

THE JERUSALEM POST

DECEMBER 2, 2022

# MAGAZINE

# 90 YEARS

**'THE JERUSALEM POST'  
CELEBRATES ITS FOUNDING  
— AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR  
ISRAEL AND THE WORLD**

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**THE JERUSALEM POST**  
FOUNDED IN 1952

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2022 • 29 HESHVAN, 5783

**King of the road** November 29

In Israel, the car still rules the road. Theodor Herzl's Zionist idea  
of a Jewish state was not just a political ideal. It was a

**A resident's journey**

From the 1950s to the 1970s, many

When they say  
"It sounds  
better in  
English,"  
they mean  
**THE JERUSALEM POST**

The Histadrut congratulates The Jerusalem Post on  
90 years of excellence



לחברינו בג'רוזלם פוסט,  
**פועלים איתכם גם  
ב-90 השנים הבאות**

בנק הפועלים מברך את עיתון ג'רוזלם פוסט לרגל  
חגיגות 90 שנה להיווסדו ומודה לו על שנים ארוכות  
של שותפות ועיתונות משובחת.

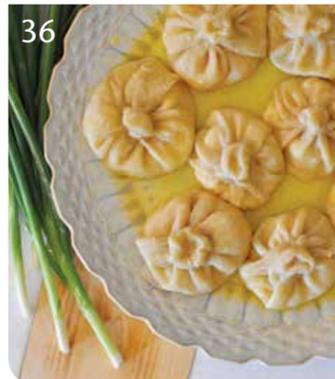
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COVER PHOTO: Jerusalem Post archives  
Photos (clockwise from top): Marc Israel Sellem;  
Meital Sharabi; Pascale Perez-Rubin



(FROM L) John Adler; Lea Ben-Dor; 'Palestine Post' founder Gershon Agron; and Ted Lurie, 1956. The latter three all served as editors-in-chief. (Jerusalem Post archives)

EDITOR ERICA SCHACHNE: 'Working at the "Post" affords me the opportunity to wave the Zionist flag high.' (Ziv Asor)



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Esteemed readers,

It brings me great pleasure to introduce this issue on the 90th anniversary of *The Jerusalem Post's* founding.

Launched in 1932 by eventual Jerusalem mayor Gershon Agron, it was known in those pre-state years as *The Palestine Post*.

Think about it – almost a century ago, on the precipice of the Holocaust, before many of us were twinkles in our parents'/grandparents' eyes.

I came to the *Post* quite by chance in 2012, starting as a copy editor at the old complex in Jerusalem's Romema neighborhood, whose vast corridors were populated by ghosts of papers past – and pigeons. As a nascent *olah*, I didn't yet get the full picture of the history of my new workplace and its role in faithfully documenting so many years of Israel's ups and downs.

Ten years later, I still pinch myself nearly every day that I have the privilege of occupying a place on its masthead and being your editor, working to actualize the *Post's* mission of spreading meaningful content far and wide. Together, we've shared stories large and small that have shaped the Jewish state, from an intimate look at the Entebbe hijackers to the IDF's Alpine Unit – soldiers on skis! – from a "happy list" to keep spirits up during corona, to the latest exhibition at the Israel Museum making us all proud.

In this web-fueled world, it's no small wonder that our English-language newspaper continues to be a bestseller – a paper you can fold, whose pages crinkle as you turn them, that you can take with you on the bus or read cover to cover (we hope!) on Shabbat. And, of course, we have an online presence – as Israel's most-read English news website.

As *Magazine* and *In Jerusalem* editor, I wake up with purpose each morning, feeling I have a role in building the Jewish state word by word, brick by brick. Join me in popping the champagne (or non-alcoholic cider) on this milestone!

Ever your editor,  
Erica Schachne

PHOTO OF THE WEEK | MARC ISRAEL SELLEM



SAY WHAT?

By LIAT COLLINS

Ke'esh be'sdeh kotzim  
נאש בשדה קוצים

Meaning: Like wildfire  
Literally: Like fire in a field of thorns  
Example: We couldn't keep it a secret. The news spread *ke'esh be'sdeh kotzim*.



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# KKL-JNF POSITIONING ISRAEL AS A LEADER IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

• Lidar Gravé-Lazi

In November 2022, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) delegation, headed by Director General Amnon Ben Ami, arrived in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt to participate in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27).

During the event, KKL-JNF delegates presented the fund's plans, thoughts and solutions to deal with climate change and the environmental crisis, based on its rich history of activities in the field, and position Israel as a global leader in the fight for planet preservation.

KKL-JNF, the largest Jewish green organization in the world, has been an official member of the UN Climate Change Forum as an observer organization since 2009.

According to KKL-JNF, most of the climate forecasting models in the Middle East show a likely increase in temperatures, shortening of precipitation seasons and an increasing frequency of extreme events.

In Israel specifically, models predict an increase in extreme climatic events and an expansion of the desert line to the North. Regarding the regional distribution of rain, the near future will likely bring a decrease in the annual amount of precipitation in the South and Northeast of the country.

As such, KKL-JNF is committed to sharing its vast knowledge and expertise in afforestation and soil conversion in semi-arid areas, as well as other proficiencies, to provide solutions not only within the State of Israel, but to combatting the global climate crisis as well.

KKL-JNF was established in 1901, as a decision of the Fifth Zionist Congress held in Basel, with the aim of purchasing land in Eretz Israel for the Jewish people.

"The people," said Theodore Herzl at the Congress, "will forever be not only the donors, but also the owners of this dedicated capital."

This has been a fundamental principle of KKL-JNF since its inception, that its lands



▲ Photo by Yossi Zamir

are not to be sold but to forever remain the property of the citizens of Israel.

As such, since its establishment KKL-JNF has served as a trustee in the name of the Jewish people over the land of Israel and has acted to develop the land and strengthen the bond between the Jewish people and their homeland, providing a response to Israel's most pressing needs.

Today, one of Israel's most prominent challenges, together with the rest of the world, is the climate crisis. Even before the crisis became an issue on the global agenda, KKL-JNF has operated in Israel in a wide variety of fields that contribute to this fight and to the preservation of the planet.

As such, the organization has become a world force in the fight for a greener, more sustainable planet.

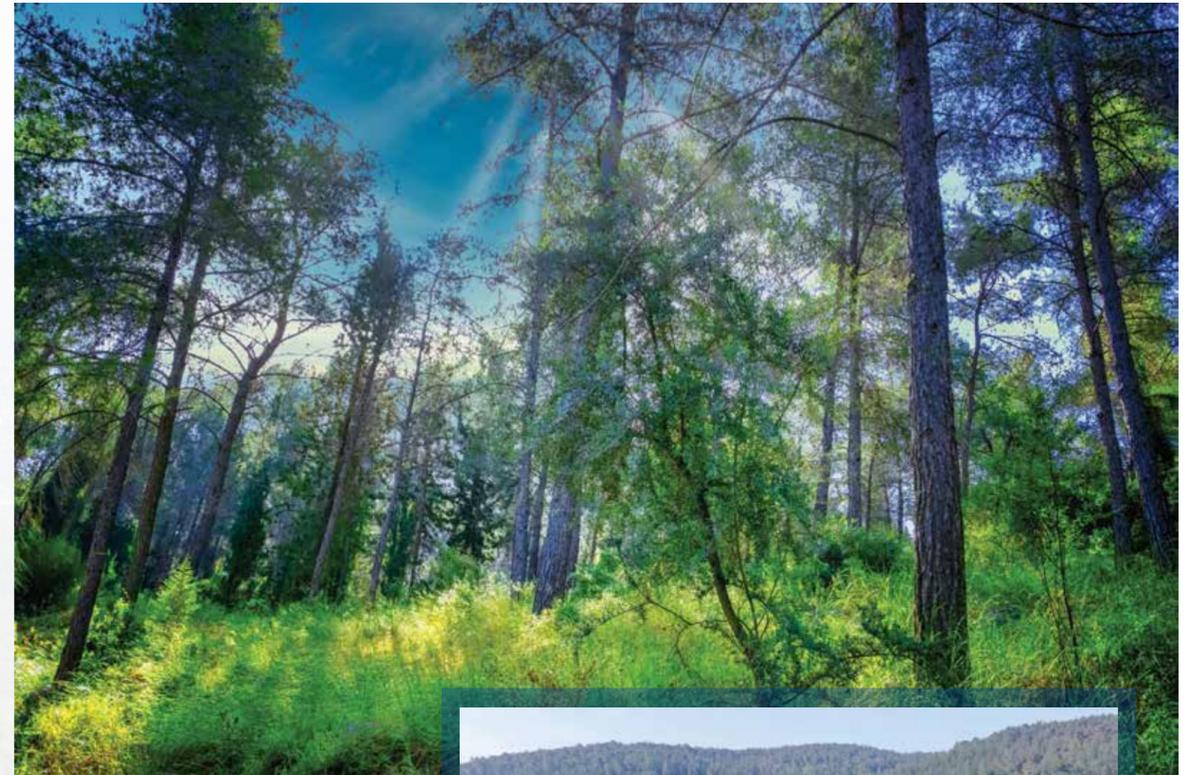
Since 1961, by special mandate from the government, KKL-JNF operates as the forest

service and land development authority in Israel.

KKL-JNF's sustainable development agenda includes forestry, boosting water resources, combating desertification, holistic planning, land restoration, ecotourism and education. While always dealing with sustainable development, KKL-JNF is placing more emphasis and resources to help combat climate change.

In addition, KKL-JNF supports the agricultural R&D stations dotted around the country, to advance agricultural technologies for local farmers. Israel is a country with limited water and land resources, so these stations are critical to maintain Israel's food security and competitive edge.

In the last decade, KKL-JNF has doubled its efforts in sustainable forestry practices, increased research and fire prevention



▲ Photo by Bonnie Sheinman

capabilities, and upgraded ecosystem services. The organization sees forestry as key in adapting to climate change.

According to KKL-JNF, forests help regulate climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and preventing soil erosion, by creating carbon soil sinks and providing shade to cool temperatures and regulate rainfall.

Indeed, Israel is one of the few countries in the world that have a wider expanse of forests than they had a century ago.

In addition to its activities, the organization also recently launched an annual prize \$1 million for Israeli researchers who will contribute groundbreaking technologies to the world in dealing with the climate crisis. In addition, KKL-JNF is preparing to launch the International Center for Climate Research in the near future

As such, KKL-JNF has earned a worldwide reputation as a highly professional organization when it comes to sustainable forestry practices and experts in dryland forestry.

Consequently, many countries and



organizations are eager to learn about the expertise it has accumulated as a living lab for dryland forestry, desert agriculture and watershed management techniques.

The organization's international relations team is in continuous contact with major inter-governmental organizations and senior government officials in the respective fields.

KKL-JNF operates with the firm belief that

international cooperation is the only real way to affect climate change, which is a global issue.

At the UN Climate Conference, by using its vast expertise gained over the past century and by exporting this knowledge, KKL-JNF showed the world just how Israel can lead the way and positioned the country as a trailblazer in the global fight against climate change.

# A letter from home

• DAVID BRINN

**F**or the first few years that I lived in Israel, *The Jerusalem Post* was like a lifeline. Then it became my life.

With virtually nonexistent Hebrew skills but a thirst to know what was going on in my adopted country in the mid-1980s, the *Post* became my go-to address for information. Every Friday, I'd buy it at a newsstand in south Jerusalem and spend Shabbat poring over the various sections.

Some of the erudite prose by clearly Anglophone writers like Philip Gillon or Alex Berlyne went over my head, but other stories and columns by staffers like Sam Orbaum and Matt Nesvisky introduced me to a familiar and endearing mindset, which made me feel like there were other people in Israel to whom I could relate. It felt like getting a letter from home.

They were writing about Israel and the Jewish world but with a sensibility that spoke to me, an outsider who desperately wanted to belong. With their story-telling skill, humor and wisdom, they made me feel connected – like I wasn't a foreign implant in the middle of this Mediterranean maelstrom I had chosen to make my home.

When I landed a position at the *Post* five years later as a page designer, I got to meet those people behind the bylines. They turned out to be as colorful as their prose, and just as welcoming.

They and a host of others – dedicated professionals committed to producing a quality product that met the varied needs of its readership – would play significant roles in nurturing a journalistic novice who knew a little about writing, not a lot about

journalism, and even less about Israel.

And they were characters, with the proverbial news ink under the fingernails. People like Louis Rapoport, a '60s activist turned Ethiopian Jewry champion, who wrote the definitive coverage of their clandestine aliyah in his book *The Lost Jews: Last of the Ethiopian Falashas*.

He was the night editor when I was assigned to him to design the news pages for him on the evening shift. Sometimes on our way home at the end of the night, he'd impart wisdom about news, journalism, life and the best place to get a falafel.

He explained once that as an editor, he would often make his editorial decisions by envisioning a composite reader – an everyman – and ask himself what that person would want to read.

His tragic death at an early age from a heart attack in 1991 inadvertently thrust me into that position of decision-making much sooner than I or anyone at the *Post* had intended. And I kept Louis's advice close to me.

Those composite, everyman readers sometimes revealed themselves in flesh and blood. Occasionally, on the bus ride into the office, I'd spy fellow passengers perusing the *Post*. I'd pay attention to what they were reading, their body language or the reaction on their faces.

Thankfully, they would almost never crumple up the paper and throw it on the ground in a huff but would usually take their time and examine all the pages thoughtfully. I silently hoped they were being informed, enlightened or just entertained by enjoying a good story.

With the transition to the digital age, seeing newspaper readers on the bus has become a rarity. But the goal of telling stories and hopefully enlightening and informing readers has remained a constant at the *Post*.

Not everybody always agrees with everything they read, but that's okay. In a family, there's room for divergent opinions and views. And I hope that's the way regular readers have come to think of the *Post*.

Whether receiving the paper rolled up outside the front door or perusing *Jpost.com* on the screen over morning coffee, it's still like getting a letter from home.

And because it's family, that means readers feel unfettered – perhaps more so than they would with another publication – to share their true feelings when something irks them. Like those rare times when the answers to the cross-words are mixed up (we are human). Or if that day's editorial is diametrically opposed to what they believe.

And that's okay. Because all of us here, on both sides of the paper – the staff and the readers – are passionate about the subject that all of us love: Israel. There are countless shades of opinions and beliefs, and there's room for all of them – within reason – under the umbrella, as long as all

sides are treated with respect. That's part of being a family, too.

That sense of partnership with the reader is what I think sets the *Post* apart from other publications. Total strangers who I'm introduced to will have no qualms about telling me some variation of "Yeah, I read the *Post* – why don't you do ...?" before telling me what they don't like about the paper and suggesting what can be done to improve it.

It's because they care – as much as all of us at the paper – about what we write about and how it's presented. Israel evokes passion in people – some cannot stand to see it criticized, and others can't stand to see it not being perfect.

The *Post* has tried to be a home for both ends of the spectrum and to everyone in between. In that sense, we've created a real community, which is two-way, dynamic and constantly evolving.

SO MUCH HAS changed since Gershon Agron published the first edition of the *Post* 90 years ago. But the essence remains the same: being a reliable and well-written source of information about Israel, the region and the Jewish world.

Just as the readership has changed with the times, I'm no longer the young upstart who looked in awe at the grizzled veterans who were masters at reporting, writing, editing and designing.

There were so many people from whom I learned so much – like layout mavens Ben Shuman and Joe Blumberg, who impeccably designed pages always with a cigar and a cup of "tea" close by; copy editors like Ilan Chaim, who gave new meaning to the term "word crunching," by getting to the essence of any paragraph or sentence; and editors from Jeff Barak and David Horowitz to Steve Linde and Yaakov Katz, who all, in their own way, demonstrated what leadership and commitment to the highest journalistic standards means.

During my time at the *Post*, I lost my innocence about Israel (putting out a paper one black night in November 1995 that reported on the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin), and I've lost most of my hair.

But I've gained so much in return: friendships and experiences that span a lifetime; the satisfaction of putting a paper to bed, knowing that the reader was going to get his money's worth in the morning; the opportunity to write a piece or publish someone else's that could have a lasting effect on the way someone sees an issue or the life of the subject.

This could only happen if someone read our stories. And that's why, for all of us at the paper, the reader is paramount. Into my fourth decade at the *Post*, whether assigning, editing, writing or choosing the stories that we tell, I still take Louis Rapoport's advice to heart every day. After all, there's nothing like getting a letter from home. ■

*The goal of telling stories and hopefully enlightening and informing readers has remained a constant at the 'Post'*

'OCCASIONALLY, ON the bus ride into the office, I'd spy fellow passengers perusing the "Post." I'd pay attention to what they were reading, their body language or the reaction on their faces.' (David Brinn)



- Communicated -

# MOSAIC UNITED

## STRENGTHENING RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND GLOBAL JEWRY

• Alan Rosenbaum

**P**olitical rivalries, division and uncertainty are routine in Israel, but if there is one thing that Israeli leaders seem to agree on, it is the importance of Mosaic United, the Israel-based organization that strengthens the connection of young Jews in the Diaspora to their Jewish identities and the State of Israel.

"In a time of strategic uncertainty," says Gary Torgow, chairman of Mosaic United, "Mosaic is an important element in the Israeli government's strategy to strengthen relations with global Jewry. We will be going on our fifth Minister of the Diaspora. They have all come from different political parties, and they have all been marvelous, talented and dedicated to the Jewish people. Mosaic is a cause which helps unite politicians and political parties across the spectrum." Torgow is the chairman of the Huntington National Bank, a top-25 US bank, and the national campaign chair of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Since its founding seven years ago, Mosaic United has invested millions of dollars into innovative Jewish educational programs to strengthen Jewish identity and connection to Israel in the Diaspora in a unique partnership between the Israeli government and private philanthropy. The Israeli government and Mosaic United reached an agreement whereby Jewish philanthropists contribute \$1-2 for every dollar donated by the Israeli government. To date, Mosaic United has invested \$165 million in educational programs around the world, \$55 million of which has been contributed by the Israeli government.

Speaking with the *Jerusalem Post* from his native Detroit, Torgow

explains that Israel is today the focal point of world Jewry, and as such, the responsibility to look after world Jewry is a crucial component of Israeli society. "There are more Jews living in Israel today than anywhere in the world, and we need your support," he says. "Jerusalem, as the center of the Jewish people, must take responsibility and lead the global Jewish movement."

Torgow cites the organization's three foundational programs – Campus, which has reached 115,000 students in a collaboration between Hillel International, Chabad on Campus International, and Olami; Shalom Corps, a global Jewish volunteer movement operated in partnership with the Jewish Agency that supplies volunteer organizations around the world with funding, resources, educational tools and volunteer recruitment support; and Yisraelim, an innovative program that reaches Israelis living abroad, strengthens their Jewish-Israeli identities and connects them with their local Jewish communities.

One of Mosaic's most significant efforts going forward, says Torgow, is a partnership with RootOne, an organization that brings teens to Israel, that will enable thousands more Jewish teens to visit Israel each summer. In 2022, the partnership brought 5,000 young people. In 2023 the number of participants will grow to 7,000, and by 2024 participation is projected to nearly double to 9,000. Studies show that these Israel experiences have a tremendous impact on participants, increasing their levels of Jewish engagement and overall interest in Jewish life compared to those with similar backgrounds who did not participate in such trips. Says Torgow, "It is a pacesetter, critical step for global Jewry to help high school students have an immersive

experience in Israel. It will tie these young people to Israel for the rest of their lives in a beautiful way." He adds that Mosaic United has played a key role in deepening the educational component to strengthen the educational side of these trips, providing participants with a variety of opportunities to learn about their identity, their Jewishness and about Israel.

Mosaic United will soon be engaged in community building programs, says Torgow, to stem the tide of disaffiliation by offering new and proven alternatives to connect with Jewish communities abroad. "We're looking for ways within Jewish communities abroad to identify areas that we can partner with them on strategic areas," Torgow explains. "Our initial focus will be supporting young adults in creating their own peer-led communities and allowing them to form their connection with the broader Jewish community on their terms."

Torgow emphasizes that the fact that Mosaic is a true partnership between the Israeli government and the Jewish communities of the Diaspora is a significant part of its appeal. "Mosaic is not only government funding. It's also matching dollars with the Diaspora. It's Diaspora Jewry partnering with the Israeli government. I think that's why the political world in Israel sees it as such a valuable opportunity, because they love the partnership with Diaspora Jewry. They understand that strengthening Diaspora Jewry is part of the Israeli government's commitment to every Jew in the world and its obligation to preserve the living bond of the Jewish people as a whole."

Acknowledging the rise of antisemitism in the United States and around the world, Torgow



▲ Gary Torgow, chairman of Mosaic United

points out that Mosaic's key strategy is to help young Jews around the world strengthen their Jewish identity and connection to Israel, which, in turn, enables them to better understand how to deal with antisemitism and how to defeat it. "We are supporting programs on college campuses, and we're supporting programs and volunteerism around the world. We're raising a new generation of young Jews all over the world who take their Jewish commitment seriously and are leading change in the Jewish communities and in the great mission of the Jewish people to be a light to all humanity." ■



# Inside the 'Post' newsroom

Ninety years after the newspaper was launched, how would its founder view coverage of Election Day 2022?

• STEVE LINDE

It's November 1, 2022 – Election Day – at *The Jerusalem Post*. What would its founding editor, Gershon Harry Agron, think if he were catapulted into the newspaper's plush newsroom in the Jerusalem Post Building on 206 Jaffa St. to witness how Israel's top English-language newspaper covers the latest election, nine decades after he published its first issue on December 1, 1932?

Agron (who shortened his name from Agronsky) was born on December 27, 1893, in what was then Russia (now Ukraine). He moved to Philadelphia with his family in 1906. After serving in the Jewish Legion in World War I, he settled in Mandatory Palestine in 1920. After stints as a journalist in Jerusalem and New York, he launched *The Palestine Post* in a building on Hasolel Street (today named Havatzelet Street) in downtown Jerusalem.

He served as its editor-in-chief for a record 23 years, until 1955, when he was elected mayor of Jerusalem. Agron died in office in 1965 after contracting pneumonia – coincidentally, on November 1.

Throughout Agron's stewardship, the paper – which changed its name to *The Jerusalem Post* in 1950 – was affiliated with Mapai, which in 1968 merged with other political parties to become the Labor Party.

IMAGINE THAT Agron gets past the security guard at the entrance to 206 Jaffa St., takes the elevator up to the second floor, knocks on the door and walks into the newly furnished offices of the newspaper. (The staff moved from the sixth floor to the second floor in October.)

He is welcomed by the current editor-in-chief, Yaakov Katz,



'THE JERUSALEM POST' newsroom: active and interesting. (Photos: Marc Israel Sellem)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Yaakov Katz in his office. Behind him – a portrait of founder Gershon Agron.

who still has the wooden chair Agron sat in and a portrait of Agron in his corner office overlooking Jaffa Street. Katz shows Agron the new conference room opposite his office and the open-plan newsroom, with computers centered around what is known as the Breaking News Desk – where young men and women constantly update the newspaper's website, JPost.com. It is, Katz boasts, the most popular English-language Israeli news website in the world.

"Call me Gershon," Agron tells Katz. "Where are you from?"

"My family's from Chicago," Katz says.

"What's going on right now?" Agron asks, looking around and feeling the palpable excitement surrounding the Breaking News Desk.

"Well, Gershon, it's Election Day," Katz explains. "Actually, it's the fifth election we've had in under four years, so we can only hope there's a clear winner this time."

"Who's running?" Agron inquires.

"It appears to be a close race between the right-wing bloc, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, the son of Prof. Benzion Netanyahu, and the center-left bloc, led by Yair Lapid, the son of Tommy Lapid."

"What about Mapai?" Agron asks, referring to the party with which the *Post* was affiliated under his editorship.

"Mapai is now called Labor and will do well to make the threshold," Katz replies. "The party leader is Merav Michaeli, the granddaughter of Nehemia Michaeli, the last secretary of Mapam."

Katz introduces Agron to Tamar-Uriel Beeri, the energetic managing editor of JPost.com, who made aliyah from Cresskill, New Jersey, and sits in the office adjacent to his.

"Who's winning?" Agron asks.

"My personal motto has been, 'Once I know, you'll know,' and there's no day that motto applies more to than Election Day," Beeri says. "As this can be quite stressful and my team of breaking news editors are up to their ears in election news, televisions playing from every angle, I tend to notice that it gets a bit tense."

"Since elections are unfortunately quite common here, it's easy to form habits. My personal favorite one happens every Election Day at 9:55 p.m. At 10 p.m., all the voting polls close their doors, and the television channels air their exit poll results. This is the zenith of news urgency, so the minutes beforehand are the shakiest."

"So at 9:55 p.m. every Election Day, five minutes before those exit polls are out, I come into the open workspace of the Breaking News Desk, quickly verify one more time that each person knows what they're doing, then get my whole team up on their feet to join me for a quick two-minute stretching session. It releases



TAMAR-URIEL BEERI, managing editor, JPost.com.



BREAKING NEWS Desk editor Michael Starr.

es tension, gets everyone laughing a little, and leaves us with smiles on our faces, ready to provide the world with the biggest news coming out of Israel."

DAY DESK editor Michael Starr, who came to Israel from Victoria, Canada, says Election Day started off quite calmly in the newsroom that Tuesday morning.

"Things were a little bit slow in the beginning, news-wise. For a few hours, it was mostly politicians casting their votes, and there were calm waters. The name of the game on the web desk is speed. We need to get everything up and before everyone else, but of course there's also accuracy and items of interest to draw people's attention. That means we need to verify everything very quickly, as well as make things interesting."

"At the very beginning, I opened up a live blog, which is a new system we are trying out. When something happens, I write a short blog post such as '7 a.m., polls open,' which allows us to give a play-by-play account as things go on, and later insert full articles. I think that people found that very interesting, and these posts were tremendously popular."

Starr points out that above the news desk is a screen with the number of hits for each article, allowing editors to constantly adjust the website based on which articles readers find interesting.

"It started picking up at some point when it became clear that more people had voted at certain times than in previous elections, and this high motivation to vote was of interest to people of all political persuasions. One of the things that struck me was the

last-minute pitches of the politicians, the so-called 'gevalt' appeals."

Aaron Reich, the assistant managing editor of JPost.com who made aliyah from New York, gives a glimpse of what it's like to work in the newsroom on Election Day: "It's nothing short of excitement. Throughout the day, we monitor all the news about the votes, what voters say and what politicians say. Who is doing a last-minute get-out-the-vote 'gevalt' campaign, etcetera."

"But it isn't just about the comments, it's also about the pictures. We need to scour our own photographer's shots and the other wire photo services to make sure we have all the many pictures of people and politicians alike taking part in this now all-too-frequent exercise in democracy."

"Then when the polls close later in the day, things get crazy. The exit poll numbers start coming in, and it's a race to get everything up as fast as possible. The comments from politicians soon follow, and statements put out on social media about the outcomes. Then the party leaders address their supporters and stage grand photo-ops, all while everyone still puzzles one big question: Just who exactly won?"

Every reporter was assigned to cover a political party. Jewish World analyst, Chicago-born Zvika Klein, who was assigned to cover the Religious Zionist Party (RZP) of Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, had just attended the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America in Chicago and was hoping to get back to Israel in time for the election. He takes up the story:



NIGHT EDITOR Sarah Ben-Nun.



AARON REICH, assistant managing editor, JPost.com.

THE WRITER, a former 'Post' editor-in-chief himself, in the newsroom 30 years ago. (David Silverman/Reuters)



AGRON IN his Jewish Legionnaire uniform, 1918. (Photos: Wikimedia Commons)

OPENING OF Jerusalem's Gershon Agron St., 1960; Agron's mayoral successor Mordechai Ish-Shalom is in foreground.

"All of the speakers and participants of the conference from Israel, including new Jewish Agency Chairman Doron Almog, were on the same flight – a night flight from Chicago to Tel Aviv that would bring us back to Israel in time to vote – Tuesday afternoon. However, this direct United Airlines flight was delayed a few times until it finally left – 15 hours late.

"We then understood that there was no way we'd be able to make it back in time to vote, but I also had to let the desk know that I wouldn't be covering the RZP as I was planning to do, on election night. In addition, as an Israeli, I couldn't imagine going on a flight without knowing what the results of the election were, as the polls closed less than one hour after we took off.

"When we were finally boarding the flight, I told one of the stewards that it would be nice if they wanted to give all the passengers free Wi-Fi, since we were all eager to find out what the results of the election were going to be. We also were all depressed that we couldn't vote. 'That's a good idea,' he said.

After taking off, the head steward announced that anyone who purchased a Wi-Fi package would be reimbursed. "Even though they said that streaming wouldn't work on this Wi-Fi connection, I was able to connect to different Israeli news channels simultaneously and watch the dramatic results of this election.



"I then realized that I could actually work and started writing an analysis about the surge of seats that the RZP received in this election. It was amazing that I was very high up in altitude, but I was able to function almost normally.

"I was able to download a PDF with the party's platform and agenda, look through archived articles and quotes of the party leaders, and also watch what was going on in the RZP event in Israel. In addition, I texted a bunch of people I know who are members of the party and was able to have them send me quotes via WhatsApp voice and text.

"I think that the editors who received my articles from the airplane were surprised, since I told them that I would be signing off for the entire flight. And then, as happens in any media outlet: When they realized that I was online, they asked me for another article. The thing is – I must have been sleeping by then!"

NIGHT EDITOR Sarah Ben-Nun, who is from New York, began her shift at 3 p.m.

"The atmosphere was excited, anticipatory. Everyone was gearing up for the exit polls at 10 p.m. We all participated in a bet to guess how many seats each party would get, and that was very exciting. We each put 10 shekels in. I bet, too, but I didn't win.

"Because we knew that the majority of news pages were going to be about elections, there was a lot that we couldn't actually send to print until very late. So after sending two news pages, we sat and waited for the exit polls at 10 p.m. Our deadline to send the whole paper was 12:30; it's usually around 11 and it was extended for Election Day because we wanted to make sure we had the most accurate headline, even though we still didn't have final results, which take a day or two.

"The initial polls came in at 10, and I gave reporters a 10:30 deadline and told them to be in touch with me if there were any updates. We had a reporter covering every party. Then it was time to start laying out the front page and come up with the headline. We had a headline that said Netanyahu was poised to win, and Yaakov [Katz] improved it, making the addition that Ben-Gvir was soaring."

When the polls closed, political correspondent Eliav Breuer, who covered the nearby Likud headquarters at the International Convention Center Jerusalem (Binyenei Ha'uma), had a bet with the editor-in-chief. Breuer was born in the US to Canadian parents, made aliyah at the age of eight and served as a squadron commander in the IDF's elite Egoz Unit.

"As a political correspondent, I felt obligated to point out that the exit polls in the previous election did not reflect the final result. At 10 p.m. I tried to exude calm as the newsroom burst into frenzied activity," he says.

"The exit polls predicted that Balad would not pass the electoral threshold and that the Netanyahu bloc would win 61 or 62 seats. However, in the previous election, Ra'am also appeared below the threshold at first, but eventually passed it. Knowing this, I challenged Yaakov [Katz] to a bet that the eventual result would be 60-60. I joked that if I was correct, I should receive a raise. The rest, of course, is history. I could not have been more wrong!"

Ori Lewis, a veteran Post staffer who hails from London and works on the night desk, was one of the three who got closest to guessing the outcome in his bet.

"I guess I got closest to the number of seats each party won after playing around with it because in the beginning, I realized my guess added up to more than the 120 seats in the Knesset, and so I changed it. I think in general there was probably a feeling of 'We've been here before, and we're going through it yet again.' We had a later deadline, which is good, so we tried to get stuff out as soon as we could.

"I think our headline really encapsulates the result as it transpired later on. Yaakov oversaw the whole thing, and I think we all went home feeling that we'd done a decent job. We all pitched in and we did fairly well."

In the end, we now know, the Netanyahu bloc won 64 seats, sweeping it to victory in the fateful election. The banner headline on the front page of the November 2 issue of *The Jerusalem Post* read, "Netanyahu poised to win as Ben-Gvir soars," on top of a giant photograph by the paper's star photographer, Marc Israel Sellem, of Netanyahu beaming after voting at a Jerusalem polling station.

One can almost hear the voice of Gershon Agron telling Yaakov Katz at the end of his virtual visit: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!" (The more things change, the more they stay the same). Although outward appearances, work methods, technology and staff may change constantly at *The Jerusalem Post* (and things are certainly far more sophisticated, efficient and speedy than they ever were), the fundamental principles remain the same: It's still a newspaper of record, credibility and importance – and one of which we can all be proud. ■

The writer was Post editor-in-chief from 2011-2016.

איגוד לשכות המסחר  
ארגון העסקים הגדול בישראל

# ISRAEL A GLOBAL LEADER IN EXPORTING SERVICES

FICC PRESIDENT TO THE POST: ISRAEL IS NUMBER TWO COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN EXPORT OF SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE SIZE OF ITS ECONOMY

• Lidar Gravé-Lazi

"Israel is no longer an exporter of products, it is mainly an exporter of services," Adv. Uriel Lynn, president of the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce (FICC) recently told *The Jerusalem Post*.

Lynn sat down with *The Post* on the occasion of its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary to discuss the state of the Israeli economy, the growing trade and services sector, and the future of economic growth.

The FICC, established in 1919, is an umbrella organization responsible for representing the trade and services sector – the largest sector – in the Israeli economy.

"For many years people thought that trade and services are not important, they believed that the most important sectors are manufacturing, building, and agriculture," Lynn said. "But the economy has changed and in most of the western world, trade and services is now the largest sector of the economy."

Indeed, according to the latest available statistics, as of the beginning of 2022, the FICC represents 69% of the total product of the business sector in Israel and 73% of employees, or nearly 1.8 million people, in the business sector.

This includes both hi-tech and conservative sectors such as shipping, seaports, airlines, tourism, professional services, research and development, and software.

In Israel, Lynn explained, the growth of services has presented, "a real dramatic shift over the last 25 years."



"Israel is now the number two country in the world in the export of services in relation to the size of its economy according to an annual ranking by the IMD University in Lausanne, Switzerland," he said.

This impressive achievement is due in no small part to the FICC's role in shaping and promoting this sector.

Over the past few decades, the organization has operated to minimize and limit strikes in seaports and has contributed to the opening of two new seaports in Israel. It has acted to reduce corporate taxes, promoted legislation to protect the rights of employers, acted to reduce excessive regulation, and has worked to implement a dramatic reform in imports, among its main achievements.

Additionally, the FICC has also signed historic trade agreements with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco as well as created two free trade areas with Dubai.

"We need to know how to take these achievements and bring them to the people at large to create a better spread of the resources we have," Lynn said.

In looking to the future, he believes there are five main challenges facing the Israeli economy.

"We need to ensure the continuing growth of our economy and increase our product per capita because Israel needs a lot of resources, more than other countries, to face its challenges," he said.

Secondly, Lynn said it is imperative to control the rising cost of living. "We are really contributing by increasing the competition and making imports easier, in procedure and standards – this is one of the main goals of our organization," he added.

Additionally, he said the state needs to ensure it is possible for the young generation to buy an apartment as well as significantly invest in the development and education in the periphery.

Finally, Lynn said that the state

needs to "restore the safety of the individual and eradicate crime, akin to what Rudy Giuliani did in NYC."

"If the government will be able to achieve these five goals we will be in a good position," he said, adding that on the national level with regards to the economy Israel is currently in a "good" position.

"Because the economy grew dramatically, export grew dramatically, the Israeli National Product is \$485 billion – and that is quite remarkable," he said.

Still, Lynn said he is disappointed in state agencies, specifically the Israel Competition Authority which he said is not fulfilling its role, especially when it comes to Israel's seaports.

"Sea ports is where we swallowed the most unnecessary cost of living," he said. "They work under capacity – consciously, we are not using all of the piers available, and the Competition Authority are not really dealing with the places, like seaports, which are a true monopoly."

Despite this, Lynn said that today Israeli business is very strong and will continue to thrive in the future, especially if the government cuts down on excessive regulation.

"The business sector does not need any assistance from the government, all it needs is that the government will not interfere," he said. "We are moving in the right direction but very slowly when it comes to relieving excessive regulation and burdening procedures is slowing down the growth of the economy."

Lynn added that he hopes this move forward will "allow Israel to grow and develop and share the nature and advantages of the Israeli economy to the world at large." ■

# Where we were & where we're going



'THE POST'S present & future (from R): Editor-in-Chief Yaakov Katz; Palestinian Affairs Correspondent Khaled Abu Toameh; Middle East Affairs Analyst Seth Frantzman; and Diplomatic Correspondent Lahav Harkov. (Jerusalem Post staff)

To mark The Jerusalem Post's 90th anniversary, Editor-in-Chief Yaakov Katz sat down with Diplomatic Correspondent Lahav Harkov, Palestinian Affairs Correspondent Khaled Abu Toameh and Middle East Affairs Analyst Seth Frantzman for a conversation about the Post, its significance and how their jobs have changed since they became reporters. The full conversation can be heard on The Jerusalem Post Podcast. This is an abbreviated version, edited for style.

**Yaakov:** Lahav, when you look at 90 years of *The Jerusalem Post* and where we are and how we've gotten here, what comes to mind?

**Lahav:** So, first of all, if we look more broadly at the 90 years of *The Jerusalem Post*, we used to have this column that was from the archives. I don't remember if it was every day or every week. If something happened, you'd see how *The Jerusalem Post* was covering these huge events in Israel's history and in the world's history. And it really gives an idea of how significant this newspaper has been in telling Israel's story to the world.

In the past 10 or 12 years, I would say that the things that has changed the most is how fast everything has become – because of the media environment, more broadly, everything's moving really fast. Everything is on social media. You have to have some information the second something happens. And that's challenging in terms of trying to keep up our accuracy and to try to use the sources that we have that other people reporting in English don't have. But I think that we've kept to that challenge. We've met that challenge impressively.

**Yaakov:** But I think it's also extra sensitive in the diplomatic

beat, right? Because of this, the information that you publish really could impact Israel's standing or its ties with a country, or how it's going to be condemned at the UN or not.

**Lahav:** Yes, there are some stories that you can do and they're quick and easy; you know, if a leader has a phone call with another leader. But a lot of the important things on the diplomatic beat are happening behind the scenes, and they take a lot of phone calls and a lot of talking to a lot of different people to try to corroborate things. And they're definitely not instant stories.

I used to be on the Knesset beat, and you would have near uniformity of coverage because everything was at the Knesset. You sit in the committee rooms and you might have a different headline, but more or less the same things are happening. But on the diplomatic beat it's very individual because you're really getting stories behind the scenes.

**Yaakov:** Right. It's not just what's happening. Seth, you've traveled the region on behalf of *The Jerusalem Post*. You look at this 90-year milestone. What's your big takeaway?

**Seth:** I think that one of the fascinating things is if you go back and look at *The Jerusalem Post* in the 1930s and in the area of the pre-state period especially, it's fascinating to the degree to which the *Post* had reporters that were actually in the region who were going to places like Lebanon or Egypt, and they were getting stories from people there. And they were actually doing a lot of reporting also on the Arab community and what was then British Mandate.

So obviously that shifted in the 1950s or '60s, and then you get to the present day. I think that when you look back at those



(FROM L) Frantzman (2nd L) with Kurdish fighters in Iraq, 2017. (Photos: Seth J. Frantzman)

IN AVIDIVKA, on the frontline in Donbas with a Ukrainian army unit, 2017. 'Post' columnist Jonathan Spyer at R.

90 years, what I found in traveling the region, the fascinating thing is that even countries with which Israel doesn't have any relations, like Iraq, the times that I would travel there and spend time with the Kurds, for instance, a lot of people there are reading *The Jerusalem Post*.

I think in the West, as Lahav said, there is a huge number of media. Everyone's running to get tweets out and stories, and a lot of it kind of looks the same sometimes; but when you're in the region, you see that *The Jerusalem Post* is regarded as this legacy historic publication that people can rely on and that really matters.

I mean, Iranian media is reading *The Jerusalem Post* every day. And they're re-reporting what we write sometimes in their own weird interpretation of it. Like if we write that Iranian drones are a threat, Iranian media will re-report that and say, 'Well, you see Israel is afraid of our drones.'

**Yaakov:** The Zionist newspaper, *The Jerusalem Post* says...

**Seth:** Yes, the Zionist entity or whatever. But they're definitely reading it. And I think it shows the degree to which, even when sometimes we feel in the West that we are one of a huge number of publications, it's hard sometimes to sort yourself out from other Jewish publications and other legacy media. I think one thing

that's interesting in the region is the degree to which *The Jerusalem Post* is definitely one of the go-to places that regimes and people are looking at in terms of, well, what's the normal average thing that's happening in Israel? Here's where we'll go to find out.

**Yaakov:** On that note, Khaled, how are you received on your beat, which is in the Palestinian territories, working with the Palestinian Authority? They know you're coming from *The Jerusalem Post*. We don't hide our DNA as a pro-Israel newspaper, obviously as a Zionist newspaper. How do they receive you?

**Khaled:** I've been with the *Post* for nearly 20 years now. I would say that in recent years, or probably in the past 10 or 12 years, the Palestinian attitude toward the Israeli media has changed. It has become much more hostile and less tolerant, and there's actually a boycott of the Israeli media. It's by the Palestinian Journalism Syndicate. It's by my Palestinian colleagues, and it's by the Palestinian Authority. And that makes my job much more difficult to get information from Palestinian officials.

As Seth mentioned, *The Jerusalem Post* was always a source of information about Israel for people around the world. It was also a source of information for the Palestinians for many years. And I believe it still is because the Palestinians do not have a free media, and they rely heavily on the Israeli media. I see a lot of

our articles from the *Post* and news stories translated almost every day in the Palestinian media.

**Yaakov:** They give us credit?

**Khaled:** Yes. They mention *The Jerusalem Post*. Some say it's the Zionist paper. Some say it's an Israeli right-wing paper. Some people call it Hebrew media. They have all these labels. But how am I personally perceived? Look, I've been there for many years. You know, I don't only work for *The Jerusalem Post*; I'm also a man of the international media. So that helps me a bit. And I can go there and say, 'Today I'm not for the JPost, I'm for someone else.' So they would be open. But it is very difficult in our culture, the Arab culture. A journalist is not supposed to hang the dirty laundry out. A journalist is supposed to be loyal to his president, his prime minister, his government, his people, his homeland. And the truth is like, you know, somewhere down there.

**Khaled:** But I still go back to Ramallah almost every day. I'd be much more afraid to show my face in Ramallah if someone stopped me and said, 'We caught you lying or fabricating.' First of all, most of the criticism I get comes from the Palestinian government, the Palestinian Authority, and it's along the lines of 'What you reported is true. It's accurate, but please shut up.' And that kind of criticism does not scare me. Is it dangerous? Yes. Some of my colleagues over



ABU TOAMEH at work. (Dina Abu Toameh)

HARKOV OUTSIDE the White House ahead of the Abraham Accords signing, Sept. 2020. (Courtesy Lahav Harkov)



'BUT I still go back to Ramallah almost every day,' notes Abu Toameh: Palestinian mourners carry the body of Fadi Nuri, 16, who died after a clash with the IDF, Oct. 20. (Illustrative; Flash90)

there have been arrested. Others have been forced out of their jobs. Others have been intimidated. But fortunately for me, I go there and I come back to Jerusalem at the end of the day. I don't sleep there.

**Yaakov:** I've yet to get a call from Abu Mazen complaining about you, but maybe one day. You never know, right?

**Khaled:** He has complained about me, and he even invited me saying, 'You know what? Do you want to come? If you want an interview, I'll give you an interview.' The thing is that criticism is perceived as some kind of an opposition. There's no tolerance for criticism over there. And they assume that if you criticize them, then you must be on the payroll of the Jewish lobby, or you must be a Zionist agent, or you must be after them for one reason or another. And that hasn't changed, unfortunately, this perception that a journalist has to be loyal to his people and his government.

**Yaakov:** I want to get from each of you a story that highlights your career of being with *The Jerusalem Post*. So Lahav, let's start with you.

**Lahav:** The last two and almost three years now, I've been on the diplomatic beat. And it's very exciting for me to be able to travel with the prime ministers. I've been to the White House a bunch of times. I've taken that picture in the White House

ONCE-IN-A-CAREER experience for Harkov: The Norwegian royal family on the Royal Palace balcony in Oslo, May 2021. (Illustrative; Lise Aserud/NTB/AFP via Getty Images)



press room, standing there, like CJ from the West Wing, that all the diplomatic reporters take. But there's one story that stands out that actually was when I was still a Knesset reporter, but it wasn't my usual thing.

I accompanied Shimon Peres on his last trip as president, and it was to Oslo. He had a royal dinner, like a state dinner, but it was in the palace with the king and queen, and all the journalists were invited. In typical Israeli fashion, most of them did not understand what black tie meant, but we all got as dressed up as we could. And it was just something that I think, unless you're like a royal correspondent in London, it was a once-in-a-career experience to be eating in the royal palace with the king and queen.

It sparked a minor diplomatic incident at that dinner because I was seated next to Rabbi Michael Melchior because we were the only people eating kosher food, and I wrote about it in the article because I thought they served it to us really nicely. They served it to us on china dishes, and they tried to make it look as similar to everyone else's food. And then they also gave us wine, and the wine was from the Golan Heights Winery. I didn't even think about it that I mentioned it in the story, but the government got really criticized for it. And they had to release a statement clarifying that they weren't endorsing.

**Yaakov:** From 'occupied' land?

**Lahav:** Yes. Exactly.

**Yaakov:** Wow. So, Seth, give us a story from your travels around the world with *The Jerusalem Post*.

**Seth:** I think one of the most memorable ones was in 2015, when there was this huge refugee crisis in Eastern Europe because Angela Merkel had invited a lot of immigrants to come to Germany. Something like a million people were pouring over the borders on boats, mostly from Turkey to Greece, and then they were going from Greece. They had to walk across the borders into what was Macedonia and then Serbia, and then to Hungary.

And the countries were trying to close the borders to these people. Hungary was building a fence, so it was kind of imperative to get there. And I was trying to figure out how do you cover a story where you have a million people on the move across 600 or 800 miles of landscape? I decided, well, okay, I can just rent a car, right? I mean, you can just rent cars? Well, no. I went online and found you can rent a car in Greece, but you're not really supposed to drive through all these borders. And if you want to, you have to get all this insurance, which cost a lot of money - but the story was worth it.

I flew to Greece, I hired a car, and I ended up sleeping in the car while traveling across the borders with the immigrants. It was a pretty epic story. I ended up on the Hungarian border, when they completed the fence and the day these people were then stopped. And so, it was a huge privilege to do it. It took place over a few days, and it was great to be a reporter, not just for *The Jerusalem Post* but in general, to be able to cover this story which was a world event.

**Khaled:** Well, unlike Lahav, I'm not invited to join Abu Mazen on any of his visits to royal palaces, not to Washington and not to London or anywhere else because it's the Israeli media, not the Palestinian media. But I can tell you that *The Jerusalem Post* has really changed my life. Before I was writing for the *Post*, I did not receive invitations to speak to different people in different places. But thanks to the *Post* and because of my writings over the past 20 years, I've been meeting diplomats, I've been meeting congressmen, senators, decision makers, from all around the world. I'm invited to different places around the world to speak.

And I think that has really been a big step for me. And that shows the power of *The Jerusalem Post* as being one of the major sources of information on Israel for English-speaking people around the world. Now, of course, I've covered a number of important stories for the *Post*. One of them was the funeral of Yasser Arafat in Ramallah. As a *Jerusalem Post* reporter, I remember that many of the foreign journalists who were with me had to rely on my reporting because I was sitting in the Muqata (PA headquarters) back then, reporting on the atmosphere and the responses from the Palestinians.

Another big scoop that I had with *The Jerusalem Post* was an exclusive interview with the mastermind of the "Karin A

## THE BIG DATA REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD OF INVESTMENTS IS ALREADY HERE

• Lidar Gravé-Lazi

"The mix of new technologies and traditional human intelligence are the future of the investment sector in Israel," Kinneret Farzon, founder and CEO of Fjord Robo Advisor and Izik Noy, director at the firm recently told *The Jerusalem Post*.

Farzon and Noy sat down with *The Post* to discuss the technological advancements in the field of investments and the future of this sector in Israel.

"The world of investing today is focused on a very traditional and olden method, whereby an advisor, a human being, analyzes and selects investment portfolios," Noy said.

According to Noy, this creates several disadvantages including a limited knowledge base, personal bias, and slow response times to the fast-paced market changes, to name a few.

As such, he said, there is a growing and pressing need to incorporate new and existing technologies into the outdated world of investing, both abroad and in Israel specifically.

Fjord Technologies, the first digital investment house was founded with the aim of bringing the digital revolution to the world of investments in Israel.

This innovative method is based on the statistical ability of technology to create a competitive advantage and make an objective portfolio based on the preferences of the client, while relying on Big data and AI technologies, without personal bias or special interests.

"Fjord aims to use all the most available hi-tech for the world of investments," Farzon said.

This use of advanced technology was designed to produce a global and diversified investment portfolio that is optimally matched to every individual person's risk profile. The company offers robo-investment advice and savings management services.

"If you look back throughout

history you find that in the 17th century, brokers in London would sit in a coffee house and write deals on napkins to be bought and sold commodities," she said.

According to Farzon, the next stage in the development of the investment world took place in NY stock exchange, as runners would pass deals from buyers and sellers.

Then, in 1971 the first electronic stock exchange was established, the NASDAQ. "Since then, five decades later, there have not been any major changes with regards to stock exchanges and investing," she said.

Farzon said that today we are experiencing a "new revolution", which made its first breakthrough in the United States in 2013, with the rise of fintech companies and Robo Advisors.

"Now after the digital revolution of the 20th century, we are in the midst of a new revolution -the big data revolution," she said. "If until today we focused on technology, now we are more focused on information and the synergy of these two."

"If you think about it, all of these deals and runners, they were made from one person to the next. Today, due to the digital revolution we have an abundance of information and companies that know how to accumulate and make use of this huge amount of information are the ones that will succeed," she added. Farzon explained that the goal of big data in the world of investing, allows for less dependence on human intelligence - that is, the traditional and outdated method of reading or analyzing data.

"What is truly remarkable is that we are accumulating all the



information, not just from one analyst but from thousands, analyzing it in milliseconds in real time and developing conclusions," Noy said. "This is the future - the synergy between human intelligence and technology."

As such, Fjord technologies works with major research and advisory firms in the US as well as hundreds of mutual funds in the US, accumulating all the relevant information and data and providing clients with custom tailored investment portfolios that are suitable for all types of investors, corporations or individuals, and for any investment amount.

According to Noy, this use of technology has distinct advantages beyond the aggregation and analyzing of information.

"The incorporation of technology allows us to provide tailored and extremely diversified investment portfolios, whether in stock or real estate or other investments at a global and professional level at a fraction of the costs and with no

minimum investment limitations," he said.

This platform is especially beneficial to olim, or new immigrants, as well as people with investments in other countries. "We have the ability to collect relevant and timely information on investments and markets in other countries, so that they don't need to make any changes, their money stays where it is but is managed in the best possible way under regulation," he added.

Still, despite its clear advantages, Farzon said there are still some obstacles to the incorporation of this new technology, mainly a psychological obstacle. "People are afraid to rely on technology when it comes to their investments," she said. "Though I think slowly, as more and more companies adopt such tech this obstacle will be overcome."

She added: "Just as we rely on big data for navigation, we will soon rely on big data and technology to manage our investments." ■



PER FRANTZMAN, 'Iranian media is reading the "Post" every day.' Pictured: In Iran's parliament, Tehran. (Illustrative; Behrouz Mehri/AFP via Getty Images)



weapons ship," who's still in prison. He phoned me from Israeli prison to give me his version and publish in *The Jerusalem Post* about what had happened. And he was very upset with the Palestinian Authority. He said that they abandoned him and that he was a soldier carrying out orders. I think it showed how many people rely on *The Jerusalem Post* to get information. And these are stories that I'm proud of because we've been able to prove our credibility. I still get calls from many Palestinians

**Yaakov:** Multiple times it has become much more complicated. Seth, what are you thinking about the whole way the media industry has changed, and how do we stay relevant as we move forward?  
**Seth:** It is difficult because I think that one thing is social media giants - Facebook and Twitter - where most people are getting their information now. We see all the chaos now on Twitter, but at the end of the day, maybe 80% or 90% of people are going through some platform that is controlled by one or two companies. And so a slight shift in an algorithm can mean that, whereas one day our stories that we were posting on Facebook are being shared thousands of times, and then it can be 30 times or so. It really matters to us, and it matters to us putting out information.

I was at the recent Jerusalem terrorist attack scene, and I did some short video, and it got thousands of views very quickly. So I think trying to be able to not only get the relevant stories out there and make sure that we have the sources on the ground, but we also have to make sure that we are in touch with and understand what's going on with these big platforms and how people are getting information. And it's not just a question of always having the story first, but it's making sure that we put it out in the right way.

**Yaakov:** I'm wondering, Khaled, how relevant is the media still, and the role that we play as journalists when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which seems so stuck and not moving forward. Do the stories really make a difference? Because you and I joke occasionally how it's the same stories that we wrote 20 years ago, and now they're happening again 20 years later.

**Khaled:** Sometimes I feel I'm recycling the same story. I've been writing similar stories for the past 35 or 40 years in different places - but you know, this is the topic that we're covering, and everyone is still interested. Many people are really interested in this conflict, and they are hungry for information. And any information you provide them, they will take it. I think that the biggest challenge we are facing in recent years is social media because we have to compete with social media, and that's very difficult. But I think what we do as a newspaper, as mainstream media, is bring stories that are not there already. We have to keep the news relevant and offer the readers a different perspective that they don't have or rarely see on social media. We need to find ways to adapt ourselves to the reality that we are living in right now.

who, because they don't have a free media over there, come to us hoping that we will publish their stories.

**Yaakov:** I find it always amazing, the doors that *The Jerusalem Post* does open around the world and the leaders of countries who want to talk to us. I recently had an interview with the Taiwanese foreign minister, and we put that online. Within minutes, the Chinese ambassador demanded that we remove the story, and they filed an official complaint with the Foreign Ministry. It became international news. This one thing that we did, which was talk to a foreign minister of a country. And we become sometimes even part of the story.

I wonder, Lahav, if we look to the future of media and journalism, what are the big challenges you see as a beat reporter covering the diplomatic beat in the larger scheme of things, when it comes to the industry?

**Lahav:** I do think that the speed is a challenge to accuracy and also to reporting in a way that's not monolithic. I think that an advantage that we have at *The Jerusalem Post* over other people reporting in English from Israel is that we are Israeli. We live here, we have our families here. We understand what's going on in life here in Israel in a way that someone who's here for two, three years maybe doesn't. And the way to bring that forward in our deeper and more insider understanding of what's happening in Israel is again not as easy, when everything is these quick snippets that need to get onto social media right away. So I think that's one of the challenges. I don't know how much we want to talk about the business model of media, but the business model of media has rapidly changed.



HARKOV'S TWITTER page: 'Everything is on social media. You have to have some information the second something happens.' (Twitter)

KATZ in his previous role as 'Post' military correspondent. (Photos: Courtesy Yaakov Katz)

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"The year I spent studying in the Hadas Program gave me the infusion of Torah learning and spirituality I wanted before entering the largely secular military atmosphere, and provided me with the foundation that I needed."

NOA ALOUSH, DEPUTY COMPANY COMMANDER, IDF EDUCATION CORPS

Y (WHOSE FULL NAME AND PICTURE MAY NOT BE USED DUE TO HIS WORK IN THE IDF INTELLIGENCE CORPS), ALUMNUS OF THE ROBERT M. BEREN HESDER YESHIVA



"We learned in a warm, embracing atmosphere, a model we seek to replicate in our work with students. We want them to be able to turn to us to discuss anything on their minds."

RABBI AZI HORVITCH, A MUSMAKH OF THE JOSEPH AND GWENDOLYN STRAUS RABBINICAL SEMINARY AND HIS WIFE ATARA (PICTURED, TOP CENTER) ARE GRADUATES OF THE STRAUS-AMIEL EMISSARY PROGRAM, SERVING AS THE JEWISH LEARNING INITIATIVE ON CAMPUS (JLIC) COUPLE AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



"Midreshet Lindenbaum is simply the most incredible place. The teachers, brilliant experts in their fields, are always ready to set aside time for students. They foster a warm environment and encourage students to explore their most pressing questions."



DEVORAH WERTHEIMER, ALUMNA OF MIDRESHET LINDENBAUM

We look forward to continuing to work together with the Jerusalem Post in telling the story of our eternal Jewish nation.





## Characters in the corridor

### Memories of an 'old-timer'

• LIAT COLLINS

I don't remember the exact date I started working at *The Jerusalem Post*, sometime in November 1988, but I can't forget the day I interviewed there. I arrived early to meet *In Jerusalem* editor Esther Hecht about a copy editing job. When I reached the large, old building on Jerusalem's Yirmeyahu Street, with the brass nameplate proudly still calling it *The Palestine Post*, I met my first *Post* character. Ahuva manned the switchboard at the entrance. Always armed with her knitting needles, she also acted as a formidable guard. She quizzed me and directed me up to the second floor.

There I was greeted by the sound of dance music and the sight of rows of employees doing a workout. There is something intimidating about being interviewed by someone who just moments earlier was kicking and punching to Aretha Franklin spelling out "R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Find out what it means to me."

I got the position, one that as editor David Landau stressed, was meant to be as a temporary replacement for three months, and only in the local paper. I didn't mind. Just having a foot in the door made me happy, let alone being able to sing and dance with both feet in the hallowed hallway a couple of mornings a week.

There is nothing so permanent as the temporary, as they say

– and 34 years later I'm still here to celebrate *The Jerusalem Post's* 90th anniversary as a staff member.

I was blessed to start working in a golden age for print journalism. And I was blessed to work with some amazing people.

More daunting than an aerobic workout with my boss – and mentor – was meeting the names behind the bylines. I couldn't believe that I could walk down the corridors and bump into much-admired writers such as Alex Berlyne, Sam Orbaum, Meir (Mike) Ronnen, and so many others.

They turned out to be extremely approachable. And each in their own way taught me unforgettable life lessons and tricks of the trade.

We worked in a low-tech era, when some journalists filed reports by phone and others mailed typewritten articles that were literally cut-and-paste. The pre-email computer system was primitive.

Without the distractions of mobile phones and the Internet, we seemed to have more time. While today my lunch usually consists of a homemade sandwich eaten with care to avoid getting crumbs in my keyboard, then we had the option of sitting in the staff canteen, close to the old-fashioned printing press. The food wasn't much to write home about, but the company was excellent.

How did we manage without Google? We had the old-timers who seemed to know everything – and were accomplished

- WRITTEN IN COOPERATION WITH REGAVIM -

# PROTECTING THE LAND OF ISRAEL – INCH BY INCH, ACRE BY ACRE

• Tamar Sikurel

When you look out the window anywhere in the Land of Israel, do you know – do you really understand – what you're seeing? For far too long, people have been gazing out their windows, taking in the stunning views, without realizing they are looking at a new battleground for the future of the Israel.

Regavim (Hebrew for mounds of earth) was conceived in 2005, originally as "The National Land Protection Trust," when three young Israeli idealists looked out of their windows and realized that the Land of Israel was gradually disappearing before their very eyes. In response to what they were seeing in the Galilee, the Negev and Judea and Samaria, and as a reaction to the successful lawfare campaign against Jewish communities spearheaded by Peace Now and a host of foreign concerns, they joined forces, using their expert legal and fieldwork skills to confront the forces undermining Jewish sovereignty and delegitimizing the Jewish State.

Ever since, they have been singlehandedly waging the legal battle to preserve Israel's most precious resource: the land itself. Regavim's small but dedicated team of fieldworkers and attorneys documents, researches and prosecutes the abuses of Israel's resources and sovereignty that threaten the very foundations of the Jewish State.

Regavim is a "big picture" operation: Detailed information collected in the field is used to formulate a broad, comprehensive approach to the challenges Israel faces on the national and international policy level. Regavim's field coordinators traverse the countryside, investigating and documenting illegal construction

and other land-use issues. The cases uncovered by Regavim's "boots on the ground" approach have exposed gaping holes in Israeli legislation, inadequacies in Israel planning systems, and violations of national and international law – but the individual cases are only a part of the larger goal.

By 'connecting the dots' between seemingly-random violations,

relevant authorities, and closely monitor enforcement activity. When necessary, we take it to the next stage – all the way through the Supreme Court," Deutsch explains.

The process doesn't end there, though. The follow-up often takes longer than the case-building or prosecution, and some active cases have been in the courts for over a decade. In the interim,

of Israel's sovereignty by UNTSO's Jerusalem headquarters in Armon HaNatziv, forced a halt of European Union-funded illegal construction in the Adumim region, rewritten Israel's Planning and Construction Law – cutting illegal construction starts by nearly 70% nationwide in just two years – and more. Regavim's successes include reversal of massive environmental damage, removal of illegal construction from archaeological sites, protection of precious water sources and more. Regavim is considered the foremost expert on the Negev, where land issues continue to present a massive, complex challenge to Israel's development and to Israel's social fabric. Regavim is also a leading voice in issues regarding Judea and Samaria. Thanks to Regavim's patient, precise and unique brand of activism, its core issues are at the very top of Israel's legislative and policy agenda.

Naomi Kahn, Director of Regavim's International Division, sums it up: "Our activities extend from the ground – literally – all the way up to the top level of Israel's legislative and judicial spheres, and beyond. Everything we do operates within the existing legal and public policy framework – but we aren't content with simply grappling with present realities. We work to create better realities, better frameworks in which the vision of a Jewish, democratic, sovereign State of Israel can flourish."



▲ Illegal construction

Regavim's analysis of the situation and recommendations for policy and legislative solutions have helped this small organization establish itself as a leading source of reliable data and viable, sensible solutions to Israel's most thorny problems.

"The idea is to empower the government to exercise its power," says Meir Deutsch, one of the founders of the movement who now serves as Director-General. "We use the information we gather to create an overview of the problem, using every resource we can get our hands on: archival material, land deeds and official documents, historic photographs, up-to-date aerial and drone photography, state-of-the-art GIS maps, and more. When we have the facts, the next stage begins."

"We process and digest all of this information and build our case, file official complaints with the

Deutsch and his colleagues use the information and experience to piece together a larger picture of the underlying issues, and to formulate solutions. With hard facts and incisive analysis, they take any and every procedural and legal measure necessary to compel those responsible to enforce the law. And when the law is insufficient or unclear, they focus their efforts on lobbying and participation in Knesset hearings, and have become a major contributor to important pieces of legislation that strive to fill the gaps that allowed the problems to arise in the first place.

It's painstaking, exacting work on a shoestring budget with a small but dedicated staff. The odds against their success seem insurmountable, the magnitude of the challenges stupendous. Yet they have sued the United Nations for violations



To learn more about Regavim, visit [www.Regavim.org](http://www.Regavim.org)

THE BRASS nameplate proudly still calling the old Yirmeyahu Street premises 'The Palestine Post.' (Jerusalem Post archives)



*I was blessed to start working in a golden age for print journalism*

storytellers to boot. Alex Berlyne, who often came to the office in his volunteer police uniform, was the go-to person for anything obscure or humorous. Alec Israel knew about books and beyond. Scrabble player Sam Orbaum, who died way too young, taught me a thing or two – or three – about wordplay and was a whiz at headlines. Matt Nesvisky was another master wordsmith with a heart of gold. Moshe Kohn was the Jewish world expert, and Ernie Meyer could answer any question on the Holocaust.

Art director and caricaturist Ronnen was responsible for the name change from *The Palestine Post* to *The Jerusalem Post* in 1950. He was also the founding editor of *The International Jerusalem Post*, or *The Jerusalem Post Overseas Weekly* edition as it was initially known, which I now edit.

He once gave me lasting advice that I cherish. I sought him out one morning after having bought a painting at a charity art auction without any idea of its true value:

“There are two things you need to ask yourself,” he told me. “Could you afford it, and do you still like it this morning? If the answer to both questions is yes, nothing else is important.”

Other remarkable characters could also frequently be seen in the corridors: dance critic Dora Sowden with her distinc-

tive large hats topping her diminutive figure; Dennis Silk, described by Yehuda Amichai as what a poet should look like; and caring culture vulture Helen Kaye.

Several talented photographers also came and went before the days of digital photos, when physical prints had to be submitted. David Rubinger is probably the best known among them. His professional tip when I asked him: “It’s all a matter of perspective. You have to try to catch a different angle, a different way of looking at things.” It’s advice that can be applied to more than photography.

Restaurant reviewer and tourism writer Haim Shapiro, who invited *Post* people to his 80th birthday celebration a few years ago, also taught me an important lesson often overlooked in the world of talkbacks. Asked what he did if he ate somewhere and it was terrible, he told me he wouldn’t write about the restaurant but would give it a second chance. Anyone can have an off day.

However, as any critic can attest, it’s much easier and more fun to write a witty, withering review than a fair one that doesn’t bore the reader.

Martha Meisels, the consumer columnist whose advice was invaluable in a pre-Google era, will forever in my mind be tied to trailblazing environmentalist Dvora Ben-Shaul. One of the proudest moments of my career was receiving the Life and Environment award together with Dvora. I still often wish I could consult with her when I need pet advice. In a column on how to give animals medicine, the zoologist stated: “Once when I was treating a bear with a sore paw...”

I have written elsewhere of how my grandfather did a painting of a postcard showing an archaeological dig in the Bar-Kochba caves, where both Martha and Dvora clearly appear, long before we became colleagues. The two continue to hang around together on my living room wall.

Other venerable veteran writers are Greer Fay Cashman, who remembers names and newsworthy incidents over decades, and Judy Siegel (or Jusie to veterans) is a fountain of information on health. And I know I can always call Esther Hecht.

The names of the journalists who helped make the paper, and helped form me, are too numerous to mention here, but they have a place in my heart, as well as the archives.

Those of us who worked together on *In Jerusalem* formed a tight band of friends and colleagues. (And all mourn the loss of Aryeh Dean Cohen four years ago.)

We worked together through war and peace. In January 1991, when I was *IJ* acting editor, I asked *Post* editor-in-chief N. David Gross what we should do when the First Gulf War hostilities broke out: “What’s your question?” he mumbled into his long, gray beard. “You’re journalists, and the paper has to come out no matter what.”

But I should have known that. It was a lesson scorching into *Post* history. In February 1948, when a bomb ripped apart the premises then on Havatzelet Street, the next day’s paper appeared with the headline: “Palestine Post press and offices destroyed... explosion rocks Jerusalem.”

Chief archivist Alexander Zvielli, who started working at the newspaper in December 1945 and continued until his death in May 2017, a remarkable 72 years later, was wounded in the blast. How much *Post* history and legacy was lost when he left us at the age of 96?

Nearly 10 years ago, the paper moved to new premises at 206 Jaffa Road. The physical archives with clippings has been replaced by the virtual one, managed by Elaine Moshe, another veteran. And recently, we all consolidated on the second floor, having put the photo archives in storage a couple of years before.

The new open-plan offices are more comfortable and aesthetic than their predecessors on Yirmeyahu Street. They are also quieter. In the age of WhatsApp and email, almost no phones ring with reporters calling in stories. I am the only one who sings out loud – but the young and enthusiastic Internet team needs to have at least one eccentric old lady around.

Today, there are no more corridors, and many of the characters of my early days at the *Post* have gone to a world without deadlines. Far from being ghosts that haunt me, they are constant inspirational guiding spirits. ■

COLLINS AND Dvora Ben-Shaul receive the Life and Environment Media Award for 1996. (Courtesy Liat Collins)



# What I’ve learned



OUT THERE  
HERB KEINSON

As *The Jerusalem Post* turns 90, it’s time for me to reflect on 37 of those years – the ones that I have spent at this venerable newspaper.

Thirty-seven years. That’s 41.1% of the paper’s entire history. That’s three publishers, 10 editors-in-chief, and innumerable colleagues. It’s also one heck of a lot of misspelled words and participles left dangling.

During this time I’ve learned much about the country, the *Post*, my profession, my readers and myself.

FIRST, THE country.

After being a part of the coverage of most of the major stories that have shaped this nation for nearly four decades – from the Demjanjuk trial to the mass aliyah of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews; from the Rabin assassination to the premiership of Ariel Sharon; from the Gaza withdrawal to the Netanyahu-Obama years – the one thing I can say for certain is that nothing is as good or as bad as it seems or is often portrayed.

We are a hyperbolic people. Nothing can be just good or bad – it must be either over-the-top good or apocalyptically bad. A bad law in the Knesset is the end of democracy; a tiff with a US president is the end of the American-Israeli relationship; and a maritime agreement with Lebanon is a historic diplomatic achievement. Nothing can just be parve; everything is the end of the world.

Now about the *Post*. I will be forever grateful to the *Post*. It has provided me with a livelihood from the moment I made aliyah (though it would have been extra special had it paid hi-tech salaries).

Moreover, it has allowed me the opportunity to ply my trade unimpeded. In all the years I’ve worked here – when the paper was a left-wing paper owned by the Histadrut, when it was a right-wing paper owned by David Radler and Conrad Black, and now in its current orientation under Eli Azur – I can count on one hand the number of times I have been instructed to write a piece in a particular way. It just never happens.

I feel lucky to be working here for two other reasons. The first is that the paper recognizes that Israel – though full of warts and faults – is a noble venture. That’s the baseline: Israel is good; we’re the good guys. Not perfect, not beyond criticism, but good. Not all media outlets, including some in this country, work from that starting point.

I’m lucky to have worked here for another reason as well: It prolonged my longevity in journalism. Since the *Post*

covers Israel, and Israel is such a fascinating story, for the past 37 years I never tired of writing about it.

Had I come out of college and gone to work, say, for my hometown paper – *The Denver Post* – I doubt I would have kept plying this trade for so long. Why? Because I probably would have started out covering the Denver municipality and surely would have gotten bored of it after not too long. How exciting, really, can those transportation and municipal planning stories be in Denver?

But here I started off in the local *In Jerusalem* supplement writing about the Jerusalem Municipality during the days of mayor Teddy Kollek, and even that was fascinating. What can I say? Denver is not Jerusalem, and the stories here have much greater significance, importance and resonance for me than the stories there.

Regarding my profession, one thing I’ve learned along the way is that journalism can breed an unhealthy dose of cynicism. Skepticism is necessary – you need to be skeptical about what you are told – but too much cynicism can be corrosive.

If not careful, you can end up not believing anybody or constantly thinking the worst of people and their motives, or never – but never – taking anything at face value. While this may be a good instinct for a reporter, it’s not a great way to go through life or particularly healthy to take those skewed attitudes home at the end of the day.

Sometimes, as that quote mistakenly attributed to Sigmund Freud famously has it, a cigar is just a cigar. Sometimes things are just what they seem, without ulterior, Machiavellian motives lurking behind them.

I’ve also learned a lot about how people view what they read.

For example, when someone says that something you wrote was good, they don’t necessarily think it was well crafted, well punctuated, well sourced, or well thought out. Rather, they agreed with it. On those precious occasions when someone told me that they liked what I wrote, I sometimes probed a bit and asked what it was that they particularly liked. Invariably, they admitted that they liked it because it echoed their own thoughts and legitimized their own opinions.

I’ve also learned that folks feel free to trash your place of employment if you work for a newspaper. I can’t count the number of times someone I met for the first time would, when told where I worked, slam the paper – as if I didn’t work there, as if their *Post*-bashing did not somehow reflect on me, as if I took no pride in my place of employment.

Once, many years ago, a professor of Jewish thought at Ben-Gurion University harshly criticized the *Post* in our first-ever chance meeting, saying the paper

had gotten so bad that he had stopped reading it. Younger then, I took offense (it bothers me less now). I looked him straight in the eye and asked him where he worked. When he replied BGU, I said that I heard that the Jewish Philosophy Department there was horrid, just horrid, that nothing worthwhile has ever come out of it, and that I wouldn’t let my kid study there if it was the last academic option on the planet.

I got my point across.

And what I’ve learned on a personal level is that I’m a better writer than reporter, that I’m overly self-conscious about my American accent when asking a question at a Hebrew press conference, that I really dislike being dependent on officials to throw me a few crumbs of information once in a while, and that it is a lot more fun writing these types of columns than writing about Benjamin Netanyahu, the Palestinians, Iran or the state of US-Israel relations.

The problem is that these types of columns can’t fill a newspaper or pay my bills, while Netanyahu, the Palestinians, Iran and the state of US-Israel ties provide endless material – just endless – for stories and analysis. It’s the gift that just keeps on giving. It’s what has kept the *Post* in business for 90 years, and what has kept me gainfully employed here, thank God, for fully 41.1% of that time. ■

*Skepticism is necessary – you need to be skeptical about what you are told – but too much cynicism can be corrosive*



# An unpromising start

• GREER FAY CASHMAN

The first story I ever wrote for *The Jerusalem Post* was rejected by the very person who had commissioned it – the paper's second editor, Ted Lurie. In 1948, Lurie became acting editor after founding editor, Gershon Agron, took a leave of absence in order to head the newly created Information Office of the nascent state. Lurie held the position for some time until it became clear that Agron would not be returning.

The paper, founded during the British Mandate era, was originally called *The Palestine Post*. In 1950, the name was changed to *The Jerusalem Post*.

In the mid-1960s, when few Jews had a good word to say about Egypt, I was a very young journalist in Australia who had been taught that there's more than one side to every story. Accordingly, I began to question the things I had been taught in my Jewish day school, Zionist youth movement, and even the Jewish newspaper where I worked. I had a nagging urge to go to Egypt, but I was fairly sure that, given my background, I would be denied a visa.

I had no option but to write a request to president Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Months went by, when suddenly a letter arrived from the Egyptian Embassy in Canberra, notifying me that following instructions from Cairo, the embassy would issue a visa.

A Melbourne travel agency arranged my flight and accommodation at the Tulip Hotel. The taxi driver taking me there from the airport spoke no English, and I spoke no Arabic. I tried speaking in Hebrew instead, since there was some similarity between Hebrew and Arabic, and we managed to understand each other.

Egyptian hospitality is legendary. Although the hotel was not very luxurious, the service was friendly and helpful.

The following day, I went to the Government Press Office (GPO), where they already knew about me – the young Jewish journalist from Australia. Although it was quite early in the morning, I was greeted with a tray of piping hot food. I explained that I could not partake for religious reasons and was asked what was permissible.

Fresh fruit, I replied, whereupon a young man was immediately dispatched to make the necessary

purchase. He returned with a tray laden with a variety of delicious fruits.

The GPO was very helpful in terms of information and recommendations about where to go and what to see. They even provided English-language Jewish newspapers from around the world for me to read. The staff apologized for not being able to arrange an interview with Nasser. It just so happened that celebrity boxing champion Muhammad Ali was in town, and he was a lot more important than an anonymous young journalist from Melbourne.

Coincidentally, in June 1985 Ali visited Israel. Although he had already retired from boxing, he was still a celebrity. My press photographer husband, Dan Landau, was photographed by his colleague Isaac Harari playfully jamming his fist into Ali's jaw.

During my first visit to Egypt, there was a rumor going around that Israel's prime minister Levi Eshkol intended to poison the Nile. As this was before the 1967 Six Day War, it is widely believed that this may have contributed to the decision to wage that war. Having made no secret of the fact that I was planning to travel from Egypt to Cyprus, and from there to Israel, several Egyptians asked me to find out if the rumor was true.

At the time, the sister of my Australian boyfriend, who had made aliyah some years before, was working in the Foreign Ministry. When we met, I told her about the rumors circulating around the poisoning of the Nile story. Although she confirmed that it wasn't true, she suggested that I should speak to Ted Lurie about publishing my story in *The Jerusalem Post*.

LURIE WAS quite enthusiastic at first, but as the article did not contain a single negative comment about the Egyptians, he soon lost interest.

In those days, Jewish journalism was more propaganda than news driven. The information office headed by Agron was, in fact, a propaganda office.

Meanwhile, a much longer, hand-written version of the story had been sent to *The Australian Jewish News* in Melbourne, where it was published in full.

Gershon Agron was born in Russia in the late 19th century. In 1906, his family immigrated to the US, where he grew up. Fluent in English, Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, he began writing for Jewish newspapers in 1915, seven months before the end of World War I.

Having joined the Jewish Legion, he fought against the Ottoman Army in what was then Palestine. A journalist at heart, he sent dispatches from the front line back to America.

A committed Zionist even as a teenager, Agron – or Agronsky as he was originally called – soon came to the attention of the Zionist leadership in America and was appointed as the spokesman for American Jewry.

Following his discharge from the army, Agron joined the Zionist Commission established in March 1918. It was headed by Chaim Weizmann, who at the time was president of the British Zionist Federation, and would later become the first president of Israel.

The Zionist Commission comprised leaders from Britain's Jewish community, who went to Palestine to study the situation in order to make recommendations to the British Authorities. Agron was the Commission's press officer.

While in Palestine, Agron also helped to expand the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), formerly known as the Jewish Correspondence Bureau. The JTA was founded in the Netherlands in February 1917 by Jacob Landau, a 25-year-old journalist. Landau recognized the importance of collecting news from around the globe of specific Jewish interest and disseminating it throughout the Jewish world. In 1922, the JTA transferred its headquarters to New York, where it is still based.

The JTA's Berlin bureau was closed by Hitler's secret police in 1937.

At one stage, the JTA collaborated with MI6, the British Intelligence Service. Together, they launched the Overseas News Agency (ONA), which provided press credentials to British spies.

The JTA currently comprises correspondents in 40 cities across the globe, including Washington DC, Moscow, Jerusalem, North and South America, Israel, Europe, Africa, Australia and Asia.

Having completed his work with the Commission, Agron returned to the US and was appointed editor of the JTA.

IN THOSE days, journalists were known as publicists. Their articles didn't simply report the facts, they also contained personal opinions. Thus Agron used the JTA extensively to lobby for the creation of a Jewish state. In 1924, he immigrated to Palestine.

He continued to write for the JTA, as well as several non-Jewish publications in different countries.

For some years, he served as press officer for the Zionist Executive. He dearly wanted to set up a Zionist newspaper, but without the required support he was forced to find another backer. On December 1, 1932, the first edition of an eight-page broadsheet was published.

Lurie, who had emigrated from the US to Palestine in 1930, worked with Agron almost from the very beginning and stayed as head of the paper until his death in 1974. Agron continued working for various Zionist causes. In 1955, he was elected mayor of west Jerusalem, a position that he held until his death in 1959.

Photographs of Agron in his mayoral role are on display on the upper floor of the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. The high esteem in which he was held can be evidenced by the fact that the former headquarters of Israel's Government Press Office was, for many years, located in Beit Agron in the center of town, alongside several other international media outlets. One of Jerusalem's main streets is also named after Agron. ■

# YAD VASHEM AT 70

## HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

• Alan Rosenbaum

This coming year Yad Vashem will mark its seventieth anniversary as the world's foremost source of Holocaust remembrance, education, documentation and research. As the number of Holocaust survivors who can provide firsthand testimony dwindles and the events of the last century grow more distant in time, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center not only remains committed to the mandate it received from the Knesset, when it was first established in 1953, it has renewed its vision accordingly. "Yad Vashem is not only about commemoration of the Holocaust from the Mount of Remembrance," says Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, "it's about reaching out to audiences around the world to lead the documentation, research, education and commemoration of the Holocaust, and to convey the chronicles of this singular Jewish and human event to every person in Israel, to the Jewish people, and to every significant and relevant audience worldwide."

In the spirit of these global initiatives, Yad Vashem has initiated several innovative cultural and commemorative projects during its seventieth-year milestone:

### The Book of Names: A Monumental Installation

Ever since its inception, one of the fundamental goals of Yad Vashem has been to gather the names of each victim of the Shoah. It is at the core of the name of the institution – Yad Vashem, 'a name and a memorial', taken from a biblical verse in Isaiah. In 2014, Yad Vashem unveiled the first Book of Names, a tangible memorial to the individual identities of the Jewish men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust, which is housed at SHOAH, the permanent exhibition in Block 27 at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. This January 2023, Yad Vashem will inaugurate a new version of the Book at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, one day before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is observed each year on January 27. The Book of Names lists the names of more than 4,800,000 Shoah victims collected by Yad Vashem over the past seven decades in alphabetical order, and where the information is known, includes their birth dates, hometowns and places of death. The Book of Names will remain on display in the United Nations for several weeks before being moved to Israel, where it will be on permanent display at Yad

Vashem in Jerusalem. The Book of Names will open to the public in time for this coming Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day.

### Sixteen Objects - Making a Personal Connection

Yad Vashem is home to the world's largest collection of Holocaust-era artifacts, documents and artwork. These "silent witnesses" tell the personal stories of the victims and their communities. Sixteen of these items have been curated into a new exhibition that Yad Vashem will open at the Bundestag, the national parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, during the week of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. This unique exhibition will bring together 16 authentic objects whose stories are directly connected to individuals and places from across Germany. Their stories and the fate of their owners embody the history of the Holocaust and serve as witnesses to its atrocities. As the number of survivors decreases, nearly eighty years after the end of the Holocaust, we rely on these artifacts to serve as everlasting witnesses to inspire the next generation of remembrance.

### "Vessels of Light" Symphony

Inspired by the heroism of Chiune Sugihara and the thousands of Jewish lives rescued through his decisions and actions during WWII, Lera Auerbach created the music, libretto, and artistic concept for *Symphony No. 6, "Vessels of Light,"* for Violoncello, Choir, and Orchestra. *Symphony No. 6 "Vessels of Light,"* is a symphony by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, and the American Society for Yad Vashem. The commission was catalyzed by the world-premiere performer of the symphony, Japanese-American violoncellist Kristina Reiko Cooper, whose husband's father, Irving Rosen, was rescued thanks to the life-saving visas granted by Chiune Sugihara. Yad Vashem honored Sugihara as one of the Righteous Among the



Nations for his actions during that dark chapter of our recent history.

The world premiere of "Vessels of Light" was held at the Kaunas State Philharmonic Hall in Lithuania, where Sugihara issued the life-saving visas in 1940. The symphony will be performed around the world during 2023 and 2024 in New York, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Leipzig.

"Seeing Holocaust-era artifacts on display in the German capitol, hearing Yiddish lyrics and traditional Jewish melodies intertwined in the "Vessels of Light" symphony and touching the names of the millions of victims who were not only murdered but whose identities the German Nazis tried to erase, will further engage and inspire the next generation of Holocaust remembrance," remarks Dayan. "Like the late Elie Wiesel once said 'whoever listens to a witness, becomes a witness'. We must continue to bear witness to our history and to those who were murdered as well as those who survived in order to tell the world their story. We are their legacy." ■

THE ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN IN COOPERATION WITH YAD VASHEM



(FROM 3RD L) 'Palestine Post' founder Gershon Agron is flanked by Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek (L) and David Ben-Gurion, in the Old City. (Jerusalem Post archives)



▲ Photo by Ardon Bar-Hama

# Enchanted by the world of news

Working in the media isn't a job, it's a calling

• ORI LEWIS

The feeling I get on the verge of 2023 is that it could have been only last week when, in the mid-1960s, as a young boy aged no more than seven or eight, I used to peer down through the ground-level windows on Havatzelet Street in central Jerusalem. There, I'd look at the huge printing presses in the basement of a large office building as they trundled in rotary motion, churning out bundles of newspapers.

As the son of an engineer who worked throughout his life in the textile industry in England and later in Israel, I was used to seeing complex machines at work, and they were always a source of fascination.

Seeing the printing presses in action was definitely respite from the underwhelming mornings out during school holidays, when I accompanied my grandfather to his arcane office directly across the narrow street from the newspaper building.

In the case of my maternal grandfather, the newspaper being printed so close to his office was *The Palestine Post*. He was a multi-generation Jerusalemite who was born in the Old City in 1900 and lived through the twilight of Ottoman rule and the entire period of the British Mandate. *The Palestine Post* was just one source of information enabling him to stay in the know, in addition to the Hebrew dailies and foreign publications that might have been a few days old.

Even after the newspaper changed its name to *The Jerusalem Post* in 1950, the original name was etched in my grandfather's mind, like black printer's ink being used by the barrel-load across the street. For him, it was always *The Palestine Post*.

While he sat in his squeaky, wooden swivel chair reading, I would sneak out to the street to observe the hustle and bustle among the shops and to stare through the windows at the machinery down below.

I was still too young to know that less than 20 years earlier, that same office building had been devastated by a bomb in which people had been killed and wounded. And I could never have predicted that 20 years later, my adult life would be so intertwined



with that newspaper. My grandfather was certainly very proud when he heard that I worked for *The Palestine Post*.

TRAVEL FORWARD in time almost a decade, and this teenager, back in Israel after a long stint in his native London, also found *The Jerusalem Post* to be a lifeline in what felt like alien surroundings.

It must be particularly hard for younger generations these days, when information is so readily available, to fathom just how cut off we all were from the outside world. Back then, newspapers and a solitary TV channel, as well as the odd radio station, were almost the only ways to access news. And of course, the news being conveyed was fashioned by the editori-

al decisions made by those publishing it.

Accessing information from a country of one's origin was far more difficult. Yes, it really is hard to grasp that this was the case such a short time ago, when the computers of the day were of little benefit to any of us. And the Internet or e-mail? They were still to be devised.

AS A young teenager in Israel in the early 1970s, having recently arrived from London, I was starved of my abundant staple of sports information, particularly the cricket that I loved so much and followed religiously back in the UK, so I found *The Jerusalem Post* a welcome and soothing source of news, particularly on Fridays. One name, Philip Gillon, stood out among the many writers. He had a weekly television review column where he pretty much wrote about whatever took his fancy.

The programs on Israel's only television channel were just a peg for him to expound his liberal views. He was a master wordsmith, never pulling his punches when expressing his opinions. At the time, most of those opinions went right over my head. All I cared about was reading what he might have to say about whatever sporting event he had either seen on television or read about in one of the international media outlets, to which he had access and I didn't.

He also listened, as we all did, to the BBC World Service. We were clearly of a similar mind, and the sport was all I cared about.

Imagine, then, my absolute delight when I discovered that Mr. Gillon played tennis regularly at the same club where my father was a member – the Holy Land Hotel of later infamy.

The connection was soon made when I met a lumbering giant of a man with a booming voice and a self-deprecating and hugely irreverent manner. He also had an amazing sense of humor that made him and his wife, Hadassah, loved by all who met them.



THE WRITER at work: Endless fascination. (Marc Israel Sellem)

THE ORIGINAL 'Palestine Post' office goes up in flames after a half-ton bomb went off outside the building on Hasolel Street (now Havatzelet Street), February 1, 1948. Three employees were killed and many were wounded. The perpetrators' identity and the reason the paper was targeted have never been fully ascertained. (Werner Braun/ Jerusalem Post archives)

# BEIT MORASHA

## IS MOVING VALUES TO ACTION

• Alan Rosenbaum

“I founded Beit Morasha in Jerusalem in 1989,” says founder and president, Prof. Benjamin Ish-Shalom, “to deal with the challenges of ideology, values and identity that then characterized both Israeli society and Diaspora Jewry. A profound sense of alienation, different and, at times, conflicting aspirations and dreams, and the lack of a common cultural language between the various factions of our people, all heightened the need to courageously confront the unprecedented challenges arising from the existence of an independent Jewish state for the first time in two millennia.”

“At Beit Morasha,” Ish-Shalom continued, “we do this through values-based leadership training and the development of a conceptual infrastructure for understanding the meaning and significance of Judaism in the era of a sovereign Jewish state and at a time of the dramatic transformation of ideas and values that marks the post-modern era.” Chaim Nagus, chair of the Beit Morasha Israel Board says, “For me, Beit Morasha represents the Zionist ideal of advancing a model society of values and identity through leadership training.”

Ish-Shalom explains that the organization's DNA is in training and developing values-based leadership and translating those values into action. One of Beit Morasha's flagship programs in this area is the Jewish Identity and Value Educational Program that it provides to officers in the IDF and the country's security forces. Each year, Beit Morasha provides training to approximately 10,000 officers and NCOs on issues of ethics, values and identity. Since 2000, the organization has guided more than 250,000 IDF and security forces personnel in this area, “making a change in the language and the awareness of the army and security forces,” in the words of Ish-Shalom.

Brigadier General (res) Eli Shermeister, former Chief Education Officer of the IDF, who serves on Beit Morasha's Management Committee, says that the organization's educational work in the IDF is of great value. “In a time when alienation and violence are increasing,” says Shermeister, “and the boundaries between what is

communities to work together as a task force to respond actively to religious and ethnic conflicts, as we have seen recently,” says Ish-Shalom. He adds that these forums will be expanded in the coming years.

Beit Morasha's leadership programs are based on study, discourse and research in Jewish thought and ethics as well as from

and develop a joint vision through writings that offer a contemporary and relevant new Jewish thought.”

Beit Morasha's leadership team is composed of educators, academics and professionals dedicated to bringing the vision of Judaism to 21st-century life in Israel and the Diaspora. Ish-Shalom adds that the organization is updating its programs for the internet and other modern forms of communication. For example, Akdamot, Beit Morasha's academic journal of Jewish thought, which addresses the meeting point between tradition and modernity, is now available online.

Ish-Shalom notes that Israel, as the nation-state of the Jewish people, must take into account the voices, the needs and the views of Diaspora Jews. “They are vital partners in the future of the State of Israel and the Jewish people,” he says. Rabbi J. Fredric Schwalb, chair of the American Friends of Beit Morasha, adds, “Beit Morasha is unique in that it is an organization committed to Judaism that includes Orthodox, Liberal and Secular Jews among both its leadership and its membership. All are working together to achieve one goal – to make the moral standards which Judaism espouses part of our everyday, personal decision-making process.” Freda Rosenfeld, President of the American Friends, and Howard (Hillel) Wallick, a leading board member, echo Schwalb, saying, “The way that Beit Morasha's team helps develop strong ties among people from all walks of Jewish and Israeli life is remarkable. They put ethics at the forefront of society and, these days, that is more important than ever.”

“Our goal,” concludes Ish-Shalom, “is to shape a modern Judaism with values and train leaders whose decisions are based on these values and who take their inspiration from the Jewish world. This is no less important than it was at our founding, and perhaps it is even more so today.”



▲ Prof. Benjamin Ish-Shalom addressing the Forum of Interfaith Leaders at its November conference marking the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.” (Photo by Ofer Ribak)

permitted and what is forbidden are sometimes blurred, Beit Morasha works to spread the light of values, wisdom and proper leadership. Beit Morasha is a source of inspiration for many commanders in the IDF and leaders in Israeli society who have experienced its unique activities for over three decades. I am privileged to participate in the educational efforts of Beit Morasha.”

A second area in which Beit Morasha has influenced Israeli society is in the interfaith forums and training programs it conducts in mixed Jewish-Arab cities in conjunction with the Interior Ministry. Almost 20% of Israel's population is Arab, and the relationship between Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze is one of the most complex issues in Israel today. “These encounters are held not only in the context of interfaith dialogue, but also to coalesce the religious leadership of these different

the sacred texts of other religions. Ish-Shalom, himself a prominent researcher, scholar and writer, says that its “*Hagigim*” program, which trains, encourages and promotes writing in Jewish thought among talented scholars, is key to the organization's vision.

He notes that providing training in values and ethics to IDF personnel and security forces, easing interfaith tensions and developing a cadre of leading Jewish thinkers are essential in Israel of 2022. “These three areas,” he says, “are very relevant to contemporary society. First, issues of ethics and values in the IDF come into play daily. Second, when we address the interfaith tensions in our streets, we are responding as a sovereign Jewish nation that must take responsibility for all areas of daily life in this country among all its citizens. And finally, we need to provide a conceptual infrastructure



THE ONLY record of the writer's two friends and mentors with him in the same photo (Philip Gillon fielding in blue cap, Jerrold Kessel keeping wicket and the writer batting), during a July 1984 cricket match in which many 'Post' staffers and others would participate in a traditional Election Day contest between the paper's team and an ad hoc 'Rest of the World XI.' Election Day was the only time when such a time-consuming sport could be played to a conclusion, so it never happened more frequently than once in four years. Both Kessel and Gillon were accomplished players and captained the Israeli national team; the writer considers himself 'a mere schoolboy cricketer.' (Walter Brecher)

FIGGY GILLON gives the keynote speech at the writer's 1989 wedding, in which he notes marriage is just like playing tennis: You serve, and you serve, and you serve, and just when you think it's somebody else's turn to serve, you serve some more. (Yoni Mizrahi)

That encounter was to be career-defining for me, and it set me on my course in life. Within a couple of years, just from playing tennis, I established a connection with the newspaper. Figgy, as he was known by everybody, was, at the time, probably only a little older than I am today. He became my first mentor and guide in a career in journalism that was as unplanned for me as it probably was for him when he was a young barrister in his native Johannesburg until he came to Israel in the early 1950s.



In the late 1970s, we spent many hours working together in the newly established sports department of the newspaper. There, Figgy also worked alongside his fellow South African Jerrold (Yoram) Kessel (later to make his name as a CNN correspondent in the region), with me as their protégé. When we weren't working in the smoke-filled noisy newsroom with the clatter of typewriters and telex machines, we were out either playing tennis, as we did for many years, or watching and discussing sports - cricket in particular. The arguments and discussions could be intense and boisterous, often aided by a cool beer or a glass of whisky.

AS ONE of the younger members of staff in the 1980s at the newspaper's offices in Jerusalem's Romema neighborhood that had been converted from a Tnuva abattoir, and having returned to civilian life following army service and studies, I was more attuned to using the latest technology of the day. *The Jerusalem Post* was one of Israel's first publications to move from lead typesetting to more modern means of printing, and I was in the right place at the right time to be able to offer my supposed technological skills that these days are as archaic as writing with a quill and inkwell.

One of my first jobs was to operate the only fax machine the newspaper had. It was a marvel of innovation, a device that baffled some of the older journalists, but it was a doddle for a young aspiring news reporter like me.

On Thursday nights, I would go into the office, commandeer the fax machine after all the copy was in, and I would work into the wee hours to transmit a copy of the Friday daily edition's front pages to New York so that they could front the edition that would be printed there on the same day as they would appear in Israel - how utterly remarkable!

Of course, the fax machine was too small to accommodate an entire page, so each had to be cut into strips and sent in segments to the person at the other end of the line, who would then marry them back up into a whole page.

Then there was the news monitor's position. This comprised listening to the hourly news bulletins and watching the solitary television channel to pick up any late-breaking news. The latest developments

would then be passed on to the night editor.

The job also entailed being able to operate a computer that would be switched on from time to time after a reporter had called in to inform that they had sent an e-mail. Some lucky reporters actually had their own PCs at home, but they were still very rare indeed in the 1980s, so most journalists would have to make an in-person appearance to present their printed pages to the editor in charge.

If a reporter with a computer had filed a story, they would pick up the phone, and it would be my job to dial in to the newspaper's mailbox to retrieve it and print it out on paper. I'd then hand it to the night desk for one of the copy editors to work on before they would hand it to a typist in the busy typing pool, who would then key it back into another computer system for type-setting.

The days of lead type were already over in the 1980s, but even the computer technology that appeared cutting-edge only four decades ago is now positively stone age.

WITH OVER 45 years in the news business, as well as editing in the office, there have been many memorable reporting assignments and interviews with world leaders and sports stars that I have been fortunate to meet, both at home and in far-flung places across the world.

One of my first assignments was also one of my most memorable. In 1987, I was reporting from communist Czechoslovakia at a time when the Iron Curtain regime there was particularly unwelcoming to Israelis. It was for the Davis Cup tennis event between Israel and the heavily favored host Czechoslovak team.

That trip had its hair-raising moments, as some of us traveling among a group of Israeli "supporters" whom

the CSSR had grudgingly allowed in were actually journalists, but we were not allowed to say. When we reached our destination in snowy Prague, after a long day's bus travel from Vienna, I called the office from my quite obviously bugged hotel room to tell my colleagues that I had arrived safely. The voice at the other end of the phone (not one of the people mentioned above) then asked with brisk enthusiasm: "Hey, Ori, do they know yet that you are a journalist or do they still think that you are just a supporter?"

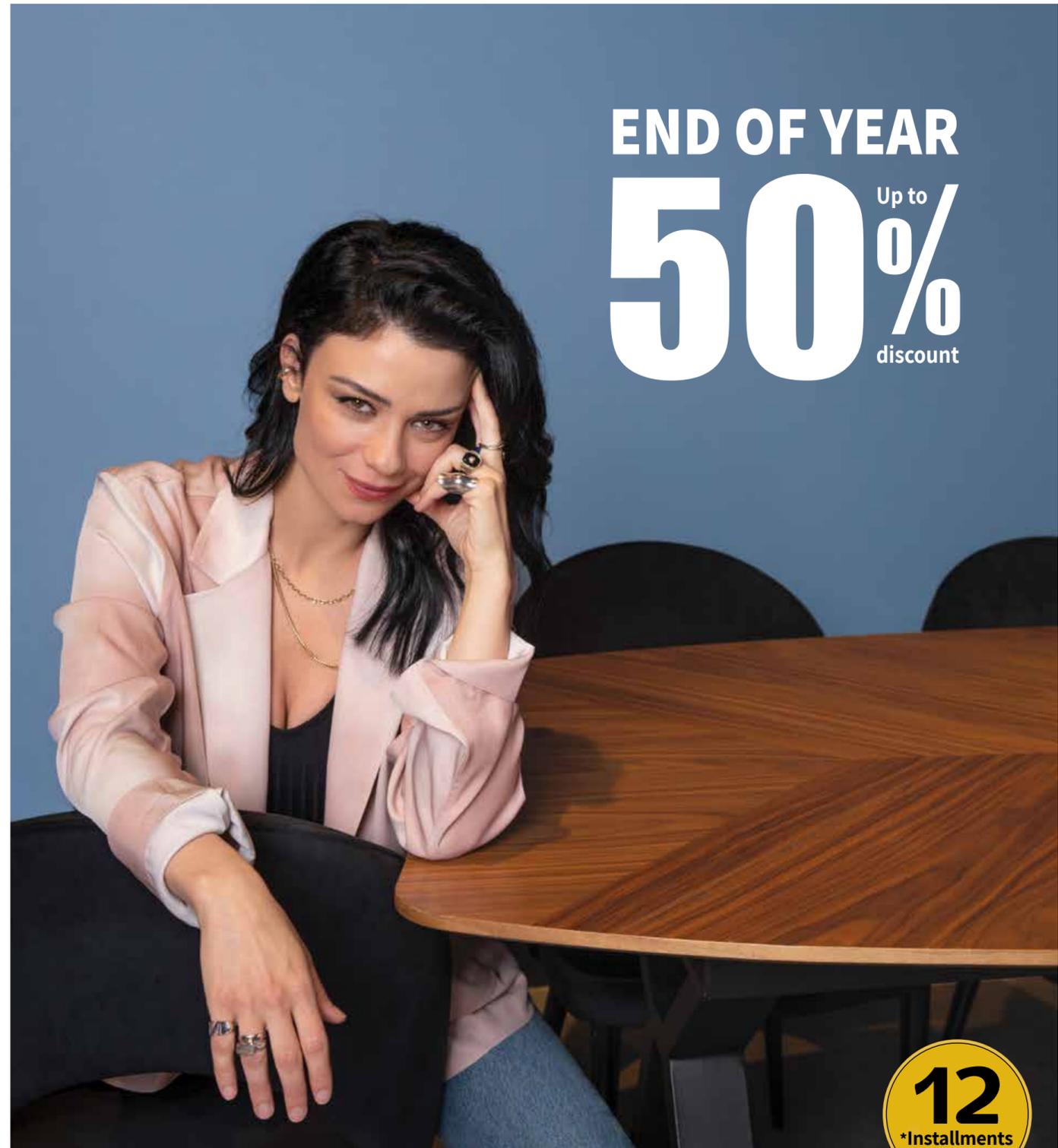
I was suddenly thrown into a cold sweat and was certain that within seconds, stern-faced agents from the Czechoslovak secret service would barge through the door and drag me away to a dark dungeon, never to be seen again. Thankfully, however, even the communist Czechs were warm and accommodating hosts in the minus-20-degree temperatures. And in the end, Israel even won the event.

AS I survey the newsroom at the back end of 2022, over 40 years after I first set off on my path in the news business, now white-haired, I am clearly one of the older people around the office. The young whipper-snappers, who are about the same age as I was when I began, are mainly in charge of the far more technologically demanding Internet and social media operations. I'm one of the few "old dogs" who still work on the print edition. What will the future hold for the young and enthusiastic bunch of budding journalists for whom news is now so abundant, yet so much more transient, as web pages must be updated by the second?

Although printed newspapers have a shelf life of about a day, the Internet is far less durable. You can't wrap up fish and chips or line a trash can with an Internet page, but the skills needed to produce it require a range of different skills in the cut-throat news realm of the 21st century.

As I settle back into my chair to review and work on tomorrow's printed newspaper, my parting shot comes from the non-newspaper world. It was a comment made to my young son by a friend, colleague and mentor of immense wisdom during my career away from the *Post* when I worked as a news correspondent with the Reuters news agency for almost 20 years. "If you want a comfortable life, never be a journalist" my friend said to my son in no uncertain terms when he was about the same age as I was when I was mesmerized by those old printing presses.

My son, shrewd and determined, has definitely heeded that advice and has taken off in a completely different direction. I, on the other hand, am too old to be learning new tricks. I was drawn to the news business for most of my working life, and it has rewarded me with no end of fascinating experiences, many of them thanks to this newspaper. ■



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# Hoarding and tossing



**THIS NORMAL LIFE**  
BRIAN BLUM

I have been reading – and writing for – *The Jerusalem Post* for nearly a third of the publication's 90-year existence. I've also done something else that's been less lucrative but for which I feel an irresistible compulsion: clipping articles of interest.

I've been clipping for longer than my relationship with the *Post*. Growing up, I used to cut out pieces from whatever newspaper I could get my hands on: *The San Francisco Chronicle*, where I grew up; the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, where I went to college; various alternative and underground weeklies. I once saved an entire *Bali Advertiser* issue following a vacation in Indonesia.

But 50 years of compulsive clipping has come to an end. Well, the physical part at least.

Now when I find an article I think I might find valuable later, I copy the text or the web address into Evernote – and throw away the print version.

I still have boxes and boxes of clippings, though. This is why I've been slowly – very slowly – going through my collection and tossing articles I either haven't read in years or don't have plans to ever read again. But first, I write down the name of the article, its author and a URL if available; if I had the time and hard disk space, I might have opted to painstakingly scan the actual articles.

Over the years, I've rationalized my newspaper hoarding.

First, as a writer, you never know when you'll find something relevant for a story you didn't regard as noteworthy at the time.

Second, it will be a great way for my children to learn more about their father after I'm gone.

The pushback: Why burden your children with having to go through your stuff? Take care of it while you're alive, a legion of professional de-clutterers emphasize. Even if it's all entirely online, your descendants will still have to decide whether to pay the monthly cloud storage costs – or make the painful decision to delete the account forever.

Still, it's not an entirely crazy idea.

WHEN MY wife Jody's father passed away earlier this year, she found a treasure trove of old letters the two of them wrote to each other during college. It's been an eye-opener.

Now, I don't expect my kids to care about business plans I wrote in the 1990s for companies that never took off or the technical specifications for building long-forgotten CD-ROM edutainment titles.

But I do hope they won't get rid of at least some of the more interesting clippings I've amassed.

Among the discoveries in my many boxes of *Post* clippings:

Can the Smadar Theater in Jerusalem be saved from greedy developers? An article from 2008 by Peggy Cidor was bleak, but the Smadar is still standing, 14 years later.

Are young families leaving Jerusalem? Gail Lichtman wrote in 2010 about how to keep these valuable city residents in town. (It's a topic that, sadly, never gets stale.)

Larry Derfner wrote about disappointed political doves in "Still liberal after all these years." (More things that haven't changed.)

Lauren Gelfand interviewed Moshe Basson, the proprietor and head chef of Jerusalem's Eucalyptus restaurant. Thirteen years later, I had the best maqluba (an upside-down rice and lamb dish) I've ever tasted there. (You've still

got it, Moshe.)

For a few years, I saved every one of Shlomo Brody's "Ask the Rabbi" columns. Among the more memorable headlines: "Does Jewish law promote vegetarianism?" "Do demons exist?" "May one invite someone on Shabbat knowing they will drive?" and "Why are yeshiva students exempt from serving in the army?"

Can Orthodox women be rabbis? Haviva Ner David thinks so and wrote about it in the *Post*.

Why are religious Jews spitting on priests in Jerusalem's Old City? That was the topic of a disturbing 2009 article, "Mouths filled with hatred."

Stewart Weiss wondered whether the 2010 earthquake in Haiti was a sign from God. (Note to Stewart: nope.)

Hannah Brown covers movies and TV for the *Post*, but back in the early days of the Internet, she did a weekly round-up of the most interesting websites called "Couch Surfing." I clipped a bunch of those, too.

Naomi Ragen wrote about surviving the 2002 Passover massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya. That was at the height of the Second Intifada, and I found too many articles on the topic in my stash. Among them: a piece about a waiter stopping a suicide bomber at Jerusalem's Caffit restaurant on Emek Refaim Street, and another about the 2001 Sbarro bombing. (I eventually suspended my terrorism clippings when it got too overwhelming.)

AND YET there's room for optimism: Saul Singer dubbed our fair city "Jerusalem of charisma" and declared he wouldn't want to live anywhere else. (He's still here.)

I didn't just clip politics and lifestyle topics. I found a strong sprinkling of tech in my collection.

Nicky Blackburn profiled Jerusalem start-up Versaware, which, at its height in 2000, employed 640 people. And Derfner wondered in 2008 whether we all live inside a hi-tech bubble.

There were also articles on food, including quite a few of the *Post's* annual *sufganiyot*, *hamentashen* and cheesecake-for-Shavuot reviews, which were delicious at the time but no longer necessary to keep in hard copy.

I could go on – but then I'd fill the entire *Magazine* with my irrepressible nostalgia rather than focusing on lugubriously emptying more boxes.

In the meantime, I want to wish a happy 90th birthday to all my friends and colleagues at *The Jerusalem Post*. ■

*The writer's book*, Totaled: The Billion-Dollar Crash of the Startup that Took on Big Auto, Big Oil and the World, is available on Amazon and other online booksellers. [brianblum.com](http://brianblum.com)



**FUNDAMENTALLY FREUND**  
MICHAEL FREUND

**T**he *Jerusalem Post* turns 90 years young this week, as it celebrates the day back in 1932 when an ardent Zionist, Gershon Agron, along with a group of other visionaries, began publishing an English-language broadsheet in pre-state Israel.

This was no small feat given the economic conditions at the time, the oppressive British occupation of the Land of Israel and surging Palestinian Arab violence and hostility.

But it was precisely those circumstances which made the paper, known back then as *The Palestine Post*, such a crucial force in helping to shape the narrative of the region.

Indeed, in our information-saturated age, replete with phenomena such as viral YouTube influencers and teenage TikTok stars, it is perhaps difficult to grasp the role and power that newspapers played in the pre-Internet era, not only in recording history but also in shaping it.

As a child growing up in New York, I recall looking forward each week to the arrival of *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, which I quickly devoured from cover to cover as an antidote to the toxic anti-Israel bias of *The New York Times*.

Then, as now, the *Post* served as a window into Israeli society, both as a reflection of what was happening and as an attempt to edify, educate and entertain.

It is a voice amid the clamor, a source of reason regardless of whether one always agrees with its stance on various issues.

Since the dawn of the Web, forecasters have been predicting the demise of the newspaper as a vehicle of information. And while the industry has certainly taken a beating over the years, it is still very much alive and kicking, continuing to play a key role in informing the public and taking to task those in positions of power.

AS THE *Post* commemorates this milestone in its history, it is a timely opportunity to ponder what the function of Zionist and Jewish media can and should be in the age of cyberspace.

On the one hand, newspapers aim to be objective purveyors of the news, employing honesty and integrity in reporting on events.

And yet, is there really any human institution that can truly be said to be entirely objective, untainted by leanings and biases of one sort or another?

Doesn't every media outlet have an agenda? I think we all know this to be the case. One need look no further than the editorial page of any paper to get a sense of how those putting together the publication view the world.

Hence, there is nothing inherently contradictory in being a "Zionist newspaper," one that advocates for Israel and the Jewish people while maintaining proper journalistic standards.

Moreover, I would argue that Israeli and Jewish newspapers not only have a right to defend the Jewish people and its state, but also bear a responsibility to do so. At no time in recent memory has there been so much bile and venom directed against our people. The calumnies and falsehoods hurled at the Jewish state online are breathtaking in their audacity and vilification, which is why platforms such as the *Post* are so important. Not only do they set the record straight, but they provide readers with an oasis of sensible and reasoned truth, something that is sorely lacking in so much online discourse nowadays.

This is not to say that newspapers are infallible. Far from it. As Oscar Wilde keenly observed, "The public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing. Journalism, conscious of this, and having tradesman-like habits, supplies their demands." ■



And no less a personage than Thomas Jefferson, one of America's founding fathers, had an even harsher view, asserting, "The man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors."

But I believe that Jefferson overstated his case. I prefer to think of favorite newspapers as akin to old friends. They are familiar and fun, interesting and enlightening, yet at times they can also infuriate or disappoint. But even when they do, their value far outweighs their demerits.

When God decided to create the world, He did so with words, though He most certainly did not have to. Perhaps the lesson is to remind us of the potency of words, which can make or break reputations, rouse new ways of thinking or even bring down tyrannical regimes and give birth to a new reality.

As a voice emanating from Zion, the *Post* has inspired Jews and non-Jews alike across the globe, connecting them to Israel however distant they might be. May it continue to fulfill this historic mission with passion and purpose, along with candor and conviction, for many more years to come. ■

*The writer served as deputy communications director under prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his first term of office.*

IT IS perhaps difficult to grasp the role and power that newspapers played in the pre-Internet era. (Museums Victoria/Unsplash)

*Then, as now, the 'Post' served as a window into Israeli society*

*Over the years, I've rationalized my newspaper hoarding*

(Illustrative; Egor Vikhrev/ Unsplash)



# The power of a story



THE HUMAN SPIRIT  
BARBARA SOFER

I began writing regularly for *The Jerusalem Post* at the end of 1999, after responding to a column that so incensed me that I felt compelled to respond. That column celebrated the decision of the writer's healthy 18-year-old son not to serve in the IDF, while my sons had become IDF officers. The editors of the *Post* offered me a personal column, in which I have subsequently shared my joys and sorrows and documented the miracles of Israel.

All these years later, my sons are still doing reserve duty, my oldest grandchild is in uniform, and the miracles of Israel continue.

I love hearing from readers. I wrote the following story in March 17, 2005. After it ran in the *Post*, I learned that hundreds of additional hungry families had received Shabbat food as a result. What a great feeling.

*Clara Hammer died on March 26, 2010, but her chicken fund continues in her memory.*

#### The human spirit

Two chickens at a time  
The power of a story.

Five women stood in line at Hacker's butcher shop in Jerusalem, when the

butcher hoisted a transparent plastic bag full of chicken fat and bones onto the counter and handed it to a teenage girl. She looked down at the sawdust, thanked him and hurried out.

Clara Hammer, a retired teacher from Los Angeles, was third in line. "How many cats does that family have for such a big bag of scraps?" she couldn't resist asking.

The butcher flushed. "They don't have any pets," he said quietly. "There are seven children, and the father is on dialysis. Friday night they make soup from what I save for them, and Saturday they make cholent."

Clara froze, transported back 62 years to a dirty Romanian prison. A guard was offering the starving little girl with blonde hair and a remarkable singing voice a piece of bread and a rare treat – a slim finger of chocolate – if she could learn a song in Romanian after hearing it only three times. She was a Yiddish-speaking refugee from Russia, but she succeeded and the prize was hers. The girl divided the precious reward into 11 equal pieces for the children in the cell. The girl was Clara, and she remembers the feeling of hunger and the taste of that chocolate until today.

Customers behind her were getting impatient. Clara cleared her voice. "From now on, please include two chickens with the scraps. Cut one in quarters, the other in eighths – children like smaller pieces – and add a kilo of ground meat – they need variety. Put it on my weekly butcher bill."

Customers behind her were getting impatient. Clara cleared her voice. "From now on, please include two chickens with the scraps. Cut one in quarters, the other in eighths – children like smaller pieces – and add a kilo of ground meat – they need variety. Put it on my weekly butcher bill."

Customers behind her were getting impatient. Clara cleared her voice. "From now on, please include two chickens with the scraps. Cut one in quarters, the other in eighths – children like smaller pieces – and add a kilo of ground meat – they need variety. Put it on my weekly butcher bill."

Twenty-five years later, when I arrive at her door in the Ramat Eshkol neighborhood of Jerusalem, she praises my punctuality. "I'm still a school-teacher at heart."

Cashews and almonds are set out alongside orange juice and a bottle of Coke. Orange juice is good for you, and it helps the kibbutzim, she urges me to drink. Clara only buys Coke – no Pepsi – because of the years when Pepsi refused to market in Israel.

Clara waves me toward a square cushioned chair that reminds me of the seat used for the honoree who holds a baby for ritual circumcisions. "It's Elijah's chair," she says, reading my thoughts. "I use it for guests, but if Elijah comes you'll have to get up."

The phone rings.

"Don't worry. I don't talk long."

While she's talking, I skim an old article about her and do the math. This spry, witty woman with coiffured wig and eye shadow is 95!

Incredibly, Clara was born in 1910 in Ukraine. She grew up calling her parents by the Hebrew *abba* and *ima* for "dad" and "mom," to the amusement of her Yiddish-speaking classmates.

Before the infamous pogroms forced the family to flee to Romania, her father bought eggs from farmers, candled them, and sold them in Kiev. Clara's bitterest childhood memory is their arrest as they fled. Her father was restrained from rescuing her fallen mother. For eight months, Clara and her sister and brother languished in prison, until the Romanian Jewish community ransomed them and located her missing mother in a TB sanatorium.

A family photo from Haifa, where they moved in 1922, shows them happy, but Clara's mother was still ailing. Seeking better healthcare, they moved to Pittsburgh near relatives. As they left Zion, her father looked at the shoreline and pledged that his family would return.

Clara went to public and Hebrew school. At 17, attending a book talk about Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik in New York, Ephraim Hammer, a Hebrew teacher, watched her peruse the sale copies and bought her one, in the hope they could read it together. Soon married, the two Hebrew teachers moved to Los Angeles, where they taught and intermittently tried their hand at business.

"In those days, men brought their dates corsages, and they didn't like a flower shop that closed on Saturdays," Clara says.

Her hobby was singing, and she entertained at hospitals, particularly one for chronic lung disease, which claimed her mother's life at 34.

In 1969 Clara and Ephraim finally fulfilled her father's pledge and sailed for Israel. Their cabin was so filled with flowers and Barton's candies from well-wishers that the captain mistook them for celebrities. They sailed alone, but over the years were joined in Israel by others in their family, now numbering over 60 members.

Clara still shops at Hacker's. On her desk is this week's check to cover her bill: NIS 4,946; 134 families will pick up two chickens each week, thanks to donations and Clara's meticulous handwritten bookkeeping. She sends handwritten thank-you notes to all contributors to her fund. One of her teenage great-granddaughters helps her.

I'd heard about Clara long before I met her. A few months ago I met a paralyzed second grader whose parents couldn't afford the NIS 30 a day for a hospital TV for the week he would be confined to bed. I asked myself what Clara would do, and paid the bill.

The power of a story. ■

*The writer is the Israel director of public relations at Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Her latest book is A Daughter of Many Mothers.*

Clara froze, transported back 62 years to a dirty Romanian prison

'FROM NOW on, please include two chickens with the scraps.'

(Yossi Aloni/Flash90)



# Thanksgiving – and giving thanks



IN PLAIN LANGUAGE  
STEWART WEISS

Ah, Thanksgiving. For Americans everywhere, including – perhaps especially – for those living abroad, Thanksgiving in the old country evokes the warmest and most beautiful of memories.

The beautiful fall colors amaze, though the brilliant leaves will soon be covered by the first, pure coat of snow. The brisk weather brings the annual closing of the windows and the changing of the wardrobe, particularly in cold climes like Chicago, where I grew up. Several families would gather together each year, with the kids playing football outside while the adults watched the televised games inside. And, of course, that delicious aroma of roasted turkey wafting through the air.

For Jews, Thanksgiving was unique, an anomaly. Though largely secularized – like many American holidays – it has a quasi-religious message that equally covers all the denominations. Who could argue with the universal call to give thanks for the many good things we enjoy in life? Who could refuse to devote one day, or at least a small part of it, to pause and count our blessings rather than focus on our gripes or grievances?

On Thanksgiving, we were privileged to include among our company the beloved principal of our Jewish day school, Rabbi Meir Shapiro. He would speak about the Torah's emphasis on giving thanks, how the only section in the repetition of the *Amida* that must be said aloud is "*Modim*," the thanksgiving prayer. He would remind us that the word "Jew" or "*Yehudi*" is itself connected to *today*, the Hebrew word for "thanks." "*Yehudi*" derives from the matriarch Leah's declaration of gratitude to God when her fourth child, Yehuda, is born; Yehuda's birth guarantees that Leah will have more than her share of the 12 tribes, and so she humbly acknowledges her good fortune. *Toda* also relates to "admission" – as in "*Modeh Ani*," the traditional first words of our day – as we acknowledge our dependence upon God, who brings us out of semicomatose slumber each morning into life anew.

Shapiro would also devote a few words to the rabbinic debate over whether turkey is a kosher bird. As there are no specific "signs" that identify birds as kosher – unlike the scales and fins of fish, or the split hooves and chewing of the cud for animals – there must be an ongoing tradition that specific species of birds are permitted. In the final analysis, the fact that great rabbis throughout history ate turkey was sufficient grounds to approve it – and that is something else to be grateful for!

THE FIRST Thanksgiving holiday in America was proclaimed in 1863, amid the Civil War, as president Abraham Lincoln decreed that even in the most disastrous of situations – even as brothers killed brothers in the United States' most bloody conflict – there must be a pause to give thanks. Lincoln's dramatic words ring clear and true, even today:

"It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord. We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?"

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no



THE LINCOLN Memorial, Washington. (PublicDomainPictures.net)

other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice...."

HONEST ABE'S call for humility, devotion to God, and a sense of brotherhood reverberates across the centuries, directly into our own homes. We, too, are, at the moment, a divided nation, as so clearly demonstrated by our recent elections. The popular vote between the competing factions was virtually even, and the incoming government has come to power by the slimmest of majorities. We cannot reach our highest potential as a people when half the citizens are despondent and feel disenfranchised, while the other half is triumphant rather than tolerant.

As in America, we, too, have been blessed by a giving and generous God with amazing success, with wealth and power that is the envy of every country in our region. What we have accomplished here in the State of Israel in just one century is nothing short of miraculous, in the biblical sense. And the future can bring us even more wonders as we demonstrate how faith and fortitude, as well as belief in our own awesome abilities, can overcome any adversity and change history for the better.

But for all these hoped-for achievements and the promise for the years ahead to be realized, we have to become one nation, with a shared destiny and an assurance that each one of us is no less equal than our neighbor in both burden and benefit. There cannot be "two Israels," locked in bitter competition with each other if we are to move forward.

As Lincoln said so wisely, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." ■

*The writer is director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra'anana. jocmtv@netvision.net.il*

Honest Abe's call for humility, devotion to God, and brotherhood reverberates across the centuries

THE TRELIS team:  
Creative, innovative  
and ahead of the game;  
founder Ilay England is  
seated at bottom L. (Trellis)

# REINVENTING THE VISION



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

A few years ago, the wine team of one of the world's most famous wineries in France visited Israel. The team members spent a week here, visiting wineries, vineyards, universities and other academic institutions.

When I asked the owner why a winery from Bordeaux, of all places, would go to Israel to learn, and not, say, to Australia, I was told: "Israel is streets ahead. No one has the research and development that is taking place here."

Unfortunately, when I posted a proud photo with the winery owner, I was told to take it down. It was a secret visit – though it was in no way secret to all the wine people and researchers they met.

I thought about this when I heard that Ilay England was a guest at the Act for Change Symposium in Bordeaux. He took this opportunity to explain how his company, Trellis, could help wineries. Trellis uses AI (artificial intelligence) to improve efficiency and sustainability, helping wineries in their decision-making in terms of growing, harvesting, winemaking and marketing.

Now, we all know of the Israeli excellence and innovation in agriculture. Just look at who invented drip feed irrigation, which is now used worldwide. Netafim is now a mega, global company. However, Israel is still one of the tiniest wine-producing countries, and though we are exceedingly proud and talk a good game, in the main, if we are being honest, the wine world gets along very well without us.

The wine trade is notorious for being extremely conservative and slow to change. For example, wine is still sold in heavy glass bottles, with a bit of tree bark used as a stopper. No change there... for the last 300 years, anyway. Well, here was this Israeli company, boldly going into the lion's den, to illustrate to the Bor-

delais a different way forward. The event was held at the Cité du Vin (incidentally, a must-visit wine museum) in Bordeaux. England explained to the staid wine trade that he has the answers to improve its business.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Trellis is already working with Gallo, the largest winery in the world. Just to put this in perspective, Gallo's so-called boutique winery, once called Gallo of Sonoma, makes more wine annually than all of Israel put together.

It seems Israeli technology, innovation, creativity and intelligence (in both meanings of the word), mixed with a little Israeli chutzpah, make a potent cocktail.

SO, OF course, I had to meet England. We met at a café in Ra'anana, close to my home patch.

He came in looking around, shiny-eyed, and told me that this exact street was the place of his youth, where he grew up and hung around with his friends. His family came to Ra'anana because in those days it was still slightly rural, and education was good. These two parameters were important to his parents.

However, we are jumping ahead of ourselves. His grandparents on his father's side came from Germany in 1934. They were religious Zionists. A first wine memory for Ilay was tasting the grapes and home-made Kiddush wine made by his grandfather in his back yard. His mother's parents came from Iraq.

Ilay was a sickly child who suffered from breathing difficulties and asthma. His mother always thought it was because of the crop spraying in the fields nearby. This must have seeped into the consciousness of the young boy. He was later to become a warrior in the battle to conserve the environment, farm sustainably, promote biodiversity, and advance regenerative agriculture.

He looks healthy enough today. He is tall, good-looking, with dark hair and a carefully manicured beard, with the merest flecks of gray. He has a ready, disarm-

ing smile, and is warm, quite clearly incredibly bright, but modest, not at all geekish, and is willing to indulge in small talk.

Of course, he is Israeli... and this actually helped him gain credibility when he turned up on the doorsteps of the global giants, asking for a meeting. He was well received. As he said: "Big companies are eager to learn, and innovation sells." Global giants Pernod Ricard and Treasury Wine Estates joined Gallo in tapping into Trellis's expertise.

England studied computer science and philosophy at Tel Aviv University. He then became an integral part of the super-elite Unit 8200 in the IDF Intelligence Corps. He was highly motivated, part of the crème de la crème, and his outstanding work received awards and recognition, and set him apart. He felt empowered, was certain he could contribute and create change.

England was also part of a group of similarly motivated young people exploring social and environmental sustainability. It started as a hobby and became an all-consuming passion. He read all he could on plant science and horticulture. He explained to me: "Our entire existence depends on plants." This led him to think deeply of food security issues, and he even had personal, practical experience on an urban farm in London.

He then worked for Microsoft for six years, which was another incubator for productive brainstorming and encouraged thinking big. He became obsessed with the idea of compiling environmental data so decisions could be on a basis of information rather than intuition. He observed that the existing system for collating knowledge and information was totally fragmented, information was too local, and even within companies, knowledge at their fingertips was not shared. All this when uncertainties, doubts and extreme climatic events were coming more to the fore.

England's interest and expertise were in digital innovation in the agri-food industry. He founded his



company in 2017 and called it "Trellis" because that is what supports and connects plants. He was to support and connect, to improve efficiency and sustainability. He combined his expertise in systems and information with his idealism for a better world. For him, efficiency and sustainability are two sides of the same coin.

The agri-food industry is massive and world encompassing, so from that grand entrance how did he reach a decision to focus on wine?

His ideal was the simplest possible supply chain, which is "farm to market." If you have farm to market, you have a measure of control over all aspects of the business. Interestingly, he identified that wine already operated a kind of farm-to-market ethos. The source of the wine grapes is known, the grower and winemaker have a long-term relationship, and the work in the vineyard will often dictate the style, quality and price of the wine as the ideal vertical integrated production system and decided to apply his AI expertise to the wine sector.

He did a pilot, working with two progressive wineries – Tabor Winery, situated in Kfar Tabor in the Lower Galilee, and Yatir Winery, from Tel Arad in the northeastern Negev. He then went to America, where Oded Shakked of Longboard Vineyards (formerly of J Vineyards) became an ally and assisted from California in 2019.

In the last few years, the wine industry has been struck with a series of extreme weather disasters. This includes raging fires in Australia and California and floods in Germany. Even some Judean Hills vineyards were scorched by fires. The result of these repetitive extreme events is that suddenly everyone is talking climate change, when it was barely on the radar only 10 years ago.

England told me that knowledge in wine is very much localized in a place (like a vineyard) and in the hands of an individual (say, the grower or winemaker). He went on to say that even the most experienced winemaker or grape grower, who may have worked for 30 years, will at the end of the day have done only 30 harvests.

He explained to me that the management of the corona pandemic was a recent application of how sharing wider information with broader parameters can work effectively. Information was gathered from different experiences in different countries, which enabled more accurate predictions and more efficient planning in one's own country.

We have certainly seen changes in the past decade. Just look at the vineyards. It was not so long ago that the standard vineyard had the vines standing straight

like soldiers, and there was a strip of brown dirt in between the rows. The lines were formal, manicured, clean and virtually standard. Now vineyards look different. In between the rows is a cover crop, often with wild flowers in the spring. To the onlooker, the modern day vineyard looks unkempt and a little wild. This reflects the change in view over the past decade. Current objectives are to promote biodiversity, grow sustainably and put life back into the vineyards.

So these days, everyone is talking about climate change, and "sustainability" has become one of the most overused and abused words in wine. There are, though, champions of true sustainability that are leading the way.

First and foremost is the Golan Heights Winery. There, winemaker Victor Schoenfeld runs an extremely impressive operation by any criteria. In vineyard technology, it must be one of the most advanced wineries in the world. The winery has been certified as sustainable according to the protocol of Lodi Rules, a set of guidelines used by winegrowers throughout the Lodi winegrowing region of California to ensure that their products are grown in a sustainable manner.

Another pioneer is Galil Mountain Winery, which successfully practices sustainability in the vineyard, at the winery and in the office. Famously, it recycles Nespresso capsules to help make its own compost.

One of the early leaders in more compassionate wine growing was Tabor Winery, where winery manager Michal Akerman is also the viticulturist. She has made all of Tabor's vineyards ecological and sustainable.

Also, Tzora Vineyards is certified by Fair'n Green,

a recognized system for sustainability based in Germany. Its CEO-winemaker is Eran Pick, Israel's first Master of Wine.

These days, England has become quite the wine expert and now understands the wine production cycle and the business of wine from A to Z. He is a missionary for regenerative agriculture. Whereas most people get excited by the taste of a wine or the promise of a posh label, what gets him going is when he knows the provenance of the wine, from the vine upward. He prefers wines when he knows where they come from, and he favors wineries that care for the environment.

With great ingenuity, he and his talented team have reinvented the system. There are plans for a conference later this year. Wine groups from France, the US and Italy are going to be coming here to learn from us!

Trellis want to turn over a few tables and create real change. One would think it was tilting at windmills, to turn up in California and Bordeaux with ideas to disrupt and transform. However, the company comes with a service that is brilliantly conceived, totally logical, and apparently the time is right. The vision is to bring balance in a fluctuating environment across the whole value chain, such as the yield/quality ratio, managing wine inventory, and operations within and outside the gates of the winery.

Reinventing the vision is the name of the game. ■

*The writer is a wine industry insider turned wine writer, who has advanced Israeli wines for 35 years. He is referred to as the English voice of Israeli wine. [www.adammontefiore.com](http://www.adammontefiore.com)*



TZORA'S SHORESH Vineyard in the Judean Hills is certified by Fair'n Green. (Photos: Wineries mentioned)

THE COVER crop at one of Tabor Winery's ecological vineyards.

COMPOST PREPARED by Galil Mountain Winery from recycled Nespresso capsules.



### TIPascale

All of the measurements in the recipes below are listed by weight and not by volume.

If you aren't able to locate a shop that sells Georgian sulguni cheese, you can use mozzarella cheese instead.

KHACHAPURI MEGRULI.



KHINKALI.



KHACHAPURI ADJARULI.



# TRADITIONAL GEORGIAN PASTRIES

• Text, photos, styling & food prep:  
PASCALE PEREZ-RUBIN



The best way to familiarize yourself with a new culture is by sampling its cuisine. You can learn so much about people by the aroma and flavors of the traditional dishes they serve. This week, we are going to delve into Georgian cuisine, which is replete with a host of incredibly juicy and rich dishes.

You'll find a wide variety of herbs, wheat, cheese, potatoes, apples, onions and garlic in recipes hailing from Georgian cuisine. Many recipes for savory and sweet dishes also include walnuts. Fish is often cooked in walnut sauce, and walnuts are included in the filling for stuffed eggplant and zucchini recipes, too. Moreover, these nuts ap-

pear in a large number of traditional desserts served in Georgia.

I was surprised to learn that lemon is almost never used in Georgian cuisine in salads or cooked dishes. Instead, pomegranate juice, plums, green plum sauce and alcohol are used in both savory and sweet dishes. Another interesting tidbit I discovered is that oftentimes, a pinch of ground chili pepper is added to desserts to give them a little punch. A typical Georgian meal consists of salads, pickled vegetables, and a wide variety of cheeses, such as sulguni cheese.

Georgian desserts include a number that were borrowed from other regions, such as Napoleon mille-feuille puff pastry from French cuisine and debra from North African cuisine, which are called burbushella in Georgia. Other examples include baklava, which is also popular in Turkish, Greek, Iraqi and Kurdish cui-

sine, and is called pahlava in Georgia.

I was having a hard time deciding which recipes to include in the column this week, so I decided to invite to my kitchen chef Avi Dan Dadiashvili, who grew up eating traditional Georgian food. Avi, 40, and father of three, says that while growing up, his family was always hosting guests in their home for meals that were full of authentic Georgian dishes, good music and, of course, plenty of chacha, a Georgian grape brandy.

Avi began experimenting in the kitchen at a very young age and worked long hours in catering as a teen to help out his family with expenses. He then went on to train at the Ort Zerifin Culinary Arts program, followed by jobs as a sous-chef at hotels and wedding halls, such as Keter Harimon in Bnei Brak, and as a chef at Kfar Maccabiah.



THE WRITER with chef Avi Dan Dadiashvili.

Avi is currently running a kosher-concept gourmet catering business overseas.

Avi helped me choose three of his favorite pastry recipes that offer a little taste of Georgian cuisine. All three of them include cheese filling that can easily be swapped out for meat or vegetarian fillings.

I hope you enjoy preparing these tasty Georgian pastries.

## KHACHAPURI MEGRULI (GEORGIAN CHEESE BREAD)

Makes 3 loaves with a 22cm-24cm diameter.

### Dough:

650 gr. white flour  
12 gr. dry yeast  
30 gr. butter, softened  
8 gr. sugar  
300 ml. water at room temperature  
8 gr. salt  
22 ml. canola oil

### Filling:

200 gr. mozzarella cheese, grated  
120 gr. sulguni cheese, grated  
220 gr. Tzfat cheese, grated  
2 large eggs

### Bread wash:

20 gr. butter, melted

### Topping:

30 gr. Parmesan cheese, grated

Place all of the dough ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer and knead until the dough is mixed well, soft, smooth and elastic. Cover the bowl and let the dough rise for 20 minutes. Then knead the dough again and separate it into 3 balls. Cover the 3 balls, and let the dough rise for another 20 minutes.

Add all of the filling ingredients to a separate bowl and mix well.

Flour your work surface, then roll out each ball into a thin sheet, 1 centimeter thick. Spread one-third of the filling in the center of each dough circle. Lift up the edge of the dough circle and press it down on top of filling. Then, roll the dough up into a ball. Turn the balls over and roll them out on a floured surface, so that the open cheese part is facing down. Let the dough rise for another 20 minutes.

Place the dough with the open side facing down on a tray covered with bak-

ing paper. Gently roll the dough out until each one is 2 centimeters thick, with a diameter of 22 – 24 centimeters. Let the dough rise for another 15 minutes, then bake in a preheated oven on 180° for 14 minutes.

Remove from the oven and brush with butter. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top and then place the bread back in the oven for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

**Level of difficulty:** Medium  
**Time:** 90 minutes  
**Status:** Dairy

## KHACHAPURI ADJARULI (GEORGIAN CHEESE BREAD BOAT)

Makes 8 cheese bread boats.

### Dough:

1 kg. dough, sifted  
15 gr. dry yeast  
8 gr. sugar  
1 large egg  
100 ml. oil  
250 ml. water at room temperature  
8 gr. salt

### Filling:

500 gr. Canaan cheese  
500 gr. sulguni cheese  
150 gr. mozzarella cheese, grated  
1 large egg

### Topping:

8 eggs

Place all of the dough ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer and mix until dough is mixed well, soft, smooth and elastic. Transfer the dough to a floured work surface and knead the dough for 5 more minutes. Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl and let it rise in a warm place for 1 hour or until it doubles in volume.

Separate the dough into 8 sections, so that each section weighs 150 grams.

Roll each section into a ball, and then let them rise for another 30 minutes.

In a medium bowl, mix together all of the filling ingredients. Lightly flour your work surface and roll out each of the dough balls until they are 1 centimeter thick. Spread an equal amount of filling in the middle of each circle, and spread it out a little. Roll up the dough from the far side, and also from the side closest to you, leaving the area with the filling exposed. Press each of the ends together of the rolled-up dough so that it forms a boat shape. Prepare all the boats in the same fashion.

Place the boats on trays covered with baking paper. Bake in an oven that has been preheated to 220° for 16 minutes until they've crisped up. Remove the boats from the oven, and place a raw egg in the center of each boat. Return the boats to the oven to cook for another 3 minutes.

**Level of difficulty:** Medium  
**Time:** 90 minutes  
**Status:** Dairy

## KHINKALI (GEORGIAN CHEESE DUMPLINGS)

The way to eat the dumplings is to hold each one by the tip and place the whole dumpling in your mouth, without eating the tip.

Makes 16 dumplings with a 10-cm. diameter.

### Dough:

1 kg. white flour  
1 egg  
9 gr. salt  
Around 2 cups tap water (depends on absorbency rate of flour)

### Filling:

450 gr. sulguni cheese, grated  
300 gr. Canaan cheese  
1 egg

**Serving suggestion:**  
50-60 gr. butter, cubed

In a large bowl, mix all of the dough ingredients. While mixing, gradually add the water until the dough is firm and elastic. Cover the bowl and let the dough rest for 1 hour.

In a separate bowl, mix all of the filling ingredients together.

Roll out the dough until it's really thin with a rolling pin or a pasta machine. Cut out circles of dough with a 10-centimeter diameter. Place a spoonful of filling in the middle of each circle. Then, fold the sides of the dough up so that it's all folded up like a pleated skirt (see pictures). Secure the ends together and twist the dough to close it tightly. Tear off any extraneous dough. Prepare all the dumplings in the same fashion.

Fill a large pot with water and add a teaspoon of salt. Bring the water to a boil, then add the dumplings, stirring continuously until the dumplings pop up and float on top. Cook for another 7 minutes. Remove dumplings with a slotted spoon and place on a serving dish. Add butter cubes on top and serve.

**Level of difficulty:** Medium-difficult  
**Time:** 90 minutes  
**Status:** Dairy

Translated by Hannah Hochner.

Want to watch step-by-step instructions on how to prepare my recipes and see pictures of the dishes before this column is published each week?

Join Pascale for a spectacular sneak preview in her private kitchen on Instagram @pascale\_perez\_rubin or at pascalpr.co.il.



NAZARETH VISTA.  
(Photos: Meital Sharabi/Courtesy Golden Crown)

# The Old City of Nazareth



• MEITAL SHARABI

Now that Christmas is just around the corner, we decided to take a trip to Nazareth, Israel's largest Arab city and home to a large percentage of Israel's Christian population. And since there are so many interesting historical and archaeological gems to see there, we decided to dedicate two separate columns to Nazareth. This week, we will focus on its Old City.

Although Nazareth is one of the largest cities in northern Israel, when you

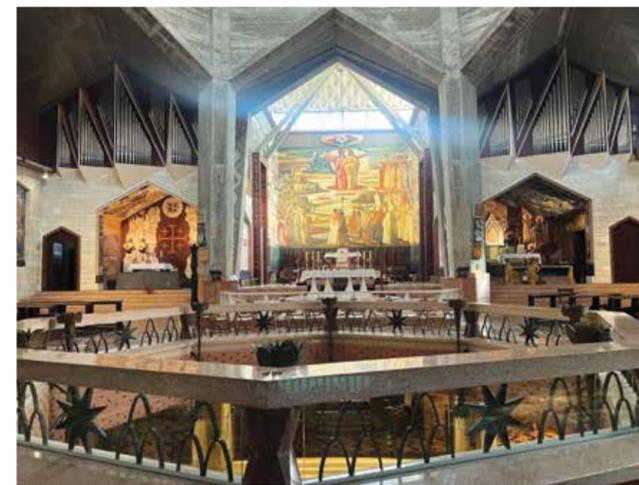
walk through the Old City you feel like you're walking through a small, densely populated town. Every year, thousands of Christian tourists and pilgrims flock to Nazareth in their desire to walk upon the paths where Jesus is said to have tread. This city in Israel's Lower Galilee is situated in one of the country's most beautiful areas and is surrounded by Mount Precipice and Migdal Haemek. Nazareth has a plethora of tourist sites, shopping centers and hotels that cater to tourists.

One new establishment that has recently opened in Nazareth is the Blend

Hotel. It is part of the Golden Crown Group, which also owns two other hotels in Nazareth. In contrast with the other two, which cater to families, the Blend is a boutique establishment that is geared toward couples and is located in the heart of Nazareth's Old City. The hotel doesn't actually restrict families from staying there, but the rooms are small and are fitting for a couple, or at most a couple and one child. The hotel has 70 contemporary guest rooms that provide all the comforts and facilities to make your stay comfortable.

In addition to the Blend's unique

name, the hotel has a much more modern design than the hotel chain's other establishments. For example, as you drive down the street, the gray concrete of the hotel jumps right out at you, since it is so different from all the surrounding buildings in the Old City, which are mostly constructed from stone. The hotel, which was built at a cost of NIS 20 million, was constructed following ecological standards in an effort to leave as little a carbon footprint as possible. And yet, the designer was also successful in integrating traditional aspects into the design of



the hotel, as well.

Moreover, the Blend's in-house restaurant offers a taste of local Nazareth cuisine, with a modern twist. Chef Samir Rashad is specifically known for his eclectic menu that combines traditional Arab cuisine, alongside a wide variety of dishes that hail from places all around the world. The menu includes fatayer, kubeh filled with mutton, zucchini sheikh al-mahshi with white rice and yogurt, focaccia with smoked goose breast, humus with shiitake mushrooms, and stuffed grape leaves with tzatziki. If you're looking for something simpler, there are a few shawarma and grill restaurants in the Old City, but the upscale restaurant at the Blend is an entirely separate league. And since it's located in the hotel in the heart of the Old City, in my mind it's the obvious choice for the ultimate dining experience.

NAZARETH IS a multicultural city that is home to numerous Muslim, Jewish and Christian historical sites. Even though there is a Muslim majority in the city, most of the historical religious sites are connected with Christianity, such as the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. This church,

which is located next to Mary's Well, was constructed on top of the ruins of a few smaller churches. According to Christian lore, Mary's Well is where the Virgin Mary became miraculously pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, many Christians visit this spot in the belief that it will help them conceive. There are also a number of fascinating archaeological discoveries that have been uncovered at the Church of the Annunciation. For example, visitors can see Greek engravings, as well as remains of a mosaic floor dating back to the Byzantine Period just outside of the church that was discovered during archaeological excavations. Every December, the church places a humongous Christmas tree that is adorned with colorful Christmas decorations in the courtyard of the church.

Another interesting Christian site is the Franciscan Convent in Nazareth, which is the biggest and most spacious convent in Israel. Visitors can enter the monastery (pre-registration necessary), where they will see pictures showing the early days of the church, a mosaic floor, as well as a number of caves. These caves, and artifacts that were found inside of them, are currently on display on the bottom floor of the convent.



AT THE Blend boutique hotel (L and middle).

IT'S BEGINNING to look a lot like Christmas.

(BOTTOM FROM L) The hotel's in-house restaurant offers zucchini sheikh al-mahshi and shish barak.

City. The Sisters of Nazareth Convent was established in 1885 by nuns who arrived in Israel from France and purchased several shops near the church. While construction of the convent was taking place, intriguing archaeological finds were uncovered, including mosaic floors, a church altar and a burial cave. This cave is thought to have belonged to a Jewish family that lived on the premises in the first century CE, and several burial niches were found inside of it.

Guided visits of the convent can be booked at (04) 655-4304.

The city of Nazareth also offers a wide selection of dining and evening entertainment options. Due to the substantial amount of choices, these will be covered in next week's column.

Translated by Hannah Hochner.



ARTIFACT UNCOVERED at the Church of the Annunciation (seen R, pg. 39 top L).



SISTERS OF Nazareth Convent.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS at the convent include an altar and a burial cave.



# Married to 'America's Pastor'

The choices Ruth Bell Graham made as Billy Graham's wife



REV. BILLY GRAHAM (L) sits with first lady Hillary Clinton and president Bill Clinton at the head table during a prayer breakfast in Washington in 1993. (Gary Cameron/Reuters)

• DANNYE ROMINE POWELL

She believed in the death penalty and said that in countries where they have it, "I feel safer walking down the street." Yet in 1978, Ruth Bell Graham befriended North Carolina's death row inmate Velma Barfield, convicted of murdering seven people, including her own mother. And while there was no question about her devotion to her Evangelist husband, Billy Graham, Ruth lived much of her life apart from him, believing a good wife needs to be a happy wife.

In a new and enlightening biography of Ruth Graham, *An Odd Cross to Bear*, Davidson professor and chairwoman of religious studies Anne Blue Wills explores the complex and often daunting personality of the woman who desperately wanted to be a missionary to China but who chose instead to join her life with "America's Pastor" and "embrace the role as background player." Wills discussed the biography in an email conversation.

**By the end of your biography, I felt that if Billy had married anyone but Ruth Bell, the marriage would've been a disaster. He was controlling, you write, and she was willing "to slip into the background... in short, be a lost life, lost in Bill's."**

His controlling temperament was more visible in the early years of their marriage. They were young! He was a little spoiled by his upbringing as the son of a doting mother. And Ruth had the benefit of experiences in China and Korea, and the confidence of her parents, that gave her the strength to have opinions and express them. Nevertheless, it did take a certain kind of commitment for the two to make the marriage work. In that, I suppose, they weren't different from other couples whose relationship endures for decades.

They loved each other and had a common project, which for them happened to be Christian evangelism. Bill was the visible agent of that project, and Ruth was the one who often kept Bill focused on the mission. Ruth had a very rich life in her own

right, living in and serving the Montreat community [North Carolina], rearing her children with, and then caring for, her parents.

**For decades, the couple lived apart – Bill on the road, preaching, and Ruth at home in Montreat and later, when life in Montreat became too intrusive, in Little Piney Cove. Her choice to live in a location that offered stability for her five children and sanctuary for Bill, when he was home, was, it seems to me, a practical solution but also a bold move for those times.**

'Practical' and 'bold' are good words to describe Ruth. If she saw a need, she tried to address it in the most direct way possible. She had the example of two parents who had rarely allowed any obstacle to slow them down for long. It was only natural that Ruth would head for the hills when living on Assembly Drive in Montreat became unbearable.

**Ruth could be stubborn – or you might say 'firm in her resolve.' I'm thinking now of her refusal to change denominations – from Presbyterian to Baptist.**

Early on, this refusal probably came from her resistance to the role of clergy-wife. Bill was pastoring a Baptist church outside of Chicago, and she was not going to become a Baptist just to quiet the congregation's complaints. After all, Bill had accepted the position without consulting her first, and Ruth did not recognize pastoral ministry as his real calling.

Ruth also held to the example of her parents, whose Presbyterian commitments were deep and tenacious. Then, too, as the decades passed, Ruth questioned attention to denominational affiliation at all, insisting that a common worship of Jesus should unite all Christians and make denominational distinctions all but irrelevant.

**Your title 'An Odd Cross to Bear' refers to how life with Billy thrust Ruth into circumstances she would not have chosen**



REV. BILLY GRAHAM (C) listens to then-Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2000. (Reuters)

**for herself. But whatever Ruth had to do, she seems to have done cheerfully and without a lot of hand-wringing.**

Ruth was not a dour person, but 'cheerful' better describes someone who comes close to living in a state of denial. That was not Ruth Bell Graham. She did work hard to shield the children from her anxieties and loneliness by emphasizing, perhaps with varying success, the positive side of Bill's work. She kept them and herself busy while he was away, and when he returned, she tried to enforce an atmosphere of calm and quiet so that he could rest. But apparently her rules kind of went out the door when Bill was home.

Several of my sources said that Ruth poured her feelings into her journals and poems. I did not have access to her journals, but many of Ruth's poems, which have been published, reveal some of the stress and loneliness she felt when Bill was away.

I learned a saying from Ruth's writings while working on the book — 'Make the least of all that goes and the most of all that comes.' I had never heard that expression before, and it captured so perfectly her practice that I assumed she had coined it. But when I repeated that to members of my family, they recognized it as something our grandparents also said. It captures Ruth's attitude, which balanced acceptance and gratitude.

**How do you think future biographers, especially feminist biographers, will assess Ruth for not working outside the home and/or not having a career independent of Bill's?**

Well, I hope that future biographers will all be feminists and will tell stories that find value in the whole variety of human stories, including those of wives, mothers and householders.

For the record, one definition of feminism (attributed to activist author Marie Shear) describes it as 'the radical notion that women are fully human.' To me, this definition authorizes women to make decisions about their lives that allow for flourishing lives and communities. It calls into collective awareness the reality that women can narrate their own stories from the complexities of their own human experience – however banal those experiences might seem to onlookers.

I see Ruth as living her full humanity when she made the hard choice of setting aside her own missionary ideal to mar-

ry Bill and make it her work to keep him on track. So, in that sense, I would argue for more flexibility and creativity in how we describe women's lives and agency.

On another hand, however, I also am deeply influenced by scholar bell hooks's description of feminism as 'a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.'

Ruth lived in a context of highly individualized Christianity and did not relate to other women as part of a 'movement,' unless it was as part of the movement of Christianity. If future biographers or historians want to explore how white Protestant womanhood detached itself from the feminist movement – and I think we should explore this history – then Ruth Graham might be a rich site of investigation.

**Since 2007, the 2,000 pages of Ruth Graham's letters and journals have not been available to researchers, though you write that Ruth gave access to her longtime friend Patricia Cornwell, the best-selling novelist and former 'Charlotte Observer' reporter. If you'd had access to those materials, do you think a very different portrait would have emerged or one very similar to the Ruth Graham you've portrayed here?**

Access to these materials probably would have produced a different result because in some years the available archival trail goes a little cold on Ruth. Access to the private papers might have allowed me to answer some of the questions I still have about Ruth's experiences as a parent and with her health, for instance.

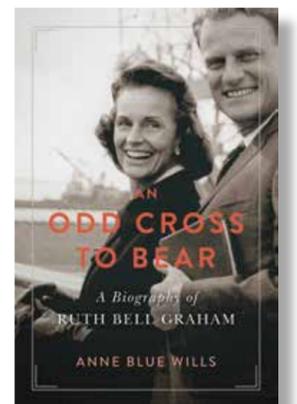
I was determined, however, to keep my attention trained on Ruth and not fill in the gaps with 'so here's what Billy Graham was doing.' And I tried very hard to depict Ruth as I had access to her, in such a way that she and her family and friends might recognize her.

Of course, even with 'complete' access, one person can never completely explain another person. I offer my account with all humility and hope that readers will either recognize the Ruth they remember or feel a connection to the Ruth they never knew.

(The Charlotte Observer/TNS)

## AN ODD CROSS TO BEAR

By Anne Blue Wills  
William Eerdmans  
288 pages; \$24.99



# Inner summer overcoming winter

A tale about the traumas of sexual abuse and how to move forward



HARVEY WEINSTEIN in court in Los Angeles on sex-related charges in July. (Etienne Laurent/Reuters)

• LAUREN ADILEV

Most parents have children because they want to build a family. They have positive, warm memories from when they were young – celebrating holidays with family, going on fun vacations together, making up inside jokes and so on. These men and women want kids of their own to carry on cherished traditions, and they have a natural instinct to protect their children. Yet within the last 20 years, report after report has hit the news.

Cases such as abusive, pedophile Catholic priests being moved from one parish to the next; the Me Too Movement, which exposed Harvey Weinstein; and reports of child pornography have all come to light, causing a level of horror which we can't comprehend. With so much revulsion, we start to believe that we can never fully protect our kids.

In Deborah Levison's new novel, *A Nest of Snakes*, the central place where abuse occurs is Torburton Hall, a boarding school. Schools are where most kids spend the majority of their time away from home, and they should be warm, safe spaces where they can learn and develop social skills. *A Nest of Snakes* reflects what happens in a society where kids are merely accessories – a society which expects a couple to marry and have children in order to fit in.

And what happens when those kids are old enough to be sent to boarding school? The parents go about their normal lives, socializing and working. They only see their kids for limited periods and expect them to do well at school, then get accepted by a top university, where their success will propel them into careers in business or politics.

At first glance, the novel's main protagonist, Brendan Cortland, seems like a loser. He doesn't work because he has lived off his father's trust fund for 30 years. He spends his days on the Internet, hunting down pedophiles. Cortland believes this to be noble work, yet there's a certain arrogance here. After all, how much can one man do? He doesn't even go outside to appointments with his psychiatrist. Instead, he gets into a car in his garage and is driven to the door of the doctor's clinic, where he can jump out and step into the office without being seen. He lives in a perpetual state of despair.

CORTLAND WAS severely abused, both physically and emotionally, in boarding school. When the psychiatrist, Dr. Aldrich, broaches the possibility of suing the school in order to bring this abuse to light, Cortland is reluctant at first. However, as he starts to open up to the possibility of putting his past behind him, he also starts to open up to the world.

Under the gentle guidance of Dylan James, the lawyer to whom the psychiatrist introduces him, Brendan talks about the abuse for the first time. As he relieves himself of the burden of such awful memories, he starts to go outside for walks.

There are many surprising twists and turns in the characters. Irma, the housekeeper, for example, seems like a simple woman who cooks and shops, but she has her own tale of terror. By exacting revenge on those who abused Cortland, she was able to find inner peace. The ex-wife seems like a witch with no redeeming qualities, until she makes a small, significant gesture of reconciliation. What is certain is the fact that the school wove a web of lies as it destroyed the lives of its students.

As a mother whose son is in boarding school, it was very hard for me to read about the abuse. Also, my late brother attended boarding school in Maryland in the early '80s, the time in which the book is set. He even wore a maroon blazer, like Cortland.

On one hand, I am comforted by the fact that my son confides in me and will discuss anything that bothers him. What's so disturbing, however, is the constant stream of news stories about cases of child abuse, especially in Israel. What propels an adult to abuse children? Why is the world filled with demented, evil people lurking around every corner, waiting to pounce on kids?

As the novel moved through the seasons, I cheered on every step of Cortland's transformation and was reminded of Albert Camus's famous quotation: "In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger – something better, pushing right back."

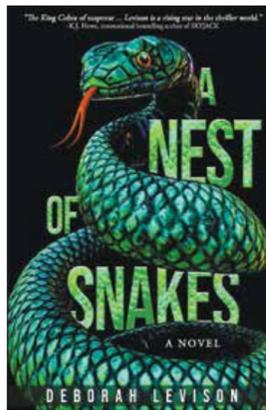
Not only does this quotation aptly define Levison's debut novel, *The Crate*, but it also perfectly reflects Cortland's transformation. It takes Cortland over 30 years to move from the beauty of the New England fall, through many cold, harsh, winters to spring, when hope starts to blossom and finally bursts into summer, by which time he is able to embrace life fully.

*A Nest of Snakes* is exquisitely written. It's long enough to resolve all the issues, yet it flows with purpose. Hanukkah, the festival of lights, is coming up. Just as we add one more candle each night, so the amount of light grows. Similarly, *Snakes* moves from darkness to light – from a tiny amount of light, to a life which fully embraces light, life and purpose. Hope also runs through this novel, just as it flows through life.

Put aside a few hours to read this novel – like a snake that traps its prey, it will seize your imagination until you turn the final page.

*The writer runs Turn Write This Way, a boutique content agency. She creates biographies, develops marketing materials and translates content from Hebrew to English.*

**A NEST OF SNAKES**  
By Deborah Levison  
WildBlue Press  
406 pages; \$19.86



JUDAISM 3.0  
GOL KALEV

# Ninety years to the 'Post'

and European intervention

In this column, we have journeyed through over 3,000 years of Jewish history, leaning on the insight of Theodor Herzl. With today's *Magazine* marking the 90th anniversary of *The Jerusalem Post*, it is only natural to place the newspaper in the context of history.

The beginning of the end of Judaism 1.0 – when Judaism was anchored in the Temple and the physical presence in Judea – came as Europeans invaded Judea. Unlike the local wars described in the Bible and in historical accounts, the Greeks and then the Romans sought to end Judaism – to force their "European values."

When this failed, the Romans destroyed the Temple and deported the Jews from Jerusalem, and then from Judea. Judaism had to transform in order to survive, and indeed it has. For the next 2,000 years it had an internal anchor of religiosity (Rabbinic Judaism) and an external one of complete insularity.

The beginning of the end of Judaism 2.0 came as those two anchors were fading. Yet, just as the religious anchor of the Jewish nation-religion was eroding, its national aspect was ascending.

Theodor Herzl launched the Zionist movement in 1897, and within 20 years his vision was about to come to fruition. The British issued the Balfour Declaration and were later given a mandate for Palestine – core to which was to usher in a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Indeed, when *The Jerusalem Post* (then *The Palestine Post*) was first published, it was merely 12 years after the prospect of a utopian Middle East was shattered by yet another European invader – this time, France.

## 1920: Toward a utopian Middle East

The year 1920 symbolized the fulfillment of Herzl's vision – a Jewish state in the making in Palestine living side by side next to a pro-Zionist Arab kingdom in Syria. The Hashemite Arab Kingdom of Syria was led by King Faisal. Not only was Faisal a Zionist, but he also lobbied the world powers during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference for the Zionist cause.

Faisal was the consensus Arab leader of the region, and still the British chose to conduct additional due diligence. They tasked T.E. Lawrence – Lawrence of Arabia – with checking Arab sentiment toward Zionism. Lawrence confirmed that Zionism had broad Arab support. This was very much in line with Herzl's vision.

Yet Herzl, who died in 1904, also predicted something else: Europe will never leave the Jews alone. He warned that European animosity would follow the Jews even after they left Europe. He wrote in 1895: "In the first 25 years of our existence we need, for our development, some rest from Europe, its wars and social complications." Stuningly, exactly 25 years after Herzl wrote this, Europe ended its "rest" and exported its cherished obsession with war to the Middle East.

## European intervention begins

France defied international law and invaded the Arab kingdom in 1920, ending the trajectory toward the Herzl-envisioned peaceful Middle East.

France argued that this Arab land of Syria belonged to them. This was not based on a historic connection of the French people to Syria. To be fair, there was a



KING FAISAL of the Hashemite Arab Kingdom (front) with T. E. Lawrence (2nd R) and the Hejazi delegation at the post-World War I Paris Peace Conference, 1919. (Wikimedia Commons)

French presence in Syria during the 19th century, and French diplomats even exported the European concept of Jew-hatred overseas to the local Arab population when French diplomats instigated the 1840 "Damascus Blood Libels."

## France defied international law in 1920, ending the trajectory towards the Herzl-envisioned peaceful Middle East

Blood libels tend to be associated with the Middle Ages, such as the 12th-century accusation that Jews murdered a child in Norwich, England, for religious rituals; but European diplomats were able to not only export but also adapt the well-tested anti-Jewish fable to local and contemporary circumstances and accused the Jews in Syria of murdering a monk. (Some argue that such exporting and adaptation of European blood libels continues today, such as with the fable that Jews murdered a journalist.)

France's claim to Syria was based on colonialist dealings that took place between a mid-level French foreign-office official named Francois Picot and Mark Sykes of the UK.

Based on this claim, France set in motion precisely what Herzl warned was the European obsession – war! France's invasion of Syria led to the removal of the Arab monarch from Syria. This led to a series of events that shaped today's Middle East: To compensate the Hashemite Arab king of Syria, the British carved Palestine into two.

They reduced the vision of the "two-state solution" from a Jewish state in Palestine living side by side next to an Arab kingdom in Syria – to a Jewish state in half of Palestine (west of the Jordan river) living next to an Arab Hashemite kingdom in the other half of Palestine (east of the Jordan river).

The territory that was once promised to the Jews is

today the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which just like its Syrian predecessor, is now a strong ally and friend of the Jewish state.

That same French invasion also led to the 1920 Tel Chai events – the first shots in what later became known as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Jews' attempt to stay neutral did not work. Local Arab Bedouin thought that the Jews of Tel Chai were hiding French soldiers. In what some historians attribute to a series of misunderstandings, fighting ensued and eight Jews were killed, including iconic Zionist activist Yosef Trumpeldor.

Incidentally, similar circumstances occurred a century later in the 2020s, with France insisting (quite theatrically) that Jerusalem and Bethlehem should be taken away from Israelis and Palestinians. In this scenario, the city would be turned into an occupied entity controlled by the "international community," (aka Europe), with the Church of Saint Anne carved out of this "make-believe colony," and be given to the sole possession of France, based on France's colonialist dealings with the Ottoman Empire.

## 'Jerusalem Post' at 90 – European intervention intensifies

This historical backdrop of the years leading to the establishment of *The Jerusalem Post* continues as it celebrates its 90th anniversary. In the last two decades, Europe invested billions of dollars to nurture the Palestinian plight and turn it into what by now has become the autonomous movement of occupationalism, independent of Palestine interests.

As discussed in this column, occupationalists, led by the European Union, aggressively block Palestinians' employment in Jewish-owned businesses, mentorship in Israeli hi-tech companies, residence in mixed Jewish-Arab neighborhoods, and even purchase of products in Israeli stores.

But there is hope. Herzl predicted that the Jewish state would one day get the adamant support of the world – not due to Europe's moral consciousness but because it would become the necessity of the world. Indeed, today humanity is advanced through the Jewish state, through Zionism. (See last month's article "Anti-Zionism is anti-humanity.")

## Toward 'Jerusalem Post' at 100: A hope for peace?

As the Arab world recognizes this and increasingly partakes in the success of the Jewish state, the historic question is triggered: Will Europe end its 100-year-old disruptive intervention that existed since *The Jerusalem Post* has been in existence? Moreover, can Europe have the courage to end its bigger woe: the 2,300-year-old European-Israeli conflict, which dates back to the European invasion of Judea; continues with the European deportation of Jews from their land; then 2,000 years of the European abusive and murderous persecution of Jewish refugees in Europe; and today, with the yet-to-be explained zealous European obsession with the Israeli-Arab conflict, its instigation and massive investment in conflict-perpetuation?

To find out, we will need to wait for *The Jerusalem Post's* 100th-anniversary issue.

*The writer is the author of Judaism 3.0: Judaism's Transformation to Zionism (Judaism-Zionism.com).*

PARASHAT VAYETZE  
SHMUEL RABINOWITZ

He learned that even when we feel we're at the bottom of a pit, we are not disconnected from heaven



(Cesar Cid/Unsplash)

## The ladder from heaven to Earth

In last week's parasha, we read about Jacob's being forced to leave his parents' home in order to escape the wrath of his brother, Esau, who was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge for Jacob's taking the blessings that had been promised to Esau.

In this week's parasha, *Vayetze*, we get into the story of Jacob who wandered to Haran, where his Uncle Laban lived. Jacob lived in Haran for 20 years, through many trials and tribulations.

This chapter in Jacob's life begins with the deceit from which Jacob suffered his entire life. After he got to Haran and met Laban's daughter Rachel, he felt she was his soulmate and wanted to marry her. Jacob made a proposal to Laban, as was customary in those days, and agreed to work for Laban for seven years, after which he would be able to marry Rachel. Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob. But after the seven years passed, he cheated Jacob and gave him his older daughter, Leah, instead of Rachel. From here on, Jacob's life became a string of complications and tragedies. After he discovered the deceit, he demanded to marry Rachel, the woman he loved, but Laban demanded an additional seven years of labor. With no choice, Jacob agreed and worked for Laban for another seven years.

Jacob was married to two sisters but loved Rachel more than he loved Leah. This created a rift in his family, with far-reaching implications. The tension between Rachel and Leah is described in the parasha. It intensified after Leah gave birth to child after

child, whereas the beloved Rachel was unable to bear children. Only after Leah had six sons did Rachel get pregnant and give birth to Joseph.

After Joseph was born, Jacob decided to leave Haran and return to his parents' home in the Land of Canaan. Laban was not amenable, and Jacob was forced to stay in Haran for years more. Even when he finally was able to escape with his family and possessions, Laban chased him and tried to kill him. Only divine intervention prevented the tragedy.

WHAT KEPT Jacob going during those long and difficult years, when he was alone, far from his parents' home, being swindled and threatened time after time by his father-in-law?

To answer that, we must go back to the start of Jacob's journey from the Land of Canaan to Haran. When he was on his way, he went to sleep for the night in a place called Beit El (the House of God). Our sages tell us that this was on the Temple Mount, the site where the Temple would be built years later. There, Jacob dreamed an amazing dream. He saw in his dream "a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven; and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending upon it."

Many interpretations of this vision have been offered by commentators. According to some of them, the dream symbolizes the connection between heaven and Earth, the possibility of a person living a secular and sacred life simultaneously, and the human capacity to bridge the gaps between heaven and Earth.

Jacob embarked on his life journey equipped with these understandings. He knew that even when he was living in a foreign land, alone and vulnerable to deceit, there was meaning to his life and his actions. He learned that even when we feel we're at the bottom of a pit, we are not disconnected from heaven. He believed that a person can be standing on Earth but his head could reach the heavens.

He also recognized that the ups and downs in his private life were not merely mishaps but were part of a complex plan in which he played a part. He saw angels going up and down the ladder and inferred that he, too, could be like that – descending and then going back up; never staying down but always climbing back up that ladder leading to heaven.

When Jacob woke up, he cried out, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

If we listen closely to these words, we learn two aspects of the connection between heaven and Earth, between the sacred and the mundane. On the one hand, Jacob discovered that this earthly site is actually "the house of God." God resides on Earth. He is not unattainable and distant. On the other hand, Jacob discovered that the place was "the gate of heaven" – the gate between Earth and heaven. Jacob discovered the connection between heaven and Earth from both sides, enabling him to cope with his distant exile while equipped with faith and confidence, hope and significance. ■

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and other holy sites.

PARASHAT VAYETZE  
MICHAEL M. COHEN

Saying 'thank you' forces us to recognize the other – reminding us we need each other



(Polina Kuzovkova/Unsplash)

## Giving thanks

Three weeks ago in this space, we explored parashat *Lech Lecha*: "Who are we? The answer to that question is multilayered and multifaceted. Our names – how we identify to others and how we are identified by others – are one way that question is answered. Before we were Jews, we were Israelites, and before that, we were known as Hebrews." The rest of the commentary for that parasha examined the name *ivri*, "Hebrew."

This week we are introduced to the seed of the name Jew. Its source is the Hebrew name Yehuda, or Judah, the fourth son of Leah and Jacob. We discover in this week's parasha, *Vayetze*: "She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son, she said, 'This time I will praise the Lord.' So she named him Judah" (Gen. 29:35). In this sentence, the Hebrew word for "praise," *odeh*, illuminates that the core meaning of the name Yehuda has to do with praise and thanks – think of *toda*, the Hebrew word for "thanks."

From this we gain the insight that one of the essential qualities of being Jewish is to live in a state of thanks. That aspect can help us cultivate a more positive perspective on how to live our lives and engage the world.

One question we need to ask ourselves is why did Leah choose the name Judah for her son?

The 12 sons of Jacob will become the 12 tribes of Israel. In the course of his life, Jacob will have relations with four women – Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah. So simple math tells us that if each woman gave birth to three children, they could each claim equal partnership in the creation of the 12 tribes. However, once Leah gave birth to a fourth son, the possibility of that equality was lost, as she realized she had the opportunity to be the mother of more tribes than the other women, and so she thanked God for that probability by naming him Yehudah. In fact, she would be the mother of six tribes.

WE PAUSE here and remember that this all occurred in the patriarchal society of its era. For one, Leah also

has a daughter, Dinah, but then the descendants of daughters did not count as tribes. In addition, it is mostly accepted that, of the four women, only Leah and Rachel are counted as matriarchs (along with Sarah and Rebekah), while Bilhah and Zilpah, the lowly handmaidens of Rachel and Leah, are not usually given that status, even though in the Hebrew, when they are given to Jacob to produce children, it says "*l'isha*," which means "for a wife" (Gen. 30:4, 9).

There is an interesting exception to this trope in the Midrash (Numbers Rabbah 12:17): "Six corresponding to the Matriarchs, namely Sarah and Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah." However, for the most part within Judaism, the two menial handmaidens, even though four tribes came from them (From Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali; from Zilpah: Gad and Asher), are not given their due.

We can be thankful in our age that these dynamics are getting a different look. In *Lilith* magazine (March 24, 1995), Rabbi Susan Schnur advocates for the inclusion of Bilhah and Zilpah in the *Amida*, while Josephine Rosman, in the Jewish Women's Archive (October 27, 2017), challenges us to reclaim these two women by elevating how they are seen.

THE HEBREW *l'hadot*, "to thank," includes an orientation of acknowledgment. It recognizes, among a number of dynamics, that we do not live in a vacuum of existential solitude. It forces us out of a hole we sometimes step into. Saying something as simple as "thank you" produces a shower of recognition, appreciation, worth and affirmation of another person. Saying "thank you" forces us to recognize the other. When we say "thank you," we are reminded that we need each other.

Giving thanks is a spiral that feeds itself. Recognizing others means they not only are seen with our eyes but are seen in their eyes as well. On the deepest level, we all want and need to be recognized and acknowledged. We hold each other up when we say "thank you." As the

French philosopher Simone Weil reminds us, "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity."

We shall see in a few weeks that Judah's life is filled with moments when he stands up to others or is unafraid to face the truth. In all these incidents, he is able to draw part of his strength from living a life in a state of thanks: being aware of what he has and not focusing on what he lacks. It is from that place that he is able to act selflessly beyond himself.

If we understand being thankful as a core value of being Jewish (and, for that matter, being human), it is not surprising to hear the rabbis say we should recite a minimum of 100 *brachot*, blessings, a day. In the Talmud we find:

"It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Meir would say: A person is obligated to recite 100 blessings every day, as it is stated in the verse: 'And now, Israel, what [ma] does the Lord your God require of you' (Deuteronomy 10:12). Rabbi Meir interprets the verse as though it said *mea* [one hundred] rather than *ma*" (Menahot 43b).

Blessings are one way we allow ourselves to take in what we have. It is related, as Mark Koffman noted on a Shabbat morning in my shul, that in one of the morning blessings we thank God for our "needs" and not our "wants."

We further learn, in the Midrash, about the Messianic Age: "Rabbi Pinhas, Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Yohanan [said] in the name of Rabbi Menahem from Gallia: In the time to come, all sacrifices will be annulled, but the sacrifice of thanksgiving will not be annulled. All prayers will be annulled, but the prayer of gratitude will not be annulled" (Leviticus Rabbah 9:7).

May we all work to bring that age closer by living our lives as Jews, by living our lives like our namesake Judah – the one who is thankful. ■

The writer, a Reconstructionist rabbi, is the rabbi emeritus of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont. He teaches at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies on Kibbutz Ketura and at Bennington College.

▶ FRIDAY CROSSWORD

**Across**

- 1 "Likewise"
- 6 Oft-misused pronoun
- 10 Scholastic nos.
- 14 Labor alliance
- 15 Icicle spot
- 16 "If all \_\_\_ fails ..."
- 17 Preference for the center of the road?
- 19 Significant other
- 20 Neruda's "\_\_\_ to Salt"
- 21 Sport
- 22 Slopes topper
- 24 APB subject
- 25 Biblical possessive
- 26 "Pumicepowered" soap
- 29 Where a Met singer reclines between arias?
- 33 Valuable violin
- 35 Hang out in a hammock
- 36 "Odds \_\_\_ ..."
- 37 \_\_\_ cit.: footnote notation
- 38 Response producers
- 41 Paris article
- 42 2010 health law, for short
- 43 Pests treated with Nix Ultra shampoo
- 44 Needle
- 46 Cereal that has amazing health benefits?

50 Wasabi \_\_\_

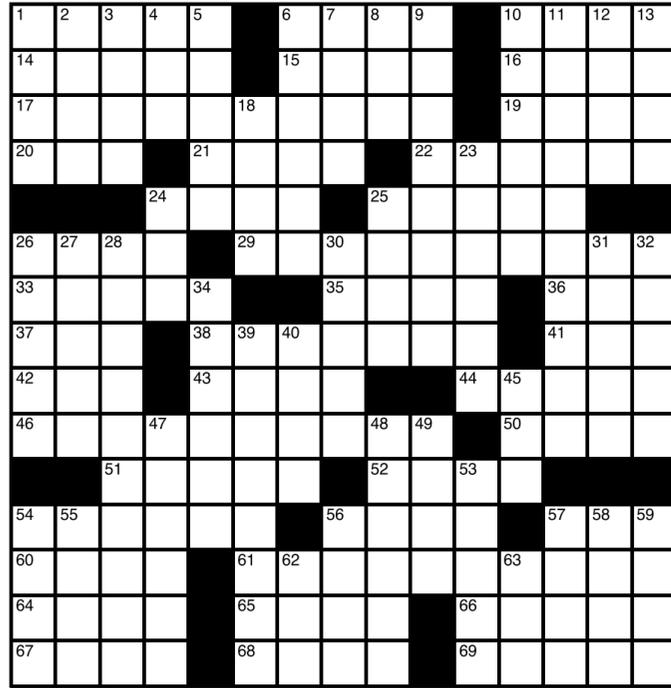
- 51 Carved symbol
- 52 Wall calendar span
- 54 First woman Speaker of the House
- 56 Hit or miss
- 57 Hon
- 60 Run \_\_\_
- 61 Hotel choice leading up to Eid al-Fitr?
- 64 Moreno of "West Side Story"
- 65 Jazz singer Anita
- 66 Govt. investment
- 67 Crafty website
- 68 Plane part
- 69 Alleviates

**Down**

- 1 Sport with referee called gyoji
- 2 Linear
- 3 Assistant
- 4 "Pretentious? \_\_\_?"
- 5 Flabbergasted
- 6 Google Docs, e.g.
- 7 Bun contents
- 8 Egg cells
- 9 Private eatery
- 10 NASA's second human spaceflight program
- 11 Mathematical concept based on a digit's position
- 12 Hammett dog

13 Permeate

- 18 Adopted son of Claudius
- 23 Judy Blume books, e.g.
- 24 Butter square
- 25 Slangy slacks
- 26 Dey-time drama?
- 27 BP subsidiary
- 28 Developers' purchases
- 30 Cartoon hunter who tries to take a vacation in "Wabbit Twouble"
- 31 Boxing venue
- 32 Egg holders
- 34 Archipelago units
- 39 Flat-changing tool, once
- 40 Disarmament subj.
- 45 Spring mo.
- 47 Just get by
- 48 "Understood, cap'n"
- 49 Young Sheldon, e.g.
- 53 Lessen
- 54 Peel
- 55 Discharge
- 56 MTV statuettes with an astronaut holding a flag
- 57 Many Wiki entries
- 58 Queen played by Olivia Colman in "The Favourite"
- 59 Concludes
- 62 Big fuss
- 63 Slam Dunk Contest org.



Solutions to both crosswords will appear in Sunday's paper.

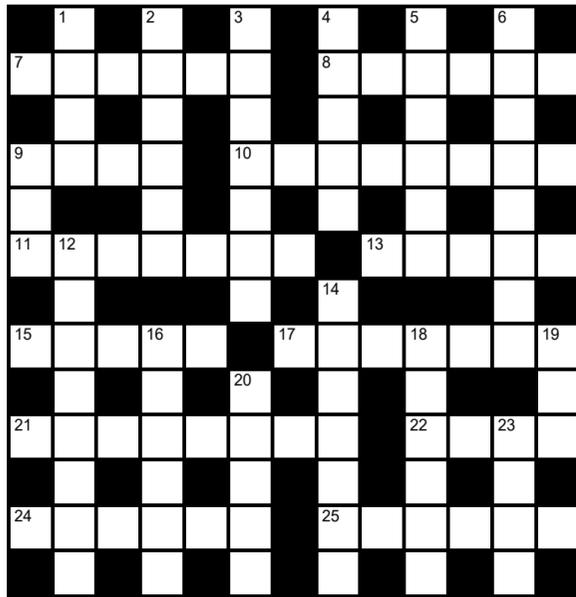
▶ QUICK CROSSWORD

**Across**

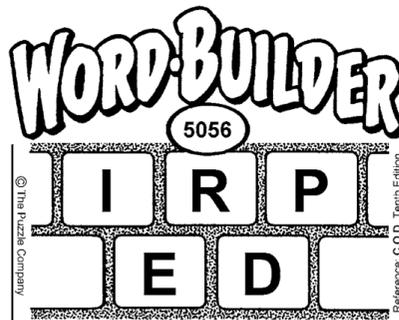
- 7 Way to position arms (6)
- 8 Instructed (6)
- 9 Month after Nisan (4)
- 10 Like a Chapter 11 filer (8)
- 11 Wallet material (7)
- 13 What Sinatra's fans did (5)
- 15 \_\_\_ of the ball (pretty woman) (5)
- 17 Universal origin theory (3,4)
- 21 Possessed (8)
- 22 Printed work with a wide spine (4)
- 24 Congressional committee subject (6)
- 25 Take a gander (6)

**Down**

- 1 Alright (4)
- 2 Tarnish (6)
- 3 Prohibited (7)
- 4 Reeked (5)
- 5 Underground shelter (6)
- 6 Somewhat tattered (8)
- 9 Abbr. following many business names (3)
- 12 Egg dish (8)
- 14 Skeleton feature (3,4)
- 16 \_\_\_ on (visit) (4-2)
- 18 Robin's partner (6)
- 19 "Only trouble is, \_\_\_ whiz... I'm dreaming my life away" (3)
- 20 A bit wacko (5)
- 23 Gunk (4)



▶ WORDBUILDER



How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

**TODAY'S GOALS:**  
Good - 10 Excellent - 14 Amazing - 18

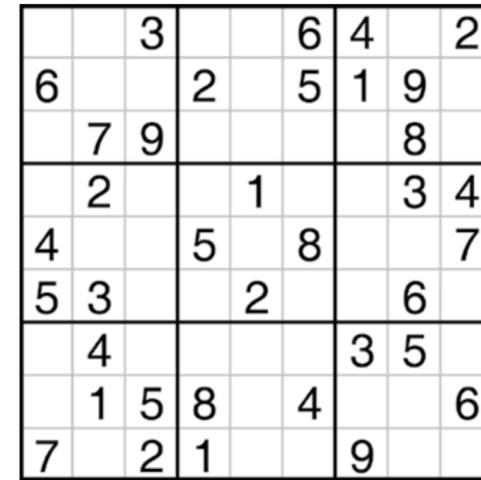
**SOLUTION 5055:** ado, adorn, and, dan, darn, don, dor, nard, nod, nor, oar, rad, radon, ran, rand, road, roan, rod.

▶ CHESS ANSWERS

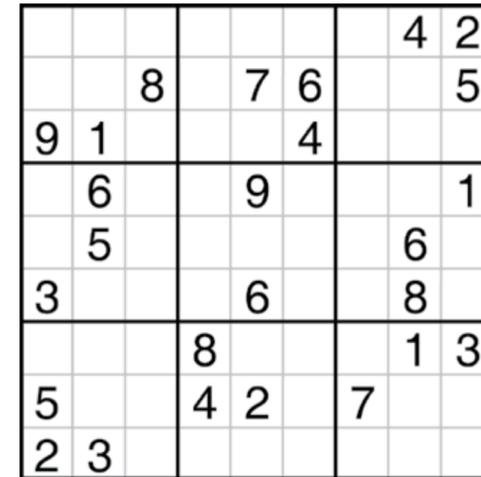
... I O 2 6 9 1 3 1 9 x I 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

▶ SUDOKU

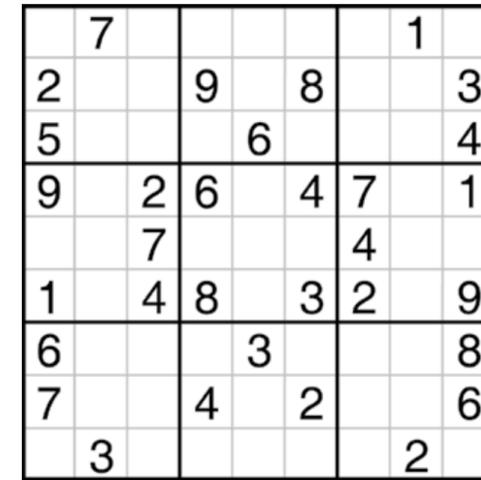
VERY EASY



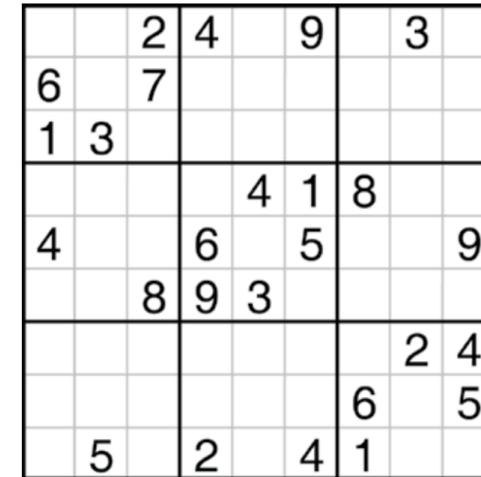
MEDIUM



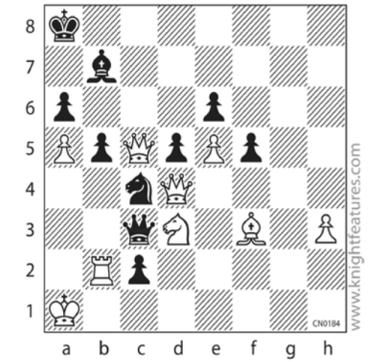
EASY



HARD



▶ CHESS By Leonard Barden



Mikhail Tchigorin v Joseph Blackburne, Vienna 1898. Black (to move) is queen and rook down and threatened with instant checkmate by Qa7. Of course Black can queen his pawn, but he only regains a knight and soon runs out of checks. Yet Blackburne turned the tables and won. What happened?

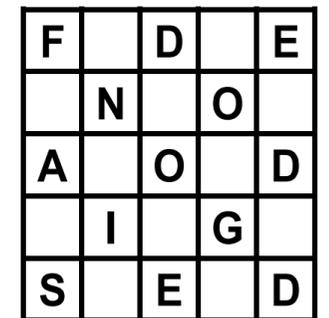
▶ THURSDAY'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS



▶ 5x5

**5x5**

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.



**ASSET**  
**SHALE**  
**HOLES**  
**ERECT**  
**NESTS**

PREVIOUS SOLUTION (other combinations may be possible)

Reference: Concise Oxford 10th Edition



MONSTROUS STORM clouds hover over French Hill, while in the distance, sunshine bathes the Jordan Valley. (Leah Yerushalmi in Jerusalem)



MANY PEOPLE believe that a chameleon changes color to match its location – but actually, the chameleon's color is usually indicative of its mood. (Julian Alper, IG: @alperjulian)

# The week in photos

• From readers Captions compiled by: Aaron Reich

Send photos of what you saw or did this week to [jpostmagphotos@gmail.com](mailto:jpostmagphotos@gmail.com) with your name and where the picture was taken – plus your Instagram handle if you want to be tagged. Feel free to add additional related info about the photo and/or suggest a caption.



RAIN ISN'T very frequent in Israel, so it is common for things to be left out in the open outside. Here's hoping the rain hasn't ruined this piano. (Yosef Symonds, IG: @visionsofisrael, in Beit Shemesh)

THE POMEGRANATE IS one of the most iconic fruits growing in Israel, its vast number of seeds said to represent the 613 mitzvot. The Hebrew word "rimon" also refers to grenades, but don't worry – these fruits are both harmless and delicious.

(Harriet Mark in Megiddo)



THIS STRANGE rock formation looks as if it could only have been formed on another, stranger, more alien and eldritch world. But this photo, like all the others on this page, was taken in Israel. (Zev Rothkoff at the Dead Sea)

## 'I'm glad I made my mistakes...

... and learned from them and can help others'

• ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN

He didn't know Hebrew. He had no friends. And he was just 13. But Konstantin Berezin's difficult start in the country in 1991 after arriving from Uzbekistan with his parents didn't get in the way of his later making it big time in a Russian-speaking start-up.

"Very fortunately, I came to a new high school, Aleh, now called Atid Razieli, in Herzliya. It was established in 1992, with only two grades of mostly immigrants," recalls Berezin, now 45. "It is one of the best high schools in Israel, and I still support it."

One of the few successful Russian-speaking start-up founders in Israel, Berezin volunteers as a youth and young adult entrepreneurship mentor through Unistream and Taglit-Birthright.

"Not a lot of immigrants become co-founders, especially not from Russian-speaking countries. Tons of Russians are in C-level positions such as CTO, project manager, IT manager, R&D manager. Only a few are leading the company, and I find it strange," he says.

"I think immigrants don't feel confident enough. To be an immigrant is hard, and it influences your development; you don't reach the peak of the Maslow Pyramid [the level of self-actualization] as easily, if ever. My generation takes 30, 40 years to reach that peak, and it's sad.

"I am trying to change this with the new wave of immigrants. I'm trying to push the entrepreneurial way of life because we should have more influence."

Berezin was one of the first employees at Samsung Electronics' Israel office, which opened in 2006. That was a year after he met his future wife, a Moscow expat now working in the finance department of Viola Ventures.

In 2012, their daughter was born. Berezin quit his job and earned an executive MBA at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

"I changed my life totally and became an entrepreneur. In 2012, the law on recycling home appliances was passed, and I was part of lobbying for that law while I was at Samsung," he relates, "so I wanted to improve the environmental aspect in our country and start an electronics recycling project."

However, following a long and costly journey, his start-up didn't win the one government license available for providing this service.

BEREZIN'S NEXT venture seemed headed toward success. He founded a company around his invention, BrighTap, a smart water meter and analytics platform intended to let households monitor water use and quality by attaching the sensor to any standard tap, pipe or hose.

The design prototype won several awards, including a top-five spot in the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Summit's World Positive competition and a \$50,000 prize in Unilever's Ideas for Life competition.

"I made a lot of connections with relevant customers, large and small, and I even met Barack Obama," Berezin recalls. "But BrighTap wasn't ready for the market yet, so I paused it – because as a businessman you need to generate a margin. You can say 'Let's save the world,' but it doesn't matter if it's not supported by the numbers."



(Smadar Kafri)

**KONSTANTIN BEREZIN, 45**  
FROM UZBEKISTAN TO NETANYA, 1991

He also co-founded a few start-ups in the virtual/augmented reality and Web3 space, currently in growth stages.

In 2017, he and three Russian-speaking co-founders established Caaresys to develop vehicle passenger monitoring systems powered by contactless, low-emission radar.

"Safety features in cars became an issue when people were forgetting their kids in hot cars. It was personally concerning to me and my co-founders as parents of young children," he explains.

Last September 6, Caaresys was acquired by Harman International, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Samsung Electronics, Berezin's former employer.

"I'm happy to say that Caaresys was chosen to supply the lifesaving technology that a European car maker will incorporate from 2024 to prevent children being left inside," Berezin says. "All my colleagues went to

work at Harman, helping to establish a cabin-safety division based on Caaresys radar technology."

Berezin chose not to rejoin a large corporate structure. "Since September, I've been searching for my next thing," he says.

"I'm an angel investor, and I advise some start-ups based on my 15 years of experience. There's a lot of regulation in the automotive industry and once you've done that, you can do just about anything," he explains.

"I'm glad I made my mistakes and learned from them and can help others. To rephrase George Bernard Shaw's famous saying: Those who can do, teach. But I cannot sit at home. I plan to have another venture in a short time."

Despite having lived here most of his life, he says he feels only "99% Israeli. I have an accent and a different look and habits. Sometimes people still see me as Russian, but I'm not."

IN HIS spare time, Berezin plays tennis, a passion he passed on to his daughter, who is on the national team. He was one of the first Israelis to buy an electric Tesla, and he enjoys driving it.

"I like technology that can improve lives and sustainability," Berezin says. "Electric cars are not the full solution and there will be a lot of changes in this industry, probably toward hydrogen and other technologies, but it's a good start toward getting away from fossil fuels."

Living in Netanya since 1998, Berezin and his wife speak Russian to their two children "because it's a free resource we can give them."

As a fluent Russian, Hebrew and English speaker, Berezin theoretically could relocate anywhere.

But, he says, "I prefer living in Israel. We are a unique country, and there is much to learn from the Israeli entrepreneurial way of living. I find it inspiring to live here," he says. "The mix of different cultures spawns a lot of innovation."

Nevertheless, he laments the fact that "we produce technology for the whole world, but in the local market we are dinosaurs in using our own technology, such as in the banking system. With newcomers like One Zero digital bank, I am sure we are on the right track. However, it takes time to adjust."



WITH FAMILY.  
(Courtesy Konstantin Berezin)

## VOICES FROM THE ARAB PRESS

A weekly selection of opinions and analyses from the Arab media around the world

COMPILED BY THE MEDIA LINE

[It is heartbreaking that] an African player may find himself playing against his home country's national team



SWITZERLAND FORWARD Breel Embolo (L) moves the ball ahead of Brazil defender Marquinhos in the second half of a group stage match during the 2022 World Cup in Doha, Qatar. (Danielle Parhizkaran/USA TODAY Sports)

## FOOTBALL AND JUSTICE

*Al-Masry Al-Youm, Egypt, November 25*

As I write these lines, Breel Embolo, a soccer player on the Swiss national team, scored the winning goal for his team in its World Cup match against Cameroon.

This might seem normal to the average reader, but those who are familiar with the player's background will immediately understand the irony, since Embolo is Cameroonian by birth. One can only imagine how confused – and perhaps torn – the player felt when he scored the goal. Embolo couldn't be happy or sad.

The sadness on his face wasn't the "ordinary" sadness one would expect from a professional soccer player who beats his former team. Rather, it was sadness over injustice – the injustice that forced him to leave Africa, abandon his homeland and move to Switzerland.

Few professional opportunities exist for people in Africa. Therefore, exceptionally talented Africans – be they athletes, musicians, artists, or scholars – look to Europe for a better future. At home, they will have to face issues like corruption and nepotism. Abroad, they will have a fair chance for development and growth.

And while many talented Africans find themselves pursuing a professional career abroad, nowhere is this more heartbreaking to observe than in sports, where an African player may find himself playing against his own home country's national team.

Soccer isn't just a game. Rather, it is a microcosm of life. The World Cup is an opportunity for countries to demonstrate their skill and power against others. In beating Cameroon on the playing field, Switzerland affirmed its position as a force to be reckoned with.

It is a model for life, neither a continuous winner nor a continuous loser, Jürgen Klopp, the manager of Premier League club Liverpool, answered, when asked about his permanent smile even when his team loses. "It is because when my son was born, I realized that football is not a matter of life or death. We do not save people's lives."

Soccer should not spread misfortune, hatred and misery. Soccer should be about joy and inspiration.

– Abdel Latif El-Menawy

## WESTERN VALUES AND THE WORLD CUP

*Asharq al-Awsat, London, November 23*

The FIFA World Cup is not just the premier sporting event in the Western world, but it is also an occasion to promote Western values across the globe.

For a long time, we've witnessed liberal values, which were once considered radical, assume the center stage of Western societies.

I'm not talking about the normalization of homosexuality or same-sex marriage. I'm talking about how the entire concept of gender has been questioned. There is no more "male" and "female," but a wide host of other gender identities that people can assume. Even young children are being indoctrinated and taught these ideas and values at school today.

These values are being put to the test in the current FIFA World Cup games held in Qatar. The International Federation of Football Associations banned the wearing of gay symbols, badges and apparel during the games, including the "one love" badge.

This angered some European teams, including Germany's national team, whose players were filmed covering their mouths – as if they are silenced – ahead

of their first match.

The Germans lost that game to Japan, and some cynics commented on the score by showing a caricature of the German players with an image of a rainbow in their heads playing against the Japanese players, who had an image of a soccer ball in their minds.

According to a BBC report, seven European national team captains were expected to wear the "one love" armband during the games. The German Football Association claimed that "depriving us of wearing the armband is like depriving us of speaking."

The only thing that FIFA allowed the captains of the teams was to wear the "no discrimination" badge throughout the tournament period. This is what Germany's captain and goalkeeper, Manuel Neuer, did in the match against Japan.

However, the truth is that the Western insolence doesn't even reflect all the players on the Western teams. For example, the captain of the French national team, Hugo Lloris, announced that he would not wear the armband, because he wanted to pay respect to his Qatari hosts.

They might not like it, but Westerners visiting Qatar for the World Cup games may just discover that the universe doesn't revolve around their own values. They are neither the source of truth nor the ultimate manufacturers of noble values. Other societies, other peoples and other countries might not agree with their liberal philosophies and worldviews. They may have their own beliefs, but those beliefs are far from universal.

Perhaps a trip to Qatar is what it takes for them to understand this simple reality. – Meshary Al-Dhaidi

Translated by Asaf Zilberfarb.

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