

# PERSPECTIVES

the magazine of

# aish<sup>uk</sup>

**CONQUERING DEATH:  
IS IMMORTALITY AROUND  
THE CORNER?**

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:  
WHEN AUTONOMOUS CARS HARM PEOPLE**

**DESIGNER BABIES:  
CAN YOU CHOOSE THE  
GENDER OF YOUR CHILD?**

**CHANUKAH:  
A TALE OF PRAGMATISM,  
HOPE AND FRIED FOOD**

**FIVE TOP TIPS FOR  
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Issue 5 | Kislev 5779 | November 2018

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# Letter from the Editor



In this fifth issue of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK, we are talking about the future.

We all know the impact technology has had on our everyday lives. Since the industrial revolution, humankind had been catapulted through an unprecedented transformation. With continued growth in almost every area of production and the exponential advance of technology, we find ourselves in a place that we are not fully able to grasp, and it happened at such a pace that our minds are still processing.

Paralleling the exciting new “@futures” programme for Aish Young Professionals, we have included articles asking bold questions. Is immortality around the corner? Who is liable when an autonomous car injures someone? Can you choose the gender of your child?

We spend a lot of time thinking about Jewish education, and we have come up with some really interesting topics from excellent educators from around the world. For readers who want to learn more, who are interested in Jewish history, culture or food, or for those who are simply curious, we hope to be entertaining, informative and purposeful.

We will explore how the Chanukah story helps us to change our habits, and the history of fried foods! Inside this issue you will read the story of the Silicon Valley kosher sushi caterer with a social mission to hire and integrate ex-convicts; and Karen Harris, managing director at intuDigital, shares her top tips for female entrepreneurs. Mental health blogger Eleanor Segall gives advice on how she learned to manage social anxiety and panic attacks and JAMI gives students tips to adapt to university life.

Food expert Ilana Epstein shares some incredible Chanukah recipes from around the world, with mouth-watering photography from the talented Blake Ezra.

We would love to hear from you! If you have any questions, suggestions on how we can improve, or topics you'd like to see covered, please be in touch. Look out for our next magazine coming out early January 2019, with some new and improved features and sections!

Wishing you all a happy Chanukah,

Ari Kayser  
Editor

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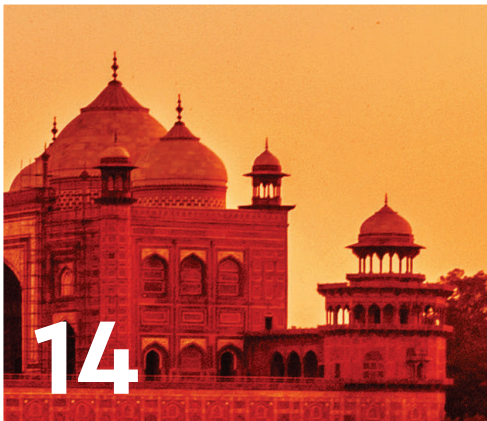
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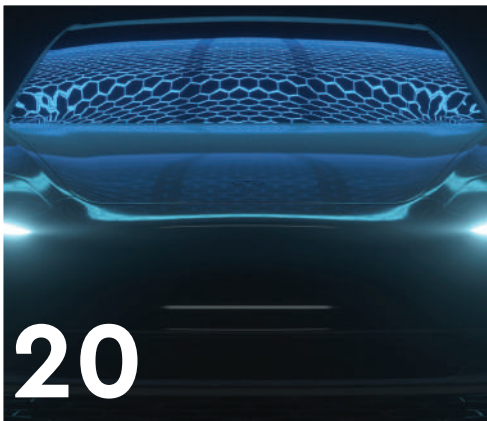
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# CHANUKAH:

## A Tale of Pragmatism, Hope and Fried Food

REBBETZIN ILANA EPSTEIN



Ilana has collected many experiences over the last few decades, from interior designer to international educator, qualifying as a pastry chef and working as a journalist for a number of publications. Ilana has lived in New York, Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Israel and settled in London five years ago with her husband Daniel and their four children. Ilana comes to JFT after four years working as an educator and Head of Programme Development for the United Synagogue's Living and Learning department and is the Rebbetzin of Cockfosters and Southgate United Synagogue. Ilana is the founder and director of Ta'am.





Being a Jew is more than just a religion or a way of life, more than a privilege or a burden. To me, above all, being a Jew is a legacy, one that has sustained us for millennia.

The Chanukah story was one of military battles, yet our legacy and tradition is one of lighting candles and eating doughnuts. How is this a testament to Jewish survival, pragmatism and resilience and how does it reflect our traditions today?

The Chanukah story happened when the fledgling people of Judea's Second Temple era were confronted with yet another overlord. This time it was not their familiar enemies – the

Egyptians or the Assyrians – but a new empire that came from the West: the Greek Empire.

After the death of Alexander the Great and the split of the vast Greek empire into three parts, the Judeans came under the rule of the Seleucid Greeks whose capital was in Antioch, located in modern day Syria.

In a way, their time was not so different from ours. Hellenism was as ubiquitous in the known world as the British Empire was in the nineteenth century and America was in the twentieth. All the provinces under Greek influence sought to emulate their overlords. Hellenism espoused beauty of all kinds: beauty in form

and shape, beauty in nature and sport, and beauty in art. Hellenism was also a religion – one with many pagan gods. The Judeans and their way of life were alien to them. A people more interested in books than beauty, in service to one God. The Greeks found the idea of monotheism savage and backward. Uncultured. Un-Greek.

As the world around them embraced Greek culture, gymnasia and theatres opened up throughout Judea. The divisiveness would become more apparent throughout the Second Temple period as the aristocracy wanted to be Hellenised and embraced the change while the farmers and vintners – the people most connected with the land – clung on to the laws and traditions of their forefathers.

This is the setting for the upheaval that ushers in the Chanukah story. But if you thought you knew the story, think again! Yes, there is a jug of oil and a mighty warrior, but there is so much more and at the very centre of it all is a family – a Jewish family.

The Greek decrees encompassed every aspect of Jewish life, threatening to choke both the spiritual and physical life out of the people of Judea. Circumcisions were outlawed and people were ordered to remove their front doors allowing anyone to wander into their homes. Livestock were defiled and rendered non-kosher. The study of Torah and sacrifices to God were prohibited. On the eves of Jewish weddings, young brides were taken first to the local Greek governor to do as he pleased. It is as his daughter was about to be abused in this way, that we meet Matityahu – a priest whose job was to look after the people and help them sacrifice and worship to God.



In an act of revenge and survival, he kills the general and his soldiers. From that point forward, he will not be stopped until the Greek Seleucid overlord left his people alone. Thus start the Maccabean Wars. All five of Matityahu's sons join him in guerrilla warfare. With their scavenger-type tactics and better knowledge of the land, the Maccabees gain small victory after small victory. Matityahu loses his life just a year into the war and his sons carry on the battle with Judah taking the lead. He fights and redeems the people and with each village and town they release from Greek hands, they bring back with them the worship of God. It is in the third year of the battle that the Maccabees successfully release Jerusalem from Greek hands, although the Hellenised Jews take refuge in the Antonia Fortress that becomes their stronghold until the destruction of the Temple some one hundred years later.

But here's where the well-known story of a ransacked temple, a jug of oil that lasted eight days and a miracle of light plays out. Interestingly, this story, which is the focus of our modern day celebrations, isn't actually mentioned by the contemporary sources of the time. In fact, the lights aren't mentioned until the time of the Talmud (around the 6th century) and the Book of Maccabees tells us that there was no menorah left in the Temple to light. The Maccabees had to make do with seven metal rods that they fashioned into a haphazard menorah in order to get the service of the Temple back on track. But we hear of no miracle in either the Book of Maccabees or Josephus. That is not to say that it did not happen. Rather,

that it was not the time for us to make much of a miracle of a jug of oil. We needed to feel big and strong and victorious. Miracles abounded and the focus was on a small band of unruly untrained men defeating the superpower of the time and winning inch by inch.

The Maccabean Wars lasted thirty years, continuously pushing away the Greeks and restarting services in the Temple was considered a miracle in itself. In the Book of Maccabees, we hear of many battles and skirmishes and wins and losses. But without fail, it is the story of Judith that captivates me.

In the Book of Maccabees, we are introduced to Judith – a beautiful widow, the daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, and likely the great-granddaughter of Matityahu.

We read of a besieged Jerusalem on the brink of starvation and of a woman who, in her own right, felt a responsibility for the welfare of her people. Judith, together with her handmaiden, concocted a ruse in order to trap the General Holofernes. In a seduction scheme worthy of a Hollywood movie, Judith isolates Holofernes and fed him salty cheeses in vast amounts that require large amounts of wine in order to quench his growing thirst. After much wine and cheese, Holofernes passed out, and here is the gruesome part. Judith severed Holofernes' head from his body and after shoving his head in a sack, sneaked out of the Greek camp unseen. When the rest of the Greek army woke up from slumber, they found Holofernes' head on a pike at the entrance to the gates of Jerusalem. Unsurprisingly, the

Greek army, with their general dispatched in such a brutal manner, abandoned the siege and the Judeans of Jerusalem found yet another reprieve.

What about the lights and the candles that we still commemorate today? It goes without saying that the miracle of lights did happen, but a fledgling nation needed their confidence boosted and they needed their enemies to know what power they had at their disposal. That their God would help them through battle, and that they were strong and determined regardless of their size. Thus, we hear of Judah and Judith, of victories and defeats, of warriors and wars. That was what our pragmatic forbearers needed to know and needed to believe in themselves when backed up by God.

In its wisdom, the Talmud speaks not of military battles but of hope. Thus we have a small jug of oil that has enough power to fuel a whole week – perhaps a whole life time of darkness. It is important that the Talmud tells us that the light must be added to, and not diminished. Each night, we add another candle, to increase our hope, to increase our belief in ourselves and in our survival. This is what a people dispersed in a diaspora need – hope.

It is probably around this time that idea of fried food on Chanukah makes an appearance. That far back, it would not have been potatoes, but rather fried dough. It is only once potatoes became common in Europe (c. 1620s) that we started eating latkes and that they become a special Chanukah treat.

Once more, it is the pragmatism of our people that overwhelms me with emotion. The last time the Jews were victorious and free in their own land was the period of the Maccabees, and it does not occur again until the re-emergence of the “Yishuv” – the prelude to the modern State of Israel.

In the 1920s, the Histadrut (Israel’s workers union) was desperate to create more jobs for their members, they came up with the idea of preparing, transporting and selling doughnuts. All reserves were scarce: money, employment and food. As a way to offer more employment the country, they encouraged people to buy jam-filled doughnuts on Chanukah rather than make *levivot* (latkes – potato pancakes) at home. A jam-filled doughnut, in their estimation, was something you bought, thus creating new jobs and fuelling the economy. Companies began offering doughnuts not just on Chanukah but for several weeks before and after Chanukah. And thus the shift in Israeli culture from latkes to *sufganiyot* (doughnuts). Today, doughnuts are sold in every bakery and market in Israel throughout the Chanukah period.

In 2009, about 18 million *sufganiyot* were consumed in Israel, an average of 3 doughnuts per Israeli. And the IDF – Israel’s Defence Forces, the modern-day incarnation of the Maccabees of old, purchased half a million doughnuts that year!

Faced with challenge, we stand up to our enemies time and time again. With military force when necessary, but mostly with faith and hope. We are a people of pragmatism when needed, we are strong when needed and fierce when needed, but our legacy is one of light and hope at all times. ☆



GIBRALTAR



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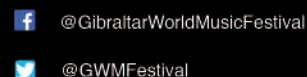
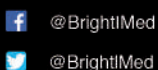
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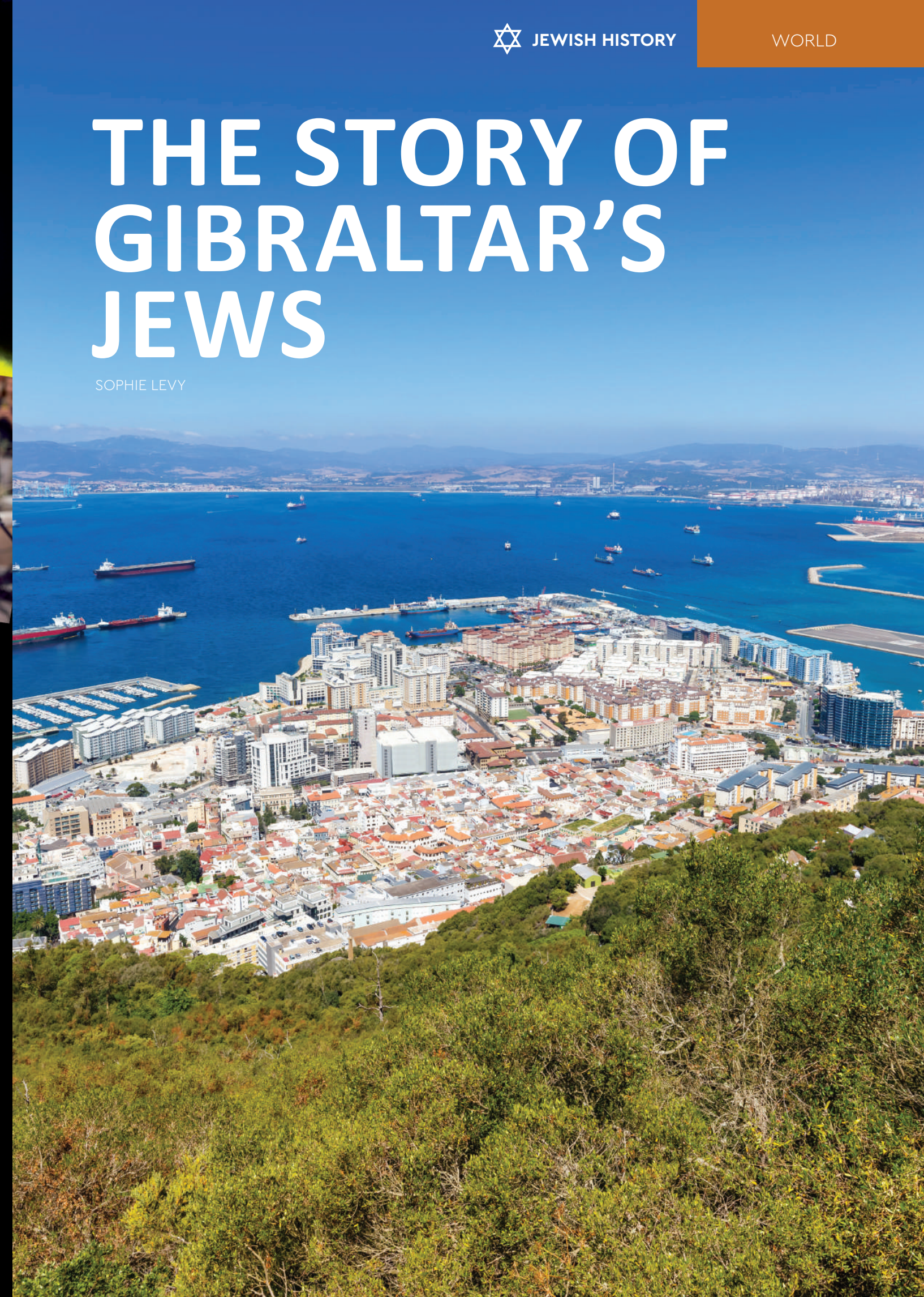


JEWISH HISTORY

WORLD

# THE STORY OF GIBRALTAR'S JEWS

SOPHIE LEVY





Sophie Levy was born and bred in Gibraltar. She studied in Michlala Seminary in Jerusalem before moving to London for her Midwifery degree at Middlesex University. After marrying and working in Gibraltar for several years, she joined Aish UK this summer. She currently lives in Birmingham together with her husband, R Doniel Levy, and daughter, Tamar. Together, they manage the Aish Birmingham Campus branch.

**E**very person has a story. I've lost count of the number of people I've met since my family moved to Birmingham. Many of the students are living away from home for the first time. When they come to my house, it becomes their home away from home. They share with me their background, their heritage, their story. Inevitably, this leads me to think about my own story.

*I grew up in the tiny community of Gibraltar and lived there a child, a teenager and a mother. But my family goes back, way back. Most families I've met in London had lived there for one, two or maybe three generations. My daughter is eleventh generation Gibraltarian.*

*My family's story, in many ways, is the story of the Jews in Gibraltar. The guardian of that story is the Registrar of the Jewish Community of Gibraltar, Mesod Belilo MBE. Managing partner of one of the country's leading civil engineering firm, birdwatcher enthusiast, photographer, JP, Choir Master, Parnass (Gabbah) of an active 294-year old synagogue...and my dad.*

**Sophie Levy:** How long have Jewish people lived in Gibraltar?

**Mesod Belilo:** Since 1704, when the British conquered it during the War of Spanish Succession. Spain ceded Gibraltar to Britain by treaty, but the Spanish insisted on including a clause that the British would never allow Jews to live in Gibraltar. This was 1713, by which time there were already 189 Jews living here.

**SL:** So did the British follow through with the Treaty's provision to ban Jews from Gibraltar?

**MB:** Well, in 1716, when relations between Britain and Spain had normalised – the border was open and supplies were coming in from Spain – Britain became less dependent on Morocco. The British invited the Bishop of Seville to make a pastoral visit to Gibraltar for the country's Catholics. He was walking with the British officers and observed "there must be a high society wedding here today – many people here are very well dressed for some kind of important occasion." "No wedding today", the British responded, "It's just a Saturday today and all the Jews wear their best clothes on Saturday."

So the Spanish got wise to the Jews being in Gibraltar, and lodged a formal protest to the British government regarding non-compliance with the Treaty. The British sent an order to the Governor of Gibraltar to expel the

Jews. He didn't want to because he was doing well out of them: everything that happened in Gibraltar needed a permit from the Governor. Permits cost money and the money went into the Governor's pocket. So he gathered all the Jews together and explained his problem. He forced them all to board a ship and had it sailed to the middle of the bay. He then went back to his office, wrote a letter telling his government that he had complied with the order and expelled every last Jew from Gibraltar. The next day he brought the ship back to Gibraltar and the Jews returned.

**SL:** Did it work?

**MB:** Not for long. Spain protested again at the highest levels until the Governor was forced to expel the Jews in 1718.

**SL:** Where did they go?

**MB:** Back to Morocco, where they'd come from. And that probably would have been the last Jewish presence in Gibraltar were



in not for Britain and Spain being back at war three years later. At that point, Spain closed the frontier and the British had to go to Morocco for their supplies. The King of Morocco insisted on negotiating a commercial treaty with Great Britain, giving each other mutual rights. It contradicted the Treaty of Utrecht signed with Spain, but they were currently an enemy so that wasn't a problem. Once they signed the treaty with Morocco in 1721, the Jews came back.

**SL:** What was the community like then?

**MB:** The Jews came back and slowly built up their numbers. Gibraltar became a very important naval base, port, an entrepôt for Britain's assets in Middle East, Far East and Africa, attracting Jewish traders to Gibraltar for the opportunities in commerce it presented.

**SL:** Where did the first Jews come from?

**MB:** Mostly from Tétouan, in the north of Morocco. These were descendants of Jews who'd been expelled from Spain 200 years earlier. Most of the older Jewish families in Gibraltar, around 70%, can trace their presence here to the early 1700's.

**SL:** When was the first synagogue built?

**MB:** In 1723, just two years after the Treaty, the Governor offered a piece of waste ground to the Jews to build a synagogue. It was inaugurated in 1724, the first synagogue to operate in the entire Iberian Peninsula since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. It was built and spiritually led by a Rabbi and wealthy Jewish merchant, Isaac Nieto. He gave it the same name as the synagogue where his father, David Nieto, was Rabbi, which many people know as "Bevis Marks" but is officially called Sha'ar HaShamayim, meaning "The Gate of Heaven".

*I think about the Synagogue which has been part of my family for so long. My wedding was there, all my siblings got married there, my parents got married there, and my grandparents got married there. I wonder where it all began.*

**SL:** So when did our family move to Gibraltar?

**MB:** In the 1720's.

**SL:** And our family's been there ever since?

**MB:** Ever since, yes. I'm ninth and you are a tenth generation Gibraltarian Jew.

*My mind goes to my daughter, Tamar. Eleventh generation, born in Gibraltar in the hospital in which I worked as a midwife. I think about the birth rate and numbers.*

**SL:** What is the size of the Jewish community of Gibraltar today?



**MB:** It's over 800 in a population of 32,000 which makes it over 2.5%. In fact, a few years ago, Pew Research Center gave Gibraltar the honour of being the country with the highest Jewish population per capita outside Israel, outranking America. Still, we're far from peak numbers: an 1834 census put the civilian population of Gibraltar at 9,000. 1,900 were Jews – almost 1 in 3!

**SL:** Fair enough, but it's growing. There were 90 children in the Jewish primary school when I was there; today it's 140. That's massive. Most small Jewish communities around the world are shrinking, but Gibraltar's population is not only surviving but thriving. What's Gibraltar's secret?

**MB:** First of all, it's a small place with a real sense of community. You can live a full Jewish life in Gibraltar: a men's and women's mikveh, Jewish home, Jewish primary school, two high schools, a milky and meaty restaurant, bakery, kollel, two cemeteries, three kosher shops and four synagogues.

It's got a very successful economy which attracts young Gibraltarians to live here. Before WW2, the majority of Jews were in commerce. Although you still see many Jewish shops on Main Street, most Jews today are in the professions: lawyers, accountants, architects, engineers, pharmacists, doctors, dentists etc.

The Jewish community has also contributed considerably to politics in Gibraltar and played a key role in its development. Sir Joshua Hassan led Gibraltar politically for 40 years and is regarded by historians as the father and architect of modern Gibraltar.

**SL:** As an historian, what's your favourite story about Gibraltar's Jewish community?

**MB:** You've probably heard of gunboat diplomacy, which the British invented. That came about as a result of a Gibraltarian Jew. David Pacifico was a very rich merchant, trading and selling goods all over the Mediterranean. He had gone to Greece to get paid for all the good he'd sold to them and they refused to pay him. He went to the British ambassador in Athens and explained his problem. The British ambassador reported

back to the Government in London, at the time under Prime Minister Lord Palmerston.

Lord Palmerston didn't waste any time. He sent the Royal Navy to Greece with an ultimatum that they either pay their dues to David Pacifico within 24 hours or they would bomb Athens. Of course, David Pacifico got paid. And that was the start of what was termed "gunboat diplomacy".





**SL:** Do you have time for one more story?

**MB:** I have a personal one, yes. Morocco had been a French Protectorate for a number of years, recovering its independence in 1955. At the time, the American Joint were very active in Morocco, convincing the Jews of Morocco to move to Israel. They were very successful with the uneducated Jews in the villages and mountains, less so with the educated, wealthy Jews of the cities. So these Jews, who spoke only Arabic, had no papers or documents. At the time, there was no direct connection between Morocco and Israel, so they set up a transit camp in in Gibraltar.

I remember that camp as a child. The Jews were brought here, they had medical inspections waiting for a ship to take them to Israel, and Gibraltar became very important in the passage of the Jews from Morocco to Israel. 80,000 passed through Gibraltar's transit camp in 1950's. One family was a young couple

who had left Morocco with a baby. Unfortunately, the mother died on the ship and she was buried in Gibraltar when the family arrived. The father moved to Israel with the baby but the wife's parents had lost relationship and contact with their son in law.

The parents knew that their daughter had died but didn't know where. For years, they had been looking for where she was buried. They eventually approached the Prime Minister's Office in Israel. Yitzchak Rabin, the PM at the time, wrote to communities around the Mediterranean to see if this lady had died and been buried there. I was given the letter by Mr Benaim senior, who was the Israeli Consul at the time. I went to the cemetery and started looking for her grave. I was attracted to a tombstone which was completely covered with lichen, a moss which grows on stone if it's not been cleaned. I started to clear it and lo and behold, it was the one I was looking for.

We wrote back to the Prime Minister's Office, who told the

mother of the lady who had died. She organised for the remains to be exhumed and taken to be buried in Israel.

I have a letter from the Yitzchak Rabin's private secretary thanking me personally on behalf of the Prime Minister, for having given peace of mind to this lady, who was finally able to lay her daughter to rest in Israel.

**SL:** Thank you so much for your time.

**MB:** It's a pleasure. Good luck with everything in Birmingham! And make sure you give a kiss to my granddaughter.

*I think about the 300 year old story of Jewish Gibraltar. My father's always been a great storyteller. Perhaps that's part of what attracted me to work for Aish? Might I want to do my bit to ensure the Jewish story goes on, to play my part in ensuring that eleven generations on they are still telling the Jewish story, my story - our story? ☆*

# Five Top Tips for Female Entrepreneurs

## Karen Harris



Karen joined intu in Dec 2012 as part of the acquisition of her online shopping centre, StyleMeTV. Karen set up intuDigital and, together with her new in house team, developed a single digital shopping platform for all 14 intu shopping centres where visitors can shop in centre, online and on the go.

Previously she was founder of Geronimo PR (awarded The UK's Number 1 Consumer PR Agency in 2005 & 2006 by PR Week and sold to Tribal Group plc August 2003) and non-executive Chairman of TVC Group (an integrated marketing agency specialising in broadcast & digital, sold to the Economist in March 2012).

In addition to her experience in digital media, broadcast and technology, Karen was a trustee of UJIA for 9 years and is currently a trustee of Jewish Futures Trust (JFT).

I was 25 and pregnant having palpitations about how I was going to tell my 'then' male boss that I wanted to 'work from home' after the baby was born. Of course I dumbed the whole thing down with 'I'll be able to start working pretty much straight away' and 'babies sleep most of the time anyway'. He agreed to the first few months and then we'd see how it was going...and that was it - the start of my future life. Mum, entrepreneur, life juggler.

Working hard was ingrained in my DNA. My mother was an Egyptian refugee who was brought up by Norwood after arriving in the UK at the tender age of five. After marrying my father at 19, they started selling men's clothing. Mum was the pattern cutter and machinist and Dad was chief salesman. From extremely humble beginnings, they grew their business to a large-scale factory in Barnsley. My siblings and I lived and breathed 'the business' as our parents spent most nights 'talking shop'.

My first business became the UK's fastest growing PR agency for two consecutive years and, by year three, I sold it to a public company. Two digital and technology business sales followed, the last one to intu plc, the largest owner of shopping centres in the UK, where I have stayed on as Managing Director of E-commerce, Innovation & Technology.

Whilst it has only taken a short time to write all this down the journey behind these few sentences was immense. There were most definitely highs and lows and lots of all nighters, but I learnt so many invaluable lessons along the way, not only about how to run a successful business, but also about what's important in life.

**"Working hard was engrained in my DNA. My mother was an Egyptian refugee who was brought up by Norwood after arriving in the UK at the tender age of five"**

# Here are my **5 Top Tips** for Female Entrepreneurs



## **1** Compartmentalise your life to ensure balance

Having the ability to multi-task and juggle so many different aspects of your life is critical for wellbeing. As women, daughters, wives and mothers, we are challenged across so many areas. Learning to develop the 'off switch' to light up one aspect of your life at a time is key. Perspective and balance is everything. For our family, Shabbat was the perfect time to recharge and re-connect.

## **2** Surround yourself with people more talented than you

The secret to most entrepreneurs' success is simple – the ability to hire people better than yourself. It will never cost you 'too much' to upscale and surround yourself with more talent. Successful businesses need expertise, diversity and those who can challenge ideas.

## **3** Visualise what great looks like

Not only articulate what success looks like but actually visualise it. Imagine how your customers will feel buying your product or using your service. Why and how they'll recommend you. What will get them excited

and what will the media say about it? Once you have that clear in your mind, work backwards and develop your roadmap to this vision.

## **4** Recognise that the best companies know how to pivot

Not everything will turn out as expected, in fact, most things won't. Successful entrepreneurs are just as able to recognise what's not working as well as what is. If it's still not delivering with adjustment then it may be time to let it go and pivot completely. So many successful businesses started off as one thing and only expanded when they became something else. Instagram is a classic story beginning as an app called Burbn before scrapping it to focus on the photo-sharing element.

## **5** Love your customers not your product

Know everything about your customers. What they like, watch, listen to and how and when they buy. If you see your audience as your 'business family' you'll make sure your brand brings them value and joy. Be prepared to completely change your product or offer if need be. There's no room for ego in successful businesses. Great products and services make people's lives better.



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# A land of spiritualism, saris, smells, stunning sights, and that's just scratching the surface.

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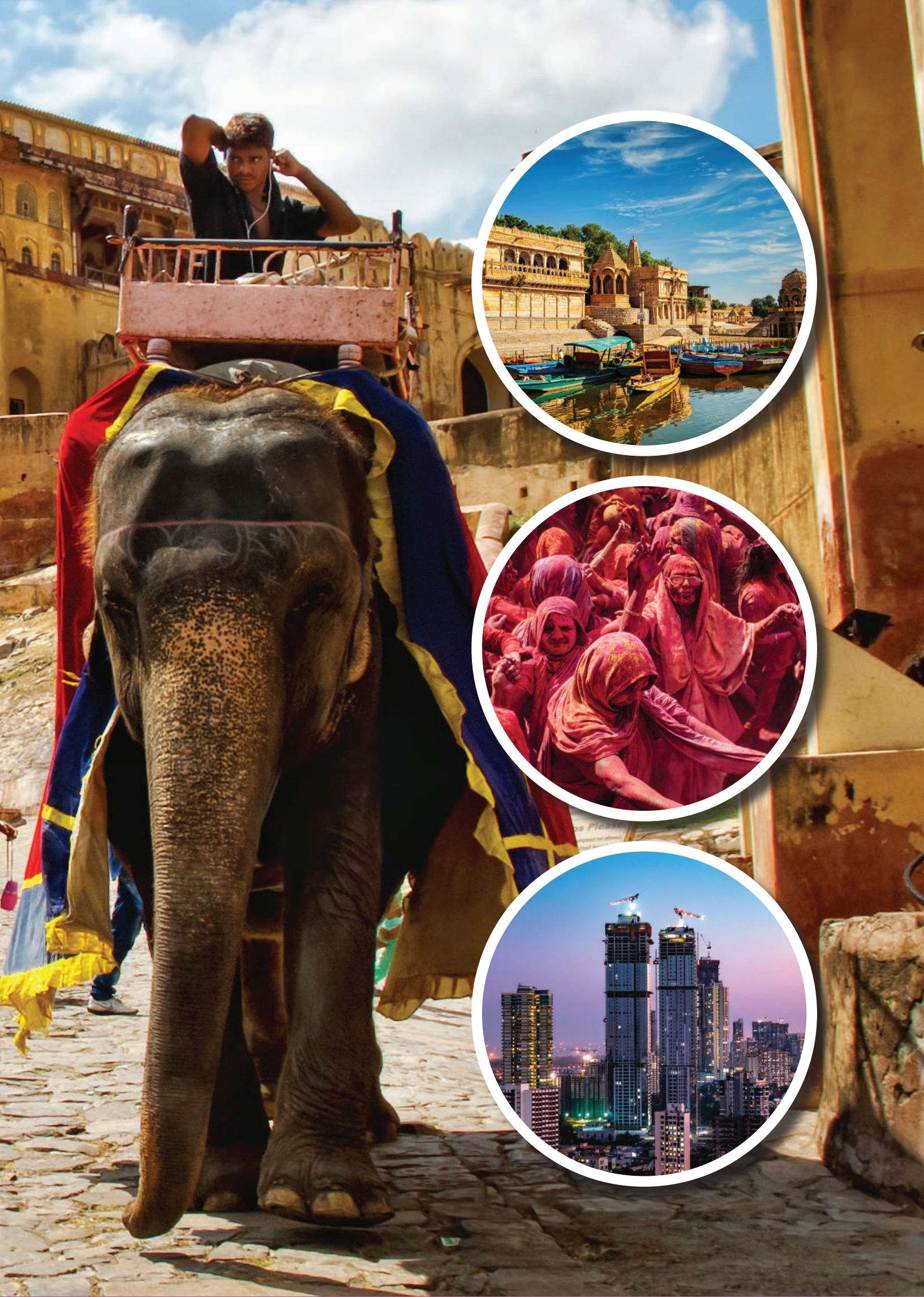
India's energy is like no other place on earth. The second most populous place in the world is at once chaotic and loud, yet peaceful and calming; this diversity makes it such an exciting and adventurous place to experience. Today, cities such as Delhi and Mumbai are home not only to beautiful temples and ancient tombs, but also glitzy shopping malls and skyscrapers as India has evolved into one of the world's fastest growing economies. From Delhi, journey to Agra to see the marvelous Taj Mahal, one of the greatest architectural masterpieces in the world, before continuing to Rajasthan, 'Land of Kings'. The region here is brimming with majestic palaces and forts, and surrounded by outstanding natural beauty, from the serene lakes of Udaipur to the Aravalli Range, one of the world's oldest mountain ranges. Further north still are the Himalayan peaks, with excellent hikes or simply take in the views from a luxury lodge. Spice up your life in Kerala; this south western Indian state is the birthplace of Ayurveda 'Science of life', an ancient system of natural healing encompassing mind, body and soul. Spices are pivotal to the process, and are in abundance in the Periyar region, 1,000 meters above sea-level. Southern India can seem a world apart from the rest of country; journey here to unwind amongst the more traditional, slower pace of life.

India's travelling temptations have only increased over the past decade. Plenty of Jewish tourists are lured to India not only to experience its sensual, colourful, traditions and cultures, but

to discover the rich Jewish history that India holds, and for many, their personal Jewish heritage. India's Jewish community supposedly was at its largest in the 1940's, with approximately 20,000 Jews. After the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the community rapidly dwindled as many emigrated to the Holy Land. Today, Mumbai is home to most of the Jewish community; we can arrange guided tours of the beautiful Jewish sites as well as unique Shabbat experiences – any area of Jewish Indian heritage can be incorporated into your bespoke Indian journey. Shabbats too can be facilitated in any region; enjoy Friday night dinner at a bungalow on the beach or find spirituality on the brink of the desert. We can arrange Kosher facilities and food for you in places you probably didn't think possible, so you can travel around India with no worries.

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Some of my favourite memories growing up are of watching the menorah glow from the window sills of so many homes in my neighbourhood in the suburbs of New York. I can't tell you why but there was something about the golden glow of those candles being reflected onto the soft snow of the New York winter which still makes my heart skip a beat.

There is something decidedly public about the lighting of the menorah. Whether that means lighting in your window, outside your front door like myself or even dispelling the darkness with a giant steel menorah in the centre of Central London

lit by a specific Kohen, often the High Priest himself, in an area which was only seen by a select few, the Kohanim. Yet today our light's shine through the public thoroughfares hoping for as many as possible to see it.

What happened? What changed to necessitate something so private becoming so public?

The Jewish people living in Hellenistic Israel at the time of the Chanukah story had become accustomed to the idea that the world was predictable, with a fixed natural order. They had allowed this attitude to seep into their religious and moral behaviour as well becoming creatures of

Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter (1847 – 1905), known simply as the Sefat Emet (after his greatest rabbinical work), made a masterful play on the words of the Talmud we mentioned earlier. The Talmud states that one should light until people stop (tichleh) walking (regel) by in the street, and rereads it to teach us that the menorah is calling on us to eliminate (tichleh) acting out of habit (hergel) from our everyday lives.

But how do we change our habits? It's so difficult to change the way we've been doing things. What are we meant to do?

The Sefat Emet points out that while the Jews in the story of Chanukah had become somewhat less observant than their grandparents, in the aftermath of this incredible miracle and the inspiration it gave the nation, the sages didn't institute that the Jews begin observing all that they had neglected. Instead they instituted a new mitzvah, the Chanukah candles, hoping that something new would promote a more complete observance.

We can see from this that if change is what you want to achieve then don't rely on repairing your old habits, instead try to find a new path.

If our relationship with God has become stale through prayer then perhaps we could spend more time learning (Chanukah also reminds us of the word Chinuch, education) and if we no longer connect intellectually then perhaps it's time to just try and speak to Him.

Try something new. It will bring you back to something old and familiar. As it happened in those times may it happen in ours. ♪

“I can't tell you why but there was something about the golden glow of those candles being reflected onto the soft snow of the New York winter which still makes my heart skip a beat”

thanks to Chabad. This idea even expresses itself in the halachic requirement that our menorahs should be lit before people stop walking by in the street (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b).

The menorah in the Temple of ancient Jerusalem represented wisdom, and the daily replenishing of the oil attested to the constant application of knowledge being renewed. Yet thinking about the first menorah we notice that there was something private about its lighting. The beautiful golden candelabra of the Temple was

habit. Going through the motions without enthusiasm. Sometimes we feel this way ourselves, just going through the motions.

The Chanukah miracle changed all that. All of a sudden this lethargic community had seen that things weren't as set in stone as they had led themselves to believe. Change was in the air. The nature of something as simple as olive oil and its power of combustion was called into question. Miracles were now a part of life.

# Artificial Intelligence: When Autonomous Cars Harm People



RABBI MOSHE FRIEDMAN

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

**O**n the 18th of March 2018, Elaine Herzberg tragically made history as the first pedestrian to be killed by an autonomous vehicle. As she walked her bicycle into traffic, the self-driving Volvo XC90 being tested as an Uber taxi detected Elaine a full six seconds before colliding with her, but due to a glitch in the software the car fatally chose to ignore her. The incident had major repercussions in public policy, as it caused four major U.S. cities to halt their testing of Uber's self-driving prototypes.

Elsewhere, it had repercussions in the world of legal philosophy. Until now, there had never been such a high profile case of a death caused by Artificial Intelligence (AI). A few years earlier, a Japanese factory worker was summarily "exterminated" when a machine deemed him to be an interference with its functioning. However the world's fascination with the blockbuster app Uber, combined with the futuristic promise of the self-

driving car, appears to have created a perfect storm of media attention.

Amidst the outrage and the fear of imperfect technology (as well as the subsequent lawsuits filed by Herzberg's family), the question on everybody's mind was: when AI goes wrong, to what extent are humans to blame?

Ethical philosophers have tried to tackle the issue and have informed some of the public policy put in place in response to the incident. Their approaches have ranged from practical to borderline insane. John Kingston, a prominent researcher at the University of Brighton, has even proposed that perhaps the AI itself should be held liable for its own damage!

More quietly, a handful of Talmudists have begun to approach this question from a Jewish legal perspective, applying the same methodology to this case just as they have been doing to new issues that have arisen over the last two thousand years. Since the Torah was written as a document that

applies for all generations, then the answers to any future legal question that might arise can be derived from its principles.

The Talmud, based on verses found mostly in the portion of Exodus known as Mishpatim, classifies damages into four categories: those directly caused by human action; those caused by animals owned by a human; those from fire or other natural energy harnessed by a human; or damages from hazards such as potholes created by a human. They are distinguished by the level of direct involvement or negligence of the human, as well as the degree to which other forces caused the actual damage.

If we were able to classify AI according to one of these categories, then it would be possible to find a precedent. Let's take a closer look at each of these categories and see if and how they can be applied to autonomous vehicles.



## Direct Human Damage

The simplest way to assign blame is to classify it as a case of direct human damage. When a human being causes injury to a person through direct contact, such as kicking or punching, he or she is liable for full restitution. In Jewish law, that includes the value of the damage itself, plus compensation for medical bills, pain, loss of work, and even embarrassment. Taken one step further, the Torah also recognises that direct human damage extends to the use of an instrument (e.g. a knife or other weapon). Beyond that, even damage that occurs as a direct result of the person's force is equivalent to direct human damage. Throwing a dangerous object at another person falls into this category.

There are a few ways in which it is possible to view the Herzberg case from this perspective. One way is to say that the death can

be traced back to the owner of the vehicle who began the “force” of the car by turning on the ignition. Or in this case, where it appears that the accident occurred as a result of faulty software, perhaps the software writers (or car company itself) can be considered the first agents.

However there are issues facing this classification. First, under Jewish law, as we move beyond direct force to indirect force, it becomes much more difficult to find the human liable. When a human sets a chain reaction in motion, but the end result is several steps away from that initial force (for example, think of a Rube Goldberg machine), then he or she cannot be convicted in court.

Let's give an example. If I throw a rock at a wall and it ricochets and hits someone, even though there are two stages before it hits a person, I am still liable because it was still my direct energy

that caused the damage. However, if I throw a rock at a lever, which releases a catapult that hurls a rock at someone, then a new energy has been released, and therefore I am exempt from liability. Interestingly, though, I would still be considered liable in the “heavenly court” where divine justice is carried out beyond the letter of the law.

Similarly in the case of an autonomous car, it would be impossible to convict the owner, much less the software writers, for direct human damage. Moreover, it would be difficult to find them liable even in the “heavenly court” because an autonomous car is not as simple as a lever or other mechanical device. AI seems to have reached a point where something else is involved, not just human input. Let's see if we can take the comparison a step further.

## Damage Caused by an Animal

When a person owns an animal, he or she is liable for the damages that it causes, just as any person is responsible for safeguarding dangerous property. What makes the case of an animal slightly different is that the animal is alive and has a mind of its own.

While the law still maintains the owner's responsibility, it is nonetheless more lenient in the extent of liability since it was not the person's force, direct or indirect, that caused the damage. For example, when an otherwise tame animal acts out of character and violently hurts someone or something, then the owner is responsible for only half the damage (but when the animal repeats this behavior three times, then we classify the animal as being dangerous by nature and the owner is subsequently liable to pay in full).

Another example of leniency is when the owner properly safeguards his or her animal, but due to extenuating circumstances

the animal is released and causes damage. If a tornado comes and knocks down the gate surrounding my bull, then I am exempt from the damage caused from his rampage.

What if we were to compare the autonomous car to an animal? It certainly moves on its own and, according to some interpretations of AI, may even have a mind of its own. Would we be able to implicate either the owner or the car company? It is definitely a possibility, although we would have to ascertain whether hitting Elaine Herzberg is considered its nature or an uncharacteristic example of "violent behavior." Perhaps we would look at the offending car alone, or perhaps we would say that since every other autonomous car shares the same software then as long as there have been three cumulative incidents by this particular company it is considered characteristic of the car to damage.

The speculations here are endless, but we inevitably run into a major problem: it is not a simple matter to call AI "alive." Regardless of its "self-learning" capacities,

it is still merely an algorithm that was not born, cannot replenish its own energy supply, reproduce, or do other things that would constitute a living being.

But there is another category that may be a compromise, one that recognises damage caused by human initiative mixed without an outside force.

## Damage Caused by Fire

The Torah treats damage caused by fire as a unique category unto itself. Similar to the damages of an animal, the actual injury being caused is not a direct result of the human. But unlike an animal, fire is a natural, deterministic force that is not alive. As a result, while damages of fire carry slightly more leniencies than that of direct human force, they are still viewed more stringently than those of an animal.

The category of damages includes other natural forces as well. If I place a rock on top of a building on a very windy day,

**"AI seems to have reached a point where something else is involved, not just human input"**





and the wind inevitably blows the rock off and injures someone, I am liable as if I had lit a fire and it spread to cause injury.

One prominent halachic authority has suggested that this category is most applicable to autonomous cars. The first reason is that the algorithm of computer software appears more similar to a natural force of wind than it does to a living animal. The second is that even though wind is more or less algorithmic, it is still unpredictable. The software of an autonomous vehicle responds to many, many different stimuli, and its self-learning capabilities now may make it unpredictable to humans as well.

But if we carry the analogy all the way, we may be surprised with the results of our ruling. A person is only liable for fire and wind when it was carried by a very common wind. But where an uncommon wind came out of nowhere and carried off the stone, that person would be exempt in a human court (although still spiritually liable as explained above). What's more, if the wind were extremely uncommon, such as a freak tropical storm, then the

one who started the fire or placed the stone is completely absolved of all responsibility. The above cases are true no matter how precariously the stone was placed on the ledge.

We would now have to determine how "common" this software glitch is that injures pedestrians. So far this is the first recorded event of an autonomous car ever hurting a pedestrian where the car was at fault, after hundreds of thousands of driving hours clocked by similar cars. This may be considered not only an uncommon wind, but an extremely uncommon wind, in which case nobody is liable.


The result may not be so disappointing. Lawmakers have been careful in assigning too much responsibility to the car manufacturers for these types of accidents. Despite that these tragedies will occur, overall, the potential reduction in automobile accidents is tremendous if people switch entirely to autonomous cars. It would produce seriously negative incentives to the manufacturers if they had to foot the legal bill every time a defect occurred. Finding the balance between

accountability and recognising the overall circumstances will be a great challenge ahead.

## Conclusion

The classification of self-driving cars into the aforementioned categories provides us with a valuable framework for determining exactly how much humans are to blame when injury is partially man-made and partially machine-made. However, whether they can be compared exactly to the damage of fire is by no means definitive. As in many cases of Jewish law, there are dissenting opinions.

The purpose of this exercise was not to arrive at conclusions, but to train our minds to think critically. As in much of Talmudic discourse, it is equally important to understand how we arrived at the final legal ruling, as it is to know what the ruling is. It is exciting to anticipate that human advancement will inevitably pose new and fascinating questions, allowing the ancient Talmudic dialogue to remain as alive and vibrant today as it was two thousand years ago. 🕒



**"Regardless of its  
"self-learning"  
capacities, it is still  
merely an algorithm"**

# Cain & Abel: **A WARNING TO HUMANITY**



REBBETZIN SHALVIE FRIEDMAN



Shalvie Friedman grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa and received her BSc in Maths and Finance from the University of South Africa. She studied Jewish thought and textual analysis at the Nishmat Seminary in Jerusalem. Shalvie has taught in high schools in Johannesburg, as well as at many seminaries in Israel, both for newly observant students as well as those from religious backgrounds. She currently teaches Jewish Studies at Hasmonean Girls school as well as teaching for various parts of the Aish family all while raising her own family.

“Cain chooses a life of toil, of working with thistles and stubborn, dry earth to produce crops. He allows that curse to define his daily routine as he seeks to make his fortune.”

I remember reading a letter to God, written by a little boy. It read, “Dear God, I think that Cain and Abel wouldn’t kill each other so much if they each had their own bedrooms. It worked for me and my brother.”

This is a cute interpretation of a biblical narrative to be sure. But is the story of Cain and Abel, and its message, more than just a sibling squabble gone wrong?

Let’s set the scene. Two brothers, each of them farmers, pursue fulfilment in totally different ways. Cain is a farmer of the land and Abel is a shepherd.

It is not just any land that Cain chooses to farm. It is the very land cursed by God after Cain’s parents, Adam and Eve, ate from the forbidden fruit and are exiled from the Garden of

Eden. (The Oral Torah tells us that this curse was later lifted after the flood in the time of Noah.)

Abel, on the other hand, chooses to be a shepherd. A cursory glance at Jewish history will show that many of our past leaders were shepherds. Abraham, Rivka, the twelve sons of Jacob, Moses, King David and Rabbi Akiva to name a few.

It seems that the shepherding career has two main features. Firstly, in looking after living creatures that are vulnerable and weak, one can learn the sensitivity and selflessness required to truly connect and care for others. The Midrash is scattered with anecdotes about the kindness of the biblical shepherds and how the way they treated their flock set them apart from the people around them.

The second is that, unlike the toil of the land, taking care of sheep presents many pleasant hours, to sit and ponder and pursue the sweetness of intellectual and spiritual endeavors, while the sheep pasture. The Midrash again tells us how Abraham, Moses and Rabbi Akiva all discovered God whilst in the fields with their flocks.

The contrast of these two features portrays the brothers in question as two prototypical stereotypes of humankind. And, it would seem, that their names symbolise this antithesis as well.

Cain comes from the Hebrew word ‘Koneh’ which means to acquire. He sees his purpose in the world as a pursuit of physical gain at the cost of everything, even a relationship with God. Even at the expense of the life of his brother.



“ His obsession with material success drives him to insanity and he ends his brother’s life in a moment of wild hatred and anger ”

Abel, on the other hand, is “Hevel” in Hebrew, meaning “nothingness” or “folly”. King Solomon in the opening words of Ecclesiastes bemoans the pointlessness of material pleasure with that same word, “Hevel”. In our story, Abel sees that the real benefits in life are those that are beyond the physical. He sees that he can gain much more if he avoids the cursed land and invests in a career that engages an elevated part of his persona.

That explains why, when each brother gives an offering to God, Cain gives the very worst of his crop, choosing to keep the best for himself. He does not want to sacrifice his personal gains for God. Abel however, offers up the choicest of his animals. He sees his sacrifice as an investment in something bigger: a relationship.

And what is the final outcome? Cain is totally consumed by jealousy that his brother’s offering is accepted over his. He perceives this as an indication that God sees Abel to be the more successful of the two. His obsession with material success drives him to insanity and he ends his brother’s life in a moment of wild hatred and anger.

In response, God curses Cain. He is to become “a wanderer and vagabond”. In this pivotal initial moment at the dawn of humankind, a very clear message is heard.

If one sees wealth as the primal reason to live, their inheritance will be loneliness. God has placed humankind in a beautiful and colourful world, and equipped us with skills and interests. We are to use those skills to develop ourselves and to give love to the people around us. We are urged to be like Abel; to notice the “hevel” nonsense of materialism and learn to transcend it. 📖



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A person is seen from the waist down, carrying a large stack of gift boxes and shopping bags. The stack consists of several boxes of different sizes and colors, including white, gold, and floral patterns. The person is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. They are walking down a staircase with glass railings. The background is blurred, showing other people and the interior of a shopping mall.

# Is Materialism an Impediment to Spirituality?

RABBI JOHNNY SOLOMON



Rabbi Johnny Solomon is a British-born Jewish educator who was previously the Head of Judaic Studies at Immanuel College and Hasmonean Girls' school. He now lives in Israel where he teaches Tanach, Halacha & Jewish Thought at Machon Ma'ayan & Midreshet Torat Chessed, while also working as an independent Jewish Education Consultant.

According to its common usage, 'materialism' describes an attitude that values wealth and material possessions above all other considerations, while 'spirituality' is perhaps best described by Rabbi Dr Norman Lamm as 'the focussing of the mind and thoughts on the transcendent' (Rabbi Norman Lamm, *The Shema: Spirituality and Law in Judaism* p. 6). Given this, if our focus on wealth and material possessions overshadow our focus of the mind on the transcendent, materialism must naturally be an impediment to spirituality. As our great Sages taught, 'the more possessions, the more worry' (Ethics of the Fathers 2:8), meaning the more we focus on our possessions, and the more we focus our attention on possessing, the more spiritually disconnected we become.

Significantly, one of the last messages taught to the Jewish people by Moses just before he died concerned the impact that materialism and 'affluenza' can have on our spiritual focus which can confuse our priorities and misdirect us from the truth of the Torah (see Deuteronomy 32:15 as explained by Sforno). As Yossi Prager once wrote in an essay titled 'Affluenza and its Complications': 'Just as influenza can kill, "affluenza" can spiritually deaden, focussing people on their own needs and wants, increasing their sense of entitlement, and reducing feelings of gratitude or amazement arising from the gifts we have been given'.

But does all of this mean that the act of possessing must automatically impede spirituality? According to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, both are in fact possible, and finding the right balance is part of our Jewish mission: 'God wanted Israel to ascend the double pinnacle

of earthly achievement: the peak of material prosperity and the peak of spiritual and moral perfection', and this means that 'the highest degree of morality is entirely compatible with the greatest measure of earthly happiness'. Still, the reason why Moses made these remarks was because there were times when the Jewish people 'failed to utilize its abundance and surplus [material wealth] for increased spiritual and moral performance', and 'it allowed itself to be overwhelmed by wealth and prosperity, and allowed its better, spiritual and moral self to be drowned in them' (Hirsch commentary to Deuteronomy 32:15). What we learn from here is that while materialism – at least in its purest sense – is an impediment to spirituality, material comfort and wealth need not be. The question is really which of these do we value more – the material or the spiritual, the transient or the transcendent?

In a wonderful article titled 'Being Truly Jewish in a Society of Plenty', Rabbi Berel Wein shares a powerful Midrashic insight which helps us gain a better understanding of which we value more:

'The Midrash describes the generation of the Tower of Babel in ways that bear some resemblance to ours. They were concerned with things, but not with people. If a brick fell from the tower and was smashed, they mourned the loss; but if a human being fell – that was all part of the risk associated with technological progress. Construction projects, space-shuttle programs, new highway techniques, all are achieved at the cost of the quality of human life. Society generally is more interested in things – furniture, objets d'art, foreign sports cars – than in people, especially people who are different from the norm. This attitude is quite prevalent in Jewish America, as well. Materialism

and conspicuous consumption of goods destroy the fabric of a life consistent with Torah values and halachic principles. Many times, too much becomes too little and more is definitely less. The test of affluence is a difficult one to pass'.

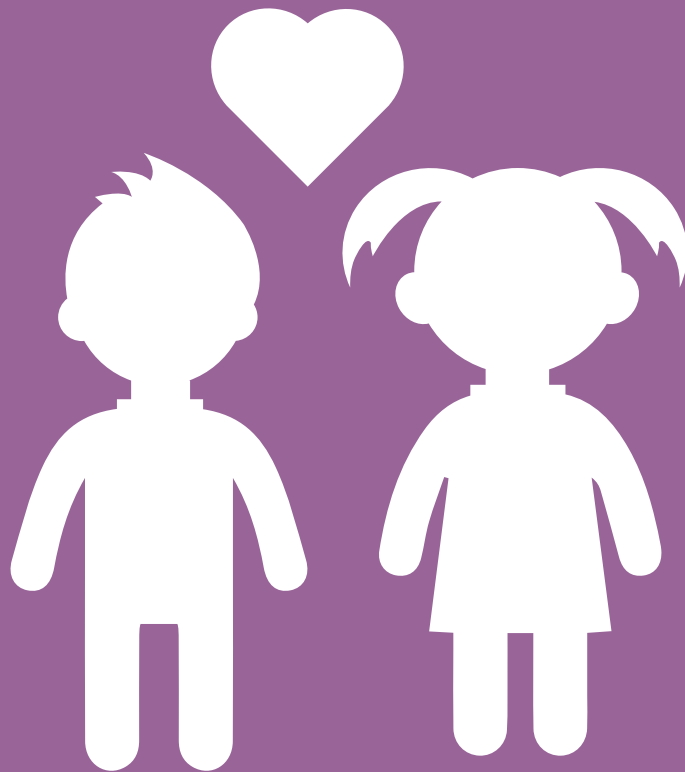
So this is the ultimate test – can we cope with abundance? Can we survive affluenza? Or as Rabbi Yissocher Frand once remarked, 'Are we consumers or are we being consumed?' (Rabbi Yissocher Frand in *Print* p. 191). But how can we strike the right balance in a world where, for the most part, materialism overshadows spirituality? I think that the answer to this question is found in one of our better-known blessings which, sadly, is recited far too infrequently in our modern world.

We are taught that when we build a new house or buy new items we should recite the Shehecheyanu blessing as 'an expression of praise and thanks of the Holy One, blessed be He' (Rambam, *Hilchot Brachot* 10:1) and to make sure that 'we always remember our creator' (*ibid.* 1:3).

In my opinion this is an ingenious blessing because at a time when we are most involved in the act of procuring and possessing material goods, the Shehecheyanu blessing reminds us of God and how everything in life is really a gift from God.

Moreover, by reciting the Shehecheyanu blessing having just purchased an item we also convey a profound idea which is that while we often think of prayer as being limited to synagogues and homes, God should be no less prominent in our thoughts when we are on the high street and in shopping centres because, ultimately, these are the places where our focus on the transcendent can be most distracted by the transient. 🕯

# THE BIG QUESTION



**DESIGNER BABIES – CAN YOU CHOOSE  
THE GENDER OF YOUR CHILD?**

BEN THWAITES



BEN THWAITES

Ben read law at UCL before working at Herbert Smith until 2012. He spent four years in higher Jewish learning in Israel and has been involved in community and leadership projects, such as UCL JSoc President, Ner Yisrael Youth Director, Har Etzion British Alumni Programmes, Co-ordinator and informal educator for Immanuel College and Hasmonean. In his spare time Ben continues to practice law and is the General Counsel for a number of Jewish charities, as well as running a family investment fund. He lives in Israel with his wife Aviva and their three children but regularly commutes to the UK.

In 2015 celebrity couple Kim Kardashian and Kanye West made headlines when it was rumoured that whilst using an IVF procedure to have their second child they opted to use preimplantation genetic screening (PGS) to ensure they gave birth to a boy. The rumours were ultimately denied but the science is real and it sets the stage for the modern question of whether parents should be allowed to choose the gender of their baby.

The medical profession, and governments worldwide are grappling with how to address this scientific development, and of course it is intriguing to see what Jewish sources have to say on the matter.

The process of determining Jewish law, or halacha, in novel scenarios is a fascinating one and goes to the heart of how halacha operates. Before delving into the specifics of this matter lets briefly explore the methodology of determining Jewish law for new developments that have not been addressed before.

The Talmud, supporting commentaries and codes of Jewish law are vast, dealing with every area of life including what we eat, how we do business, how we spend our time, how we procreate and more. It is no surprise, however, that the historic literature does not specifically address newly developed medical practices. So what happens in these scenarios – how do Jews know what to do?

It is worthwhile noting that we see no precedent for hiding under the covers or running away. In every generation, scholars of Jewish texts have grappled with establishing what the Torah's views are on modern day questions. The word for Jewish law itself, halacha, is derived from the root halach, meaning 'to go' or 'to move', implying that Jewish law is not static but something which can change and adjust. On a deeper analysis it would appear that not only is this quest a practical matter but it is a profound aspect of Jewish faith. We are implored to look towards the Divine communication, via the Torah and its laws, and work alongside, and informed by, these precedents. We are encouraged to partner with God, to explore, analyse and tease out what the applications are for modern day issues. This exercise is both daring and dangerous, and hence requires total mastery of Jewish sources combined with the humility to ensure that the law is explored with the highest level of objectivity possible.

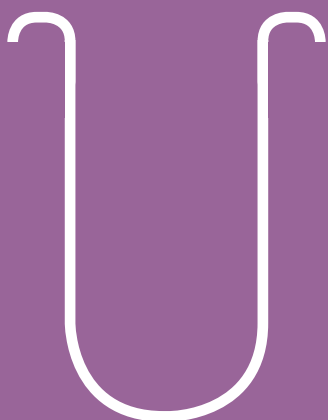
Focussing on the issue at hand, as with any exploration in Jewish law, first one needs to understand the facts. Whilst for generations there have been suggested practices which can influence the gender of one's child, such as diet and how and when intercourse is performed, these are at best effective in a very minor way and raise no issues in the eyes of Jewish law.

What we are addressing here is the procedure known as PGS, where put simply, fertilised eggs are examined to identify the gender and subsequently,

the desired genetic material is inserted into the mother and the undesired material is discarded or at least frozen for a later date.

PGS is a process within IVF so let's start there. IVF treatment, used to assist with fertility, has been widely accepted in the eyes of Jewish law since its inception and the reasoning is clear. There is an imperative to have children and where a couple are struggling to do so, this is seen as an ideal way forward<sup>i</sup>. Although there are issues with how the sperm is gathered (outside of intercourse between man and wife) and that some genetic material is wasted, these concerns are overridden by the significance of fulfilling the mitzvah (commandment) to have children. It is interesting to note that other religions take differing standpoints and the mainstream Catholic position views the fertilised eggs as a full life form and therefore it cannot be discarded.

Using IVF together with PGS is more subtle however as motivations become very relevant in the suitability of the exercise. To date, Jewish authorities have grappled with different types of scenarios and concluded in different ways.



1

**Health reasons** – for example if there is a dangerous genetic disease passed on to only one gender but not the other. The consensus here is that it is advisable to use PGS as this is helping improve life<sup>ii</sup>.

2

**To fulfil the mitzvah of procreation** – whilst it is a topic in its own right, the mainstream conclusion, based on the Talmud, is that a couple should try and have at least one boy and girl<sup>iii</sup>. Whilst many Jewish scholars have confirmed this is also an acceptable use of PGS, some have differed in their conclusion on the basis that this mitzvah is to try to achieve this outcome without 'Playing God' so to speak.

3

**Emotional reasons** – a fascinating case was that of a male Cohen who was sterile and he and his wife wished to use donor sperm. They wanted to only have girls to avoid any embarrassment for the father or son, when in synagogue and only the father would have been able to give the priestly blessing. This case was recognised as a legitimate reason for using PGS<sup>iv</sup>.

4

**Preference** – without any of the reasons above where a couple merely decide they want one gender over another. If they already have several children of the opposite gender then again this has been recognised as a legitimate scenario to override the concerns<sup>v</sup>. Where this is not the case however and it seems that a couple are keen to have their 'designer baby' then it would appear there is least room to be lenient and allow this course of action. Notably, in this case, many secular courts have taken the same view as there is a concern of moving towards eugenics and the slippery slope of what will be next – choosing looks or intelligence of one's child.

<sup>i</sup> As noted by many leading poskim, including R Moshe Feinstein, Igrot Moshe Even HaEzer Vol. I #18, and R Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Shulchan Shlomo Vol. III p. 99 (<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/515043/ivf-and-halacha.html>)


<sup>ii</sup> R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, found in R. Avraham-Sofer Avraham, Nishmat Avraham 4, 180.

<sup>iii</sup> R. Ovadia Yosef, oral communication to Richard V. Grazi, 27 November 2005. R. Moshe Erenreich and R. Yosef Carmel, Be-Mar'eh ha-Bazak 5:104, 206.

<sup>iv</sup> R. Aharon Lichtenstein, letter to Richard V. Grazi, 29 Sivan 5651

<sup>v</sup> See endnote <sup>iii</sup>

For further reading and sources see [http://traditionarchive.org/news/\\_pdfs/Sex%20Selection.pdf](http://traditionarchive.org/news/_pdfs/Sex%20Selection.pdf) and <https://www.yutorah.org/download.cfm?materialID=502191>



**"Jewish law  
is not static  
but something  
which can  
change and  
adjust"**

In summary, PGS is another incredible scientific development with great power for good. Like with many developments however it also comes with risks and dangers. The Torah and its modern application broaden our discussion on these issues and offer genuine insights and guidance in these complex areas.



# Catering for a Better World

## How a Silicon Valley Based Kosher Catering Company is Changing the Face of Prison Reform

ALEX SHANDROVSKY



Alex Shandrovsky founded L'chaim Foods as a response to a personal and communal need for quality, kosher cuisine.

Over the last four years, Alex has built L'chaim into the largest catering company, specifically focusing on spiritual allergens including kosher and hallal. His interest in creating a more inclusive community and experience as a Rabbi in prisons led him to the Delancey Street Foundation. After learning more about the challenge of re-entry, Alex committed to leveraging the resources of his catering company and the network of corporate clients he has developed to address this major social challenge. Alex's work in social entrepreneurship has been featured in Haaretz, San Francisco Chronicle and Newsweek.

**A** year ago I made a surprising hiring decision at my San Francisco based kosher catering company, L'chaim Foods. I began to hire employees who have spent an average of over 5 years in prison.

Sound unconventional? It sure is. But taking a chance with an overlooked talent pool has done wonders for my small

business which has raked in \$1 million in annual revenue since that hiring change.

On a recent trip to a prison, I had an opportunity to meet John. At around 55 years old, John has a beautifully trimmed moustache, a bright smile, and strong handshake. In a room of 100 men John stood out. He has been in prison for the past 38 years. At the age of 17, in a fit of rage, he

took another man's life, and that decision has defined him forever.

Seeking to learn about resilience from John, I wanted to understand how he has been able not only to keep going for the last 38 years but to become a mentor and leader for others. "Alex", he told me "do you know who the most dangerous person on the prison yard is?" Naively I replied, "maybe it is the gang leader, or



one of the armed guards.” He smiled, understanding how little I knew about “real” life, “no, the most feared person in prison is the one who has lost all hope. When a man loses hope in prison he is the most dangerous. In the last 38 years, I have not lost hope.”

Unlike John, over 90% of prisoners will serve their time, pay their debt to society, and once again become our neighbours.

Unfortunately within a few short years, 75% of those individuals return right back to prison.

Let’s take a moment and experience what is known as “re-entry” – when a prisoner re-joins society. Close your eyes for a moment and try to go back to the worst thing you have ever done. I know, it is uncomfortable but give yourself the opportunity to experience

this moment. Imagine that this moment, hidden in the deepest shadows of your past, is laid bare for all to see. Imagine looking at the eyes of a potential employer knowing that as you submit your application he knows that thing you wish you could forget. Would you feel shame? Would you even consider applying for that job?

This is the reality that those who have committed a crime in



America face on a daily basis. They are defined by society as the worst thing they have ever done. Every job application or housing contract has a box, requiring you to state if you have ever been incarcerated. While prison is a “box” that one can leave after serving ones time, the square on an application is a definition that stays with a person for the rest of their life.

Research shows that 90% of those who are re-arrested reported that they did not have a job at the time of their arrest. The consistent factor that changes the trajectory of the formerly incarcerated is employment.

L’chaim Foods, a company that I established five years ago and acted as its CEO before making Aliyah this summer, aims to change the face of re-entry through hope. We are a social venture that seeks to provide job and life skills through

the culinary arts to the re-entry population. We finance our mission through catering to some of Silicon Valley’s top companies including Google, Facebook and Airbnb.

Our vision is simple. Focus on the 6,000 people currently on parole in the San Francisco area, lead them through a six-month culinary arts training programme, and then have our employees recruited by Silicon Valley’s top restaurant groups and corporate kitchens.

I have many critics that believe a business should be focussed entirely on product and profit, that integrating a social mission into our bottom line confuses the customer and often results in a poorer quality product.

I would urge those critics to read this year’s investor letter by Larry Fink, the CEO of

Black Rock Capital, the world’s largest money management firm with over six trillion assets. In this letter he claims,

“Society is demanding that companies, both public and private, serve a social purpose. To prosper over time, every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society. Companies must benefit all of their stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the communities in which they operate.”

Driven by my Jewish values of tzedakah and tikkun olam, I believe that our social mission is at the core of our success. More and more, consumers are looking to be nourished beyond just what the product does but also what values it stands for.

**“At the age of 17, in a fit of rage, he took another man’s life, and that decision has defined him forever”**



## “Driven by my Jewish values of tzedakah and tikkun olam, I believe that our social mission is at the core of our success”



That being said, I have had my fair share of setbacks along the journey. Often, I have to remind myself how differently I look at the world. One of my employees, Sarah, who was convicted of credit card fraud gave me an insight into her world. At sixteen, she was introduced to the world of fraud by getting a fake ID from a family friend.

Attracted by the allure of escaping the poverty and family dysfunction she grew up in, she delved deeper. First she began to sell IDs but quickly moved to purchasing credit card information on the dark web. With a few pieces of equipment that were easily purchased on Amazon, Sarah began to create fake identities and credit cards that were associated with them. The amazing thing was when Sarah would go shopping at

a local Bloomingdales, every time she would slide the card it would be redirected to another account that was purchased from the dark web.

Over ten years, Sarah was able to live a very glamorous life, stealing over \$1,000,000 while only spending a few years in prison. Every time she would leave prison, she would try to apply herself in a legal profession but employers would turn her away again and again. Allured by “easy money” and doing what she was good at, Sarah would eventually go back to the dark web.

When Sarah arrived at L’chaim, she was released from jail the day before and was facing 5–10 years if she re-offended. One month after Sarah was fired, I saw a cheque for \$2,000 cashed with a fake signature and endorsement.

I can’t be sure if it was Sarah but all signs pointed to her. She was tasked with cleaning out my old papers and amongst those papers was an old cheque from a year ago. All she had to do was get a fake I.D. and cash the cheque.

I would continually ask myself how my employees could steal from me when I had given them opportunities that others would not. How could they take advantage of my kindness?

Charity is a fundamental principle that is in our blood but, on the other hand, as a business you cannot be taken advantage of. Only a work culture that holds employees accountable clearly sends a message to its community that your choices matter. In order to instill a culture of hope, one has to establish a culture of law and accountability.



# 5 Rules | for a Successful Social Venture



1

Top Quality Product. Being a good person is not an excuse for delivering a terrible product. Never allow your social mission to compromise the quality of your product. Great marketing with a poor product will make you go out of business faster.



2

Top Quality Product. I repeat, never allow yourself to compromise on a product thinking that the customer will forgive you because of your social mission. This will never work.



3

Make it a Business. Is this a hobby or a business? Never confuse the two. A business has to have a solid plan and exist on its own merit. Your product must be genuinely needed by consumers regardless of your social mission. In my case, I know that businesses feed their employees Japanese cuisine, it is a fact. My assumption is that if I can produce a high quality product at a similar price point with a social mission that resonates with people, we will win business.



4

Be Real. If you are not truly passionate about the company's social mission then your employees and community will feel it. People can tell if you are real.



5

Connect to Consumers. Communicate with your customers on the “why”, not the “how”. L’chaim is not a catering company. We aim to change the face of re-entry through a job and life skills programme that is financed by the great food we sell to business customers. This is a major difference, start with the why and end with the how.

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# Conquering Death:

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## Is Immortality Around the Corner?

RABBI DANIEL ROWE



**A**s he walked into the room to present at TEDx in Munich, everyone's attention was gripped. His long wizard-like beard looked better suited to a prophet of old than to a jeans clad Cambridge professor in 2018. Dr Aubrey de Grey came to discuss how we can win the fight against ageing.

Newspapers and magazines have characterised his work as "ending death", although people could still die in accidents or through illness. Interestingly, 90% of deaths in the western world occur either directly or indirectly through ageing. And if we factor in emerging technologies, from miniature robots patrolling the blood stream that could stay ahead of cancers and bacterial mutations to artificial limbs and restorable brains, then the possibility of genuinely achieving immortality becomes plausible.

This very thought leaves us with many questions. Can we really conquer ageing? What will happen to the world's population? Will we be forced to colonise other planets? Will we get bored after a thousand years of life? Ten thousand? Ten million? Would we be eternally cut off from life after death?

## The Elixir of Life

The search for the 'Elixir of Life' has been on the minds of humans from antiquity. It is referred to at least as far back as the 3rd century CE by an Egyptian alchemist known as Zosimos of Panopolis. Four hundred years earlier, the first emperor of unified China, Qin Shi Huang, sent his court sorcerer on two missions overseas to search for the elusive elixir. In 1643, British scientist Sir Thomas Browne

wrote about having attained a 'smattering' of the substance which, he claimed, was 'more than the perfect exaltation of gold' and had taught him much about the Divine.

By the 18th century, alchemy had been absorbed into modern chemistry and with it the search for miraculous elements all but ended.

In the 1960s, an American anatomist, Leonard Hayflick, discovered that cells in most species (including humans) can only divide a finite number of times. The older we get, the more cells stop replicating, and the weaker everything becomes, from muscles to brain processes.

De Grey was born in Cambridge in 1963, around the time of Hayflick's discoveries. He had no ambition to resurrect the search for the elixir. At Cambridge he studied computer science, became a software engineer, and worked in artificial intelligence. In 1995, after a breakthrough in gerontology (the science of ageing), he switched his focus to tackling ageing and never looked back.

## The End of Ageing

In 2003 de Grey co-founded the Methuselah Foundation, whose stated mission is 'to make 90 the new 50 by 2030'. In July 2005 he spoke at TED, a conference that brings together leading thinkers and cutting edge researchers, and his talk has been viewed over 3 million times online.

"Hands up anyone in the audience who is in favour of malaria?" de Grey asked. Silence. "Hands up anyone who's not sure if malaria is a good thing or a bad thing?" Again no hands



RABBI DANIEL ROWE

Rabbi Daniel Rowe holds a BA in philosophy from University College London where he was awarded the A.J. Ayer prize for philosophy, and an MPhil in philosophy from Birkbeck College. He was a tank driver in the 401st Armoured Brigade of the Israel Defence Forces and was awarded with an "Outstanding Soldier" award. Rabbi Rowe studied for almost a decade in Israel in various Talmudic institutes and is considered one of the most dynamic Jewish speakers in the UK, teaching in campuses, communities and schools across the country. He is Executive Director of Aish UK.



went up. “I’d like to put it to you that the main reason we think malaria is a bad thing is because of a characteristic of malaria that it shares with ageing” then clicking his power-point control, the screen comes up with the words ‘because it kills people!’

“The only difference is that ageing kills considerably more people than malaria!”

The trouble, de Grey explains, is that the underlying cause of death is not being dealt with. The human body stays healthy so long as cells continue to divide and reproduce. We need new cells as we grow, and then we need them to replace old or dead cells. But human cells are programmed to stop reproducing after a certain amount of times. That means that everything from our muscles to our memories to our immune system function less well the older we get. We are effectively programmed to die somewhere between 100 and 120 even if nothing else ever went wrong.

## Rejuvenation Biotechnology – Human Upgrading

There have been attempts to slow down the ageing and decaying process, but de Grey believes these are equally misguided. Decay is a part of nature. Any machine will suffer wear and tear. Any car part will sooner or later need replacing. But therein may lie the clue as how to solve the ageing problem.

De Grey points out that there are cars around today that were built nearly a hundred years ago which survived because of regular repair work done to replace ageing or worn

out parts. Such an approach, he believes, is precisely what can work for humans.

He is the Chief Science Officer of the SENS Research Foundation which is helping to fund research into anti-ageing therapies. Most significantly, he believes that there is a strong probability that several of these emerging technologies will be ready to start human trials between the years 2020 and 2025. And whilst scientific progress is not as easily predictable as many would believe, de Grey believes that it is more likely than not that the first human being to reach 1,000 years old has already been born.

## Are We Ready for the Next Technological Revolution?

The pace of technology and the social impact it is having is unquestionably frightening. A world without ageing may be exciting, but it also raises so many unknowns, yet many of these concerns may in fact be exaggerated.

Would we have people on pensions? No, they’d be healthy enough to work. Would they be bored forever? No, new technologies will come along and make life different to before. Will the world suffer from overpopulation? Perhaps we’ll have to choose between low birth rates and low death rates or high birth rates and high death rates. Perhaps we will spread to other parts of the universe. Perhaps technology will accommodate for more mouths to feed. De Grey argues these are issues that the beneficiaries will need

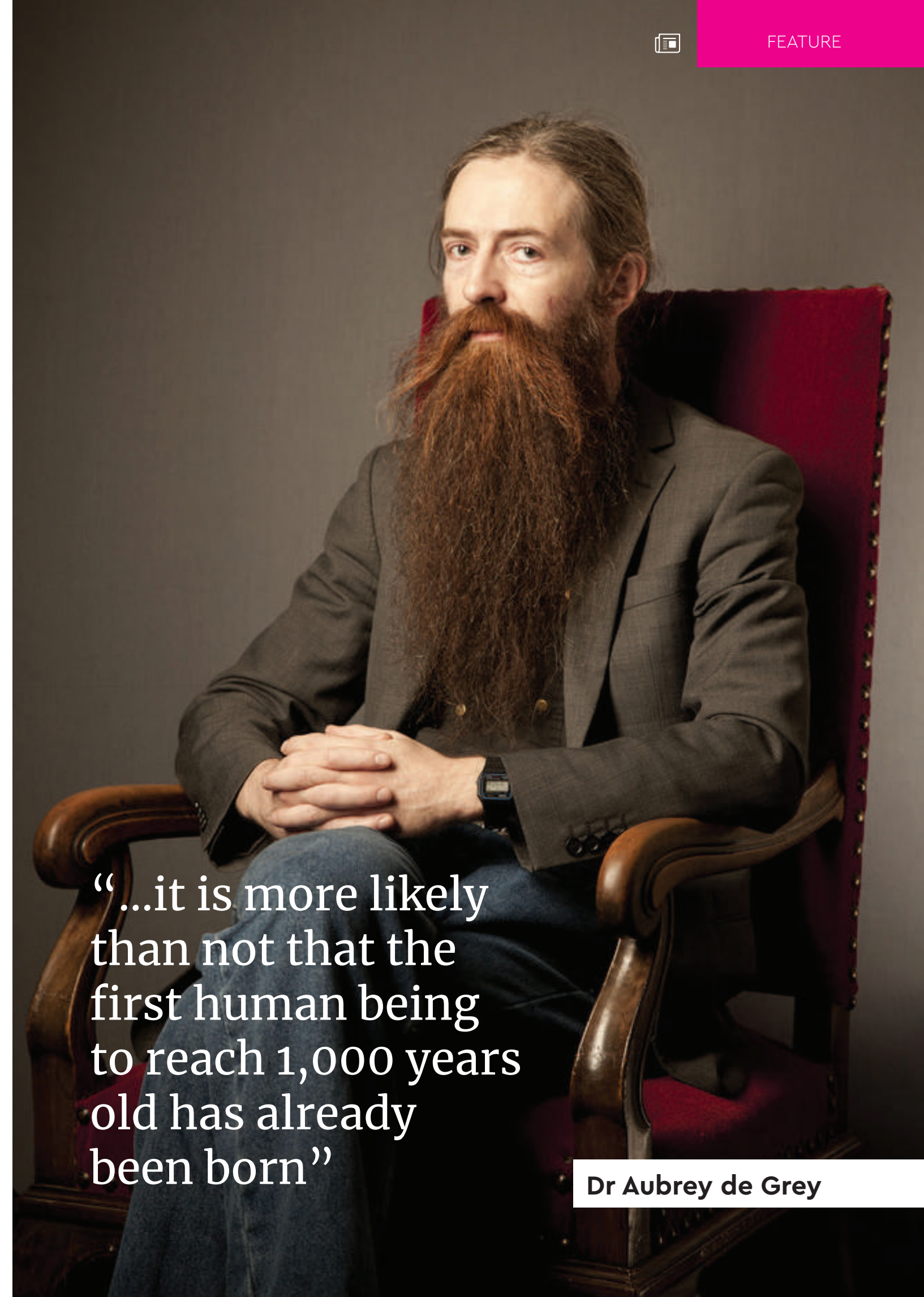
to deal with. But, it would be a ‘moral crime’ if we simply left everyone to suffer the pain of ageing and death instead.

In one sense, the end of ageing is just one of a whole set of futuristic developments that threaten to upend the way that things are now. Artificial intelligence, for instance, threatens to make humans redundant in most occupations eventually. The upgrading of virtual reality offers the possibility of spending as much or more of our time in virtual worlds as in real ones, and artificial limb technology offers the long term prospect of replacing much, or maybe even all, of our body parts with robotic limbs. From the colonisation of other planets to the augmentation of human brains, a science fiction world is now emerging at the horizon of technology, and is being worked on in laboratories across the world.

## The World to Come – The World of the Future

Many faiths speak of a ‘world to come’. Almost invariably it refers to a state of life after death and many Jewish sources do affirm a state of being after the body dies. But the ‘world to come’ refers not to an afterlife, but to the state of the world in its perfected future. Such a world will have, amongst other things, no death.

The Book of Genesis sees the world that Noah re-enters after the flood as one in which life has an upper limit of 120 years. That does not mean that the limit is inevitable, nor that it cannot be broken.

A portrait of Dr. Aubrey de Grey, a man with a very long, full brown beard and long hair, sitting in a dark wooden armchair with a red velvet backrest. He is wearing a grey blazer over a dark shirt and blue jeans. His hands are clasped in his lap. The background is a plain, light grey wall.

“...it is more likely than not that the first human being to reach 1,000 years old has already been born”

**Dr Aubrey de Grey**



Death is, like so many aspects of the current human condition, an aberration; but as this world enters its next phase perhaps death will go with it.

This raises a tantalising question: Could science and technology be the catalyst for the end of death?

## The Future is in the Past

“Most cultures have a golden age in the past,” says Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, “but the Jewish people’s golden age lies in the future.” The Torah starts from the Garden of Eden – which is really the ultimate or final state of humanity. In effect, it starts from the future. Adam is expelled into the world as we know it. Our job is to rebuild humanity to the point where earth becomes Eden once more.

That future world dominates much of the vision of the prophets and is referred to repeatedly by the Rabbis of Talmud and Midrash.

One school of thought claims the future to be full of miracles. Pig will be kosher, the wolf will lie down with the lamb, the world will be in a perpetual state of Shabbat, death will be gone and the dead will be resurrected. Other sources claim, at least for the Messianic era (which most see as preceding the world to come), there will be no miracles.

## A Technological Miracle

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, a prolific Jewish author with two degrees in physics, suggests that technology may be the tool that God uses to unleash the ‘miraculous’ world of the future.

When the Midrash says that pig will be kosher, that might once have been understood to be allegorical or miraculous. Today, lab produced meat could bring kosher pork chops into reality. When the prophets spoke of the wolf lying down with the lamb, of course the meaning included an allusion to world peace. Perhaps we can now imagine the day when humans no longer eat animals – using lab produced meat instead – and eventually avoiding animals killing each other as well. As machines evolve, the day when we never have to work again may draw us into the ‘day that is permanently Shabbat’ far sooner than we might have anticipated.


Perhaps more significantly, as artificial intelligence advances, one plausible trajectory is that humans will seek to be augmented to keep ahead of machines. The possibility of super brains, and even of shared consciousness, might appear. We might be able to create a merging of many people into one ‘super-state of being’.

A tradition that encompasses Talmud, Midrash and Kabbalah, records that in the Garden of Eden, Adam stood as a single soul encompassing all of humanity and is described as a super-intelligence who could see ‘from one end of the world to the other’. After the sin, Adam left Eden not as one soul, but divided into billions of shattered fragments that entered into the world of space and time as we know it. Since then, our mission has been to heal a broken world one relationship at a time, moving ever-closer to the rebuilding of ‘Adam-kind’ as a single oneness, able to experience Creator and creation as a Garden of Eden once again.

## The End of Death

Could technology help to deliver such a state of integration and oneness?

Of course the future is about something far deeper than just technology. It is about the awakening of the soul of humankind and the partnership between Creator and created. At the same time, technology may provide the vehicles for bringing that reality into fruition. According to de Grey, this may be closer than any of us imagined.

Perhaps that future would echo the words of Isaiah “Death will be removed forever, and the Lord God shall wipe the tears off every face.” 



“...the Jewish  
people’s golden age  
lies in the future”



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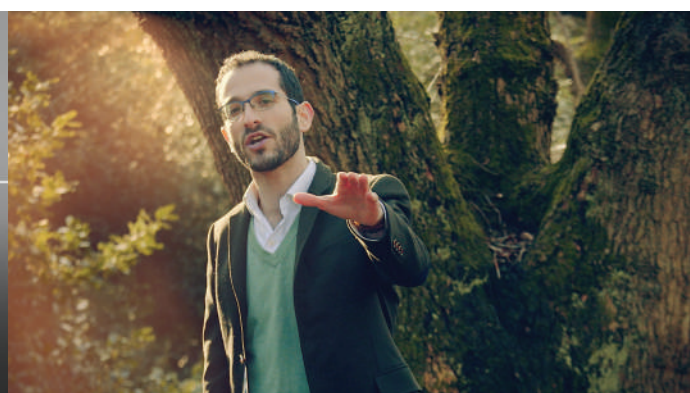
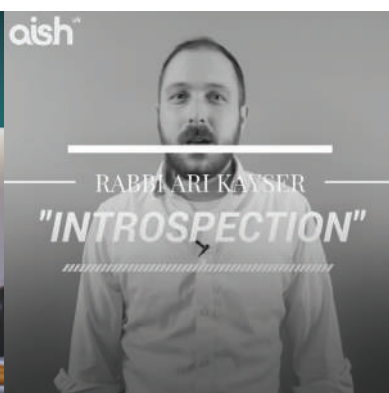
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# Believing in Our Children

SHANNI SOLOMON



Shanni Solomon is a parenting trainer and lecturer and holds a diploma in the foundations of counselling, a BSN in Nursing, a Masters in Psychology, and works as an Innate Health Practitioner and Emotional Wellbeing consultant for schools in North and North West London. Shanni is now about to embark on a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, focussing on developing resilience in teenagers and its impact on school-wide antisocial behaviour. She has been blessed with six beautiful children of her own and to be married to Rabbi Dr Leslie Solomon. She works with many child and teenage clients, their parents and teachers, and can be reached at [solomonshanni@gmail.com](mailto:solomonshanni@gmail.com)

On many occasions, I have been asked what is most important for new parents to know. To know about their new responsibilities as primary caregivers for this new life, brimming with infinite potential and possibility. To know, simply, how not to mess this up. The parents that I have met are simply hoping to do well in this novel and very formidable industry called Parenting.

It is often quite overwhelming for new parents to absorb the enormity of this new role, there are just so many things to remember and consider! But even more daunting is that just when parents feel they have a handle on their baby's routine and needs, it is replaced by the ever demanding (read frightening!) and often confusing toddler. And so it continues, until teenage-hood hits with a vengeance (oh, there is so much to look forward to!).

So many well-intentioned people will try to guide us as new parents, after all there are so many people around who have experienced parenthood, from both sides of the parent-child

relationship. Yet the onslaught of said guidance can be the most daunting of all. And, for what it's worth, I will throw in my two cents as well. But hopefully, to simplify rather than to overwhelm.

In my mind, the most important, most fundamental principle that a successful parent will understand and commit to is summed up in the following statement: more than physical care, more than love and even more than positivity, what children need most from their parents is their belief. Belief that the child is good. That the child is wise. That the child is ok and will ultimately succeed. That the child is of enormous intrinsic value and worth. Despite what other messages to the contrary come the child's way (and they will!), the emotionally healthy child will know, quite fundamentally, that his parents believe in him (or her).

However, the parents need to be clear about the following precepts in order for this to come to fruition:

1. Every child (and every adult...) is looking to do well for themselves. They are looking to succeed, and they are always looking to



More than physical care, more than love and even more than positivity, what children need most from their parents is their belief



help themselves to that end. They are not looking to self-destruct, no matter how self-destructive their behaviour seems to be to onlookers.

2. In order to do well, they do whatever makes sense, given what they have available to them in their minds at that moment to further their success however they see it, and that is how they will behave. Even if a few moments later there is a shift, a change of heart, which often happens and leads to regret, the original behaviour itself was driven by what made sense in that moment.

Now, why are these two concepts so pivotal to believing in our children? Because if we, as parents, understand these two precepts, it invariably leads to greater compassion for all human beings and, most relevant to our discussion, our children. If we can see the innocence in their behaviour, even their bad behaviour – because after all, they were only acting upon what seemed to be a good idea in the moment (like we all do) – we can then begin to believe in their deeper, more inherent ability to access their own wisdom and to make good choices, no matter what past behaviour may seem to predict.

And this is the most important part, if we believe in our children's ability to choose well, they start to believe in it too. We are the most

valuable point of reference for our children, they learn to smile by mimicking us, they learn to speak by imitating our sounds and they learn of their own value and self-worth by listening to our continuous messages to them about themselves.

There is also a third precept at play here, and that is that young children assume that their parents are in control. They assume that parents know what to do, that they aren't afraid and that overall they've 'got this', no matter what the particulars of the situation. They often test this by pushing our buttons, pushing their

luck, you name it. But it is only in order to affirm for themselves that their parents are, in fact, in control, even when things are getting a bit hectic!

Have you ever noticed the incredulous look of surprise on a child's face when a parent loses the plot and has a tantrum of their own? Fear, upset and genuine surprise. The parent's behaviour challenges the aforementioned tightly held assumption and the child will almost always attribute it to something they do not

understand as opposed to the parent truly being out of control. Fascinating, yet true.

And so, when a parent believes in a child's inherent wisdom and ability to choose wisely, the child himself assumes that to be the case as well. And that, my friends, is a great place to start. 🧑🧒



# Five Tips to Reduce Anxiety

By Aryeh Sampson

Our era has been dubbed 'The Age of Anxiety.' With increasing financial stress, family pressures, health problems, global economic turmoil and worldwide political unrest, we live in very worrying times. Recent statistics have shown that 59% of people in Britain have experienced anxiety and 70% have suffered from stress. The number of antidepressants prescribed by the NHS have risen sharply over the past decade in line with the recession of 2008.

I would like to share five approaches that can be helpful in reducing anxiety.

## 1. Self-Awareness

Since much of our anxieties exist on a subconscious level, the first step is to become aware of our thoughts and internal dialogue. People tend to envision the worst possible consequences coming true. For example, someone worrying about finances may imagine themselves poor, homeless, and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. This is often combined with the imagination producing stirring images that create a sense of panic and great distress. Memories of similar traumatic events from the past may also be unconsciously projected onto the current situation, which further exacerbates the problem.

Once we become aware of our internal thoughts we are able to discover the fears that are at the root of the anxiety. A good acronym for fear is: FEAR – False Evidence Appearing Real. Much of our fear may be based on invalid thinking. For example, when a person is having a panic attack they may misinterpret the physiological effects and think that they are having a heart attack, thereby further increasing their anxiety.





Aryeh Sampson is a BACP accredited psychotherapist and couples counsellor. He is in private practice in North West London as well as counselling on Skype. Aryeh is the author of 'Go To Yourself – Transformation Through Jewish Wisdom and Psychology'. He can be contacted at [aryeh.sampson@gmail.com](mailto:aryeh.sampson@gmail.com). For more information see [www.counsellingnorthlondon.org](http://www.counsellingnorthlondon.org)

For more info check out his YouTube channel 'Aryeh Sampson'

## 2. Challenging Our Thoughts

By verbalising our inner dialogue, we can challenge our irrational thinking and start to see the situation more objectively and calmly. This approach is emphasised in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which teaches that our interpretation of events determines our emotional response. By becoming aware of our cognitive biases – those irrational thought patterns – we can change the way we think about a situation, reducing its emotional impact.

To do this, one might ask some important questions: Are there other equally plausible ways of interpreting this situation? Is it possible, even probable, that a dreaded event will not occur? How many situations have you worried about in the past that turned out much better in reality? It is also valuable to explore how one would best cope with the worst case scenario if it were to occur.

## 3. Sharing Our Feelings

Sharing our concerns and worries with a supportive person can be therapeutic, helping to reduce and lighten their emotional impact. It is most effective if the listener allows us to express our concerns fully, and doesn't interject with premature words of advice or encouragement.

Expressing our emotions reduces the likelihood of stress-related problems such as muscle aches and tension headaches. Suppressing our emotions makes us more prone to feeling depressed and anxious.

## 4. Take Action

Facing a difficult situation and taking appropriate action where possible reduces our fear and moves us from feeling helpless, or a victim of circumstances, to feeling more in control. Behavioural changes often lead to emotional changes – this is a principle upon which behavioural therapy is based. For example, a person who has a phobia of dogs and feels great anxiety around them would gradually increase their exposure to dogs until they could tolerate them without feeling anxious.

Creating and implementing a plan of action to deal with our area of concern is therefore a vital step. While this often requires courage, avoiding the problem just serves to maintain it. The fear associated with it can paralyse us and produce a negative self-fulfilling prophecy. It is also important to break down this plan into small, manageable steps.

## 5. Maintaining Wellbeing

Attending to our physical state helps to reduce stress; this includes getting enough sleep, exercising, eating properly, having time to relax, and sometimes medication may be necessary. Breathing techniques or meditation can also be very helpful.

It has been demonstrated by much modern research that prayer helps reduce anxiety. A recent study interviewed 246 people before having cardiac surgery. The results showed that those who prayed before the operation were more optimistic and suffered less anxiety.

These five approaches can be used in combination or individually. A person's particular circumstances, as well as individual character and personal preferences, will determine which approach will be most helpful. 🌿

# Instilling Confidence in Children Through Drama



SHIRA DRUIÓN

Shira obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, Education and Psychology. She then trained as a Speech and Drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She has been an educator for the past 15 years, teaching students from nursery to university where she lectured on writing and communication skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix where she teaches a broad age group of students. She also works for Chazak where she is the editor of YALLA Community Magazine and is responsible for PR/Marketing and events for young professionals. For more info on Dramatix classes in North West London, contact Shira at [shiradru@hotmail.com](mailto:shiradru@hotmail.com) | 07587400516



**P**op icon Taylor Swift said, “happiness and confidence are the prettiest things you can wear.” Every good parent’s deep desire is to ensure that their child’s life journey is a happy one, but many are not aware of how to create that reality. Children today are faced with a multitude of pressures as they travel through 21st century life. The competitive climate of keeping up with an ever evolving world that expects consistent output can be very demanding on a child. There are many ways to empower children and that confidence is the elixir to happy living. For many, drama can be their modus operandi by helping to create confident children and ultimately confident adults.

So how is confidence the antidote to happy living and how does drama nurture confidence in children? There are many ways to answer this but in short, confidence and a healthy self-esteem enable children to navigate the roadmap of life more successfully and this helps them to cross the hurdles they encounter because they have a belief in their own abilities. Speech and drama lessons encourage children to explore themselves in what drama theorist Brian Way calls, “the safe space.” It is in this space, free of judgment, where their feelings and emotions can be held and

their imaginative dreams explored. The experience of being allowed to be oneself is what liberates a child and allows them to feel heard and accepted as they are without having to conform to the many rigid boundaries of their daily lives. They then grow in self-esteem and become more confident people.

Drama has always featured prominently in my life. In fact, I almost can’t imagine life without it. I started speech and drama lessons at the age of six, when I was a shy, little lady and I recall how intimidated I was at my very first drama show. I remember vividly how scared I was to recite my poem in front of the hall of people. I then went on to spend 11 years of my life as a student, three years qualifying as a teacher and so today, I can get up in front of any number of people to speak and do so confidently. So how did that come about? What process took place to bring about that change?

I often try to explain to the parents of the children that I teach that, although in eight or ten lessons there can be slight improvement, a real dramatic process can take years because it takes place organically, by building a child from the inside out. Drama works by building the esteem of a child and also enriches




them with a repertoire of dramatic skills. But the real beauty of drama is how it shapes the child's perception of themselves and encourages them to feel more empowered. They naturally become more able to verbalise their feelings and to be happy exploring their own space, and this helps them interact with others.

The different dramatic exercises encourage students to unpeel the layers that cover up their insecurities and idiosyncrasies because the lessons urge them to let their hair down and experiment with characterisation, mime, movement, and their bodies. All of these tasks liberate them in different ways. A child may live in a home that is very rigid with parents who are demanding, which can cause him to always watch his

step and in turn become inhibited and lacking in self-esteem. Drama will allow the child to feel accepted, which will then allow them to start to see the world through a different lens. This process models healthy, functional behavior which then adapts into their consciousness. Imagine a child who is never given that space or opportunity. They will grow up highly cautious of others and will struggle to feel okay about themselves.


I often watch in wonder when new children enrol in my Dramatix classes and look around the room to see how others will react when they act out a scene and are almost waiting for a chastising response when they take on a character or role. It is then a very joyous experience to watch them become comfortable

in their own skin as time passes and they become more used to letting go, and we watch on as they grow in their confidence and stop worrying about how others will perceive them. They embrace the opportunity to have fun and enjoy the activities. Not only does each child become more confident but in fact the group as a whole starts to enjoy the antics that go on and the humorous moments become celebrated and if there is laughter it is with another not at another.

The long term prognosis for a student who continues with drama lessons is that they will undoubtedly become a more confident person who is much more equipped to stand strong in the world. And most importantly, a child who is more confident has a much better chance at happiness. 

“It is in this space, free of judgment, where their feelings and emotions can be held and their imaginative dreams, explored.”





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# The Pursuit of Happiness

RABBI ARI KAYSER



Born and raised in London, Ari Kayser completed a BSc in Economics at the University College London before making his way to learn in yeshiva in Israel. Along the way he spent a lot of time backpacking, visiting over thirty countries, writing a lot of poetry, and attaining certification as a professional cocktail bartender. In 2008, Ari founded a non-profit startup dedicated to publicising Jewish values through creative media. In 2012, Ari received Rabbinic Ordination and became Founding Director of Outreach at Lev Modiin, an organisation dedicated to creating learning and growth opportunities for the Anglo community in Israel. Ari managed the Schools Department of Aish UK for a number of years. Currently, Ari is the Executive Editor of Perspectives, the Magazine of Aish UK, as well as creating captivating videos for Aish's Social Media operations.



# *Happiness doesn't come to you, it comes from you.*

**W**hen I was younger I was always chasing after anything that would give me a thrill. By the age of 18 I had travelled across the globe in pursuit of that feeling. No matter how far I went, no matter what I was chasing, that emptiness followed me.

## *There was always something missing.*

We traverse this world in a whirlwind of events, a hurricane of emotions, and an endless stream of thoughts. Time rarely stops for us to take stock of who we are, instead it pushes us to decide what to do next.

One thing I have noticed in my short time in this world, is that time only speeds up. It doesn't ask you when you want to take a break and relax. It keeps moving, whether you do or don't.

If I were to ask you: "What do you want more than anything in the world?" My guess is that most people would answer: "I just want to be happy."

The United States Declaration of Independence proudly states


that every individual has the right to "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

And herein lies the problem. The "pursuit of happiness" leads us to believe that happiness is something which exists outside of you.

That miseducation implores us to eternally chase that which cannot reach us, crave that which will not fill us, and desire that which will never fulfil us. Like an addict trying desperately to feed a hunger, no matter how much they try the hunger never dissipates for long.

The ancient teaching of Ben Zoma describes that happiness is not a pursuit of that which you lack, but an expression of that which you already have. Whatever you are trying to acquire in life is irrelevant to the concept of happiness.

With that knowledge I have begun to understand that the chase is actively preventing us from achieving that very happiness we have been in pursuit of. Happiness is a state of mind which can be accessed at any time we allow ourselves to stop pursuing it.

Happiness doesn't come to you, it comes from you. 

# Social Anxiety and Panic Attacks:

## How I Learnt to Manage Them and How You Can Too

Eleanor Segall



Eleanor Segall is a freelance mental health writer and blogger. She blogs at [www.beuownlight.com](http://www.beuownlight.com) and is a freelance writer for [Metro.co.uk](http://Metro.co.uk), [Glamour](http://Glamour) and [Happiful Magazine](http://Happiful Magazine). Eleanor has written for mental health charities including [Mind](http://Mind), [Rethink Mental Illness](http://Rethink Mental Illness) and [Time to Change](http://Time to Change).

As a teenager, I struggled with my mental health. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at the age of 16 and a few months after Israel tour, I was hospitalised. I felt like I was different. I had a chronic illness and I didn't know what to make of myself anymore. As a teenager in a small community, you don't want to feel singled out and so having a psychiatric emergency that led to being hospitalised for bipolar made me feel like I was 'weird' and 'different'. I judged myself and had self-stigma. I just wanted to fit in.

This is what sparked my social anxiety after I left hospital with a diagnosis and new medication. I had already been living with heightened anxiety from the age of 15. Bipolar is a mood disorder thought to be caused by a chemical imbalance and runs in my family. It is where moods can change between high (manic), neutral (usual functioning) and low (depressive moods).

As part of the depression, my anxiety levels went through the roof. I had heart palpitations, my thoughts

raced, I couldn't sleep or rest and I had to take medication to slow down my mind.

However, as well as this, I had to come home from Israel tour early after a hypomanic (lesser manic) episode. Not everyone understood what was happening to me and some thought I was hyper or strange. This led to some introspection and what I now know is social anxiety.

Social anxiety is the intense fear of negative judgment from other people. You worry that people could be looking at you or thinking bad things about you. I had been previously judged for having bipolar by those who didn't understand fully what it was and who could not separate it from my personality. Then, I began judging myself negatively and projecting this onto how other people saw me.

For me, this fear turned into not being able to go to parties, worrying about the way I looked and having to cancel on friends and arrangements. I also became anxious before dates and about work.



It became constant and in order to stop the panic and fear, I felt I had to stay inside and not see people. It was really hard.

Accompanying the negative thoughts of the social anxiety, I had panic attacks. This meant that because I rationally loved seeing my friends or attending their celebrations, I would make arrangements with the hope of seeing them. Then the anxiety would rise and bubble, like in a pressure cooker. I was flooded with adrenaline, and had constant irrational negative thoughts about the situations that were out of my control. My heart was beating so fast, I felt sweaty with clammy hands and felt I had to 'stop' the fear. My fear of being judged negatively was turning into a phobia.

What helped me recover from this was a long process over many years. I was taking anti-depressants to boost my mood and other anxiety medications. Anxiety medication, as with any mental health medication, are trial and error for each person. Everyone has individual brain chemistry. My medications were prescribed after meetings with my psychiatrist and in combination with different types of therapy. I was taking a general anxiety medicine and prescribed some for emergencies when I had panic attacks.


I began to have Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which tries to rationalise the anxiety thoughts and change your thought patterns to a more positive frame of mind. I had many sessions over months, but it was clear that this type of therapy wasn't working for my subconscious anxiety.

I would write and challenge my thoughts on

paper in a 'thought record' but then would have a panic attack and would end up crying and exhausted.

I began to research other forms of therapy. One therapy that really clicked with me was exposure therapy, where you lean on your support network and gradually expose yourself to the feared situation. In my case, this would mean not instantly cancelling but sitting with the high anxiety for 45 minutes until it passed. This didn't work straight away. I often couldn't handle sitting with such heightened anxiety.

However, my family were an excellent support. My mum would take me out for drives to get me used to going out again. I would set myself small challenges like walking down the driveway, then down the road and gradually coaxed myself back out in to the world again.




“Social anxiety is the intense fear of negative judgement from other people”

There is a belief that when we stop seeing certain things as a threat and expose ourselves to the anxiety and nothing bad happens, our amygdala – the part of the brain that controls anxiety – will reset itself. I slowly began to find that the more things I was able to do, the less I was flooded with adrenaline.

It is also empowering to sit with the level of anxiety and, for me, not to cancel the feared event. Going through with certain things was a massive achievement for me.

Today, aged 30, my social anxiety is a lot better but I still have relapses and feel myself slipping back into my anxious patterns of thinking.

Sometimes I still have to cancel events in my diary and I get nervous about things, just to a lesser degree.

I also saw how self-care, like meditation and being kind to myself, and sitting with a therapist for talking therapy really helped me process my issues. 

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## So what can help you if you have social anxiety and panic attacks?

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1

Go to your GP, therapist or psychiatrist. Explain what you are going through. Your GP and psychiatrist can start you on medication or refer you to therapy, although the NHS has long therapy waiting lists in London.

2

Investigate the different therapies and choose one you think would best suit you. If you find it doesn't work, see if you can switch to another therapist or therapy type. Exposure therapy really helped me and that can be done with a supportive partner, family member, support worker or therapist. You could also try CBT, talking therapies (psychodynamic) or others. Research via the Counselling Directory website.

3

Self-care methods like working on your breathing and practising meditation can really help anxiety. Breathe in for 5 and out for 8, nice and slowly. Try to slow down your breathing and breathe deeply into your stomach. This should help calm you.

Meditations like the Yoga Nidra meditation can really help calm you. It focuses on the breath and letting the mind drift, promoting stillness. You can do this for as much or as little time as you want.

4

Remember you aren't alone. Organisations like No Panic and the Samaritans are really helpful and offer a free telephone line to speak with someone if you are anxious. Mind also run great support groups, as do Jami in the Jewish community (although you will need a referral for Jami).

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# chanukah:

## out of the frying pan and into the light!

**On the very first winter after Adam and Eve were put on this Earth, the first woman and man were confronted with an unprecedented predicament. The days were getting shorter and the nights overwhelmed their power beyond the day.**

The fear was magnified as, day-by-day, the darkness came in earlier and lasted longer each night. The only conclusion? This brand new world was coming to an end.

Did they start stockpiling? Did they even begin to understand about the rotation of the earth? Did they succumb to fear? Did they bow their heads in prayer? Did they gather into themselves and find comfort? I don't know.

What I do know is that just as the darkness extended itself to a point where even the most faithful would have given up hope, slowly the light clawed its way back each day; taking back some of the night. And Adam and Eve rejoiced.

It is no surprise then, that in all cultures this is a time for celebration. It was in fact predestined that the Chanukah miracle would happen on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, often corresponding to the winter solstice – the longest night of the year.

We Jews, in our own time-honoured tradition, light candles every evening of Chanukah and continuously add light for eight nights. We take a moment to enjoy the light of the Chanukiah and reflect on our good fortune. It is a time of joy and gathering, of bringing together friends and family and sharing light and faith with them.

This month, we at Ta'am are sharing with you some of our favourite Chanukah foods. Some old and much loved, and some new modern alternatives. All are unapologetically fried to celebrate the miracle of the small jug of oil that supplied enough oil not for one night, but for eight. We have also included a number of dairy recipes in commemoration of the story of Judith and her victory over Greek general Holofernes.

Wishing you a Happy Chanukah filled with delicious food, gathering of friends and family, and light.

*Ilana*

Zalabia & Sufganiot  
pg. XX



Ta'am (taste in Hebrew), headed by Ilana Epstein, is the latest addition to the JFT family. For more information, please email [info@taam.org.uk](mailto:info@taam.org.uk)





## fricassé

Recipe courtesy of Chantal Young

What can be better than bread? Fried bread!

This Tunisian bread is actually a doughnut. Like most doughnuts, it has very little sugar in the dough, and rather than combine the delicate doughnut with sweet flavours, the Tunisians use this as a base for a savoury meal. It is usually served at family celebrations with a variety of fillings – waiting for each person to create their own individual sandwich. We love the idea of celebrating Chanukah with a fried food that is unusual to most and yet intrinsically feels like home.

**10g fresh yeast or 14g active dried yeast**

**240ml (1 cup) warm water**

**Pinch of sugar**

**500g bread flour**

**1 teaspoon salt**

**1 egg**

**Oil for coating and frying**

In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast in a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup warm water. Add a pinch of sugar and let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. In a large bowl, combine flour and salt, make a well in the centre, and add the remaining water, the yeast mixture and egg. Mix to combine. At this point, you may need a bit more water, but add just a tablespoon at a time, mixing and gathering in the

dough, until the dough comes together. Using your hands, or the dough hook of a stand mixer, knead the dough, until smooth and elastic. Place dough in a lightly-oiled bowl. Oil the top of the dough as well and cover with a tea towel. Set aside to rise for about an hour until doubled in size.

Form into 10 small sausage shaped logs, and place on a well-oiled tray about 2 inches apart (the dough will rise and spread). Brush the top of the rolls with oil, cover the tray with a tea towel and let rise for another half hour.

Using a heavy-bottomed frying pan with two inches of oil, or a deep fat fryer, heat oil to 180 °C (350 °F). Fry the fricassé in oil for about 3-5 minutes per side, until deep gold in colour and cooked through. Remove from the pan and drain on a paper towel. Once cooled, slice open as you would a roll. Serve with Tunisian tuna salad, hard boiled eggs or potatoes, ready-made harissa and olives – or any combination you choose.

## tunisian tuna salad

**2 cans tuna packed in oil**

**1 preserved lemon peel finely chopped, flesh removed**

**3 (or more) teaspoons ready-made harissa**

**2 tablespoons flat leaf parsley, chopped**

**2 tablespoons good quality mayonnaise**

In a medium bowl, mix all the ingredients together.

## carrot & ginger latkes

This latke alternative has a fresh, zingy flavour to it that is a change from a potato latke. But the spirit of Chanukah is not lost as these carrot fritters are shallow fried. Serve with celery and coriander salsa to give the humble carrot a real flavour and texture boost.

**800g (6 cups) coarsely grated peeled carrots**

**45g (6 tablespoons) plain flour**

**1½ teaspoons salt**

**¾ teaspoon baking powder**

**½ teaspoon ground black pepper**

**3 inches (about 8 teaspoons) fresh ginger finely grated**

**3 large eggs**

**canola oil (for frying)**

Place carrots in a large bowl and press with paper towels to absorb any moisture. In another large bowl, whisk flour, salt, baking powder and pepper to blend. Mix in carrots and ginger, then eggs.

Pour enough oil into heavy large frying pan to cover the bottom and heat over a medium heat. Working in batches and adding more oil as needed, place a ¼ cup of carrot mixture into the frying pan and flatten with a spoon. Fry until golden, about 5 minutes per side. Remove and place the latkes on to kitchen towel to drain. (Can be made 6 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Rewarm in 180°C oven until crisp, about 10 minutes.)

Serve latkes with relish and salsa.

## celery & coriander salsa

This quick salsa requires almost no work and will enhance fried dishes such as latkes and chips. It is also a perfect accompaniment to the carrot latkes.

**4 large stalks (approx. 2 cups) celery finely diced**

**3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**

**1 small bunch (30g) fresh coriander minced**

**1 tablespoon white wine vinegar**

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Season salsa with salt and pepper. Let stand at least 30 minutes. (Can be made 6 hours ahead. Cover and chill.)

## cheesy potato latkes

Take your classic potato latke and make it sing by adding a mature, strong-flavoured hard cheese. I use mature cheddar, but feel free to experiment with alternatives and create a new Chanukah tradition that you will come back to every year.

**900g baking potatoes, peeled and grated**

**1 large brown onion, finely chopped**

**200g mature cheddar, grated**

**30g plain flour or matzah meal**

**2 large eggs**

**1½ teaspoon kosher salt**

**½ teaspoon ground black pepper**

**about ¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, for frying**

Place the grated potatoes and onions on a large, clean tea towel. Gather the sides into the middle, roll up the towel, and squeeze the mixture over the sink to remove any excess liquid. Transfer the grated, drained potato-onion mixture to a large bowl, and stir in the cheddar, flour, eggs, salt and pepper.

Pour enough oil into a heavy large frying pan to cover bottom and heat over a medium heat. Working in batches and adding more oil as needed, place about a tablespoon of potato mixture into pan and flatten with a spoon. Fry until golden brown and crisp, about 4-5 minutes on each side. Remove and place the latkes to a paper towel-lined baking tray.

Serve with applesauce.

## beetroot latkes with goat's cheese

**800g beetroot, peeled and grated (about 6 medium sized)**

**45g plain flour**

**1 ½ teaspoons salt**

**2 teaspoons ground cumin**

**1 teaspoon ground coriander**

**¾ teaspoon baking powder**

**½ teaspoon ground black pepper**

**3 large eggs, beaten**

**canola oil (for frying)**

**1 log goat's cheese**

Place beetroots in a large bowl; press with paper towels to absorb any moisture. In another large bowl, whisk flour, salt, cumin, coriander, baking powder and black pepper. Mix in the beetroots, and then eggs.

Pour enough oil into a heavy large frying pan to cover bottom and heat over a medium heat. Working in batches, and adding more oil as needed, place about a tablespoon of the beetroot mixture into frying pan and flatten with a spoon. Fry until golden, about 4 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and place on baking tray. (Can be made 6 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Reheat in 180°C oven until crisp, about 10 minutes.)

Just before serving, place latkes on a heat proof tray. Top each latke with a round of goat's cheese. Place the tray under a preheated grill for about 3 minutes until the rind of the cheese starts to char and the centre bubbles. Alternatively, use a blowtorch to toast each cheese-topped latke.

## homemade applesauce

**5 medium apples, peeled, cored and coarsely chopped**

**60ml (¼ cup) apple cider**

**50g (¼ cup) light brown sugar**

**3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**

**a pinch of salt**

Add all of the ingredients to a medium-sized, heavy saucepan; stir, then bring to a boil over high heat. Boil, stirring occasionally, until the apples become very soft, about 10 minutes. Mash with a potato masher and set aside.







“ it's amazing how the hopes of a people can be tangibly shared in the simplest of foods ”



## sufganiot (jam doughnuts)

If you have never made a jam doughnut at home, don't be intimidated. They are easier to make than you would expect and the homemade versions are fresh and super delicious.

**2 teaspoons active dry yeast**

**1½ tablespoons lukewarm water**

**125ml (½ cup) lukewarm milk (or milk alternative)**

**2 tablespoons caster sugar**

**50g butter (or margarine), melted**

**335g (2¾ cups) plain flour**

**2 eggs**

**vegetable oil for deep-frying**

**caster sugar for topping**

**jam for filling**

In a large bowl, place the yeast, water, milk and a pinch of sugar and set aside in a warm place for 10 minutes or until bubbles appear on the surface. Add the butter, flour, eggs and sugar to the yeast mixture and mix until a sticky dough forms. Place onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth.

Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a clean, damp cloth and set aside in a warm place for 45 minutes or until doubled in size. Knead the dough on a lightly-floured surface for 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Roll until the dough is 1cm thick and use an 8cm-round cutter to cut 10 circles from the dough. Place the doughnuts on a baking tray lined with non-stick baking paper and set aside for 30 minutes or until risen.

Place the oil and a sugar thermometer in a large, deep saucepan over medium heat until the temperature reaches 180°C (350°F). Alternatively, use a deep fat fryer.

Cook the doughnuts, in batches, for 1–2 minutes each side or until golden. Drain on absorbent paper. Roll in caster sugar. Using a small knife, make a small hole on the side of the doughnut. Then, using a piping bag fitted with a small nozzle, push about a tablespoon of jam into each doughnut.

## zalabia

This ancient Middle Eastern fritter is a real Chanukah treat in my home. Zalabia goes under many different names and guises, but the principle is always the same. It is a thin, yeasted batter that is deep fried before being drenched in a sugar syrup.

In the Ta'am version, we have used lemon and orange blossom water, but feel free to play around with the flavours. Try rose water, honey, cinnamon, saffron or star anise.

**Sugar syrup:**

**400g (2 cups) sugar**

**235ml (1 cup) water**

**2–3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**

**1–3 teaspoons orange blossom water (optional)**

**For the fritters:**

**8g (¼ ounce) active dry yeast**

**470ml (2 cups) warm water**

**1 teaspoon sugar**

**280g (2½ cups) plain flour**

**1/8 teaspoon salt**

**1 large egg**

**oil for deep frying**

To make the sugar syrup:

Mix the sugar, water, lemon juice and orange blossom water (if using) together in a medium-sized, heavy-bottomed pot. Bring the mixture to a boil and boil for about 5 minutes until all of the sugar has dissolved and the mixture thickens a bit. Allow to cool before using to dip the zalabia.

To make the fritters:

In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast into a ¼ cup of water. Stir in the sugar and let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt and make a well in the centre. Pour the yeast mixture, remaining water and egg into the well and stir until smooth. The dough will be thin. Cover and allow to rise at room temperature until double in bulk; about 2 hours.

Heat at least 2 inches of oil in a deep, heavy-bottomed pot or in a deep fat fryer, to 185°C.

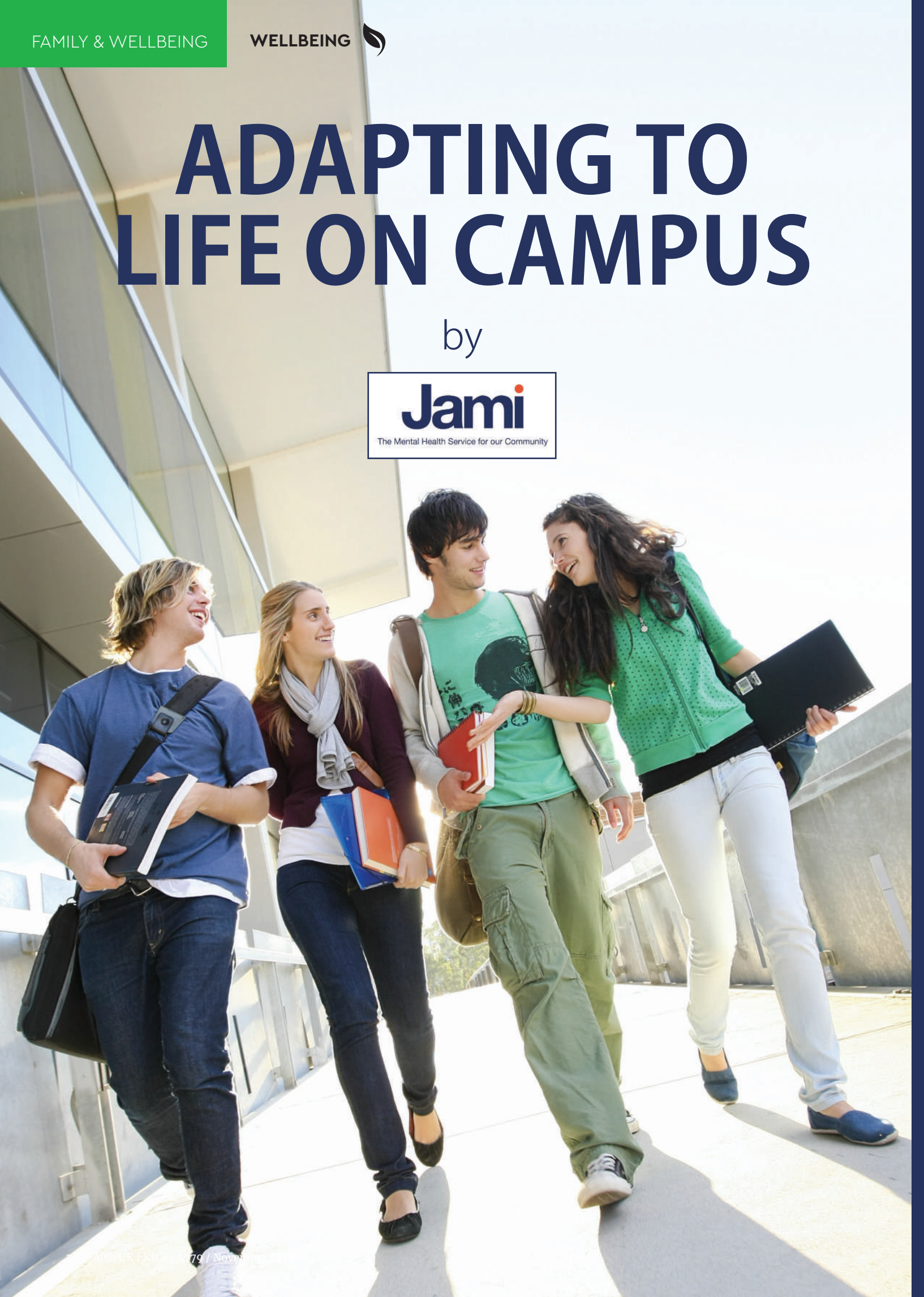
Stir the batter. Using a tablespoon, dip the tablespoon into water then pick up a spoon full of batter drop batter into the hot oil. Fry the zalabia in batches, turning to ensure that they turn golden on all sides. Remove from the pot and drain on paper towels.

Dip the warm fritters into cooled syrup or sprinkle with icing sugar and serve immediately.

To serve later, store the zalabia up to a day in an air tight container and dip in syrup just before serving.

# ADAPTING TO LIFE ON CAMPUS

by



**W**ith the summer well and truly behind us, we are now fully immersed in the new academic year. For those of us who have recently started university there may be mixed emotions. A sense of excitement and apprehension may intertwine. Going to university is a time of transition with new responsibilities and forms of independence. University is a milestone; a point where we cross over to a new phase of adulthood.

Starting university is a big life change which, like any adventure, can be filled with opportunities and challenges. As we negotiate the uncharted territory of new experiences, new people and new learning we will need to manage our wellbeing to ensure our time at university is as enjoyable as possible. For many of us, this will be the first time we will live away from home. The education style at university is different and we will need to be responsible for our learning as well as personal finances and other areas of life. Our move to university comes with freedom which needs to incorporate ways for looking after our wellbeing.

Although we are gifted with newfound independence at university we are not alone. Our parents, guardians, wider family network and friends may no longer be in our immediate vicinity but they are still there to support us. Our safety net does not dissolve with the start of our university life. To boost our wellbeing we need to maintain our existing social connections whilst making new ones. Having someone we can speak to when we face a challenge or are feeling stressed will support us. Sharing an experience with friends, albeit

on a different course or campus, can be comforting and a great way to share ideas and solutions.

We may want to negotiate how often we will be in contact with family. Discussing this with our parents or guardians before we go can minimize uncertainty around unmet expectations. Most of us thrive when we feel included by our social group and can socialize with those who share our interests. University provides us with a multitude of opportunities to boost our wellbeing by creating these new connections. Not only are we likely to live in shared housing but our course and university societies provide a pool of like-minded potential friends. Opportunities for socialization abound at university but it's important we think about how and when we would like to socialize.


If we are in shared housing, we recommend making your bedroom a personal space where you can relax. We recommend thinking about personal touches you can add to your bedroom to make you feel at home. What pictures of friends and family will you take with? What can you take from your current room to make your new room feel like home?

Whilst receiving a degree is the end goal of our university journey we need to make sure we enjoy our time and sample the amazing experiences universities have to offer. During your first term take the time to get to know your university campus, you may choose to explore it with some course or housemates. Try out the societies fair. Maybe sign up for something you've never tried before? Trying out new things and devoting time to hobbies are both great opportunities for investing in

our wellbeing on campus. You might also want to find out more about the sports teams and gym facilities on campus. Exercise can boost our wellbeing and sports facilities are a great place to meet new people.

Besides family and friends, it's important that we know where to turn if we do feel like we need more support. We recommend signing up to the campus or other local GP. Our physical and mental health is linked so it's important that we have a doctor we can turn to in either scenario. Universities will also have their own support service for students which offer a variety of counselling or therapies so check this out.

You may feel like you will never need either the GP or the support service but it's worth knowing where they are and how to get in touch just in case. You may find that you signpost a friend in that direction. Many students may also turn to Nightline which is a student support helpline, you can find the number for your university on their website. Some university campuses may also have a University Mental Health Adviser or be involved with Student Minds who have a great booklet on going to university and university life which is packed with information. Jami, the mental health service for the community, is also available to offer telephone support for those outside of London.

For those in London or returning for the holidays Jami can offer further support alongside signposting to further resources. Jami run an educational programme for university students including training on Mental Health First Aid. 

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# TOP 10 TIPS

for Making  
the Most of  
your Uni Years



Here are some of our favourite pearls  
of wisdom we have gleaned from  
students who have shared with us their  
advice for those starting out on their  
academic journeys in university.

### 1) Freshers' week freebies:

At any freshers fair you can easily fill bucket loads with all the free goodies. It's a great time to stock up on pens, phone chargers, stationary and notebooks for the whole year. You don't even need to come prepared with a bag because there are plenty of those too.

### 2) Be brave and open minded:

Whilst many feel that they don't want to commit to loads of societies and clubs, it is the best way to meet new people and break out of your comfort zone.

### 3) Be discerning:

It's great to sign up for stuff, but you have to learn how to say no. Learn to understand the difference between those that are out to get your money or your time and those that are genuinely interested in you.

### 4) Spend some time studying technique:

So many students regret not spending more time in their first year perfecting the art of researching and essay writing. It's worth spending time studying how to study effectively before you waste all your time with inefficient methods.

### 5) Shabbat Planning:

If you like your mum's chicken soup and Friday Night Dinners, be sure that whatever campus you are on there are those who would be delighted to host you. Whether it is the JSOC FND or local families, make sure to make arrangements early in the week to avoid disappointment. (Some students actually ask their mums for the recipe and host their friends!)

### 6) Be ahead of the game:

Don't leave it to the last minute. What may have worked in secondary school, doesn't at university. A slow and steady approach will give you more free time and reduce stress.

### 7) Where is the Jewish corner?

A lot of students feel like uni is the time to leave the "Jewish bubble" behind. Inevitably after a few months being outside the "bubble" it gets tough and can be very lonely, plus it's always hard to come in from the outside. Best option is learn where and what the Jewish students like to do and set up a base.

### 8) Be clear what is demanded:

With any assignment or task, make sure you have total clarity on exactly what you are supposed to be doing before you spend your time on the wrong thing. Time is precious, use it well.

### 9) Establish committees:

It sounds funny but it is the best way to live together with friends and avoid unnecessary arguments. Assign the major house-running obligations to different members of the house. Make sure someone good with finances is in charge of the bills. Appoint someone else to be in charge of cleaning arrangements, nights out, cooking, Shabbat arrangements.

### 10) Look after yourself!

Make sure you eat well. Students can often mess up their body clocks and experience a serious change in their diets and exercise routines. Make sure you're not one of those people that ends up glued to a couch, living off chocolate bars and Häagen Dazs!



Above all else, find out about Genesis, the Aish UK Campus programme on your campus and learn about the amazing opportunities it provides to hear world renowned speakers, eat delicious free food and travel the world.

Wishing you the best of luck on your journey from the Aish Campus Team!

# genesis

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What's  
been  
happening  
at

**aish** <sup>uk</sup>

around  
the  
country?



## **BIRMINGHAM**

We were delighted to welcome The Levy Family to Birmingham. Rabbi Doniel and Rebbetzin Sophie will be working with students at university campuses across Birmingham and providing a home away from home for young Jewish students in the Midlands!

## **BRISTOL**

New student arrivals in Bristol were treated to a special welcome BBQ hosted by Rabbi Uri and Rebbetzin Tamar Jaskiel.

## **ESSEX**

At their new home Rabbi Mendy and Rebbetzin Gittel Brukirer hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Sukkot BBQ for students and their families, as well as a FIFA 2018 tournament for young professionals.

## **GENESIS (NATIONWIDE)**

Our flagship student programme Genesis launched around the country with over 400 students signing up to the weekly speaker and learning series. Our online series Genesis On Demand offered a series of webinars to those students at campuses with no Aish branch.

## **LEEDS**

Students in Leeds have been treated to regular warm and welcoming Friday Night Dinners hosted by Rabbi Shauly and Rebbetzin Adina Strom.

## **LIVERPOOL**

We continued to run our popular series of Lunch and Learns at King David High School in Liverpool.

## **LONDON YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

October saw the launch of our new cutting-edge programme for young professionals – @futures – which explores the innovation which is shaping our world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and its impact on the Jewish community. We also hosted a number of social events alongside the programme including a launch night at SiNK with 100 in attendance.

## **LONDON SCHOOLS**

We relaunched our J-Link programme, offering educational opportunities for Jewish students in non-Jewish schools including Haberdashers' Aske's, University College School and St Paul's. Meanwhile we continued our NXT programme for JFS sixth formers as well as a variety of shiurim at Immanuel College.

## **MANCHESTER**

We had a busy Yom Tov period with a number of talks and explanatory services offered at different communities around the city, as well as a special guest talk from Rabbi Lazer Brody. We also hosted a variety of events for young professionals and school students including a challah bake, a FIFA tournament and film night.

## **NOTTINGHAM**

Students in Nottingham were treated to a special exclusive performance from Britain's Got Talent finalists Darren and Andrew otherwise known as "DNA".



# LOOKING 'TO' THE FUTURE



ROBIN HANSON



ZOE JACKSON

This October saw the launch of Aish Young Professionals department's exciting new '@Futures' series of lectures. Run fortnightly, the programme presents keynote speeches on the topics at the forefront of 21st Century innovation, followed by a 'response' lecture presenting the Torah perspective on key ideas discussed.

The series kicked off by welcoming entrepreneur Zoe Jackson MBE. Dropping out of school after taking her GCSEs in 2006, Zoe went on to crowd-source funds to launch her performing arts company, 'Living the Dream'. Building her business model quite literally from scratch, Zoe soon caught the eye of investors such as James Caan (of Dragons' Den fame) and Sir Richard Branson (of fame fame), the latter choosing Zoe as the ambassador of Virgin's start-up department, Control Shift. In 2015, Zoe was honoured in the New Year's honours list for services to young entrepreneurs.

Zoe's keynote speech, 'Planet Start-up: The Millennial Revolution', focused on how globalisation, technology and a schooling system that at times seems quite dated can at once be a tremendous challenge to Millennials entering the workforce, but is also tremendously empowering. The influence of apps, unparalleled connectivity and communications means that any developed economy is fertile ground for start-ups that could potentially have global reach and influence. Beyond this,

through her philanthropic work Zoe demonstrates how all of the above can also be harnessed into a powerful tool for good in reaching underprivileged societies and vulnerable people that merely a few decades ago it was naive to assume could be found, let alone effectively helped.

Session two of the @Futures series saw Professor Robin Hanson of Oxford and George Mason universities deliver an enthralling talk titled 'AI & Consciousness: Rise of the Machines'. A well-known presence on the TED Talk circuit, Prof. Hanson shared numerous fascinating insights and challenging questions about the way technology and AI is changing the way we view the world around us.

Drawing on decades of experience in computer science, economics and physics, Hanson paints a rather unsettling image of a not-so-distant future when robots controlled by super-advanced AI are able to outperform humans in almost any task. Groundbreaking research into 'brain emulations' – nicknamed 'ems', suggests that it will one day be possible to 'download' a person's collected memories and experiences onto a computer, upload the resulting data into an artificial 'mind', and thereby grant that 'mind' the ability to make decisions that will be almost precisely the same as its human 'parent'.

Once fully developed, this technology will leave entire industries obsolete and hundreds

of millions not just unemployed, but unemployable. Humanity, argues Hanson, will then be left with a stark choice – possibly the hardest choice it will ever have made: to multilaterally agree to set aside the ancient boundaries of politics, finance and creed and embark on a new era of shared wealth and redistribution of power. If plotted successfully, an AI-dominated era could see unprecedented productivity and prosperity for all of mankind.

Both of these presentations opened up rich avenues of conversation from a Torah perspective. Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz addressed the audience about the ethical dilemmas that arise as a result of handing over authority to automated systems, delving into the issue of self-driving cars forced to 'choose' between veering into a single cyclist or a car full of passengers. Following the opening session Rabbi Eli Birnbaum explored the age-old stereotypes that have seen Jews stand accused of being capitalist hoarders and communist agitators and asked: what is the Torah's vision of the ideal economy, and its economic model be feasibly applied to the post-financial crash, pre-Brexit world?

As the @Futures series draws towards a strong conclusion for Term 1, one unifying philosophy has emerged that drives the programme forward. More than anything, @Futures challenges participants and educators alike: what is humanity's next chapter, and is Judaism still part of the story?

# aish

## Young Professionals

*philosophy*

*ulpan*

*textual analysis*

*history & culture*

*21<sup>st</sup> century  
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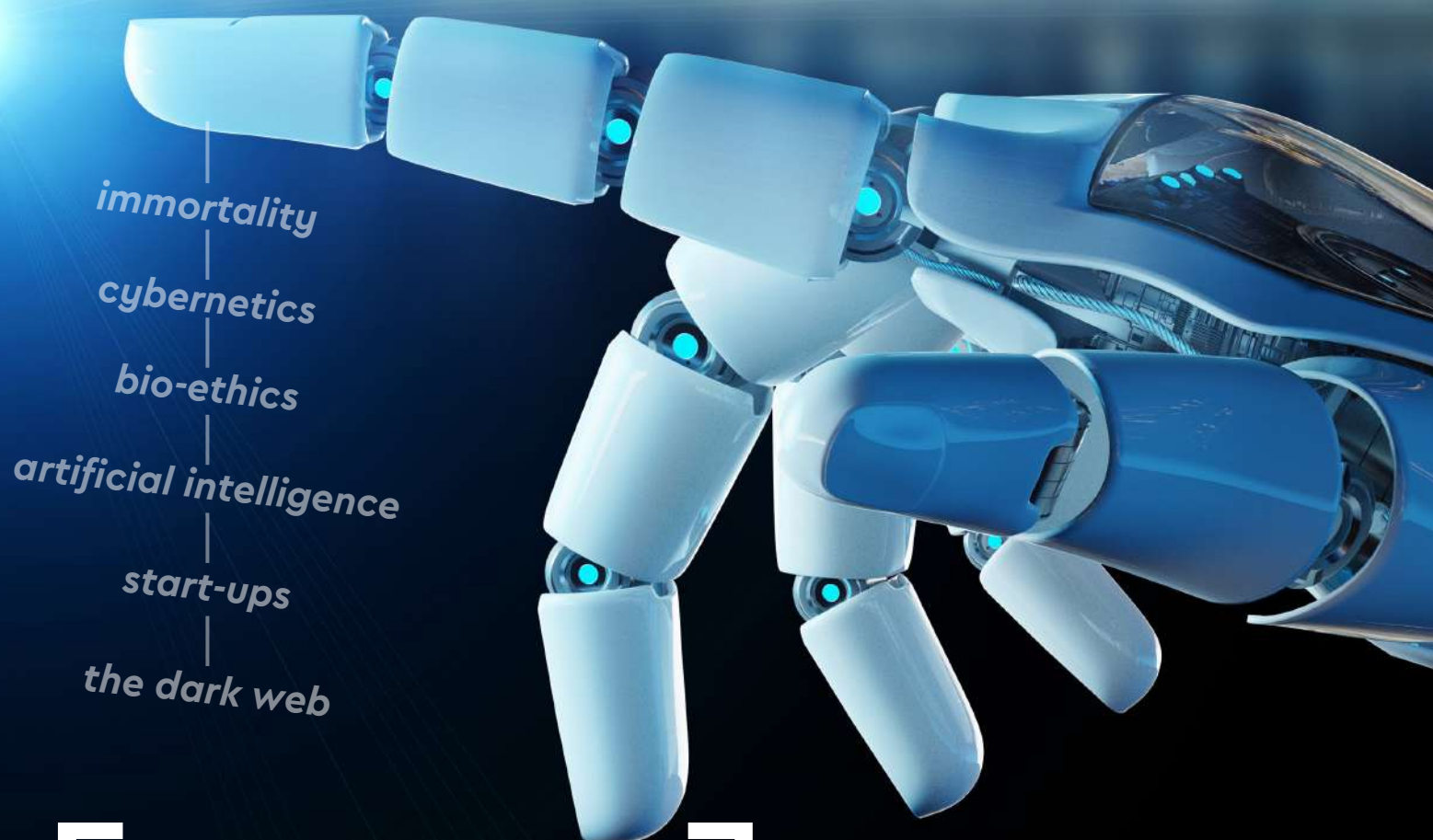
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[ ages 22-30 ]

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# @futures

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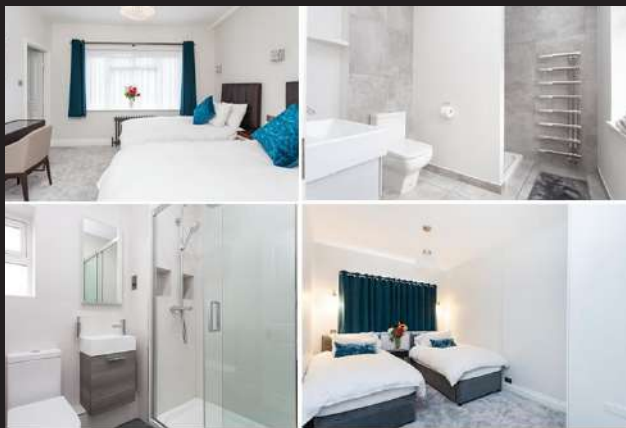
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