

Anniversary

21 February 2008 - 15 ADAR 1, 5760



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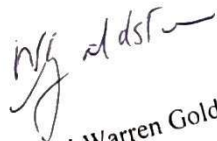
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**OFFICE OF
THE CHIEF RABBI**

On behalf of the South African Jewish Community it is a great honour to wish the Victory Park and Districts Hebrew Congregation mazaltov on this very special occasion of its 40th Anniversary. 40 years ago pioneering Jews with entrepreneurial spirit established a community Shul in an area where there were none. As we look back on the many milestones and achievements of the Victory Park Shul we must pay tribute to the passion and entrepreneurial spirit of its pioneering founders who set up a Shul in an area where there were none. We must also pay tribute to the generation of Rabbis and Chazonim and Shul committees that have served this community with such dedication and distinction. In particular Rabbi Yossi and Rebbetzin Lieba Baumgarten deserve special mention having served for 29 years with honour and distinction. We are all very excited with the wonderful start that Rabbi Azriel and Rebbetzin Laia Uzvolk have made since assuming their leadership roles at the Shul. Our sages teach us that a Shul is like a miniature Beit Hamikdash – Temple. When we enter, we connect to generations of Jews going all the way back to Mount Sinai. We were born as a People when G-d gave us His Torah 3320 years ago. As we look to the future, we pledge to continue in the noble traditions of our ancestors to ensure that the light of G-d's Torah continues to shine in our lives and in the world.

May Hashem continue to bless the Victory Park Shul with many more years of growth and vitality until the coming of the Final Redemption, may it be speedily in our days.

With warmest wishes



Rabbi Warren Goldstein

CHIEF RABBI



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כל
כנסיה
שהיא
לשם
שמים
סופה
להתקיים

(פרקי אבות ד"א)

"ANY
COMMUNITY
DEDICATED
FOR THE
SAKE OF
HEAVEN
WILL ENDURE
FOREVER"

(TALMUD, CHAPTERS
OF THE FATHERS 4:14)

As I write this greeting I have the same feeling of Nachas that a proud parent experiences in acknowledging the achievements of his children.

Some 40 years ago we held our first Minyon and in the words of Chapter 4.1 of Perkei Avos "When you enjoy the work of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well for you."

Happy I am in that we can celebrate 40 years of achievement and see the fruits of our labour in a congregation that has grown over the decades.

In congratulating the Victory Park and Districts Hebrew Congregation on this 40th Anniversary, it is my wish that Hashem shall grant his blessing that the congregation will celebrate many more such occasions.

David Serebro
 Founding Chairman

- COMMITTEE
- 1967/72
 1972/74
- 2**
- 1978/79
 1979/81
 1981/83
 1983/85
 1985/86
 1986/88
 1988/90
 1990/91
 1991/93
 1993/94
 1994/96
 1996/98
 1998/00
 2000/01
 2001/02
 2002/03
 2003/
- CHAIRMEN
- D. SEREBRO
 - S. CHERTKOW
 - C.K. WAINER
 - H. BLOOM
 - D. SEREBRO
 - I. COHEN
 - I. GUTKIN
 - S. RAFF
 - L.J. NATHAN
 - H. BLOOM
 - S. RAFF
 - H.R. LANG
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 - S. ARENSON
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 HONORARY SECRETARY
- 1977
- COMMITTEE
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 - Seymour Chertkow
 - Wille Gimpel
 - Irwin Gutkin
 - Joss Harris
 - Woolf Kantor
- Harry Bloom
 - Ivan Cohen
 - David Serebro
 - Monty Kobrin

לא תנוג
 לא תענה
 לא תתמד

DAILY

הדואר המצויין
 הודעת הנוחה ליסוד
 הוד בנות נשיא העדה
 מ כה הטרן עונת ה' ה'רפ"ב

BRAANFONTEIN HEBREW SYNAGOGUE
 FOUNDATION STONE LAYED
 DAVID BAGG ESQ. PRES.
 NOVEMBER 18TH 1977

הגובת הבית
 בית הכנסת
 ויקסלי פרק

הודעת הנוחה ליסוד
 הוד בנות נשיא העדה
 מ כה הטרן עונת ה' ה'רפ"ב

BRAANFONTEIN HEBREW SYNAGOGUE
 FOUNDATION

Message from the Chairman

Friends, we are privileged to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Victory Park & Districts Hebrew Congregation. From our humble beginnings in the foyer of the Primary school hall in 1967 to our full fledged shul today. On this important date we look back and pay tribute to those individuals who had the foresight and determination to build the community.

The Victory Park community has always played a vital role in upholding the Jewish community in the North West of Johannesburg. The North West has always been the small community within the greater Johannesburg community and together with our "sister" shuls we have continued to foster and grow Yiddishkeit in this part of Johannesburg. As with all other communities in South Africa we have been hit with emigration and older members moving from the shul. At this point we should pause and remember those members of the community who have passed away but played a vital role in establishing our community.

We must endeavour to attract new young members to ensure that our community will continue to flourish well into the future. To this extent I appeal to the men to assist us in keeping the daily minyonim going. The daily minyan is the corner stone of a shul and we must ensure we are able to have a minyan three times a day.

We have always had a solid and meaningful relationship with the South African Jewish Board of Education and the King David Victory Park school campus. Our Rabbis, both current and past, have always been welcome in the schools and over the years we have seen many successful Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies take place in the shul. To the current and past school principals we thank you for the ongoing support and look forward to many more fruitful years together.

Our community has always been a member of the Union of Synagogues and some of our past committee members have served on this important body. We are pleased that tonight we have the Chief Rabbi with us as we celebrate this special anniversary.

Im eshlacheich et yerushalim tiskack yiminie (if I forget you Jerusalem let my right hand forget its cunning). This famous verse I believe reflects the belief that Israel is central to the well being of every Jewish person and every Jewish community. Tonight as we celebrate this special event let us all remember that the State of Israel is celebrating its 60th anniversary and we as a community salute the State of Israel. We wish Israel and all her citizens a safe and prosperous future.

I believe that a true reflection of a community can be seen by the people that have grown from within. For a small shul like Victory Park to have produced over 10 Rabbonim is no small feat and we can all be proud of this. We are very much a community shul with almost all of our regular activities taking the form of family affairs. It is pleasing to see how our regular Yom Tov dinners have grown in number over the past few years.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Uzvolk have recently moved into the area and we welcome them with open arms. The Rabbi has put together many interesting shiurim and we look forward to more and more members and visitors joining us at these shiurim.

Tonight has taken many nights of planning and days of committed effort. On behalf of the whole community I wish to thank all of those who worked so hard in putting this wonderful evening together. Alan Lewis, Mel Stamelman, Joshua Lewis, Andy Koton and Leigh Wainer. To all our members, past and present and especially to those of you who were able to join us tonight, many thanks for making tonight so special. To all our wonderful sponsors who gave so graciously, we greatly appreciate your contribution to making tonight the success it is. To all the members of the community who support the shul in so many different ways we thank you. It is a great pleasure to see the amazing outcome that has been achieved. I wish you all a very pleasant evening that hopefully will create many more memories.



This celebration tonight is the culmination of 40 proud years of history. As we celebrate our past, we rejoice in the prospect of our future as a renewed and growing community.

Jeffrey R Sher
Chairman - Victory Park and Districts Hebrew Congregation



from the Rabbi's desk.....

40 years is a milestone. It's a milestone for which I cannot take credit. I compliment and praise Rabbi and Rebbetzin Baumgarten for having served and led the Victory Park community to this point. A community as strong as ours does not evolve over night. It takes nurturing, sacrifice and care.

Laia and I are privileged to be taking over the mantle of leadership at this milestone. We're not the first community to pass over leadership after 40 years. (Does the name Moses ring a bell ?).

Joshua assumed leadership of the Jews after Moses' 40 years. He took the Jews into the Promised land. With him began a new era. Now the Jews needed to learn to function as a natural, worldly nation. No more manna, nor clouds of glory.

40 represents a NEW era. It's a time of maturity. No more thirty something. So, what is maturity? To me it implies being settled, having a clarity of vision. There is no longer a need to rebel and there is responsible behaviour. The mishna in Avot ch 5 teaches us that at 40 a level of understanding is reached.

The message with which Hashem blessed Joshua was as follows: "Chazak ve Ematz" - Be strong and brave, to guard and fulfill the torah which Moshe my servant commanded you. Do not deviate from it to the right or the left in order that you will succeed in all that you do. This torah may not depart from you by day or by night and you shall utter it by day and by night so that you might succeed in all that you do." (Yehoshua 1).

May the significance of 40 carry us forward into a new era. May it, as with Joshua, carry us into Israel, with the Torah at the centre of our lives so that we succeed in whatever we do both individually and collectively,

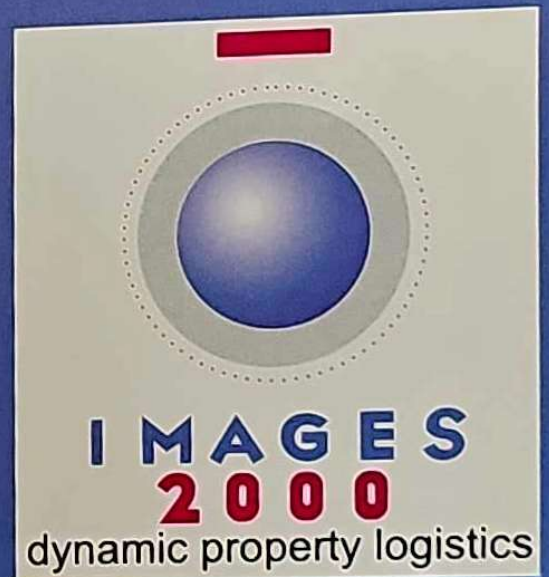
To the Victory Park community and to the South African community at large, from Laia and myself, "Chizku Ve-imtzu" - be strong and brave and may we succeed in our future endeavours together.



Rabbi A. Uzvolk



Mazeltov to the victory park hebrew congregation on 40 years of service to the community. May our community continue to grow from strength to strength in the many years to come.



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Stories from way back when...

The Victory Park Shul was completed in June 1977 and my son Colin had the first Barmitzvah there. I had to really move them to finish it in time and we had it on the 18th June without carpets but just about completed..so maybe that is worth knowing about.

Have a wonderful celebration. We the whole Sacks family from Victory Park live in Melbourne.

lots of luck

Barbara Sacks



The first Rabbi of the shul was Phillip Heilbron. He was both rav & chazan with a beautiful voice. The kids adored him and really enjoyed Shabbat mornings.

When we were still in the School Hall, our Dalmatian "Jingles" was a regular shul attendee, however as soon as the Rabbi began

his sermon, he used to let out a loud yawn and go to sleep.



I'm sure Rona Bloom can tell you lots of stories e.g. Harry, who had an incredible sense of humour, started a rumour that he was building a Mikva on the stand next to their house (which is now the Strimling's house). The Mikva would be where the Nathans are in Lynton Lane. The whole community was abuzz discussing it, and he was laughing at everyone.

When we moved in to the area, some of the shul committee came to ask us to be members of the shul. Tony opened the door and said you don't want me you want my wife.

A few weeks later Leon Nafte was collecting for the IUA, and on the card was written, not Jewish but a donor.

In order to get a seat at shul, one had to be a foundation member. When Harry Bloom & Ivan Cohen came to see us, Tony had to agree to us becoming a foundation member. A few years later, I wanted a seat for Jodi, I had to make her a foundation member too. Are there lists of the original foundation members, and the subsequent ones still around?

Marcia Parness



I remember Victory Park

The Lissoos family moved into Victory Park 37 years ago. We chose this suburb because of the Jewish day school presence and a Shul congregation.

Initially shul services were held in the Primary school hall – women on the left of the hall and men on the right with a substantial aisle between.

Discussions at Shul committee meetings always centered on the building of a shul. If one goes to the minutes of these meetings there was always this discussion. Eventually Collie Wainer, a more than well known property landlord, took the bull by the horns and got things going in the building of our present shul. He was ably assisted in fund raising by Harry Bloom, Monty Kobrin, David Serebro and Seymour Chertkow.

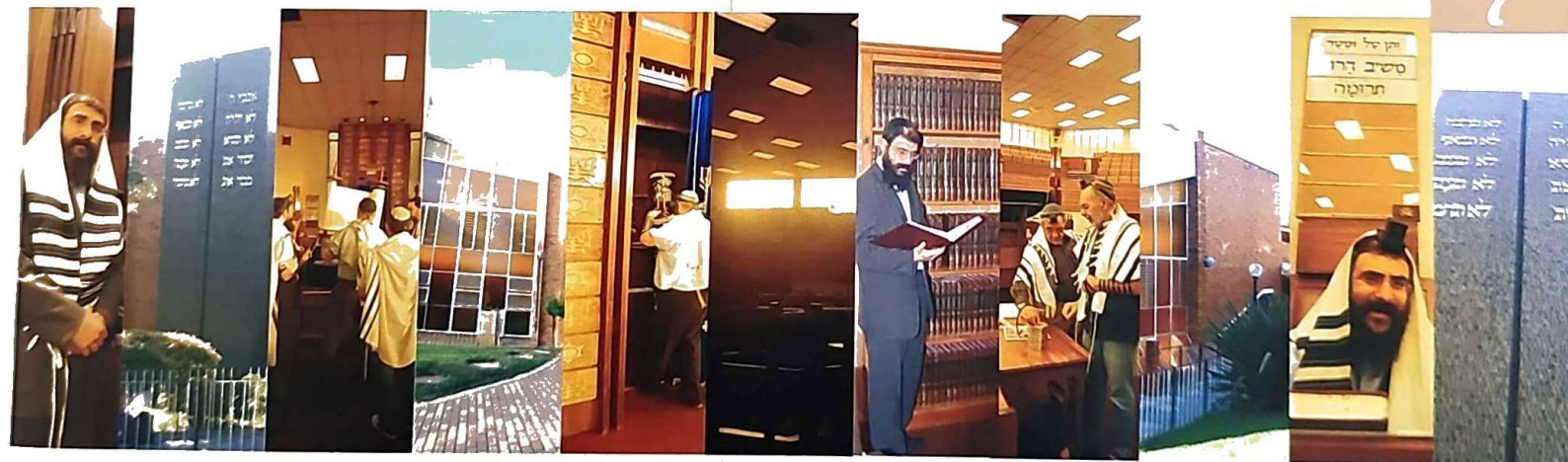
Eventually enough money was raised. Negotiations with the South African Jewish Board of Education allowed us to build our Shul on the King David High School property.

Ruth Gimpel (now Lazarus) headed the Ladies committee and with her usual skill was responsible for the delicious catering of all the shul functions.

Rael, our son, was one of the first boys to have his barmitzvah at the shul. He was also one of the first to conduct the Friday night service and to read the whole sedra – i.e. Layering all the aliyahs.

After much controversy, good sense finally prevailed and the King David schoolgirls started having their Batmitzvahs at the shul. Dolly Levin scripted and trained the girls for what was always a moving and impressive ceremony. Rabbi Baumgarten's address to the girls was always inspiring.

Three of the Lissoos girls had their batmitzvahs here. On one occasion our shul was not big enough and the batmitzvahs were held in the Emmarentia Shul. Thus Phili Lissoos had her batmitzvah in Emmarentia.



The school was to use the Shul for daily prayers.

The Shul Rabbi, if and when appointed, was to be involved on the school campus. Ivan Ziskind, who had just designed the Yeshiva College shul was appointed architect. We got our new shul!!!

The Victory Park Hebrew congregation has been the central focus of religious activities in this area and of communal life. The shul has played a very important part in our lives

Please God the shul will continue to go from strength to strength

Irv Lissoos

The Victory of Victory Park

Victory Park deserves to be royally saluted on its 40th anniversary.

They have been trailblazers and helped put the Johannesburg Jewish community on a pedestal with their chesed extraordinaire.

For the last 18 years the Victory Park community has hosted the Residents of the Selwyn Segal annually for a Shabbaton. The community not only opened their hearts and homes to these precious people,



but they have developed special relationships that have exceeded all bounds and expectations.

When the history of the Johannesburg Jewish community will one day be written, the Victory Park community will deserve to rank uniquely at the top for their commitment and leadership in leading the way in showing the road for communities to overcome preconceived prejudices. This can best be described as the "Victory of Victory Park."

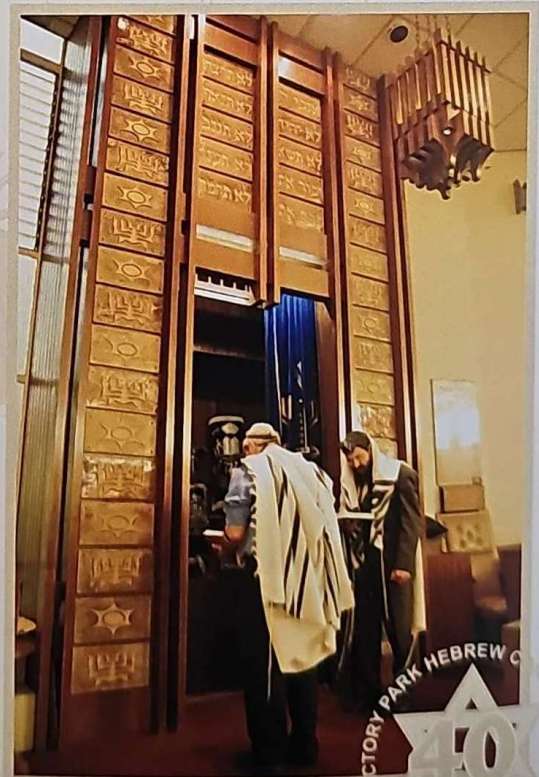
On a lighter note, one anecdote that comes to mind involved Ari Klein on one of our visits reminding one of the residents, Brent Sloman, who was going to sing "Anim Zmirot" not to scream, and then speaking to himself, Ari Klein said, "who am I to tell him not to scream."

There are many other incidents that have left indelible impressions, but none more so than the hospitality, friendliness and chaveshaft that have been the hallmarks of every visit. The residents lovingly remember the great times that have been had, particularly playing leggy with Herby Lang at the Delta.

May the Victory Park community continue to grow spiritually, morally and ethically and may the entire congregation be blessed to reap the rewards that they so richly deserve.

All the residents of the Selwyn Segal join me in wishing you every success on the occasion of your 40th anniversary celebrations and may the congregation go from strength to strength.

Lionel Stein – Convenor of the Selwyn Segal Brocha and Shabbaton Programme and past Chairman of the Yeshiva College Hebrew Congregation.





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Tau Lodge - Madikwe January 2008

The silence here is such as you only hear in the deep country-side, birds chirping, frogs leaping in the water, buck and the like sipping gently at the waterhole. Random sightings of lion, elephants and many other of the beasts of creation.

Much like that January day in 1966 when we moved into our newly completed house in Victory Park. A wooded setting, few houses, but teeming with the atmosphere of things to come.

Next door, a celebration in progress marking the arrival of a new baby, representing the spirit of a young suburb, vital and energetic, bound to grow to maturity.

Of course, Victory Park could not remain pastoral and undeveloped with sand roads, cows grazing in the fields and trees everywhere. Houses were being built all over and in the nature of things Jewish, the time came to make provision for this new suburb's spiritual development.

A small group of the early residents, including Dave Serebro, Seymour Chertkow, Erwin Chernin, Harold Smith, Arnie Valkin, Des Novick and yours truly, set about the task of starting a Shul.



Sadly, most of those involved are no longer members of the Shul and even more sadly, some have passed on. However, we should all remember them with appreciation for their efforts.

We canvassed the residents and approached all newcomers to the suburb. Development of houses was such that there was a constant influx of new residents. Many belonged to other and established Shuls and we had to show that we could meet expectations.

Eventually, in 1967, we commenced Friday night services in the foyer of, and subsequently inside, the Primary School Hall. We had begged and borrowed Sifreh Torahs, had an Oren Kodesh made, used the schools' chairs in rows facing each other for the men and the ladies and we were "in business".

Friday night services were initially conducted by various members who, although not trained, were able to do so. In order to grow and increase our offering as a community shul, we had to increase the services to include Shabbat morning and festival services and everything that went along with that. We soon employed trained and skilled persons to lead the services and to attend to the spiritual needs of the congregants. We had successes and failures amongst these. I think of Philip Heilbron who was an outstanding Chazan and, on the other side of the coin, a certain person, employed part time for Friday night and Shabbat services only, who was a huge disappointment.

All the while we were using the Primary School Hall for services, having to set up and take down each week and Yomtov. The Committee, comprising mainly the original founding group plus a number of notable, hard working and enthusiastic people were well aware that we could not continue in temporary premises and began moves to secure a permanent home for the Congregation.

It made sense to remain within the campus of the King David Schools. The High School was still very much in a growth phase. A bequest from the Hurwitz Family, endowing a hall for the High School served as a catalyst to combine the development of a new school hall with a synagogue, where some synergy of facilities could be enjoyed. A proper Shul would also create a venue for the daily morning services attended by the pupils.

A serious fund raising campaign was undertaken and various people, then on the Committee worked extremely hard to raise the funds necessary to get going. Amongst these, the late Harry Bloom, was a tireless worker.

What had to be done, was done. The Shul was built, clergy were appointed and this spanking new facility was opened by the then Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Bernard Casper, amid celebrations and great joy on 7 August 1977.

Alf Abrahamson





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YOU WANT TO KILLA ME YES?

My name is Hymie Altman. For my sins I am a Quantity Surveyor (and a jolly good one too!!) I was privileged to have been appointed by the then august and knowledgeable specially constituted "Body of Balebattim" which was entrusted by the Victory Park and Outlying Districts Hebrew Congregation to act on it's behalf as a Caretaker Building Committee.

Why am I telling you all this ?

Well, I was recently asked by one of your present day Shul Committee Members whether I was involved in the construction of the Shul? Whether I knew of or could remember anything humorous or something of interest that could be shared with the Community ? My response was immediately in the affirmative !!!

I had always dreamed of one day telling someone/anyone/everyone about a most unusual type of incident that happened at one of our weekly site meetings...it certainly was unusual, and being personally involved, it was frightening!! Everyone who was (privileged enough to be) present at this particular site meeting included, inter alia, members representing the Client, Architects, Structural Engineers, Electrical Consultants, Quantity Surveyors, Main Building Contractors, Sub Contractors and other interested parties, were shocked at what they witnessed!!!

At this stage a bit of background:
Remember that any building contract doesn't just happen!

Many months, if not years, of planning, hard work, sweat and tears, snot en trane, re-planning, revamping, pricing, adjusting, negotiating, forwards and backwards, until a fair and viable contract is eventually arrived at and signed and sealed. By the time construction is underway the whole of the "building team" becomes (or should become) a cohesive integrated unit and everyone knows (or should know) precisely what is required to successfully and amicably conclude the Contract.

Another bit of background:
Some significant trivia relevant to this episode regarding its main players:

Firstly, yours truly: I am not (nor was I then) one of the smallest guys around...95 to 100kg and 1,82 m tall makes me no small baby!!

Secondly, our Main Contractors: Messrs. Lidone & Bozenetti, two of the nicest people one could ever wish to come across of Italian extraction, as the names of the two main directors implies: the one was one of the smallest and shortest of men (I would guess he must have been about 60 to 65kg and about 1,60 m tall) and the other was really one of the tallest, largest, heaviest and strongest of men (I would say that he must have

conservatively been about 230 to 250kg and at least 1,96 m tall in his socks) .

The reason for giving the above mentioned vital statistics will become quite apparent in the next couple of lines of this historic revelation on this auspicious occasion.

However, I must crave your indulgence for just one more bit of background:

For those of you who may not be all that familiar with the procedure, protocol and etiquette at any normal building site meeting please note that what I am about to divulge is NOT the norm!!

As our Architect was out of town for this particular site meeting I chaired the meeting. Everything was running smoothly, recording of progress, financial matters, problem areas, weather conditions and all other things relevant to the contract, were minuted and another fruitful and successful meeting was drawing to a close just prior to lunchtime.

I have, to this very day, no idea of what precipitated this very strange behavior which is about to be revealed to you.....what happened was this:

I was about to thank everybody present for their attendance when there was a huge loud bellow emanating from the seat directly opposite to where I was sitting!! It was terrifying!!

**"Hey Alterman..What is a da matta wit you ?
You want to try killa me yes??
Well, no! I will killa you first!!"**

With that, the gigantic frame of the normally most placid Mr.Lodoni as fast as greased lightning itself, surged upward and forward with outstretched arms traversing the full width of the table and all I saw was those enormous hands coming directly towards my throat... all in the flash of a second!

Everybody was stunned, the silence was deafening, nobody moved a muscle!!

Suddenly a shrill voice screaming in Italian pierced the silence and the small frame of Mr Bozenetti came hurtling across the room to entangle his small delicate hands around his lifelong friends' neck!! Just as well, or I would still be dangling from that giant's vicelike grip with the tips of my toes trying desperately to re-engage with terra firma!!!

The bottom line is that regrettably Mr.Lidoni's medication that he was on at the time played havoc with his mind...and after suitable but unnecessary apologies...all is forgiven and forgotten. As for me I still have this beautiful slender neck!!!

HEARTIEST MAZELTOV VICTORY PARK
Hymie Altman



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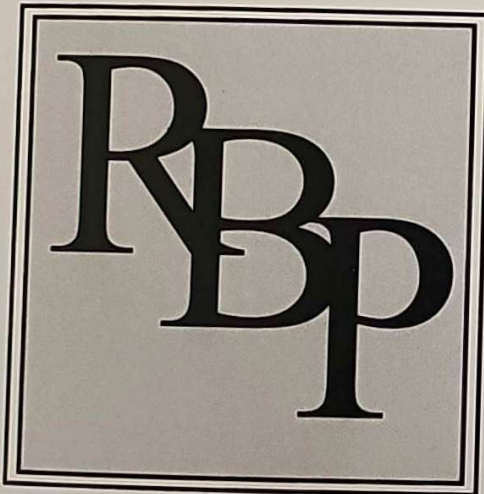
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King David Schools and the Shul

A shul has a three-fold task to its community. It serves as a place of communal tefillah yet is also a Beit Kneset, a place where Jewish communities gather. This could well be in a social sense, for it is through social interaction that community life is cemented. The third task of a shul is to be a Beit Midrash, a place of learning, to be a vibrant community there needs to be ongoing growth in the form of knowledge.

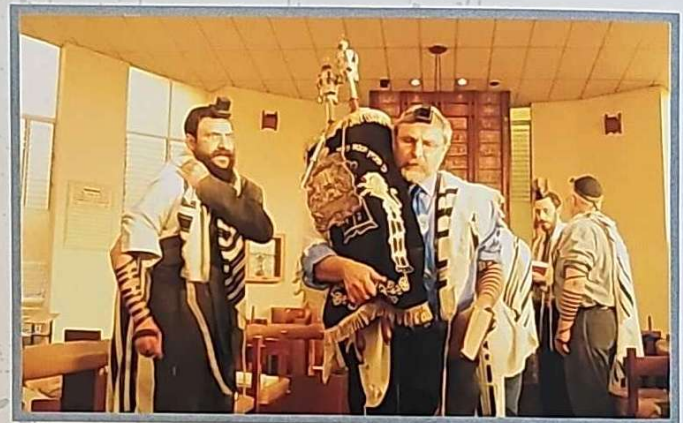
Victory Park School has achieved many of these goals within an already established community, the Victory Park School community, ideally placed to create the synergies between school and shul.

In retrospect one wonders if this successful shul and school could not have achieved even greater heights if the bond would have been closer. Far from me to dwell on the past or the overly negative. Time is a continuum and thus always grants us the opportunity to celebrate, contemplate and look forward with hope to the future.



14 May the Victory Park community have much joy in its anniversary celebrations and may we find many more such occasions to celebrate in the future.

**RABBI KACEV
SABJE**



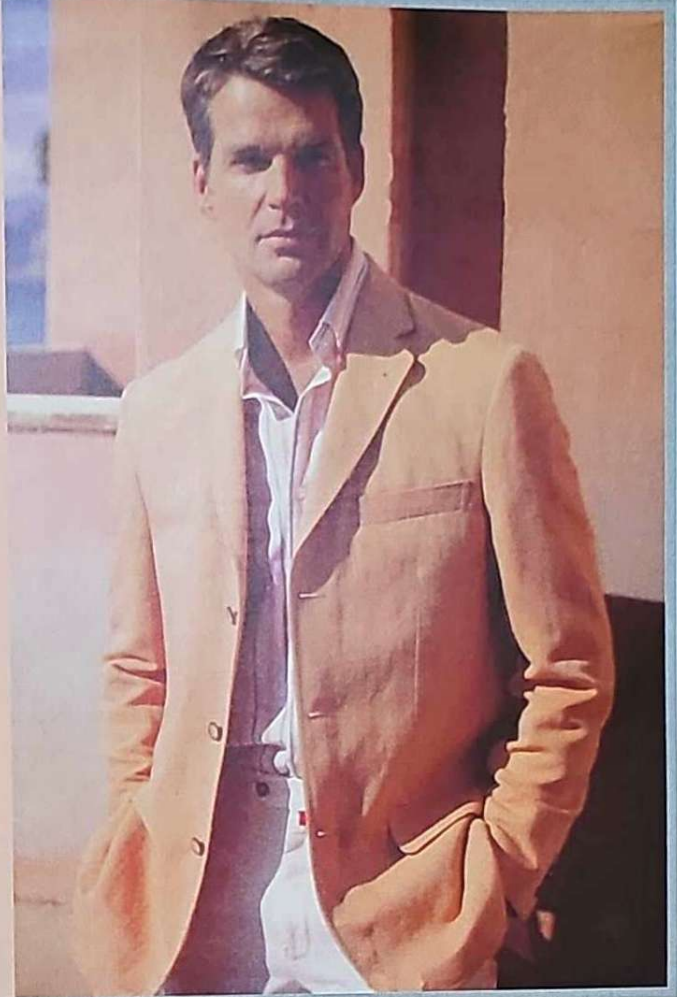
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Victory Park Shul Anniversary Tribute February 2008

It is now almost a quarter of a century since I first set foot in the Victory Park Shul. It was here that I celebrated my barmitvah, a very nervous young boy, in 1987, and it was here that I began my spiritual journey that would eventually lead me to the rabbinate.

My memory of the shul is by and large connected to several families, all of whom had a profound influence on my life.

Rabbi Yossi and Liebe Baumgarten opened their home to me and I soon became a regular visitor and a close friend of Mordechai and Shalom DovBer. Meals at the Baumgartens were legendary-great food (even the 'cardboard' shmurah matzah on Pesach was somewhat of a delicacy!) interesting conversation and a steady stream of guests from across the religious spectrum. But their involvement did not end there. Every Thursday night, at the behest of Mordechai, I would join a small group of young men from the neighborhood on the long trek to the Torah Academy School in Oaklands where we enjoyed the weekly mishmar learning programme. This in turn led to many Shabbatonim on 'the other side of town', most of which were run by the spirited and lively Lubavitcher bochrim from America. Rabbi Baumgarten was always on hand to assist me and many others in the performance of mitzvot through the Victory Park mitzvah fund and he often encouraged me to deliver short divrei Torah at Seudah shlishit and at other times. I now have my own Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, which, thank G-d, has assisted many congregants to lead a better Jewish life.

David and Renee Shaw were another couple that contributed to the spiritual growth of many young men and women in the community. One could always find a large group of high school students at the Shaw apartment on Shabbat afternoons where we ate, sang and learned in a relaxed and humorous atmosphere. David personally saw to arranging learning programmes for the youth of our shul and it was at his insistence that several of us would go to the Keter Torah community of Rabbi David Lapin every Sunday morning for classes in Talmud, Mussar and Chumash. Even after they left Victory Park, I maintained a strong connection with the Shaws and I would often visit their home, first in Sydenham and later in Sandton, before they emigrated to Australia shortly after I was married in 1998.

The long Shabbat afternoons at Victory Park offered the 'Shabbos gang' an opportunity to spend time together, socializing, learning and enjoying good food. The Victory Park Shabbos gang of the 80's consisted of, amongst others, Michael and Daniel Gimpel, Adam Galgut, Maurice Aron, Jonathan and Saul Bloom, the late Marc Aarons, of blessed memory, Michael, Larry and Brandon Raff and David Frankel. Many of these young men have gone on to study at yeshiva, marry and produce wonderful observant families in South Africa, Israel, America and elsewhere.

These young men were frequent guests of Ruth and the late Willie Gimpel, at whose home one could sample Ruth's culinary delights, talk philosophy with the older Gimpel boys, Jonathan and David, and even take a nap after lunch. Another favourite location was the home of Rhona and the late Harry Bloom, where the gang delighted in snooker, ping-pong, soccer and tennis. These activities made it possible for many to keep Shabbos, which at their own home may have been too lengthy and lonely to deal with.

Of course, the Victory Park shul was renowned for its many colorful characters. Remember Irwin Gutkin's pesukei d'zimra, recited at a world-record speed of 15 minutes every Shabbat? After all a 'time is a time', as the shul motto attested to. What about the snuffboxes passed around by the old timers at the back of the shul on Shabbat mornings? And who could forget Bulke (and I don't mean the pastries served at the brochah!) or the controversial ice machine that was always a subject of religious debate!

Victory park shul was a family, a home, and a place where you could find your own niche, whether it was a quiet spot to daven, a good whiskey with friends or a challenging shiur on the Parsha.

I will always recall my years at the shul with fondness and joy and I wish the community hatzlacha rabbah for the future.

Rabbi Matthew Liebenberg

Claremont Wynberg Hebrew Congregation, Cape Town

Chairman Of The Rabbinical Association Of The Western Cape



Becoming 'Meshugah Frum'

VICTORY PARK holds a special place in my heart. I was born there and spent my formative years in its warm embrace. Growing up in Victory Park was a privilege. While being part of the great metropolis of Johannesburg it still had the character of a small town. Everyone was friendly and there was a real sense of community. When at shul, I enjoyed myself because I found myself in the company of my friends from school. Friends with whom, to this day I have a close connection. I probably would have gone the way of most South African Jews i.e. Shul 3 times a year and maybe kosher at home and a smattering of Yiddish words, had it not been for Victory Park Shul.

including; Rabbi Weiner (who now heads up the Centre program in Israel) Rabbi Baruch Smith (who now heads up Mischelet Ester in Jerusalem). Foremost among those who influenced me, and many others was David Shaw who became the Chazan in 1986. David guided my group of friends and I, on the path of learning and growing in Torah and Yidishkeit.

Victory Park Shul members were the ones who allowed us to grow and rebel and push boundaries and I'm sure on many occasions be royal pains in the area a bit below the neck. Victory Park taught me things like "A time is a time" "Be a mensh"



Several acts of Divine providence coincided with my choices to lead me down the path of religious observance or as some might call it "meshugah frum"

Rabbi Baumgarten was the first to influence me, while I was learning my Bar Mitzvah parsha, by saying in order to learn with him, I had to attend shul for the whole year prior to my Barmitzvah. This I did and started coming to shul regularly. Further he and Lieba often invited me over for Shabbes lunch. I realized that Chalah and Cholent are nothing to be sneezed at. Simultaneously I was becoming good and true friends with some other "regulars" my age. While some people may think Shabbes is a drag, for me it was the highlight of my week. Always great food and great company. We used to go in packs from one house to the next, like a plague of locusts devouring all the great food put in front of us. Thank you to all the mothers who used to always manage to provide more food than we could eat - very impressive. There were some Youth Directors who went on to great things who also had an influence on my group,

"Always try help the community" "Some one has to put the siddurim away" and to be grateful to the ladies and men who work so hard, for the Shul for nothing more than a complaint about how things could be done in a better way. The above and many more midot (characteristics) are what made and make the Victory Park congregation so special. It was in this fertile field of good old fashioned Jewish values, that I became a part of, and wanted to contribute to the Jewish nation. I owe a debt to the Victory Park Hebrew congregation, it was one of my first stops on this Journey called life and it has made an indelible impression. Even though I've moved out of Victory Park, myself and others still proudly refer to our selves as "Parkers" I pray that the shul goes from strength to strength so that other "youngsters" can grow up in a shul, that's really a warm happy family full of good values.

David Frankel



Nostalgia

I note from Stan's weekly news bulletin that the Victory Park Shul is celebrating it's 40th anniversary next month. My wife, Adele, and I joined the Congregation on moving from Potchefstroom to Johannesburg at the beginning of 1970 and remained members until our emigration to Canada in 1992. We have fond memories of our stay in Victory Park and of the life-long friendships made with numerous members of the Congregation while our children, Saul, Basil and Deborah - who unfortunately passed away in 2000 - were given the privilege of attending the Jewish Day School at Victory Park and thereafter receiving a university education prior to their departure for Canada.

It is thus with a certain amount of nostalgia that we think back on the years that have gone by but we are at the same time pleased to convey the very best wishes from our family to the Congregation on this wonderful milestone. May the Congregation continue to remain a pivot of Jewish life and learning in Victory Park.

This message is sent with greetings from Adele and I, Saul and his wife Deborah and their children, Basil and his wife Lauren and their children, and late Deborah's husband, Ian, and their children.

Arnold Levy
Ontario - Canada

It is with much pleasure that I wish the Victory Park Shul a Hearty Yeshakeach and Mazeltov for their 40th Anniversary.

May the forty years turn to gold and may the Shul go from strength to strength.

Louis Aronowitz

Mazeltov Victory Park Congregation.

We wish we were there to celebrate with you. I remember helping out to make a minyan in the school hall before the shul was built. We have wonderful memories of our years at the shul, and miss all our friends.

Motty and Mankie Fedler
Greensboro North Carolina USA

Victory Park has always been unique, and will continue to be unique, in the Johannesburg family of shuls. Thirty five years bound up with this shul, three barmitzvahs and one batmitzvah, and some dozen years able to serve on the committee : the shul has played a major part in the lives of my family. The Friendships engendered there, the opportunities offered to participate in a meaningful Jewish life, cannot be overemphasized.

I welcome the opportunity to wish the Committee and Kehillah of the Victory Park Shul a hearty mazeltov on the 40th birthday and to extend all good wishes for continued hatzlachan.

May you continue to play a role far in excess of the size of the community.

Kind regards

Colin Frankel

PS: One piece of trivia: Our daughter Miriam, was born on the late afternoon of the 7th of August 1977, where Maureen had been involved in the catering during the day of the opening



Life begins at forty

It is said "life begins at forty"!.....
 With Hashem's Blessing, may this be the case
 with this very special Kehilla. Our family had the
 pleasure and privilege to be part of the
 community from its inception, and long may it
 continue to thrive and prosper. On a personal
 note, the growth and development of
 yidishkeit, and familiarisation of the Synagogue
 service was an integral part of our children's
 growth. I personally am indebted to The Rabbi
 and his group of youngsters for this. I could
 never have given this education to our children.
 There are many from that era that have
 progressed to take Smicha and teach or have
 congregations of their own.

More generally this community is very special.
 It is almost as if each and every family has an
 extension up the road , around the corner,
 somewhere in VP. It was and I am sure still is
 amazing to see congregants emerge from their
 homes on Kol Nidre night on their way to shul,
 chavershaft and camaraderie building and
 erecting the Succah. Having a L'chaim on
 Shabbat. All these occasions are never to be
 forgotten and for us "out of sight is not out of
 mind." It may not be simultaneous but we think
 of you alloften." We think of all the post
 Yom Tov lunches, no where else can you find a
 group of people so friendly, hospitable and
 caring as in VP

Who will not consider the highlight of our
 calendar the annual visit from Selwyn Segal. We
 have all developed special relationships with our
 annual guests, very special people. Long may it
 continue and grow from strength to strength.

Renee and I will unfortunately not be able to be
 with you on the night of your celebration , our
 thoughts and good wishes will most certainly be
 with you.



Once again a hearty Mazaltov to you all, and
 may Hashem shower his blessings on you all.

Yours with fond and happy memories
 Renee and Geoff Bryer
 Australia



KING DAVID SCHOOLS

The Shul on the Victory Park campus plays an integral part in the daily lives of our King David students.

For 40 years, our staff and students have attended prayer services every morning as well as celebrating chaggim and commemorative occasions.

We wish our Victory Park Hebrew Congregation a very hearty mazaltov on this auspicious occasion. May you and the community continue to grow and flourish.

Joseph Gerassi - Headmaster



20

Making a Minyan - the creation of a Shul

This function tonight being held to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Victory Park Congregation fills me with memories of a time very different from the present. A few young men in their twenties to early thirties set out to establish a minyan which would create a true community surrounding the King David Schools. I can recall so well the day that David Serebro and I visited the Chief Rabbi in his office in Yeoville to request his blessing to establish a minyan in our suburb.

Our request was granted and the Victory Park Congregation came into being. We now had to find a home for our minyan and what better place could there be than the Primary School hall as the High School did not have a hall at the time. Every Friday afternoon you would find a group of young men setting up the hall

for the Shabbat. The community prospered and grew.

Eventually Rabbi Phillip Heilbrunn became our Spiritual Leader. We had arrived.

As the community grew our beautiful Shul was built. It became a place of worship which was used every day by the pupils attending the high school.

The present leaders of the community have a very different environment to deal with. Emigration and demographic changes within the community have created challenges not seen previously. I wish them well in their endeavours and pray that our Community grows from strength to strength.

Seymour Chertkow



*Congratulating
Victory Park Shul
on their 40th
Anniversary.*

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Excerpts from the late CHIEF RABBI CASPER'S ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE VICTORY PARK SHUL - 1967

We are the generation of survivors. We are the generation who have seen so much destruction of Jewish values, of centres of Torah, centres of Jewish idealism and life, and therefore it is heartwarming for us to be able from time to time to see a sort of a reawakening, a rebirth, a resurgence of Jewish activity, of Jewish belief, of Jewish practice in our parts of the world.

A synagogue is for us a symbol of human values, of humanity itself.

A few years ago, at the time of the Munich massacre of Jewish athletes I referred to terrorist activity as a cancer which, unless uprooted by international determination will inevitably spread so that eventually no one will be safe anywhere. Its perpetrators have apparently lost all sense of the value of human life. We plead with the International community. Specially, may I say with world religious bodies to take firm steps to control this anarchy, to prevent further bloodshed. Stop the dangerous erosion of human values.

Human values. That I suppose is what our celebration here this afternoon is all about. This particular synagogue has got some special features. I will not discuss its architectural features - others perhaps are more competent to judge that. The feature which I am referring to particularly is that this is a synagogue which is linked with a school. If I may say so, I think it grew out of the school. First there was learning. First there was a place for children. First there was a place for Torah, and from this gradually a community grew, and grew, until eventually this particular synagogue has come about in such a way that it will have a golden, glorious opportunity of bringing to bear its influence upon hundreds of our children day by day. That those children will be able not merely to see an edifice from the outside, but to come into it constantly every day. To feel its warmth, to feel its guidance, to feel its Jewish inspiration.

There is another lesson, which I think has to be learnt from it, and that is, what we might call the sense of community. A sense of mutual responsibility - the one for another. We need to be with others in a community so that we should be able to demonstrate the relationship, the proper relationship, between one man and another. That is why we say our prayers always in a minyan, so that a man should know that he has to link himself with others in the community, so that there is nothing selfish about his prayers. He prays not merely for himself but for others, for all those round about him. A sense of responsibility is there for us to learn from page after page of our sacred teachings.

Every single one of us must see himself as though he is facing the whole world and every single person has to realize that he has it in his power to bring a blessing or a curse to the whole of the world.

And there is another thought, in this same connection, that I must leave with you. It's important that every individual should be aware of the potential which is his. The power which is in his hands. When you know such a thing, when you have this awareness of the potential of your place in the world, of your place in life, of the opportunities that are before you, of what you can achieve and what you should do when you are aware of these things, then the possibilities that are before you are almost limitless.

With compliments and best wishes to the shul



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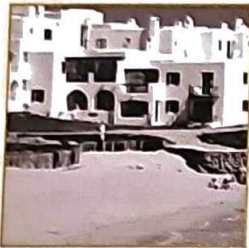
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