

FROM THE EDITOR

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One of my favourite cartoons that appeared several years ago in the pages of The New Yorker magazine had a black and white illustration of a clearly observant Jewish man walking down the street speaking on his cell phone, saying to the person on the other end, "And remember, if you need anything, I'm available 24/6," in a seemingly obvious reference to the fact that the man did not work on Shabbos – 24/6 rather than the well-known expression used in business of 24/7, referring to being available on all days and at all times. With a national circulation of well over a million copies, The New Yorker magazine ranks among the top magazines in the United States, meaning that the joke was seen as one whose punch line could be understood by anyone and everyone across America.

There are certain behaviours, external acts, that seemingly define us as Jews and, of which, even the world around us has taken particular notice – enough to laugh along with the joke.

The Torah tells us that Shabbos is an *os*, a "sign", between the Jewish people and Hashem. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, aka the Chofetz Chaim, famously explains that when a sign hangs outside of a building, it announces to the world the particular business or trade in which the owner is engaged. As long as the sign hangs on the building, even if the owner of the business goes away for several days or even weeks, it's clear and obvious to everyone that the business has not moved or closed down – that it's still open for business. But, if the sign is removed, everyone knows that the business has closed for good. So too with Shabbos; Shabbos informs the world that our Judaism is alive and well – that we're still open for business; and to the contrary as well, a lack of connection to Shabbos, shows, *chas v'shalom* (G-d forbid), that the spirit of Judaism has departed from us. And, just as when the soul leaves the body, the body dies, so too, a connection to the Jewish soul - to Shabbos - is what keeps us alive as Jews.

In his incredibly passionate and moving argument before the Knesset on the issue of stopping Israel's national airline, El Al, from flying on Shabbos and Yom Tov, Menachem Begin famously concluded his remarks and testified to the importance of Shabbos to the Jewish people saying, "...This House should know, it is not necessary to be an observant Jew to appreciate the full historic and sacred aura that enshrines this 'perfect gift' called Shabbat. Its prohibitions are not arbitrary. They provide insulation against corrosive everydayness, they build fences against invasions by the profane, and they enrich the soul by creating a space for sacred time. In a word, one need not be pious to accept the cherished principle of Shabbat. One merely needs to be a proud Jew."

A connection to Shabbos shows the world that we're still in business, that there's a CEO who's running things and to whom we'll have to answer when it comes time for our final employment review.

Thanks to the Chief Rabbi's annual Shabbos Project and the sterling example shown to the world by the Jewish community of South Africa, with each passing year, more and more Jews around the world are becoming aware of the beauty of Shabbos, of the soul that keeps Judaism alive – that keeps us alive as Jews.

Please G-d, may Jews around the world continue to take up the mantle of Shabbos and show the world that Judaism is still alive and well – with our "business" expanding into new locations and new markets everywhere, proudly displaying "signs" of Shabbos observance for all to see.

The *JL* team was saddened to hear of the passing of Naama Nothmann, the incredibly talented local artist and daughter of the well-known Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, ztz"l. We featured her several times in the magazine and she was always very gracious and willing to give of her time. We wish her family long life.

On a happier note, mazel tov to Martyn Samuels and the rest of the *JL* team on celebrating the 10th birthday of *Jewish Life*! May the magazine continue to grow and expand its influence around the world, and may it go from strength to strength.

ROBERT SUSSMAN,
EDITOR

ON THE COVER: AFTERLIFE CONCEPT AS AN ECG OR EKG MEDICAL HEART MONITOR LIFELINE SHOWING A FLATLINE TRANSFORMING INTO WHITE DOVES FLYING UPWARD TOWARDS HEAVEN AS A SPIRITUAL FAITH METAPHOR FOR BELIEVING IN LIFE AFTER DEATH.



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JEWISH LIFE is published by Total Publishing
(Pty) Ltd ©2008.

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eruv, feel free to take this publication
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ISSN 1994-8670

Total Publishing (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 52339, Saxonwold 2132

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Jewish Life are not necessarily those
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abc
ABC 100% AUDITED
CIRCULATION

Certified for the period
Jan – June 2017: 12 841