a desert with complete faith in God. How are these national memories meant to help us as individuals going through personal judgement?

An important clue is that the Hebrew word for 'memory', 'Zikaron' is not merely memory, it is identity. When we stand before God we tell Him that somewhere deep within, we actually identify ourselves with the people of Israel. We were

born not decades, but millennia ago. Even as individuals, we carry the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the people. The nation carries us, and we carry the nation. That is how we approach God on Rosh Hashanah.

Our sense of Jewishness is always bound up with the wider people of Israel. But that can also lead to a sense of outsourcing our Jewishness to the community. That is to miss the point entirely. The whole point of 'Zichronot' is to say that the national identity of Israel is *my* identity too. It challenges each one of us to realise that we are responsible for the preservation and eventual realisation of the dreams of the collective community of Israel.

When we are being lifted by the community, we do not need to exercise our own independent Jewish muscle. Any muscle that is not exercised weakens and atrophies. This year we cannot rely on the Rabbi, the Chazzan, the community and the children's service to carry us through. But that also offers an opportunity to step forward and to discover our own Jewish muscle, and to raise ourselves, our friends and our families, through these days.

That takes some work.

The prayers of the High Holy Days are not at first so easy to relate to. On Rosh Hashanah they talk about God as 'King', and on Yom Kippur they ask us to take a hard look at ourselves and become better people. They are not personal prayers written by us for us; they are national prayers written by Israel for Israel, and sometimes for all of humanity.

What if we were to take some time aside, in the days and weeks beforehand, and to study the prayers. Perhaps we could find a guide – a Rabbi, an online course, or a friend who is more knowledgeable than we are. Perhaps we could get a group together and learn the prayers and the tunes for ourselves. We may discover just how powerful, moving, meaningful, relevant and life changing these prayers can be. And when we do walk into shul, facemasks and all, the voices of the siddur will resonate with our voice. We will not be the one needing lifting, but the one providing it for ourselves and others.

It is not just the prayers. In Judaism synagogue is really important, but it is not the most important part of our lives. The home is even more important, as are the centres of study. The most sacred places of Judaism are the minds, the hearts of individuals and of families. This year we can place much more emphasis on those. We can prepare the Rosh Hashanah meals together. Maybe some families can cook together. Whether or not we do, we can certainly prepare together with discussions, games, stories to share, questions to pose and so on.

The most iconic moment of the synagogue service is the sound of the shofar. The blasts begin with one long calling sound, a *tekia*, followed by the broken sounds, known variously as *shevraim* and *teru'ah*, and then once again the long blast. The long blasts are regal, suggesting the entry of the presence of God into the hearts and minds of the community. The broken blasts represent a broken world, and sound like a crying child.

Each year we think about the way things should be (the long blast) then reflect on the broken state of the way things are now (the broken blasts) before letting the long blast lift our ears and our sights to envision a healed holy world, and how we can play our part in the coming year to make that fixed world a reality. The long blasts are the voice of a community coming together, singing together as one. The broken blasts are more painful, and represent a situation like ours when we must stay further apart.

This year the broken sounds may resonate more strongly than usual. Some minds may be cast to the tears of a loved one whose life was lost. For others it may be the tears of financial ruin. For all of us the brokenness of the sound might represent the community of people who can not yet fully come together as one.

And yet there is a curious and counterintuitive message that the Torah gives us, the moment that the anti-Israel prophet Balaam found himself forced to bless Israel. His blessing included this transformative insight: Hashem 'sees no corruption' in Israel, for 'Hashem [Israel's] God is with him, and the *teruah*-blast of the King lies within [Israel].' (Numbers 23:22)

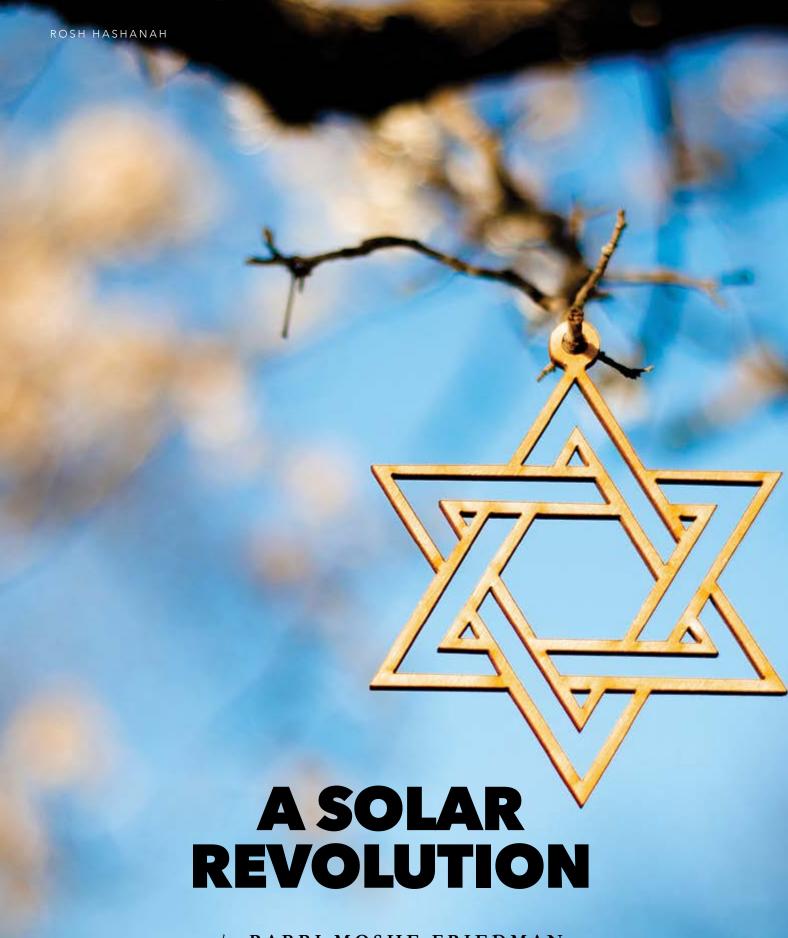
Balaam saw that God does not view us through the lens of the long blast of the *Tekiah*. Instead, He enters the nation of Israel through our *Ternah – through the broken blasts and the broken cries*. What Balaam saw is that God looks at Israel based on how it behaves in the years like these, when members cannot be carried by one another, but when each needs to step up and be counted. He hears our cries when we are imperfect and sees the efforts we make, each as individual broken sounds of the shofar.

If we stretch that extra mile, God Himself assembles the pieces, taking each one of us and putting all our efforts together. In the absence of the great *Teruah* of one big packed shul singing together, God takes each of our efforts and puts them together into His own, even greater, call of the Shofar.

May we all be able to be a part of that Shofar, and may this be a year of sweet tasting blessing for all of us individually, and all of us as one.



Rabbi Daniel Rowe is the Executive Director of Aish UK. He holds a BA in Philosophy from University College London and an MPhil in Philosophy from Birkbeck College. He studied for a decade in Israel in various Talmudic institutes. Rabbi Rowe is known for his ability to tackle difficult topics and has numerous videos and articles online. Rabbi Rowe has played an instrumental role in the creation and development of many organisations and initiatives such as the Forum for Jewish Leadership, the Aleinu Conference



by RABBI MOSHE FRIEDMAN

I have a custom of making the same joke on the birthday of close friends. I wish them a happy "arbitrary day marking another solar revolution." They know I'm kidding, and that I do wish them well on their birthday. But there is some grain of truth buried in the jest — why is it important for us to celebrate a day because we happen to occupy the same location relative to the sun as the day you were born?

Similarly, we could train this criticism on one of the holiest days of the Jewish year - Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. What, dare I ask, is so important about having a new year? It's certainly not just about marking the passage of time. You might say, well isn't it the day on which we are judged for the entire year? At which point I would ask another question: why does God, an all-powerful and all-knowing Deity, need to judge us on one day? Let's make it a sliding scale, in real time, like a stock market ticker that tracks whether you're up or down that day!

To put it simply: why do we need to be judged on one day alone?

Let's begin with what the answer cannot be. One cannot say that it would simply be too difficult to track everyone all the time. Better that we give everyone a "final exam" on one day and the year's grades are based on that. No, that's far too naive, to suggest that God does not possess the mental computational skills to process everyone's progress at every moment of the day.

So if it is not for God's sake that an entire year's worth of evaluation takes place over the span of two days; rather it is for our benefit. And although it may cause a bit of extra pressure during those two intense days for us to be on our best behaviour, it is highly advantageous for several reasons, two of which we will illustrate right now.

performance every single hour of your job. Have you been doing better or worse than the previous hour? It would quickly become very tedious and overwhelming, and would tell you nothing of your improvement over time. Now imagine that you are being asked to review your entire work performance from the time you were 13 until well into your 50s.

A bit too much to chew off, no?

There is a reason why we have annual reviews at our jobs and in school. Despite its arbitrariness, a year gives you a good sense of what you've done, how much you've accomplished, and in what direction you can head the next year. It gives us a satisfying pause, the ability to say, "that was last year, we can start fresh next year." So too Rosh Hashanah allows us to get a bigger picture of how we've lived up to our moral potential with enough of a wide lens to make generalisations, but with enough high resolution that we can make specific conclusions. In other words. Rosh Hashanah allows us to evaluate a reasonable amount of our past, and plan a manageable span of our future.

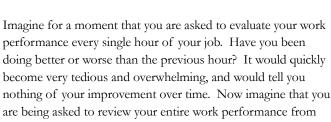
While the first reason benefits us practically, the second reason benefits us with respect to the judgement itself. If we were to

> receive a real-time, minute by minute judgement throughout the entire year, it would be brutal. No blemish would go unnoticed, and every single minor tick would count against you. True, it may be a more accurate assessment, but perhaps what God is going for is not accuracy. Perhaps what we say throughout the year, that God is Merciful and Compassionate, is a better reflection of His judgement.

> If we have two days of the year to dress in our finest and present ourselves

in our best light, then the judgement we receive is less about who we are, and more about who we could be. It's hard to be a human being and God knows that. What he cares more about is if we understand our potential as much as He does. Under those conditions, God tells us that if we know who we could be, then we deserve another year to try to live up to it.

As we approach this most awesome of days, let us remember that this is not some arbitrary day marking another solar revolution. It is also not a tax audit or a final exam. It is a day granted to us, with generous compassion, to help us become aware of our own progress, and to prove to ourselves and to God that we are capable of using this year to become the people we know we can be.





Rabbi Moshe Friedman grew up in Manhattan, New York, and received his BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. He studied Jewish Thought and Talmudic Law for ten years in Israel, including several years at the Mir Yeshiya, and has passed Rabbinic ordination examinations from the Israeli Rabbinate. In 2017, he moved to London with his wife and two children to take up the role of FJL UK Liaison, a role which includes regular campus visits and London-based educational programmes.

- 69 -

GOD TELLS US THAT

IF WE KNOW WHO WE

COULD BE, THEN WE

DESERVE ANOTHER

YEAR TO TRY TO LIVE

UP TO IT.



A GUIDE TO LIFE?

by RABBI DANIEL EPSTEIN

As I sit to write this, in the middle of August, the last fully communal event I remember was hearing the Megillah over Purim.

In March.

Our community, Cockfosters & N. Southgate United Synagogue, of nearly 1,100 members, with the exception of the last few weeks, has been maintaining its community life in virtually-shared silos of electronic connectivity.

So many words have become over-used during these weeks: unprecedented, unbelievable, strange, exhausting.

There is no question that all of these are true, but the beauty of Judaism – and the most reassuring sentiment – is encapsulated in a single verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes (1:9)

הֶּלֶהְיִּשֶׁ אוּהְ הֹיָהָשֶׁ־הּמַּ השֱעָיֵּשֶׁ אוּהָ השְּׁעַנְּשָׁ־הּמַוּ שׁמֶשֶׁהַ תחַתַּ שׁדֶחָ־לֹכָּ וְיאֵן:

That which has been, it is that which shall be;

and that which has been done is that which shall be done:

and there is nothing new under the sun.

We think we have heard it before and many people quote the second part of this verse, but what we often don't realise is that it is only **PART** of the statement.

"What has already happened will happen again; what has already been done will be done again, *and* there is nothing new under the sun."

We can understand this in two ways:

a. Everything has been tried and there are no new solutions

or:

b. Whatever we did in the past, we are still here now; and so we must have confidence that we will be here in the future as well.

One of the paths being adopted globally to try to overcome the infection rates of this coronavirus pandemic is being variously entitled 'Track & Trace'. It is being presented as a socio-medical approach: figure out if you have caught the virus, list the people you have most frequently interacted with since just before or after discovering that you have it, and then ask all of those people to isolate. Thereby we are hoping to ensure that they would pass on the virus – assuming that they have caught it – to as few other people as possible.

I would like to propose that, in anticipation of Rosh Hashanah and the New Year ahead of us, 'Track & Trace' isn't a response to a pandemic.

It is, *and always has been*, the correct Jewish response to life itself and the latest terminology for what we inherently understand at this time of year. All of Jewish literature is replete with *Track & Trace* language; often hiding in plain sight.

The cautionary tale of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, there lies one of the most spectacular phrases in the Torah. In the delicate moments between Cain's offering being rejected by God and the catastrophic response of Abel's murder by his brother, God introduces Cain to *Track & Trace*.

Cain is crestfallen. God literally asks him, "Why has your face fallen?" (Genesis 4:6) and

face fallen?" (Genesis 4:6) and acknowledges the precariousness of his situation. Emotion is welling up inside of him and he faces an ultimate choice. God continues: "Surely, if you do right, there is uplift. But if you do not do right sin crouches at the door; its urge is toward you, yet you can be its master."

Track & Trace. Understand what you are experiencing. Acknowledge the moment. Know that there will be direct consequences that hinge on your very next move, and that the

implications of those actions will define you irreversibly.

Cain cannot and will not engage with these emotions and, as we know, his next action is shocking. But he was warned. By God Himself!

The second paragraph of our central declaration of faith – the Shema Yisrael prayer – contains a broad correlation between our behaviour and the prosperity and success of our agricultural and spiritual efforts. Do well, keep dedicated to God and His guiding principles and rain will fall when it should and we will be protected.

If not, there will be implications and consequences to our actions, and sin always crouches at the door. *Track & Trace*.

The Jewish year itself has a majesty and a metronomic harmony to it that also speaks of tracking and tracing its graceful movement. Starting from any festival in the year, there is a meandering narrative that tracks and traces our Jewish story in a series of perpetual moments that speak of the relationships between us and our Creator; between us and our fellow Jews; between us and our families; and between us and the world at large.

I find the connection between the months very instructive. From the summer months of Tammuz and Av – re-experiencing the anguish of the Destruction of the Temple

- through the contemplation and anticipation of the month of Elul, leading up to the crescendo of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, to the sublime experience of Sukkot, as the ultimate symphony of *Track & Trace*.

We fell short once. We did it often. We lost our way.

But we have factored in time to reflect, to heal, to determine a way forward and the daily sound of the Shofar for the whole month of Elul helps to

sharpen our focus.

IF NOT, THERE WILL

BE IMPLICATIONS AND

CONSEQUENCES TO

OUR ACTIONS, AND

SIN ALWAYS CROUCHES

AT THE DOOR

We become acutely aware of the passage of time and its power to create urgency as well as allow us to resolve, to double our efforts, to do better.

We come to the High Holy Days with a small sense of what we would like for the coming year. We do our best to look forward with hope and optimism that the future is as yet unwritten and it is beckoning us to write it well.

If we have tracked our experiences and we have traced them to the best of ourselves and the bits we are looking to do better, then the process may not be perfect, but it is our very best effort.

And we should be proud of our achievements to date and grateful for the blessing of time to come to make our Creator proud of what we can still achieve.





by REBBETZIN SHALVIE FRIEDMAN



In the year 1991, the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak had grown so large that it was impossible to hold their bulging numbers. It was recommended that the women's section be split in order to open up more seats for the men on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

When this suggestion was brought to the Yeshiva head, Rabbi Elazar Menachem Man Shach (1899-2001), he said the following: "Let us carefully consider who the individuals are who are praying with us. The women's section is made up of many women who each come with very special prayers; they pour their hearts out with supplication to merit blessing from the Almighty. Their prayers emanate from a deep place and they are saturated in tears."

Rabbi Shach continued, "Their prayers, perhaps more than ours, have the strength to break through even the locked gates of heaven. Therefore, we must understand that our entire Yeshiva rests on the prayers of women. How can we possibly allow even one less woman to attend?" Rabbi Shach did not allow the women's section to be diminished by even a single chair.

But it was not Rabbi Shach who discovered the potent power of women's prayers, specifically in the context of the High Holy Days. The very fibre of the Rosh Hashanah service is built on the prayers of women.

Rosh Hashanah is referred to in the Torah as a 'Yom Teruah', a day when the Shofar is sounded. The very identity of Rosh Hashanah is defined by the sound and experience of the shofar's blasts. At closer inspection, the description of the sound of the shofar in the text of the Torah is dissimilar to our own experience of that sound.

We know that there are three unique blasts made by the shofar - a Tekiya (long uninterrupted sound), Shevarim (three medium blasts) and the Teruah (the broken-up sound). If the Torah only mentions the Teruah sounds, where are these sounds derived from?

In biblical times, when the Jewish nation was living in the Land of Israel, they had a wise and fearless leader named Deborah the Prophetess. Together with her husband and the Army of Israel, she went to battle against the ruthless General Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army of King Jabin of Hazor, known for his brutality and success on the battle field.

Through the bravery of the Jewish army and courage of a woman named Yael, who single-handedly killed Sisera, the Jews defeated their enemy. Yael brought Sisera into her tent and after feeding him wine and cheese, she spears him with a tent peg and murders him.

The Book of Judges describes the mother of Sisera as she waits for her warrior son to return from battle. She sits at the window with her maidens, confident that her son will be returning victorious. As more time passes waiting for her son's return, she begins to begins to worry, wondering why he uncharacteristically delayed.

Sisera's mother lets out a unique sound of angst at her son's failed return. The word used to describe her pain does not appear elsewhere in the Torah; and its audible sound and meaning is debated. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 33b) says that this is the sound of the shofar. It is from here that the Talmud derives the precise sounds of the shofar blasts.

Why would it be that the mother of a wicked man is the model for such a fundamental part of our Rosh Hashanah experience? Surely there are many other people who wail and cry out to God throughout the Torah that could be used as a better model?

One suggestion is that Sisera's mother had an uncanny confidence in her son's return. Perhaps that is meant to be

our mentality as we stand and hear the shofar. We are meant to feel certain that God will grant us a sweet year.

Rabbi Soloveitchik suggests quite the opposite, "Yet, although overtly anticipating her son's triumphant return, in a deep recess of her heart Sisera's mother tragically sensed that this time he was in fact never coming home again." Upon hearing the piercing tones of the shofar, we must awaken from spiritual complacency, we must witness our own illusions being relentlessly shattered.

These opposing views describe the dichotomy of our Rosh Hashanah experience. Our emotions fluctuate between confidence and total uncertainty. We pray, we sing, we eat apples and honey, and through it all we feel both a deep sense of surety that we are going to have a sweet year, and a fear that we have totally missed the mark.

But there is a deeper reason behind why Sisera's mother is the model of the shofar blasts. This can be seen by the fact that she is not the only woman around whom the Rosh Hashanah service is constructed.

On each day of Rosh Hashanah we read a *Haftorah*, a piece of text from the Prophets. These texts were chosen because it was felt that they encapsulate the themes of the day and put us in the right mind-set for the Rosh Hashanah experience.

On the first day we read about Chana, who lives not long after the story of Sisera transpired. Chana is barren and heartbroken; she goes up to the city of Shiloh, the resting place of the

UPON HEARING THE PIERCING TONES OF THE SHOFAR, WE MUST AWAKEN FROM SPIRITUAL COMPLACENCY

tabernacle, and prays to have a child. The Talmud learns many of the practical laws of prayer from the verses that describe how Chana prays. God answers Chana and her son, Samuel, later becomes a prophet and the leader of the Jewish people.

On the second day we read about another Jewish woman, our foremother Rachel. Rachel was buried in Bethlehem, on the road leading out of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah describes that many years later, during the destruction of the First Temple, the Jews would be led out of Jerusalem into exile in chains. As her descendants would pass by her grave, Rachel up in heaven would beseech God to have mercy on her children. Unlike any of the other forefathers and foremothers, Rachel refuses to be comforted, demanding that God returns the people from exile. In response, God tells her, "there is merit to your actions, the Jews will once again return to their borders" (Jeremiah 31:17). Like Sisera's mother and Chana, Rachel is a woman who lets out a wail of agony and demands that her children are spared.

Closing this loop, it is noteworthy that the success of the Jewish nation in the story of Sisera and his mother was at the hands of two heroic women: Yael and Deborah.

This year, as we all try to work out how we will be praying on Rosh Hashanah in a safe and responsible way, ensuring social distancing, we know that our shuls have less space, and many people are afraid.

But I know that we have a network of Jewish women around the globe who are going to be praying on Rosh Hashanah as they always have. When I imagine our sorority of Jewish sisters praying wherever that may be: at home, at shul, in parks or anywhere else, it makes me realise that, more than anything, we are an interconnected, spiritual community of people bound by our prayers and the cry of the shofar.





פנה טובה

Step into the New Year

with New Beginnings at Chana

Call our free Helpline on 020 8201 5774 so we can support you on your journey

C CREATING LIVES TOGETHER

chana.org.uk 020 8203 8455 Chana Charity Ltd 1172957



Will you be there for someone who has no one?

DONATE NOW worldjewishrelief.org/roshhashanah
020 8736 1250

reg. charity no 290767

trial by twitter

by RABBI ELI BIRNBAUM



On 9 August 2020, MP for Brent Central Dawn Butler was sitting in the passenger seat of a car when police pulled the driver over and requested proof of ownership. Their concern? The vehicle was apparently registered to a residence in Yorkshire, and seeing it driving around London aroused suspicion that it was stolen. Butler and the driver, both black, recorded the incident and posted the video along with accompanying commentary to Twitter. Butler's interpretation of the event was unequivocal: she had been the latest victim of racial profiling in Britain's institutionally racist society. The initial tweet (below) hit over 10,000 retweets and 33,000 likes not to mention the deluge of comments, both for and against, that followed in its wake.



The purpose of this piece is not to pass judgement from the comfort of a keyboard on Ms Butler's interpretation, nor for that matter on how she handled the situation. Rather, it is to ask some hard-hitting questions as we approach the segue of the Jewish calendar in which the Books of Life and Death are open and our deeds are examined, one Tweet at a time.

In the aftermath of the social media maelstrom, Met Police Deputy Commissioner Sir Steve House noted the polite and professional conduct of the attending officers, and explained that the 'stop and check' was carried out because one of the officers had entered the car's number plate into the digital recognition system incorrectly, and the system had traced the vehicle to the wrong address. They made a decision to pursue and stop the vehicle due to its tinted windows, and their (mistaken) belief that it was over 200 miles away from where it was meant to be - something only Dominic Cummings can get away with without incident.

Sir Steve went on to bemoan a growing trend toward what he superbly nicknamed 'trial by Twitter' - a trend steadily and insidiously eroding public trust in public institutions. The sheer volume of outrage and the speed of its eruptive expression in light of Butler's social media upload had, Sir Steve lamented, made it almost impossible to process the complaint and any relevant disciplinary action in a fair, balanced and calm fashion.

I thought things had reached a watershed after the Kevin Hart Oscars scandal. Remember that? Even if you don't, Twitter does. You see, in 2018, Hart was approached to be the host for the 2019 Oscars awards ceremony. Within minutes of the announcement, tweets he had sent eight years earlier which joked (badly) about the LGBT community were trawled back into the public domain, and the avalanche began. One thing led to another, Hart rightly posted a heartfelt apology for the homophobic nature of the content, stepped down from the Oscars and that was apparently that.

Except it wasn't. A month later, talk-show mega-host Ellen DeGeneres re-opened the conversation by suggesting Hart should reconsider his Oscars decision. Twitter responded with quite a backlash. Hart issued another apology. A few days later, he took to SiriusXM radio to apologise for a third time. Two days later, The Late Show host Stephen Colbert launched into a series of questions about the whole brouhaha. Only this time, Hart apparently hadn't had his evening nightcap, and was significantly pricklier in his response:

"The situation is like an onion. No matter how many times you keep peeling it back, it's just endless. I apologised. "Apologise again!" I said, 'I apologised before!'... "and so does the one after apology!" It just keeps going."

As above, our task here isn't to micro-analyse what Hart said or did. Rather, it is to highlight the unsettling and perhaps dangerous role that social media is evolving into: An unaccountable, uncontrollable judge, jury, prosecution and executioner of every misdemeanour under the sun, rolled into one.

TRIAL BY TWITTER.

It, together with other social media platforms, has totally redefined the way we look at wrongdoing, remorse and redemption. The Books of Life and Death are no longer abstract heavenly legends. They are here, with us – hosted on a server in downtown Atlanta. And each inscription takes up no more than 280 characters. With an image or a meme to boot, if the ministering angels are really on point. There is no escaping our iniquities as journalists and bored teen-hackers scramble frantically to dish the dirt on everyone in any position of significance anywhere.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- 1) Has the advent of social media given our misdeeds a certain *permanence*? Even deleting your profile won't do the trick: as long as said journalist/bored teen is quicker on the draw, they will have a screenshot of sin copied and saved faster than you can say 'Silicon Valley'. And once saved on a server somewhere, that sin has effectively been *meaponised*, stored forever to be used in targeted character assassination or straight-out blackmail.
- 2) Has it eroded our faith in the fact that people change?

 One of the many oddities that struck me about the Hart uproar was the sheer length of time that had passed since he made those homophobic comments. Was what he said wrong? Undoubtedly. Did he mean it to cause harm? Quite possibly. But above all else: Did he have the capacity to turn over a new Vine and emerge a changed man? Definitely.
- 3) Has the 'like, share subscribe' culture of social media created a dangerous illusion of overwhelming public support? Dawn Butler's tweet seemed to garner an awful lot of attention. But look closer. 10,000 retweets and 30,000 likes. Even if we assume that those were two distinct groups of users, with no overlap (highly unlikely), that is still just 0.06% of the UK's entire population. Again: I am not suggesting that Ms Butler's grievance was invalid. Rather, I am merely echoing what Bari Weiss - former New York Times journalist - pointed out in her resignation letter: "Often, the mirage of popularity on social media creates a false hysteria that blows the true significance of an event totally out of proportion and subsequently guides commentary and even policy in an endless positive feedback loop."
- 4) Has social media assigned to itself the role of judge, jury and executioner, whereby the 'appropriate' atonement is prescribed by a digitally baying mob who all-too-often know only a portion of the facts, a portion of the time? Consider this: Which recourse sounds better? Kevin Hart resigning from hosting the Oscars as a result of public pressure due to controversial anti-LGBT comments, or: Kevin Hart nonetheless hosts the Oscars and uses that platform to raise global awareness about LGBT rights and concerns?
- 5) Has social media as pointed out by Hart and repeated by Weiss created an atmosphere of real "fear of the digital thunderdome", wherein heartfelt and sincere apologies are rejected out-of-hand by those who shout loudest and type fastest? Can there be an end to the apologetics if the whole world can demand one? Is it even *possible* to apologise to the entire world?

Let us examine each of the above concerns through the kaleidoscope of Maimonides' classic section on *Teshwa/* Repentance. In light of his approach, they rapidly become deeply, deeply worrying...

- 1) Sin is Not Permanent At the core of the very rationale behind having a High Holy Holiday 'season' at all is the unequivocal belief that God grants us a chance to start afresh every single year. In fact, Maimonides elaborates, there is no real need to wait until these Days of Awe to begin the process of repentance and rehabilitation the gates are wide open all year round. In fact, a person could live their entire life in sin only repenting with their dying breath. As long as that repentance was sincere, their slate is 'wiped clean'. To view sin as indelible is to abandon humanity to an infinity of unchanging despair.
- 2) People Change Here is perhaps Maimonides' most powerful statement. Not only do we hold precious the idea that - given time, experience and introspection - people do change, sometimes drastically, it too lies at the very core of what the High Holy Holidays are all about. "What is complete repentance?", Maimonides ponders, "To find oneself in the same situation as before, but [this time] resist temptation." And in-so-doing, the erstwhile deviant demonstrates a simple fact: Who I was last time is not who I am now. Maimonides continues: "A true penitent should consider changing their name, as if to say: 'That was the old me; now - I am a totally different person." To reduce the complexities, subtleties and magnificence of the human condition to perpetually static inertia is to abandon hope that anything or indeed anyone can ever improve.
- by Mass Hysteria Here, Maimonides makes an intriguing observation: "The penitent who confesses publicly is praiseworthy, and it is commendable to let the public know his wrongdoings, and to reveal the sins between himself and his fellow to others". Yet what stands in clear contrast to the publicity driven by social media is the *direction* of the flow of attention. This point is unambiguous: the choice to 'go public' with a sin is the sinner's alone. For the masses to abrogate that choice and unilaterally 'go public' is to strip the sinner of all dignity, and all but make certain that he will (eventually) repent for entirely the wrong reasons, if at all.
- 4) Atonement is Objectively Measurable, and Not Dependent on Public Opinion – One of the great mysteries of the repentance process is quite simple: How on Earth do we know if it worked?!



Maimonides is quick to highlight this, using the second paragraph of his synopsis to describe how – in antiquity – the Yom Kippur Temple service featured actual signs whereby the assembled masses would *know* if their prayers had been accepted. But nowadays? Fear not. If the remorse, regret and resolution to change was sincere. If the aggrieved has been approached and placated. If the sinner can enter into exactly the same situation and this time resist the urge, we can rest assured that their atonement is complete. Anything else is to forsake even the most well-meaning penitent to a lifetime of doubt and uncertainty.

There is a Clear and Urgently Real Limit to **Apology** – This theme is rooted in one of the most tantalisingly brilliant segments of Maimonides' piece: "He (the wrongdoer) is obliged to seek out the aggrieved and appease him and implore him until he receives forgiveness. If the aggrieved refuses to forgive and he (the sinner) has tried - sincerely and heartfeltly - on three separate occasions to regain his favour, he (the sinner) may let the matter rest and move on with his life, since the sin is thereby placed on the one who refuses forgiveness". Incredible. It is that last line that really delivers an uppercut to the Twitter frenzy. Briefly: to expect from the sinner a *lifetime* in apology is to condemn him to a socio-emotional prison, forever distracted, forever haunted, forever treading on eggshells. For society to function, we simply must be willing to forgive, even if we cannot allow ourselves to forget.

Where to next for the Twittersphere? Who knows. Perhaps a good place to start is to stop treating it all like gospel. The fact that self-respecting (or otherwise) journalists, politicians and legislators have fallen into the trap of believing that using Twitter to express complex opinions on complex subject matter is sensible and likely to do anything other than cause more trouble, is laughable. Devalue your usage and opinion of social media! Keep it for memes, cat photos and pictures of your perfect avocado-on-toast. Why should a realm that operates at terabytes-per-second be suitable for anything that carries greater nuance and depth? Second: spread positivity. Social media can be a nasty, vindictive, sanctimonious place - filled with virtual back-stabbing and digital brinkmanship. Focus on the good, spread that message, and you will – surprisingly – start to gather quite a following of like-minded nice people. Third, do not allow social media to colour your view of the world. Listen to its content, take it on board, sure! But don't get intimidated into changing your beliefs or convictions off the back of a couple of boosted Insta posts. Remember: 10 of the top 20 most-liked Tweets belong to South Korean boyband, BTS. And their most liked Tweet only (only!) had 3 million views. Does that mean you should start buying BTS albums? Maybe. Or maybe, it means there are as many as 7.5 billion people who don't listen to them either.

As Douglas Adams so eloquently put it: Don't Panic.



Rabbi Eli Birnbaum studied in Talmudic College in Israel for six years before attaining Rabbinic Ordination after two years in the Jerusalem Kollel. During this time, Eli completed a BSc in Criminology & Social Psychology. Together with his wife Naomi, Eli moved back to London to take up a position in the JLE's campus department, where he set up the infrastructure for regular Lunch & Learns across London's major campuses, as well as creating the 'Genesis+' programme, aimed at older students and post-graduates. He now works as an Aish educator, primarily focussed on the burgeoning Young Professional demographic.



SHIRA DRUION CATCHES UP WITH IAN MARK ABOUT HIS NEWEST TECH CREATION, CORONACRUSH - A DATING SITE FOR YOUNG JEWS

CoronaCrush is a Facebook group that has taken the Jewish dating world by storm. I had the opportunity to speak with one of the founders of CoronaCrush, Ian Mark.

What is CoronaCrush?

CoronaCrush is a Facebook community with 16,000 members where Jewish singles from all over the world can meet one another virtually. About 55% percent of the group is located in the US, 30% in Israel, and the rest are spread between Canada, Europe, Australia, and South Africa. About 5% or 800 people are from the UK.

That's a lot of people... How did the group get so big?

It just kind of went viral. We started out by just inviting our friends and then our friends started inviting their friends. Additionally, we attracted attention from a lot of different news sources across the world and even the government of Israel created a video about us and shared it from their official Twitter and Facebook pages.

Wow, that's amazing! So, how does the group actually work?

It works in a number of ways. Originally when we started the group, people would post their friends and other people would be able to reach out to them directly or through their friend. After about a month of the group being active, we started doing speed dating events and then about another month later we started doing matchmaking too.

Have you been successful in setting couples up this way?

Actually, I was eating at a restaurant with a friend about three weeks ago and a couple approached me and asked if I was Ian from CoronaCrush. They were so happy to see me and they told me they have been dating for two and a half months. This was three weeks ago, so now they've been dating for over three months! And this is only one of many stories like this.

For people who are more interested in hard cold numbers, about 2,000 singles have been posted in the group, many of whom have been contacted and are now dating someone from the group. We've also done 10 speed dating events that have included 1,500 or so people and resulted in 3,800 dates, 600 of which ended with the participants wanting to see each other again. In total about 50% of participants in our speed dating events end up with at least one match from the event.

But at the end of the day, you asked if we're successful. And to me, the real measure of success will be if people get married from the group. So we're anxiously waiting for our first CoronaCrush couple to get engaged.

Fascinating, do you have any thoughts on what this might mean for the future of dating, particularly in the Jewish world?

That's an excellent question! Corona is still kind of a new thing and no one is really sure on how much longer it will be around. For the time being I think CoronaCrush, including the posting, matchmaking, and speed dating, is probably one of the most effective ways to be dating right now. Once people are able to meet in person more freely, I think that speed dating and matchmaking both have a lot of staying power.

For example, in a typical speed dating event, someone is able to have seven dates with seven people all from the comfort of their own home. It's fast, easy, and best of all 100% free. I can't think of anything else that compares to this.

Sounds very efficient. How are the matches made for speed dating? I mean, how do you make sure that it's not just completely random?

Another great question, you're on fire! Every participant has filled out a form answering questions related to their preference for age, location, and level of religious practice. We only match two people together if they each meet the other's criteria.

That sounds like it must take a really long time to do! How do you possibly manage of all this?

I created a computer programme that does all the emailing, matching, and scheduling at the click of a few buttons. It doesn't take very much time at all.

Very impressive. Do you think this is the future of matchmaking? Everything automated by computers?

Honestly, I don't see why not. I think either way, the computer and shadchan are just helpers in the matchmaking process and it's the person ultimately making the decision of who to marry. Computers simply make it easier to narrow down the field and expose people to more potential matches in a way that a human matchmaker can't possibly do on their own.

Perhaps a combination of the two, a computer doing the screening and majority of the legwork and a matchmaker kind of double checking and showing empathy throughout the process is the future.



Last question. What criteria are you using to match people and what criteria do you think is most relevant to people dating in today's day and age?

The criteria I'm using to match people is based solely on the sixty or so question form that the singles are filling out. I ask questions to determine peoples' dealbreakers, interests, values, and future goals. I don't take looks into account at all, since it's all being done by computer, and anyway it's so hard to understand what people are attracted to anyway. All that being said, I think the number one reason people say no to matches we send them is due to looks, which makes sense because it's the first thing people go to when getting matched. The plus side is, that if two people are attracted to each other, and they've matched according to this form, they can have comfort in knowing that a big enough chunk of the logic is in place for them to have a realistic shot at eventually getting married.

Thanks so much for your time and I'm expecting to hear about your first engagement in the very near future!

Thank you! It was a pleasure speaking with you.



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English, Education and Psychology. She then trained as a Speech and Drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former Editor of YALLA magazine and the current Executive Editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery to university, where she lectured on writing and communication skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, teaching a broad age group of students. Shira is passionate about women's education and runs women's programmes in the community.

AISH UK IS PROUD TO BE HOSTING EUROPE'S FIRST EVER

CORONA, CRUSH SPEED AING

Corona Crush has become a global phenomenon and is revolutionising the virtual Jewish dating scene with unprecedented success. It combines a cutting edge algorithm with a vast network of singles to create successful couples.

11 OCTOBER 2020

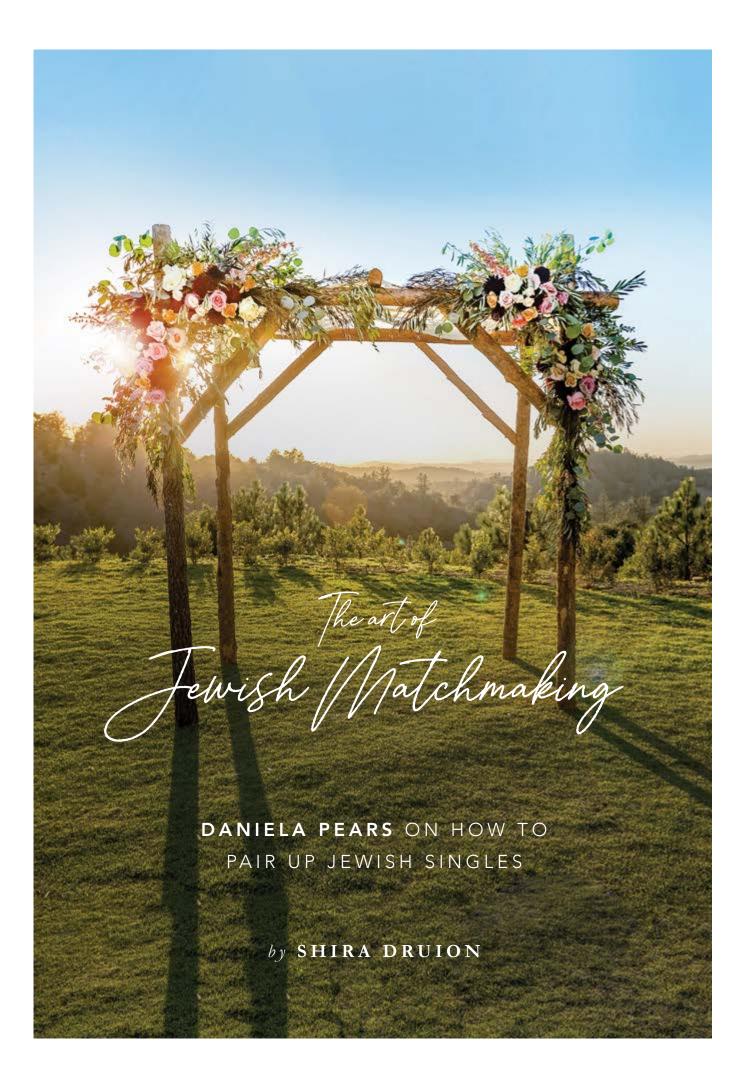
Try it, you may just find the one!

NO COST · CONVENIENT · SAFE · EFFECTIVE

Fill out the form at **Coronacrush.co/UK** to receive your invitation and meet your Corona Crush









1: What made you want to go into matchmaking?

There are several reasons. I was a trustee of Mitzvah Day for 10 years, so was used to creating projects to support various needs. Over time people would ask if I knew people to match other singles they knew. Random people from the community would tell me that if I ever created an initiative to put people together they wanted to help me.

Another more personal reason was that my father passed away when I was 12 and my mother was in her mid-30s. She was largely single for 30 years. I was acutely aware of what a waste of precious time that was as she wanted to share her life with a special man. So I have enormous empathy for people who are single who would prefer not to be.

2: How did you start 'We Go Together'?

I felt we needed to find single men. Many of my contemporaries knew of single ladies and that we couldn't help them without actively finding the men.

I had an idea on one of my runs on Hampstead Heath, where I did a lot of my thinking...

I thought about the many single men across the community would be most likely to attend synagogue (if they're weren't already regular attenders) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. So I sought to make an agreement with numerous United Synagogue and Chabad Rabbonim who knew me through my Mitzvah Day endeavours, to agree to place a flyer on men's seats in their synagogues

The flyer said: 'Are you a single man or do you know someone who is?. 'We Go Together' offers a free face to face matchmaking service for the Jewish community.

That's how we started.

I then hired a part time social media expert who developed our Facebook presence and assisted with advertising. By doing so any single London based Jewish person was able to register with us. This being the case we then sought agreement from all the leaders of all our denominations to agree that they were comfortable with what we were doing. Several adjustments were made to our profile forms to accommodate their wishes.

So now we can match people's Jewish practice in the same way we ask whether they want children or whether they'd be happy to meet someone who already has children, etc.

3. What niche service do you offer those wanting to get married?

There are 10 of us who volunteer our time to meet and match clients

- Our clients age range from 27 to 70
- Most of our clients want to get married.
- We offer a free face to face hour consultation.
- Before COVID we would meet in a local cafe and now on FaceTime.

We have become experienced in how to make a person feel comfortable opening up and talking about themselves and the attributes they are looking for in their future partner. In many cases they've not done or thought so thoroughly about this before. We also ask clients about their hobbies and interests.

We then discuss potential matches with them, as we can already short list our clients (knowing their profiles well) to see who they are interested in. That ends our first interaction. So our 'homework' is set out.

Then the hard work starts. We need to discuss between colleagues depending on whose client has been selected, whether there's synergy as they've met that person. If there is an agreement, then photos are shared. We do make it clear that we are a Values Based matchmaking service. We spend a lot of time discussing values and characteristics with our clients, both theirs and those of the person they want to be matched with.

Finally once photos are shared between the two parties. We very much hope they agree to meet! We ask for and need feedback to help iron out what is right for our client and assist in their next match should the first not have worked out. So we offer a huge amount of our time, intuition and a service that has a goal of finding our clients their soulmate!



4: How does your service compare with online dating?

The human element, meeting people, understanding clients, enabling a client to elaborate and really define what is right for them...this is so much more meaningful than anything online!

Generations of our ancestors found their wives and husbands this old fashioned way. If online matchmaking was the answer for every single person I wouldn't have set up We Go Together.

5: What challenges do you face with trying to match people up?

It's very frustrating after all our efforts to match people that they should decline each other from a photo. That's what the swipe apps are for

We need are clients to trust us. Many do...

We can ensure that two people will get along on a date however we can't make chemistry happen!

6: What have been some of your greatest success stories as a matchmaking service?

We've been running for three years. In that time we have had one wedding and two further engagements. We have clients in their 70s, 50s, 40s and 30s who decided to move in together.

We have introduced new couples to each other during lockdown. They started by chatting on FaceTime, then socially distanced walks and bike rides and are now very happily dating.

We are definitely getting more clients through word- ofmouth...that must mean we are doing something right!

7: What would you say are the most important qualities to look for in a partner?

I'd say the most popular qualities are:

- Humour
- Trust
- Care and Kindness

8: What qualities do you think help to hold a marriage together?

The above.

And compromise.... nobody is perfect!

9: What are your future plans for the organisation?

Due to COVID, we've had to conduct our informal interviews with clients on FaceTime. As that has worked well and new matches can start with FaceTime chats, I'd like to spread our matchmaking service to Jewish singles across the UK e.g.: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool.

10: Who is your target audience? In terms of age range and affiliation?

27-70 (65 for ladies...I'd love to extend this if more older gentlemen registered.. I wish they would!) Any single person who considers themselves Jewish.

(The questions we ask will specify how they practice)

11: Would you like to share with us how you met your husband?

At a Jewish charity do where he saw me on stage being hypnotised by Paul Mackenna. In those days there were Jewish charity dos weekly. It's a shame that no longer seems to be the case.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DANIELA PEARS

I am a qualified physiotherapist. I qualified in my early 20s mainly due to my love of helping others.

After my three children, I returned to my profession as a volunteer physiotherapist for Jewish Care with the aim of helping to mobilise their elderly residents to maintain their strength and mobility.

For the last decade I have been a trustee of Mitzvah Day and an interfaith chair. Social activism was always in my blood.

Matchmaking really came about when over the years people would increasingly ask me who I knew for a single person. I didn't know single people but I did know I wanted to help. I launched We Go Together three years ago.

As these early years have gone, by we have gained experience and success and have made one marriage, two engagements and numerous long term partnerships and more recently some successful introductions during the COVID lockdown.



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English, Education and Psychology. She then trained as a Speech and Drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former Editor of YALLA magazine and the current Executive Editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery to university, where she lectured on writing and communication skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, teaching a broad age group of students. Shira is passionate about women's education and runs women's programmes in the community.



Est. 1962

PETERMANS LOCAL PROPERTY EXPERTS

For all your property needs in London call 020 8598 5040 or email edgware@petermans.co.uk

Offices in EDGWARE - HERNE HILL - DULWICH - W1

Excellence comes as standard

www.petermans.co.uk

Claiming Complexity

FIGHTING
ANTISEMITISM
IN THE
MODERN AGE

by AYALA MAURER-PRAGER

It was the night before deportation to Auschwitz. Some, observes Primo Levi in If This is a Man, prayed. Others drank. 'But the mothers,' he recalls, 'stayed up [...] washed their children and packed their luggage; and at dawn the barbed wire was full of children's washing hung out in the wind to dry.' The jarring encounter between mundanity and catastrophe Levi invites us to experience here provides deep insight into the extraordinary psychology of the scene. Behind the simplicity of these acts lies a refusal to relinquish the ordinary; whether motivated by defiance or oblivion, this clinging to routine represents a deliberate hesitation to admit the fatal reality of the moment. Indeed, despite whisperings of its inevitable approach, many Jews of Eastern Europe particularly in Germany - refused to consider the actuality of a genocide; after all, following a post-emancipation process of secularisation, German Jews were a thoroughly assimilated and patriotic group. On this basis, many insisted that antisemitism would retreat in time; an assumption that was disproved six million times. The Holocaust remains incomparable to any other event in Jewish history in terms of its scale. We would be wrong, however, to overlook the fact that it was yet another iteration of the antisemitism that has sought to decimate Jews and Jewish life for centuries. We have been expelled, massacred and blamed for economic and social misfortunes since time immemorial. In each of these situations, no amount of assimilation has saved us. With the waves of antisemitism lapping dangerously close to our shores once again, the time has come to ask ourselves: what would happen if we took pride in our Jewish heritage rather than choosing to diminish it in the pursuit of broader national belonging? What would happen if we tackled the question of why antisemitism exists, and took a proactive approach to addressing it?

Throughout history, antisemitic sentiment and discrimination has been rooted in a fear or mistrust of our difference; in naively distorted or politically motivated malicious portrayals of Jewish people. And, on the whole, these depictions have achieved the desired effect. In 2014, the US-based Anti-Defamation League (ADL) found that 77% of people who had never met a Jew nevertheless held antisemitic views. In addition to highlighting the pervasiveness of these negative stereotypes, this statistic is evidence that for too long, we have not been the primary interlocutors in discussions of who Jewish people are and what Jewishness looks like. For decades, we have primarily existed as renderings of predatory otherness in literature, on television and in films that have travelled further across space and time than we, as a diminutive 0.2% of the global population, ever could. But these representations are neither fair nor accurate; the stereotypes they trade upon speak far more directly to the defamatory ideas yoked to perceptions of Jews than they do to our real lives, experiences, emotions and stories. I do not see myself reflected in the portrayals of monied Jewish villainy embodied, for example, by Shakespeare's Shylock in The Merchant of Venice or Steve Blackman's Yiddishspeaking Handler in Netflix's The Umbrella Academy. My Judaism is not the slapstick comedy that the Saperstein family of Parks and Recreation or The Marvellous Mrs Maisel imply it is; nor is it the cult-like existence painted by documentaries like One of Us or Félix and Meira. These are depictions of extremes: in each of these cases, we are created and regarded through the lenses of exaggeration, parody and spectacle that reduce us to caricature. When we consider the frightening level of animosity that exists towards Jews in people who have never physically met one, these one-dimensional representations become dangerously dehumanising portraits to which few credible and

thoughtful counters exist. The time has come, therefore, for self-definition; for a decisive resistance against characterisation from without.

Creating an effective response to the reductive simplicity disseminated by the media requires us to take control of the narrative and define ourselves in all of our complexity. Despite their significant flaws, the social media platforms of today are valuable stages on which to amplify the Jewish voices that are currently absent from discussions around who we are and what we represent. It was for this reason that I vocally opposed the #NoSafeSpaceForJewHate social media boycott several weeks ago in response to Facebook and Instagram's inaction in suspending grime rapper Wiley's account after he used both platforms to spew viciously antisemitic rhetoric. In addition to representing a galling acquiescence to antisemitic demands for Jew-free spaces, this voluntary silencing is the opposite of the dialogues we need to instigate to dispel the dangerously persistent idea that we are just hook-nosed crooks or wealthy, entitled individuals with undue influence. It is only through harnessing the power of connectivity and conversation that we can effectively reach others to try and dismantle the assumptions in which negativity towards Jews originates.

I would be remiss in ignoring the fact that layering and diversifying representations of Jews in public spaces is as imperative for our own thinking around acceptance as it is for anyone else's. The aftermath of George Floyd's death in May threw the lack of conversation around diversity amongst our own into sharp relief. The decades-long discrimination experienced by the Ethiopian community in Israel demonstrates that we too are guilty of espousing prejudicial bias on the basis of what we assume authentic Judaism to look like and where we expect it to originate from. In the Modern Orthodox north London community of which I am part, white ashkenormativity abounds in spiritual, social and educational spaces; whilst the majority of Jewish children will be taught

Semitic beliefs were

anti-Semitism
Semitism is hostili
Semitism is hostili
Jewish people. The
Jewish people and
Front promoted an
Front promoted an
iseptic is who of Jewish
of Jewish and complex
an

anyone else to do the same.

across Europe, for example, few - if any - will grow up with any knowledge of the Farhud – the 1941 pogrom in Baghdad, Iraq that violently forced 120,000 Iraqi Jews from their homes and decimated what had been a thriving hub of Jewish life. How can we expect others to recognise Jewish diversity and complexity if we refuse to recognise it in our own ranks? We cannot be hypocritical in our demands for an external appreciation of the variety of Jewish lived experiences. The Jewish lived experience, after all, has no singular colour, no central language, no single location or cultural backdrop. We must remedy our own blind spots, first and foremost: for it is only when we embrace the diverse spectrum of Jewish life and Jewish love that we can expect

about the Nazi pogroms

'Only connect!', Margaret Schlegel implores in E. M. Forster's famous novel Howard's End. 'Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.' For too long, we have lived in fragments; represented through unchecked singular stereotypes that have denied our identities in their totality, reducing us to shadowy or ostentatiously privileged figures that have allowed the glowing embers of antisemitism to flicker menacingly once again. In recognising the recurrence of this age-old hatred, we must accept responsibility for our role in resisting it; a resistance that demands our self-determination in the ongoing fight for self-preservation. We are a community that have been misrepresented with painful consequences – we have lost too much and too many to baseless assumptions about who we are. Where the stereotypes of old insist on superficiality, we must demonstrate depth. Where images of Jews are connected with cruelty, we must showcase our compassion. Rather than shying away from the history, culture and customs that define us, we must recognise that these are the very elements of our existence in which our humanity lies – and it is only when we drag them into the light that the darkness of antisemitism might be exposed for the misguided, poisonous force that it truly is.



Ayala Maurer-Prager holds a PhD from University College London (UCL) in Conflict Response, Crisis and Human Rights, and specialises in comparative genocide studies and the dynamics of race and gender in conflict and humanitarian contexts. She has worked in strategic communications and advocacy, and is looking forward to further developing her career in consulting when she returns from maternity leave in September. She lives in North West London with her husband and two sons, and can be found on Twitter and Instagram @Dr_Yalz.



CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

D E A L T W I T H

WILEY

by GIDEON FALTER

When grime artist Wiley began spewing antisemitic bile on Twitter in the early hours of a Friday morning a few months ago, Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) sprang into action. By the following Friday, he had been banned from Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and YouTube was about to ban him too, while leading politicians had condemned his comments, several of his honours were called into question and the police were investigating him.

Courts of Justice in the summer of 2014, when we called for 'zero tolerance enforcement of the law', through to our demonstration in Parliament Square in the winter of 2019, when we protested the surge of antisemitism in political and public life, were the biggest the community has staged in years.

And so when Wiley launched his antisemitic tirade on social media, it was only natural for CAA to take action.

HOW DID IT ALL HAPPEN, AND WHAT **ROLE DID CAA PLAY?**

CAA is a volunteer-led charity dedicated to exposing and countering antisemitism through education and zero-tolerance enforcement of the law. Since we formed in 2014, we have recruited an outstanding team of volunteers whose dedicated work has seen us grow into a well-organised, high-profile grassroots campaign.

Our legal actions – unique in the community – have resulted in jail time for antisemites and ground-breaking precedents, such as Holocaust denial being deemed illegal in England when used as a means to hound Jews. Our contacts with government, meanwhile, yield tangible results, such as the adoption of the International Definition of Antisemitism by the British Government – the first in the world to do so.

We have also been at the forefront of exposing antisemitism in politics and holding the Labour Party to account. We are the complainant in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's investigation into Labour antisemitism, which began after we referred the party to them, we secured the only arrests of Labour Party activists thanks to a collaboration with the radio channel, LBC.

Our research, meanwhile, has shattered popular myths, for example our Antisemitism Barometer 2019 showed that antisemitism is now more prevalent on the far-left than the far-right, and we are also particularly proud to give voice to all members of our community. Our rally outside the Royal By midday on Friday 24th July, Wiley's racist rant against Jews had been going for hours and included classic tropes about Jewish power and cunning. But at its heart was a series of conspiracy theories popularised by the Black Hebrew Israelites, including that black people are the real Israelites, that the Land of Israel belongs to the black community rather than the Jewish people, and that the Star of David is a black, not a Jewish, symbol.

The Black Hebrew Israelites are a black supremacist group that has harassed Jews in Stamford Hill and on the London Underground and is linked to the deadly antisemitic shootings in New Jersey and Monsey, New York.

This was worrying enough, and CAA issued a media statement calling for Wiley to make amends otherwise, we said, "no respectable label or manager should work with him ever again".

But Wiley's tweet in the mid-morning calling for Jews to "hold some corn" - slang for "take bullets" - followed up by a tweet at midday calling for a "war" of "black people" with Jews, crossed the line from peddling dangerous conspiracy theories to incitement. CAA immediately contacted the Metropolitan Police and also warned other Twitter users not to retweet him otherwise they might face prosecution by us. The effect was to crash Wiley's online engagement.

Later in the day, we called on the Cabinet Office to rescind Wiley's MBE, writing to the Honours Forfeiture Committee, which has now confirmed to us that it has opened a case.



West End Travel would like to wish our clients and friends a Shana Tova

For Israel and worldwide travel,

call 0208 958 3188 or email info@westendtravel.co.uk







AWARD WINNING ACCOUNTANCY IT SPECIALISTS

Empowering businesses through better use of technology.

T-Tech are proud to support Aish UK, and wish the community a happy and healthy year ahead.







All that was just on Friday. As per our policy as a Jewish organisation, we downed tools over Shabbat.

Sunday saw CAA calling out Twitter for its history of inaction over antisemitism. Just recently, for example, Twitter refused to take down the viral #JewishPrivilege hashtag, and CAA had also broken the story that Twitter viewed the Star of David as a "hateful symbol". That campaign resulted in a reversal of Twitter's policy. But here again, Twitter was doing nothing about incitement to racial hatred on its platform.

At the same time, numerous other activists – including some of our long-time partners like actress Tracy-Ann Oberman and activist Saul Freeman – launched a 48-hour walkout from Twitter and Instagram, where Wiley was also posting antisemitic comments. CAA proudly announced that we would join the campaign.

On the eve of the walkout, the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, condemned Wiley's remarks and called for action by technology companies against hate online, and her comments were echoed by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

CAA was then approached by some of Wiley's closest associates. We have always firmly believed that the path of repentance – *teshwa* – for antisemites must always remain open but it is up to them to take the first step. We were therefore happy to engage, but on condition that Wiley showed genuine remorse before any progress could be made. Our discussions suggested that there was little recognition on his part of wrongdoing, or of the hurt caused, and no intention to apologise or learn from the incident. Accordingly, there was nothing left to discuss.



On Tuesday afternoon, we had unsatisfactory calls with Twitter executives about the company's inaction, and revealed to the media Facebook's damage control e-mails to advertisers. Facebook then deleted Wiley's Instagram and Facebook accounts.

Twitter, however, had still done nothing. And so, in the middle of the night, a small group from CAA travelled to Twitter's Central London headquarters to literally shine a light on the social media giant's racism. We projected antisemitic tweets – from Wiley and many others – brightly onto Twitter's offices. This was the result not only of hours of work by our graphics team but years of documenting antisemitism on Twitter by our online monitoring unit. Our staff then worked through the night to post the video at 9am on Wednesday morning when the walkout ended. The video went viral across numerous social media platforms.

Within less than an hour, Twitter finally caved and closed Wiley's account.

We had further contact with YouTube about Wiley's account, we wrote to the Ivors Academy to have Wiley's 2019 Ivors Inspiration Award rescinded, and we took numerous other steps, which we continue to follow up even as media interest has abated.

Zero tolerance must mean zero tolerance and CAA will continue to ensure that everyone – be they performers, professionals, police, prosecutors, and social networks – live up to that mantra.

If you would like to donate to us, volunteer or subscribe to our mailing list, please visit antisemitism.org/act.



for Campaign Against Antisemitism, he also serves as a Board member of the Jewish National Fund UK.



ANTISEMITISM

the scourge in our midst

IS RACISM BETWEEN MINORITY COMMUNITIES FUELLING THE FIRES OF DISCRIMINATION?

by EMILY WIGODER

In the last months, we've seen a wave of antisemitism on social media voiced by DeSean Jackson, Stephen Jackson, Wiley and many others. For me, as well as many of my Jewish peers, this onslaught, whilst horrific, was unfortunately unsurprising.

However, there is a common thread tying these particular incidents together that caught my attention. In each case, the antisemitism voiced specifically focussed on pitting one minority group against another. When Wiley stated that Jewish people are 'at war' with the Black community and that Jewish people are successful at the expense of Black people, what he did was suggest that in order for one minority to thrive, the other must fail. He encouraged competition, anger, and hatred between two minority groups.

So, what's the effect of this kind of language? Well, there are a few different negative impacts that arise from this focus on division rather than unity. Firstly, 10 percent of people in the United States who identify as Jewish also identify as members of the Black community. When we foster hatred between these two groups, we erase the identities of thousands of individuals, increasing their sense of isolation and exclusion. Secondly, when we pit one minority against another, we normalise racism for members of majority groups. If someone from a White background sees a Black person being antisemitic, or a Jewish person being Islamophobic, they might think that it's okay; it excuses and normalises their racism as well.

This leads us to the biggest reason we should be addressing this kind of language – when minorities focus on fighting against each other, it distracts from and impedes the fight against racism. Just look at what happens when we do unite and fight together! During the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s that led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Jewish people made up half of the youths that participated in the Mississippi Freedom Summer. When Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested in 1964, he was arrested alongside Jewish freedom fighters. Similarly, when Nazism was on the rise across Europe, it was W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Bunche, and many other black intellectuals who spoke out to fight against antisemitism.

In the 1940s, when most universities in the United States refused to employ Jewish professors, it was the traditionally black colleges that offered those Jewish people jobs. When we fight together, rather than against each other, real progress can happen.

One of the biggest misconceptions that leads to this in-fighting is the idea that the Black experience and the Jewish experience, as much as either of those can be generalised about, are very different. And, of course, in some ways they are. For example, whilst many Jewish people are white-passing, and therefore able to 'hide' their Judaism at will, black people do not have this same privilege. However, there are many ways in which we experience the world similarly because of our minority status, and because of racism from majority groups.

I don't remember the exact day I got taught that I wasn't safe in the world because I was Jewish. From being force-fed pork by a teacher at five years old to being locked in the back of a taxi by a man who insisted I listened as he told me I was praying for the Anti-Christ, there have been many occasions where I've felt unsafe or in danger because of my race. As a child, I remember going to my parents to understand these incidents.

Talking to my friends from other minority groups, my experience is not unique. The fear of being attacked because of your race, the feeling of being othered, the weight of being a part of a historically oppressed people – these are all commonalities of minority experience, no matter which minority you belong to. By focusing on the fact that there are similarities between our experiences, we can begin to unite to fight racism together.

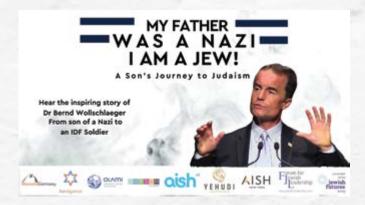
So, let us move towards a different kind of conversation. Let us look back at the success of our past unity, and try to emulate that in the dialogue that's taking place today. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said when he spoke at a meeting of the American Jewish Congress in 1958, 'My people were brought to America in chains. Your people were driven here to escape the chains fashioned for them in Europe. Our unity is born of our common struggle...to make oppression of any people by others an impossibility.'



the aish PERSPECTIVE

The impact of COVID19 restrictions have been felt deeply by everyone and has encouraged us to deliver a range of new and exciting interactive sessions and programmes, making them available to those who need this contact and support the most.

Our online content is reaching hundreds of young people who are signing up for our programmes and thousands more enjoying the video and social media we are creating and sharing on a regular basis. Here is a selection of some of the most far-reaching things we have been able to deliver across the UK during this period.



MAY 2020

My Father was a Nazi, I served in the IDF

This emotional and fascinating story of Dr. Bernd Wollschlaeger, the son of a decorated German officer, who was forced at a young age to confront his father's unbroken allegiance to the Nazis. His emotional and soul-searching journey ultimately led him to convert to Judaism and serve in the IDF.

OVER 36, 000 PEOPLE WATCHED THIS VIDEO either live or online afterwards and we were delighted to bring such an inspiring story to our followers and subscribers.

MAY/JUNE 2020

Breakout Rooms

Aish UK pioneered this innovative online social and educational platform to create several 'Breakout Room' games whereby teams of 4-10 participants work together to solve clues and work their way through the purpose designed digital Escape Rooms. Competing against other teams and resulting in one evening with over 60 students using the platform at once, this fun and social concept was a huge success and received some of the strongest positive participant feedback we've ever had.

IN TOTAL OVER 150 STUDENTS
PARTICIPATED in this original and intuitive programme.

JULY 2020

Venture Summer Internship Programme

THIS INCREDIBLE COURSE HOSTED 50 STUDENTS taking part in a 4 week part-time paid internship. With a selection of professional fields ranging from finance, philanthropy and media to hospitality and retail. The internship included daily Jewish Enrichment courses covering a variety of topics as well as 4 hours a week of Leadership & Development Training including tracks such as Social Action, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Leadership Accelerator and more. Particular highlights were our sessions with special quests such as Sir Mick Davis. Daniel Green, Andrew & Karen a new aish uk programme Harris, Martin Moshal and Ambassador Daniel Taub.

AUGUST 2020

Wiley Response Rap Video

In early August the world was shocked by British rapper Wiley's tirade of antisemitism on social media and the slow response by social media companies to removing this hatred. Rabbi Moshe Friedman provided a sharp, thought provoking and enjoyable response via his own rap video which has gone viral on both youtube and facebook and has now been VIEWED OVER 100,000 TIMES.

ONGOING

Learning One-on-One

We were overwhelmed by the hundreds of young people who responded to our calls and invitations to increase or start learning with one of our Aish Educators over the lockdown period. This period saw our highest level of engagement ever with OVER 1,080 ONE-ON-ONE LEARNING

SESSIONS AND A FURTHER 4,750 PARTICIPATIONS IN ONLINE CLASSES,

digital lunch & learns and online educational events.



Maimonides **Educational Courses**

These pay-per-course options range in topics from Jewish Philosophy to Jewish History, from Practical Spirituality to The Existence of God as well as our newest course on The Modern Jewish Woman. Each 10 part course is split across several easy-to-absorb sessions using pre-recorded and live videos and guidance, sources to examine and responsive engagements with students.

OVER 100 STUDENTS HAVE ALREADY **ENROLLED** in one or more of these courses

and are enjoying the high level of content and personal live sessions with educators as they progress through their course.

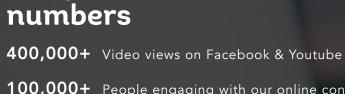


THE

MODERN JEWISH

WOMAN





The past 6 months in

100,000+ People engaging with our online content

9,540 Subscribers to our weekly email

7,128 Participations in educational sessions

3,500+New followers on social media

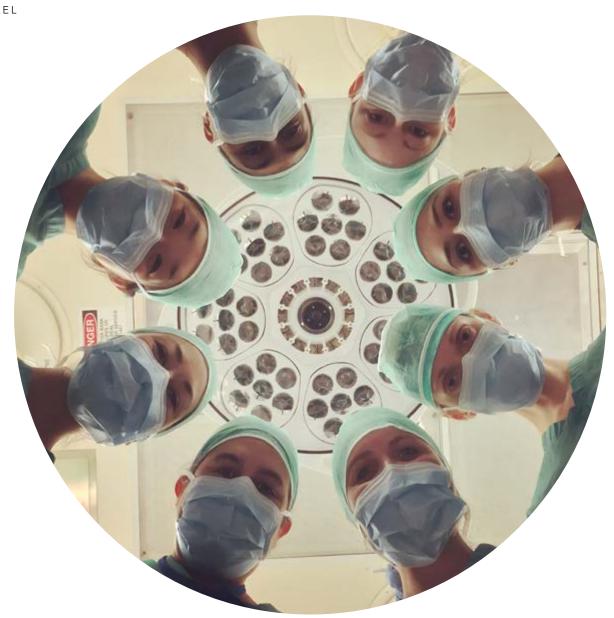
912 Participations in online events

50

100 Online course students registered

Venture Summer Internship Participants





UNITED HATZALAH

JUXTAPOSING THE MEDICAL AND

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO

COVID-19 WHILE ENSURING THE

SAFETY OF PRACTITIONERS

by RAPHAEL POCH

In all of human history, there have been few pandemics that have shut down the globe as thoroughly as Covid-19 did for the past few months. In Israel, the government acted very quickly and shut down the economy and all travel and movement beyond 100 metres from a person's place of residence with the exception of essential workers. People were only allowed to go out to buy food or medicine, but many, who were among the at-risk populations, were unable to do even that. Additionally, lines at both supermarkets and pharmacies were very long and the wait time in certain instances was a number of hours just to get in the door. The already dire health situation for people across the country grew worse as many people could not obtain food or medicine. Additionally, as many stores refused to allow young children in their doors, single parents, divorced parents, and even working parents with children at home due to school closures, found it nearly impossible to go shopping to get essential supplies. As the lockdown in Israel continued for nearly two months, things that were once simple to many people became arduous and taxing expenditures of time and effort.

Recognising the need to not only maintain a vigilant medial response for regular medical emergencies, but to also provide a solution to the growing humanitarian crisis across the country, United Hatzalah joined together with The Israel Association of Community Centers and the Lev Echad (One Heart) organisation and established a national humanitarian emergency response network. With all three organisations involved, the network was comprised of 30,000 volunteers spread across the country with volunteers present in every community, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Druze, Bedouin and others.

Utilising the same advanced GPS technology that United Hatzalah implements to locate medical first responders, all 30,000 volunteers were able to download a specially designed phone application that allowed the newly created dispatch centre to locate the five closest volunteers and alert them to the humanitarian emergency occurring in their area.

Vice President of Operations of United Hatzalah Dov Maisel explained, "During the Covid-19 crisis, United Hatzalah volunteers continued responding to medical emergencies across Israel. As an organisation that serves the public, we were unable to stay complacent in the face of what we recognised as a rising humanitarian crisis of national proportions.

Numerous segments of the population suffered as a result of the crisis due to the dramatic shift of lifestyle that was forced upon us all. We decided to mobilise together with our partners and provide a country-wide network of volunteers that provided aid to the elderly, people with disabilities, families, and others in need of assistance due to being placed under home isolation."

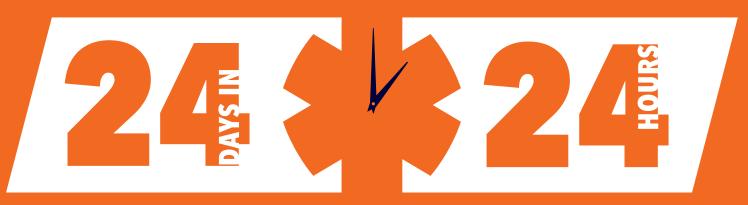
Maisel continued: "In less than 30 days, our humanitarian dispatch and expanded network of volunteers responded to more than 30,000 humanitarian emergencies that included purchasing and delivering food and medicines to those stuck at home by the threat of corona to assisting with electrical and plumbing work as well as general maintenance in people's homes, as many technicians were unable to travel."

Maisel recounted a particular incident that stood out as a volunteer going above and beyond the call of duty. "One of our volunteers who is a nurse and has previously worked in a nursing home was called to assist in a nursing home whose entire staff had taken ill with the virus. It was late on Friday night, a day when religious Jews refrain from work or travel of any kind. In spite of the Sabbath and having his own children with him for the weekend (he is a divorced father and it was his turn to spend the weekend with his children), he traveled halfway across the country to assist. The nursing home was in Bnei Brak, a city that was, at the time, under military control and complete lockdown with no one being allowed in or out. The volunteer, Gilad Hadari, provided care for 50 elderly residents of a nursing home by himself for 72 hours straight until additional staff could be found. That is the spirit of selfless giving that each of our volunteers embodies in the work that they do."

In addition to the Humanitarian Dispatch, United Hatzalah began transferring Covid-19 patients from hospitals to specially converted hotels that were transformed into care facilities for non-critical Covid-19 patients. Towards the end of April, United Hatzalah also began conduction testing for Covid-19 patients in cities and neighborhoods that suffered a high level of infection. As any medical call could also be a case where the patient or a family member present could have Covid-19 or be in isolation after having been exposed to a person with Coid-19, each and every medical volunteer across the country had to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever they went to a medical response call that had a possibility of

Donate now and be a lifesaver!





24 days of lifesaving in 24 hours

Running until:

Wednesday 30th September 2020

www.israelrescue.org/24in24

On an average day, United Hatzalah volunteers respond to 1,800 calls...



























Covid-19 interaction. United Hatzalah's Health Department was tasked with continually updating and re-issuing protocols and regulations to all of its volunteers on an almost daily basis to comply with new regulations coming from the Health Ministry. The level of infection suffered by the first responders in the organisation was very low. Out of 6,000 active medical volunteers, only 17 contracted the virus, and most of those who contracted the virus caught it from friends or neighbours and not from responding to medical emergencies.

Maisel said that this spoke to the special care taken by the organisation to protect its responders. "The number of our medical responses didn't diminish significantly and the fact that only 17 people out of 6,000 contracted the disease, and most of them caught it while not responding to medical emergencies, shows how well the safety precautions taken by the organisation worked. Among the regulations issued by the Medical Department of the organisation were: "Alternating weeks between going on calls, so that volunteers who were on call one week were off for the next two and thus wouldn't interact with large groups of volunteers and run the risk of infecting others. Another precaution was that every volunteer needed to apply a facemask to themselves and the patient in order to protect all those present, regardless of the emergency. Volunteers had to ask the patient before they entered the house whether or not someone was in isolation or ill with the virus and if so they had to wear full protective gear. Trainees, as well as volunteers over the age of 60 and volunteers with chronic illnesses, were suspended from responding to medical emergencies for the months when the virus was most rampant. These regulations fluctuated with the seriousness of the level of infection and in accordance with the guidelines of the Health Ministry. The dynamic instructions provided to the first responders successfully lessened the risk to the first responders of contracting the disease themselves."

One of the people who did contract the disease was the President and Founder of United Hatzalah, Eli Beer. Eli was abroad when the virus struck Israel. Once the Israeli government began issuing regulations that forced all people returning from abroad to enter into two weeks of isolation, Eli decided to stay abroad and continue raising money for the organisation rather than return and face the isolation period. During a fundraising trip to Miami, Eli contracted the disease and checked himself into Miami University Hospital complaining of respiratory problems.

Eli was diagnosed with Coronavirus, his condition quickly became quite serious and he was intubated and sedated. After being intubated for 30 days, Eli made a miraculous recovery and was flown home to Israel on the private jet of a friend and supporter of the organisation, Dr. Miriam Adelson.

Upon returning, Eli heard of all the work that was being done to assist the people of Israel by the organisation and said the following: "I thought that I wasn't coming back. Not to Israel, not to see my family, and not to life. I cannot put into words how proud I am to hear the stories of the acts of selflessness by our volunteers both with the emergency medical response over the past few months and with the humanitarian response. Every time one of our volunteers left their homes to respond to an emergency, they were putting their own lives and the lives of their families at risk. And it is a serious risk."

"Look at me," Eli continued. "I'm a healthy guy without any pre-existing medical conditions and I nearly died because of this disease. Why would so many people, who are volunteers, do this? It isn't their profession. They won't lose their job if they don't respond. So why take the risk? The answer is simple. Our volunteers do this because they all realise that saving people is about more than simply responding to medical emergencies, it is about caring for one's community and assisting in any way possible whenever called upon. When another person needs help, our volunteers don't relate to it as 'someone else's problem.' They relate to the incident as if it was their own mother or grandmother, father, grandfather, son, or daughter who needs help, and they move heaven and earth to provide that help. Through the work of United Hatzalah's volunteers and the volunteers of our partner organisations, whether with emergency medical calls, corona testing, ambulance transfers of corona patients, or responding to humanitarian needs, we managed to raise the level of community resilience across the entire country and that played a part in keeping the total number of Corona cases down to a minimum. I am proud of how we as an organisation handled this crisis and I believe that we have a lot of information to share with others on how to properly manage a pandemic both internally as a volunteer EMS organisation, and externally as providing assistance in the community above and beyond medical response."



MAIMONIDES

Why do bad things happen to good people? What role does religion play in politics? Can Judaism be spiritual? Have you ever wondered if Judaism has the answers to your fundamental questions?

Maimonides is the name of the new online courses developed by Aish UK. From courses on Philosophy to Jewish History to Spirituality, you will come away feeling informed, educated and empowered. Join some of the top Jewish educators in the world on a journey of discovery with short videos, additional source material for those who want to learn more, and trigger questions to help make this ancient wisdom relevant to the 21st century.

Check out the courses at aish.org.uk/course

















How long does a star live for? How long until a new face appears in the moon? How long until I'm gone, soul and body detached, and the sun forgets my face? Time can tell.

For a time now this pandemic has prevailed and we exist in a world we don't recognise. The world speaks and we don't remember the voice, a new language is being spoken, one where worried words are being uttered and scared sorrows are being shared. The world has changed and there is no amount of time that can heal the tragedy this disease has caused. Souls were lost. And time stood up, took a big strive forward, walked on, and never looked back.

Time is strange. Like a quiet person gliding by, inconspicuous, going unnoticed, until someone looks down to see footprints have been etched into our earth, dents everywhere, so that when time passes, worlds have been changed.

Time stayed with me, made a vow to never leave me. A promise whispered under the stars. Except, that vow will be broken, because one day when I leave this earth, unexpectedly, time will be forced to leave me. Time will stop and say goodbye. So, with unspoken words on my tongue and emotion on the tips of my fingers I'll whisper farewell.

And all the doors of bursting opportunity will reluctantly close, muttering apologies, but nonetheless shut forever. My actions in this life will have been recorded and time will slowly get up to leave, again, never looking back.

A girl with wisdom in her eyes once told me "emotions don't have a past, present or a future" I found truth in her words. Time has no control of feelings. Feelings are unexplainable; too instantaneous, mysterious to ever fully understand. Is there a certain amount of time until you know you're truly in love, or does the feeling surprise you by bursting into your heart, using the side door?

Time is naturally intertwined with all of life's experiences, except the duration that time stays, has no effect on the significance you regard your experience, it only takes a second for your heart to begin to feel something; one moment, and your world can be changed.

When the world stopped, collapsed, drained from its sickness, we had a sky's worth of time. Time alone. A time I used for reflection and growth but, it was also a time where my heart cried quietly and my mind burnt with anxiety, loud like a shooting star. Because emotions sink into you, at first, it's only a thought, then a feeling, but then it gradually grows, becoming everything you are.

The only way I know how to stop my emotions becoming all I am, the only way I know how to truly live, without anything stopping me from moving forward and blinding me from toxicity, is faith. Faith. Believing there is a direction destined for you.

Time told me one night, how fleeting feelings and thoughts can be, how deceptive. Time tells me it's more about the deeper feelings we experience in life, the feelings we are certain of, not all lost in burning anxiety, confusion. Real feelings.

Time tells me how God gives people gifts, like a character trait given to you, so you're able to strive in life, but then God gives us something special. He gives us people, a soul created to connect with you, the connections you feel with people are God-given. It doesn't matter how long it takes for you to see the stars in their heart, or how long it takes for the moon to be in their eyes, if it's real and pure, its meant to be. Hold on to the real people in your life. That's what time told me.



Chaya Necha Milun is 17 years old and attends Hasmonean High School. She loves children and ran the Machzike Ha'daas Shul children service programme. She is passionate about doing chesed and visits Clore Manor care home for the elderly on a regular basis. She has participated in helping run summer GIFT camps and organises her own private camps. She has also participated in the Helping Hand programme for GIFT charity, helping with children in need. She enjoys all things creative including art, dance and most of all creative writing.

TABLE SCAPES

FOR THE NEW YEAR













Sometimes simplicity is the answer.

This is for the country living/garden enthusiasts. This table is a beautiful option for Rosh Hashanah: clean lines and fresh greenery symbolise the purity and newness of the day. Simple, fresh, earthy and green.









You can never go wrong with choosing black and white as your Yom Tov theme, but for Rosh Hashanah, this is a perfect theme. White represents purity and holiness which matches this holy day perfectly. I used a white table cloth, a simple black table runner and plenty of white flowers. White hydrangeas are a fabulous option to fill your table. For those who love classic, modern elegance, black and white is the way to go.







For those of you who are like me and just adore sumptuous and extravagant styling, this theme is very much in keeping with that.

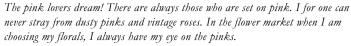
When I think of Rosh Hashanah, hues of red come to mind. 'Red delicious' apples adorn my table in harmony with the ruby pomegranate seeds. Antique silver candle sticks and silverware add a traditional Jewish atmosphere to this table. I used plenty of dark green foliage accompanied by an abundant supply of red roses and carnations.

For a traditional Rosh Hashanah theme, this is the table for you. Rich, opulent and majestic. A few of the many things that are part of this holy day.









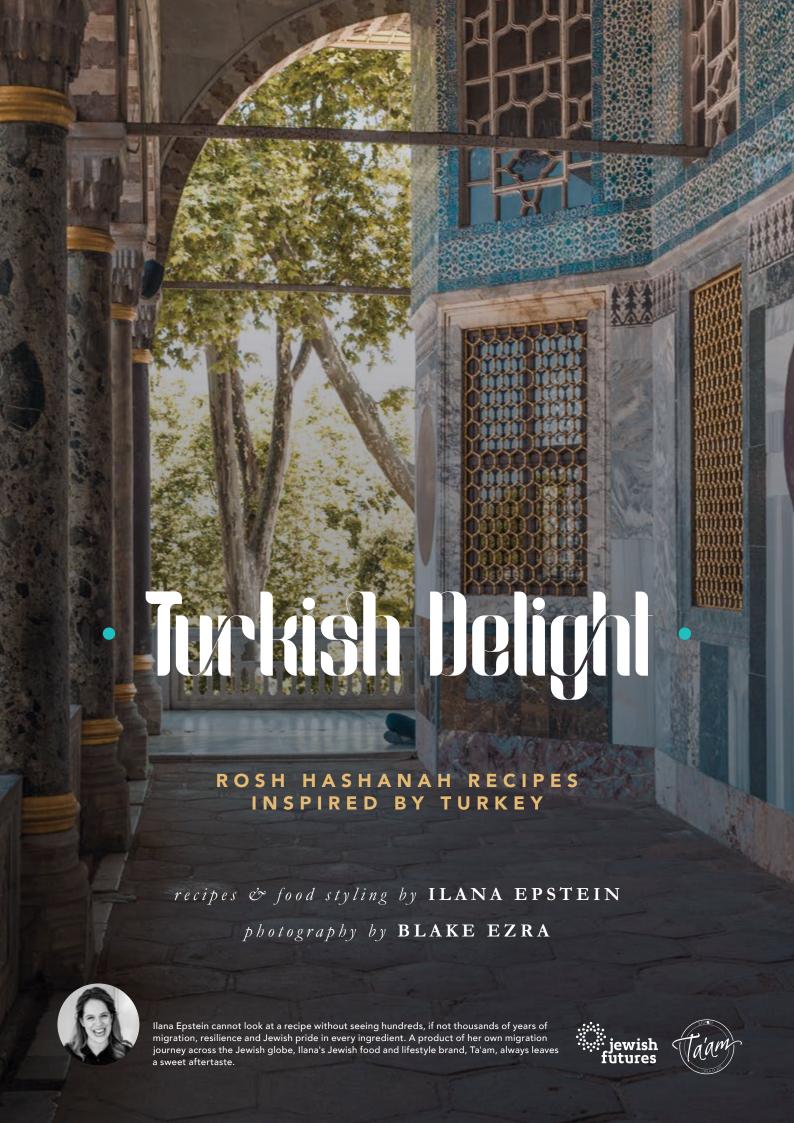
Aside from that, my brand Halva & Roses is all about that shabby chic, vintage glory, so naturally I had to create a table in my favourite colours. Romantic, dreamy and feminine.





Leah Hoff is the creative spark behind her brand Halva & Roses. She styles and designs events and dinner concepts for different occasions. Aside from being a master baker of her exquisite desserts, Leah has a certificate in floral design from The Covent Garden Academy of Flowers. Leah is also a social media manager. She can be contacted through her Instagram page @halvaandroses.

PHOTOGRAPHY Aviva Roitenbarg: 07975 923973 Instagram: @theavivaedit



In my efforts to feed my wanderlust, to try to see the world on a limited budget and with too many responsibilities, I would invariably end up staying close to home. Instead of travelling, I would read travel blogs online, read novels set in exotic locations, explore traditional foods, and experiment with recipes. All from the comfort of my home. I would set the scene for my travel adventure without ever leaving home. I didn't consider writing about a place which I had never travelled to. How could I hope to describe its vistas? Or capture its aromas and flavours? My own interpretation of traditional dishes, I was sure, would pale in comparison to the local delicacy.

Yet, if the last half a year has taught me anything, it is this: our imagination is our greatest strength. It can take us anywhere, imagine ourselves anywhere. Between imagination, travelogs, historical accounts, novels, and yes, cookbooks, we can see the world, taste the world. Will it ever compare to the real thing? Probably not in terms of authenticity but it's not too bad of a pay off in terms of accessibility. With the limitation of not being able to travel anywhere, for the first time ever, I felt I could travel everywhere. And the first place I wanted to travel to was Istanbul.

In my very complicated family tree, about six generations back, there was a Turkish woman. I don't even know if my grandmother ever knew her name. But my Savta (grandmother) knew that her own cooking was in the most part uniquely Ladino and influenced by her Turkish ancestor.

In 1492, when Spain expelled its remaining Jewish population, Jews found themselves welcome throughout the Ottoman Empire. The Jews of Spain are known as Sephardim. The word "Sepharad" is Hebrew for Spain, yet the term is misleading and deserves to be explained. The Jews who were expelled from Spain spoke a Judeo-Spanish language called Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish. The food they cooked had a strong Spanish influence and their customs and traditions varied from Jews of the Middle East. These Jews are often classified as "Sephardi" as well, but are perhaps better identified as "Eidot Mizrach" or "Eastern Communities". I wanted to explore Ladino cuisine and the best place to do so was Turkey.

Forty thousand Spanish Jews settled in the Ottoman Empire, with thirty thousand heading to Istanbul (called Constantinople at the time). Considering the total population of Istanbul numbered only seventy thousand, Jews made up a considerable portion of the population. The Jews helped propel Constantinople into an international commercial centre.

While living and enjoying religious freedom, they built fortyfour synagogues. Unlike so many places in the world, Jews have lived there largely uninterrupted, though there have been instances of antisemitism in Turkey. The Jews who live there today trace themselves back to those Jews escaping Spain.

Leyla and Rabbi Nafi Haleva are a Rabbinic couple living in Istanbul. This past summer, with the help of Zoom, I spoke to them as they sat on their sun-drenched terrace on Prince's Island, an island southeast of Istanbul in the Sea of Marmara, to which the community decamps for the summer months to escape the heat of the city. Both Leyla and Rabbi Nafi can trace their families back to 1492. They and their families have been committed to looking after their community for generations. In fact, Nafi's father, Rabbi Ishak Haleva, is the Chief Rabbi (or in Arabic the Hakham Bashi) of Turkey. We discussed Corona and community, but before long we were talking about food and even before I could tell them I was looking for Rosh Hashanah inspiration, Rabbi Nafi and Leyla rushed in to tell me about the customs of the Rosh Hashanah seder.

In recent years, more and more people have become aware that, amongst Sephardi and Mizrachi (Eastern) Jews, there are symbolic foods that can be eaten on Rosh Hashanah that are auspicious for the new year, especially when paired with a significant blessing. In Ashkenazi homes, it was often an apple and honey and the symbolic foods would make their way into the meal but had no blessing associated with them. However, more and more people have been adopting the custom of a "seder" of symbolic foods and it is wonderful to see families embracing new traditions.

Rabbi Nafi was so excited to tell me that the Rosh Hashanah seder as we know it was actually established in Turkey, and the blessings recited in Ladino. And then it made more sense to me: I had grown up with the Rosh Hashanah seder that my Savta laid out every year, and the foods she served were distinctly Ladino.

When I set off on my virtual travels, I did not imagine that I would feel so connected to a place I had never been to, but everything I learned fed my imagination and helped to fill in the blanks and the flavours that were at once familiar and at the same time exotic.

The recipes that follow are a real mix between authentic Turkish, Turkish fusion, and more Western dishes and we have woven the Rosh Hashanah symbols through them; imbuing simple delicious regional dishes with significance.

TURKISH SIMIT BREAD

Simit is the street bread of Istanbul. It is not a Jewish bread yet, like baguettes in France, Simits are a regulated bread, and exactly what ingredients go into the bread are known. Furthermore, Simit can only be cooked in dedicated Simit ovens. Thus many observant Jews in Istanbul happily eat this street food straight from the vendor.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

SPONGE

1 tablespoon instant yeast or active dry yeast 1 tablespoon sugar 60g (1/4 cup) water

DOUGH

All of the sponge 480g (4 cups) plain flour 1 teaspoon salt 30g (2 tablespoons) extra-virgin olive oil 255g (1 cup + 2 tablespoons) lukewarm water

WATER BATH

240g (1 cups) water 40g (2 tablespoons) treacle 140g (1 cup) toasted sesame seeds

RECIPE

FOR THE SPONGE:

1. Mix the ingredients in a small bowl, cover, and let sit for 10 minutes

FOR THE DOUGH:

- 1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine the sponge with the rest of the dough ingredients, mixing until the dough comes together.
- Knead for 8 minutes at medium-low speed in a mixer or for 10 minutes by hand, until the dough is smooth and elastic.
- 3. Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover, and let rest for 1 hour.
- 4. Line two baking sheets with parchment.

FOR THE WATER BATH AND BAKING:

- Combine the water and treacle in a large shallow bowl.
 Place the toasted sesame seeds in another large shallow bowl.
- 2. To shape: Deflate the dough and roll it into a thick log about 50cm (20 inches) long. Divide the dough into 8 equal pieces (about 100g each). On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion of dough into a rope 70 cm (30 inches) long. Fold the rope in half, pinching the ends together. Twist the ends of the folded dough together to make a spiral rope. Bring the ends around to form a 12 cm (5 inch) diameter ring, pinching the ends together to seal.
- 3. Heat oven to 190°C (375°F). Let the bread rise for 20 minutes.
- 4. Dip the rings in the treacle mixture, turning over to coat. Dredge the wet rings in the sesame seeds on both sides and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Repeat until all are covered in sesame seeds. Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, rotating trays halfway through, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and serve warm.
- 5. Store in a paper bag on the counter for one day or freeze for up to two months.



S P I N A C H B O R E K

In this very typical Turkish dish, we replaced the salty feta with tofu and pine nut butter. Feel free to use the same amount of feta as tofu if you prefer a dairy version, just be careful how much salt you add to the spinach as the feta is quite salty.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FOR FILLING:

2 tablespoons olive oil 2 large (banana) shallots, very finely chopped 2 cloves garlic, minced 600g (21 ounces) baby spinach, washed and dried 400g (14 ounces) firm tofu, cut into 1 cm squares 4 tablespoons pine nut (or cashew) butter Salt to taste

FOR ASSEMBLY: 12 sheets filo pastry 100g (3/4cup) olive oil Nigella seeds

RECIPE

- 1. In a large saute pan over medium heat, heat up the olive oil, add the shallots and saute stirring occasionally until the shallots are very soft and starting to turn golden, add the garlic and saute for a further 30 seconds until fragrant.
- 2. Add the spinach and cook, stirring until the spinach wilts about 1 minute, set aside to cool completely.
- Once the spinach is cool, drain any liquid that has collected at the bottom of the saute pan and discard, place the spinach mixture into a bowl add the cubed tofu, and pine nut butter (or cashew butter); stir and season to taste with plenty of salt.

TO ASSEMBLE:

- 1. Heat oven to 180°C (350°F). Line a large baking tray with baking paper and set aside.
- 2. Work with one sheet of file at a time, making sure to keep the remaining sheets covered with a tea towel so that they don't dry out.
- 3. Place the filo in a portrait position. Brush the whole sheet with olive oil. Place a large tablespoon full of spinach mixture at the bottom centre of the filo and shape the mixture into a log, fold the sides of the filo sheet into the centre, the sides will not meet. Roll up the log around the spinach in a tight roll. Place on the baking tray brush with more olive oil and sprinkle with nigella seeds. Repeat with remaining filling and filo, remembering to keep filo covered as you work.
- 4. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the filo cigars are golden brown and crisp.
- 5. Serve warm or at room temperature with extra pine nut butter or yoghurt.



RED LENTIL and APRICOT SOUP

This is the most common of Turkish dishes served all day long, even for breakfast.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 medium carrots, peeled and finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
95g (1/2 cup) dried apricots, cut into quarters
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 (400g) tin chopped tomatoes
135g (2/3 cup) dried red lentils
1 litre (4 1/4 cups) vegetable broth, warmed
10 thyme sprigs, only leaves
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

- 1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the onion and carrots; cook, stirring occasionally, until they soften and turn sweet, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the garlic, apricots, and cumin seeds; cook until fragrant, 1 minute. Stir in the chopped tomatoes and the juices from the can, stir well.
- Add the lentils, pour in the broth, and increase the heat to medium-high. Once the mixture comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low so the liquid is barely bubbling, taste and season. Cover and cook until the lentils are tender, 20 minutes.
- 3. Stir in the thyme leaves and lemon juice, then remove from the heat.
- Use a hand blender to blend about half the soup in the pot, leaving the rest to give the soup texture.
 (Alternatively, you can transfer half the soup to a blender, puree, and return it to the pot.) Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- The soup can be made 2 days ahead, store in the fridge and warm through before serving. Serve hot.

ROASTED CARROTS and BEETROOT with POMEGRANATE

All the flavours of autumn and Rosh Hashanah converge in one super-easy, incredibly tasty dish, with a hint of the Middle East. If you can't find chantenay carrots, substitute for regular carrots, peel them and cut into batons.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

500g chantenay carrots, trimmed and scrubbed 500g baby beetroots, (or regular sized cut into quarters) peeled and trimmed 500g small red onions, (or regular-sized cut into quarters, stems kept intact) peeled and trimmed 2 tablespoons olive oil 1/2 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon cumin seeds Juice of 1 orange 3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses 80g (1/2 cup) pomegranate seeds, to serve Pinch flaky sea salt

- 1. Heat oven to 200°C (400°F).
- 2. Place the carrots, beetroots and onions on a large roasting tin in a single layer, drizzle the olive oil all over, and season with salt. Cover the roasting tin well with aluminium foil, roast for 20 minutes until the vegetables are just fork-tender.
- 3. In a small bowl combine the cumin seeds, orange juice, and pomegranate molasses. Remove the vegetables from the oven, carefully uncover the tray, pour the orange juice mixture over the vegetables and return to the oven for an additional 10-15 minutes until cooked through, but still retaining their shape.
- 4. Just before serving top with pomegranate seeds and flaky sea salt



MEAT STUFFED AUBERGINE

This quintessential dish of stuffed aubergines actually has its roots in Turkey though it is found in the cuisines of all its neighbours. There is something about cooking the filling inside the aubergine that makes it even more savoury than when it is cooked on its own and creates a true celebration of otherwise humble ingredients.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

4 small aubergines, halved lengthwise

60ml (1/4 cup) olive oil
Salt and ground black pepper
1 medium onion, minced
3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through
a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)
400g (14 ounces) minced (ground) beef
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pound plum tomatoes (3 to 4 tomatoes), cored, seeded, and chopped small
40g (1/4 cup) pine nuts, toasted
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves

400g (14 ounces) cherry tomatoes, preferably on the vine

- 1. Heat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Line a large baking tray with aluminium foil and set aside as you prepare the aubergines.
- 2. Brush the cut sides of the aubergines with 2 tablespoons of the oil and season with salt and pepper. Set the aubergines, cut side down, on the baking tray and cover with foil. Roast until the aubergine is golden brown and tender for 50 to 55 minutes. Remove from oven. Do not turn off the oven.
- 3. While the aubergines cook, heat a large sauté pan, add the remaining olive oil to the pan and heat until shimmering. Add the onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook until softened and browned; about 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic, oregano, cinnamon, and cayenne and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the ground beef and cook, stirring until all the beef has browned. Add the tomatoes, nuts, and vinegar and cook until warmed through, about 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside.
- 4. Carefully turn the aubergines over so they are cut side up. Using two forks, gently push the flesh to the sides of each aubergine half to make room for the filling. Mound about 1/3 cup of the filling into each aubergine.
- 5. Add the vines of cherry tomatoes to the roasting tin on top or around the stuffed aubergine, return to the oven for 10-15 minutes until the tomatoes start to split and the filling starts to turn golden.
- 6. Can be prepared up to 24 hours before serving, store in the fridge well covered, and reheat before serving.

CHICKEN PILAV

Pilav is the original form of the English word pilaf, meaning "a grain" - usually rice - that is browned in fat before being cooked in a seasoned broth, often with the addition of vegetables and/or meat. This is the underpinning of so much of the cooking of the Middle East, we couldn't imagine not including this delicious dish here. Feel free to swap out the pine nuts or currants for other dried fruits and nuts of your liking.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1.6 kilo (3 1/2 pounds) (approximately) bone-in-chicken parts or 1 whole chicken cut into 10 pieces 11/2 teaspoon kosher salt 2 medium onions, finely chopped 450g (2 cups) white long-grain rice 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon 2 teaspoons ground all spice 90g (2/3 cup) pine nuts 100g (2/3 cup) currents 700ml 3 cups chicken stock Salt to taste

- 1. Season the chicken pieces all over with salt. Heat a heavy-bottomed saucepan or Dutch oven, add the oil and heat until shimmering. Add the seasoned chicken pieces in batches (do not crowd pan) and brown well on all sides. Transfer to a plate.
- 2. Reduce heat of the pan to medium and add to the fat in the pan the chopped onions, cook, stirring often until the onions are soft and starting to turn golden, about 5-7 minutes.
- 3. Add the rice to the pan and stir until the rice is well incorporated into the fat and soft onions. Add the cinnamon and allspice, pine nuts and currants, and keep stirring until well incorporated. Add the stock, bring to a boil, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits.
- 4. Place the chicken pieces in the pot and pour in any accumulated juices. Cover the pot and simmer over medium-low heat for 20-25 minutes, check that the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through. Remove from the heat, cover pot with a clean tea towel and then place the lid over the tea towel, leave covered and undisturbed for 10 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning before serving.



HONEYCOMB

Though in no way Turkish, we couldn't resist adding a recipe that could hold its own against Turkish coffee and reminded us of our favourite Rosh Hashanah ingredient; honey!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

300g (1 1/2 cups) granulated sugar 60ml (1/4 cup) water 85g (1/4 cup) golden syrup (or corn syrup) 85g (1/4 cup) honey 2 teaspoons baking soda

- Line a large baking tray with sides that are at least 5cm
 (2in) high with baking paper, make sure that baking paper
 covers the entire tray as well as the sides (do not leave
 any gaps).
- In a large heavy-bottomed pot combine the sugar, water, golden syrup (or corn syrup), stir until the sugar has dissolved. Bring mixture to a boil, without stirring, until it reaches 130°C (265°F) and add the honey.
 Continue heating until mixture reaches 150°C (300°F)
- 3. Continue heating until mixture reaches 150°C (300°F) immediately take off the heat and add the baking soda. Using a whisk, stir vigorously (but carefully) to evenly distribute the baking soda. It should be bubbling like crazy, pour the mixture into the lined baking tray. Do not spread or touch in any way. Let it do its thing until it has cooled completely.
- 4. Break into large chunks. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for a week.

TURKISH DELIGHT PAVLOVA

Turkish delight is actually called Lokum in Turkish. Legend has it that a British traveller brought the sweet back home and named it after its place of origin and how delightful the sweet gummy treat was to eat. We have taken all the flavours of Turkish delight and made them into a celebratory Pavlova. Many Ashkenazi Jews have the custom not to eat nuts on Rosh Hashanah, while Sephardim do not maintain this custom. Feel free to omit the pistachios in this recipe.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

4 egg whites 175g (3/4 cup) caster (superfine) sugar 2 teaspoons corn starch ½ tablespoon rose water 100g (1 cup) green pistachios (optional), finely chopped

FOR COCONUT CREAM FILLING:

1 x 400g (14 ounces) tin coconut cream 1 teaspoon rose water (optional) 1-2 tablespoons caster (superfine) sugar (optional)

FOR ASSEMBLY:

25g (1/4 cup) green pistachios (optional) 1 tablespoon dried edible rose petals 2 tablespoons rose-flavoured Turkish delight sweets, cut into quarters 2 tablespoon honey for drizzling

RECIPE

FOR THE PAVLOVA BASE:

- 1. Have all the ingredients at room temperature. Make sure all the equipment you are using is super clean. Heat oven to 150°C (300°F). Draw a 23cm (9 inch) circle on a piece of baking paper. Flip the paper over, so you can still see the circle but the ink will not bake into the meringue. Place the paper on a flat baking tray, set aside.
- In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whisk the egg whites on medium, until soft peaks form. Raise the speed to high and very gradually add 1 tablespoon sugar at a time, beat until meringue holds very stiff peaks.

- 3. Using a rubber spatula fold in the corn starch, followed by the rose water and half the chopped pistachios (if using).
- 4. Scoop the meringue onto the baking sheet within the drawn circle, use the back of a large metal spoon to spread the meringue disk just to the inner edge of the circle. Make a slight depression in the centre. Sprinkle remaining chopped pistachios (if using) over the meringue.
- 5. Place the tray in the oven and reduce temperature to 120°C (250°F), bake for an hour. Turn off the oven and cool the pavlova in the oven for an hour. Remove from the oven. Pavlova base can be made several days ahead; store in a cool dry place.

FOR COCONUT CREAM:

- 1. Open up tin of coconut cream and carefully separate the solid white cream from the liquid. Discard any liquid.
- 2. In the clean bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whisk the coconut cream until just billowy.
- 3. Fold in the sugar and rose water if using.
- 4. Cream can be made 24 hours ahead, store in the fridge in an airtight container.

TO ASSEMBLE:

- 1. Just before serving, place the pavlova base on a large plate, top with coconut cream, and sprinkle with pistachios, rose petals, Turkish delight, and drizzle with honey.
- 2. Serve immediately.





As it must during these pandemic days, it started with soap and water...

I was furious after having to clean up another one of Aaron's biological disasters, so I chucked him in the bath and started washing my hands, probably a little too violently. I turned to check on him and breathed (or more accurately, *fumed*) into the soapy lather when, lo and behold, a bubble appeared.

For those of you who don't know me, Aaron is my six-year-old with special needs, my accidental muse and the star of my show. If he laughs at something, it's usually worth writing home about.

Aaron was mesmerised as the bubble slowly introduced itself. No matter what shape a bubble has initially, it will always try to become a sphere. Almost animated, our bubbly friend struggled to form nature's most natural shape and just as it achieved circular perfection... it popped.

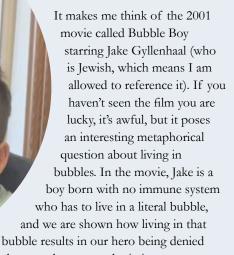
And Aaron popped the tension between us by letting out an almighty burst of laughter. There is something enchanting about bubbles – like life, they are beautiful and fragile, but there is also a darker connotation we need to explore. (Don't worry, we will tread lightly, even the gentlest touch is fatal to a bubble).

My first question was why bubbles are round. We investigated the science: the answer is that the sphere is the shape that minimises the surface area of the structure, which makes it the shape that requires the least energy to achieve. *Boring*.

As always, we prefer the spiritual explanation. The circle symbolises eternity. It starts nowhere and it finishes nowhere. The circle is also a symbol of equality: every point on the circle is equidistant from its centre. A bubble simply yearns to be well-rounded like the rest of us.

When I moved to London as a carefree twenty-three-year-old, my friends and I rented a house in Golders Green. I was used to the laid back South African approach to Judaism and was not aware that Golders Green was the one of Europe's more religious neighbourhoods. So, I was quite overwhelmed by the eclectic pockets of more religious Jews and their seemingly imposing customs.

I remember looking at them and thinking, harshly, how can they live in such a *bubble*?



basic human pleasures and missing out on so much of what life has to offer.

Living in the insulated bubble of Orthodox Jewry seemed to me to be so limiting, almost suffocating. My view has evolved over the past decade; whilst I am still far from "religious", I have had the pleasure of enjoying life inside that bubble, and so I now recognise the splendour of the light that forms within it.

How interesting it is that this virus has forced the whole world into their own bubbles.

In the UK, Prime Minister Boris Johnson borrowed an idea from the impressive New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, and introduced the concept of support bubbles, defined as a group of people with whom you are permitted to have close physical contact. Because of Aaron's condition, my girls were allowed to attend school during the lockdown, and they spoke naturally about being separated into bubbles.

The thing about support bubbles is that they must be *exclusive*. Once in one, you can't switch and start another with a different household. Within each bubble, people can stay in each other's homes and do not have to socially distance. They count as one household. If this Covid crisis has taught us anything, it is that in bubbles we find safety and health.

But we knew that already.

No one knows the power of a bubble more than the Jewish people. In *Radical Then*, *Radical Now*, Lord Rabbi Sacks explained that by building bubbles around the "synagogue in space, and the Sabbath in time, Jews became the living circle at whose centre is God".

At the time of writing, I have slept in my own bed 143 nights in a row. For me that's a 10-year record: I have been a frequent flyer since 2010, travelling a lot for work (and pleasure), so four consecutive months at home was ironically foreign to me.

No one knows the power of a bubble more than the Jewish people. In Radical Then, Radical Now, Rabbi Sacks explained that by building bubbles around the "synagogue in space, and the Sabbath in time, Jews became the living circle at whose centre is God"

But I have loved it.

I know it sounds cool to get on a plane every month and see a new place – and don't get me wrong, it is – but there was something soothing about being in our bubble for almost half the year. There is a lot of negativity out there, but I always used to think that sheltered people were losing out by not experiencing some of the more unsavoury activities of life. I don't regret most of my youthful misbehaviour.

And then I had children.

I do not want my kids to be shielded from real life the way we must shield the vulnerable from this virus, but I also don't want them to get infected by the really bad stuff.

We are free to pick who and what is allowed into our bubble, and this is the perfect time to reset and resize ours accordingly.

I used to have such issues with the kind of Jew I am. I am more secular, I love wearing T-shirts and the average Golders Green child's Torah knowledge is far superior to mine. But then I listened to a shiur by Rabbi Zev Leff which changed the game for me.

He referred to a source which I don't recall, but the essence was that the Jewish people is the circumference of a circle whose centre is God. As I mentioned earlier, it's a stunning fact that every single point along a circle's perimeter is exactly the same distance from the centre. (I read further about this, there is staggering mystical stuff discussed by our sages on circles,

including a very accurate calculation and explanation of the number pi $(\overline{\omega})$, the mathematical constant.)

Rabbi Leff explained that regardless of your level of devoutness, learning or observance, all Jews are points on that circle around Hashem – just because we are in a different place, doesn't mean we are any further away from Hashem. That bombshell changed my thinking forever.

Now is the perfect time to re-examine at which point on that circle you want to be. Redefine your bubble and conduct a governmental enquiry into what measures you need to take to ensure it is not contaminated. We all have indulgences and temptations we know we should quarantine from, so there is no better time to appreciate what really matters and lock them down.

In order to explore the arbitrary pointlessness of life, HG Wells asked, "What's it all for? Are we bubbles blown by a baby?"

I bent down to rest on the bath's edge and looked into Aaron's eyes, searching for his soul. He stopped giggling for a moment and stared deep into *my* soul for an infinitesimal yet infinite moment; I felt like I was about the unlock the meaning of life. But he interrupted my revelation by splashing the water and motioning for more. So I took the soap and water and blew another marvellous bubble for him.

This one didn't pop.



Gareth Kobrin was in born South Africa where he graduated with a Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Cape Town. He moved to London just over a decade ago where he worked in the banking industry for a few years, and then qualified as a chartered management accountant. He is now the CEO of a tax technology company called VATGlobal, which is part of the VAT IT Group. He is married to Aimee and they have three children. When he is not doing VAT stuff, he loves to write and is obsessed with sport. If you need any advice on VAT or just want some sports banter, Gareth can be contacted at gareth.kobrin@vatglobal.com.

silver



BUYING & SELLING SILVER



SILVER REPAIRS



SILVER INSURANCE VALUATIONS



WE BUY GOLD



30-50% **CHEAPER THAN** RETAIL



LARGE STOCK AVAILABLE

Look out for the launch of our new WEBSITE! rsilver.co.uk











Hassans

INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRM

CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL • FINANCIAL SERVICES • FINTECH • FUNDS • LITIGATION • PROPERTY • TAX PLANNING • TRUSTS

PO Box 199, Madison Building, Midtown, Queensway, Gibraltar, GX11 1AA T: +350 20079000 F: +350 20071966













