



# SJCA

SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

ESTABLISHED 2019 / 5780

082 440 2621

rabbi@sjca.org.za

thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com

www.africanjewishcongress.com

Rav Moshe Silberhaft

@CountryRabbi



with Divine Guidance

## PESACH MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SJCA 5780(2020)

Dear Friends and Fellow Small Community Congregants,

It is indeed an honour for me to be the first Chairperson of the first Communal Organisation in South Africa owned by and dedicated to the promotion of the religious wellbeing of Jews living outside or on the fringes of the main Jewish population centres in the country, the Small Jewish Communities Association of South Africa (the “SJCA”).

In the past this was the function of an arm of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) known as the Country Communities Department but now we represent ourselves and I want to thank the pioneers who together with me have brought this about and who serve on the first National Council, namely, our First Vice Chairperson Ann Harris (African Jewish Congress (AJC)), our Second Vice Chairperson, Selwyn Plitt (Vereeniging), Shaun Zagnoev (National Chairman - SAJBD) our CFO Meyer Gelbart, Perry Feldman (Parys) and Ivor Gelman (Grahamstown) and our National Director & Spiritual Leader, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

A year ago this seemed impossible and the future of our Country Communities bleak with the pending closure of the Country Communities Department of the SAJBD but with imagination, ingenuity and the hard work and co-operation of all those mentioned above and Zev Krengel Vice President of the SAJBD it has become a reality and the future of our country communities- the fruit of the *Great Litvak Trek* into South Africa of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century- has been secured.

Herbert Agar in “*Saving the Remnant*” wrote of the *Lithuanian Jew* as having been a unique type of man living in small towns and being compassionate, holy, inward looking and happy with his store of biblical scholarship, his books, his family and his deep love of God and those of us who grew up in the *Stetls of Southern Africa* can give testimony that his children in Africa were no different and that the importance of our communities is that we saved these traditions through turbulent times and sent them back into the mainstream of *Judaism* throughout the Western World in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1983, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson wrote:-

*“..... the Festival of Pesach, [Passover] the Season of Our Liberation, comes around every year not merely to remind us of the Liberation of our ancestors from Egyptian*

2.....

Founding Members:

Chairman Barney Horwitz (Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation) | Vice Chairman Selwyn Plitt (Vereeniging) | Vice Chairman Ann Harris (African Jewish Congress)  
Treasurer Meyer Gelbart

I. Gelvan (Grahamstown), Trustees (Group Defunct Communities), Trustees (Kroonstad), E. Berger (Lichtenburg), P. Feldman (Parys), Judge R. H. Zulman & D. Saks (Pietersburg), G. Green (Potchefstroom), S. Zagnoev (S A Jewish Board Of Deputies), M. Levitas & S Leas (Springs), M. Gordon (Uitenhage), R. Gnesin (Upington), P. Gersh (Welkom), S. Phillips (Witbank)

National Director & Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft



# SJCA

SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

ESTABLISHED 2019 / 5780

082 440 2621

rabbi@sjca.org.za

thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com

www.africanjewishcongress.com

Rav Moshe Silberhaft

@CountryRabbi



with Divine Guidance

*bondage, but also to inspire us to strive for a greater measure of self-liberation from all limitations and distractions which impede a Jew from his free exercise of Yiddishkeit in the everyday life. This is the meaning of the highly significant passage in the Haggadah: In every generation a Jew should see himself as though he personally has been liberated from Mitzrayim [Egypt]....."*

There can be no better way of expressing what we as the SJCA stand for.

As we move towards *Pesach* we are taking our first steps towards assisting smaller communities and individuals in outlying areas to maintain their connection to mainstream *Judaism* and our common *Jewish Heritage* through visits, communications and assistance with preparations for the festival from our Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, the doyen of Country Community Rabbis, and through messages and inspiration from our First Vice Chairperson, Ann Harris who infuses in us the remarkable legacy of her late husband, former Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris of blessed memory who taught the Jews of South Africa that in the face of adversity can come the building blocks of a great communal revival.

Just as in 1994, the Jewish Community in Africa is currently living in great uncertainty. Will the *Corona Virus Pandemic* destabilise the countries and economies in which we live? Will religious freedoms be fully restored once the current emergency measures are abolished? Will the pandemic decimate our numbers bearing in mind our average age being a little beyond youthful?

We in the SJCA have taken the lead in trying to preserve the unique *African Ashkenaz* tradition and to make it possible notwithstanding the limitations imposed by small numbers and the distractions of the general communities around us to promote the free exercise of our *Yiddishkeit* in the everyday life and to wear the badge of *Judaism* with pride.

I wish you all a *chag Pesach kasher vesame'ach*.

BARNEY HORWITZ  
CHAIRPERSON

Founding Members:

Chairman Barney Horwitz (Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation) | Vice Chairman Selwyn Plitt (Vereeniging) | Vice Chairman Ann Harris (African Jewish Congress)  
Treasurer Meyer Gelbart

I. Gelvan (Grahamstown), Trustees (Group Defunct Communities), Trustees (Kroonstad), E. Berger (Lichtenburg), P. Feldman (Parys), Judge R. H. Zulman & D. Saks (Pietersburg), G. Green (Potchefstroom), S. Zagnoev (S A Jewish Board Of Deputies), M. Levitas & S Leas (Springs), M. Gordon (Uitenhage), R. Gnesin (Upington), P. Gersh (Welkom), S. Phillips (Witbank)

National Director & Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft