

Beauty, virtue and Torah

IN HIS criticism (*AJN* 14/4) of the article on cosmetic procedures that I wrote (*AJN* 17/3) in conjunction with Rabbi Yudokovsky, Dr Simon Wein has made an elementary yet very damaging mistake about Judaism, one that cannot be left uncorrected.

It seems that he is personally offended that Orthodox Judaism should be interested in beauty and grace. He takes the view that Judaism is only concerned with improving one's inner self and believes that women should be only concerned "with fear of God".

I am happy to report that our religion is not one of self-denial nor self-

infliction. The stand that Dr Wein takes would be enough to turn anybody off Orthodox Judaism.

Dr Wein bases his whole criticism on a verse which he interprets from the Art Scroll Sidur, which seems to indicate that "grace" is "false". The Vilna Gaon raises the obvious contradiction. Why do we have such a verse which seems to be critical of beauty yet the Torah is full of references to the importance of beauty, for example the outstanding beauty of our three Matriachs.

The Vilna Gaon cites the parable of a gold ring in the nose of a pig. When a woman has no other right-

eous virtues, then beauty is to be despised. But when a woman has all the other required attributes then her beauty becomes an independent and important attribute, something worth being proud of and striving for.

Judaism does not involve making oneself ugly and therefore our article, highlighting the new cosmetic, laser and liposuction procedures from a Torah perspective, did not "miss the point" as Dr Wein tried to suggest in his eloquent, but rather aggressive and misguided letter.

*Dr Daniel Lanzer
Armada*

DENMARK'S JEWS

WE WISH to inform you that an all-day symposium which may be of interest to your readers will be held at the University of Melbourne on Saturday, May 13.

One of the most memorable chapters of the history of World War II in Denmark was the escape of nearly all the Danish Jews to Sweden in 1943. Reference to that remarkable event will be made in the talks to be given on May 13.

We hope that some representatives of your newspaper and the Jewish community in Melbourne will join us in our celebration. We would be particularly happy to see any Jewish people who may have escaped from or through Denmark to Sweden in 1943. They would be most welcome to participate in the "Memory Sharing" session which is scheduled immediately after lunch.

This Saturday's symposium will be held in the Laby Theatre, Physics Building, University of Melbourne from 9.30am to 4pm. Further details from the Danish Consulate: (03) 894-1383.

*Erik J Jensen
Consul General, Royal Danish
Consulate, Melbourne*

YOUTH MOVEMENTS

I AM writing to publicly express my delight with the performance of the youth movements at last week's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations at both Luna Park and the Melbourne Concert Hall.

It is no exaggeration to say that the youth movements played a special role in making both events so memorable. Even bad weather could not prevent the Carnival from being excep-

tionally well-attended. Nothing dampened the enthusiasm of the participants and this is all to the credit of the movements which have succeeded in instilling such pride and spirit into our youth.

In their enthusiasm, discipline and professionalism, the youth movements also made our Concert something very special to remember. Both on stage and off, they distinguished themselves. My congratulations to each of the movements, their shlichim, madrichim and all chanichim.

*Tom Borsky
President
State Zionist Council*

ISRAEL'S PEACE

I BELIEVE that if most Jews were brutally honest, the general consensus would be that all Palestinians in the occupied territories who oppose Israel undemocratically and violently, should be forcibly removed.

But political and practical realities make this both impossible and unpalatable. So what can Israel do?

Only when the Palestinians begin to see the tangible benefits of the peace process will it be possible to dissuade the potential suicide bombers and others from joining Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

Attempts to stem the flow of these attacks by sealing off the territories have proved futile and will only further alienate the Palestinians prevented from working in Israel and unable to support their families. This only serves to push the moderates further into the camps of the extremists.

And the idea of building a wall around the territories is simply

fantastic. Ultimately, there is nothing one can do to prevent the irrational acts of those who are prepared to commit suicide.

The only hope, therefore, is for Israel to press ahead with the Middle East peace process.

*Jeremy Goldman
Caulfield*

JCS THANKS

ON MARCH 15, 1995, after a waiting period of a year and a half, we were finally reunited with my 86 year old father, who had been living in the Ukraine under unbearable conditions.

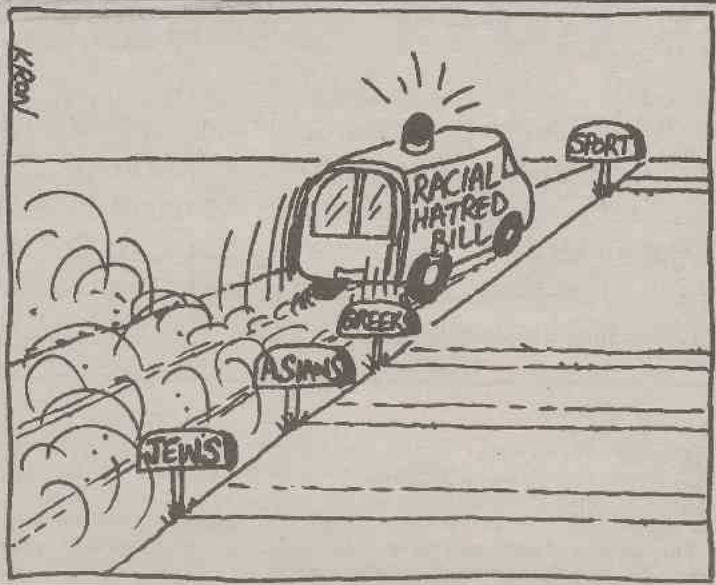
My family owes the unforgettable sense of relief and elation that we experienced upon my father's arrival to the incredible commitment and dedication by the staff and administration of Jewish Community Services.

My family would like to express its deepest gratitude to everyone at JCS involved in the never-ending task of reuniting Jewish families, separated by political injustices and social hardship. In particular, we would like to emphasise the support by the JCS director, Lawrence Joseph, as well as assistance by the social workers, Miriam Orliansky and Helen Vikniarsky, who worked with the Russian-speaking community on the Special Assistance Program.

We believe that the noble task undertaken by JCS to re-unite Jewish families from all over the world will never be forgotten. We know that our conviction is shared by all readers of the *Jewish News*.

*Svetlana Tumarkin
and family
East St Kilda*

KRON'S VIEW



Lesbian families

IAN MOND (*AJN* 28/4) needs first and foremost to understand that being gay is generally a given *not* a choice. Why would we (or anyone) choose to belong to such a vilified, marginalised group — especially when we often already experience these prejudices by being Jewish?

He also needs to be made aware that there are well over 20 children of mothers in the Jewish Lesbian Group. As all but one of the mainly adult children are heterosexual (so much for our influence on children) we have contributed to the "continuity of the Jewish family".

By rejecting our inclusion in the Jewish family he has also rejected our children and their current and future property.

He implies that the unmarried, asexual women who — for physical or psychological reasons — cannot conceive or bear children, infertile

men, and those choosing not to have children should also be excluded as they do not "contribute to the continuity of the Jewish people".

*What a tragic loss!
Sue Pamplin
East Ringwood*

LETTERS' POLICY

WE welcome letters to the editor. But we give preference to short letters of no more than 300 words. Letters may be cut for length, or edited for style and clarity. We only consider letters which include the sender's street address, day contact phone number, and full first name (not an initial) and surname. In common with standard newspaper practice we do not advise writers whose letters are not published.

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having or forming a small tuft(s); marked with streaks as of pencil or brush.



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SHEAFFER

Why Canberra is wrong on Iran

THE Australian government's decision not to support the American initiatives against Iran diminishes Australia's role as a good international citizen. It fails to recognise Iran's support of world wide terrorism, its hostility to the Arab-Israeli peace process, and its rapid conventional and non-conventional rearmament. And it is blinkered about the risks for Australia in trading with Iran.

The response last week by the spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Senator Evans to President Clinton's call for other nations to support Washington's sanctions was breathtaking in its myopia and insensitivity.

Particularly indefensible were two of the statement's references: the first was to a continuation of our "dialogue" and promotion of trade with Iran because we are said not to believe in tying trade to other issues. Yet this is precisely what we have done in the cases of South Africa and Iraq.

While Australia has \$534 million in annual trade with Iran, Australia supplies Iran with credit of \$1.14 billion, the highest credit rating we extend to any country. This is ill advised, given that Iran has an international debt of \$30 billion and has rescheduled over \$6 billion worth of debts with Germany, France and Japan.

Furthermore, the government should recognise that although Iran has been unable to meet its commercial obligations, it has nevertheless spent US\$2 billion a year on its military build up, most recently making billion dollar deals for nuclear equipment with Russia and China. Iran is not at war or under serious threat. With ample oil supplies and a sworn dedication to wipe Israel off the map this build up is not defensive but clearly aggressive.

The second remarkable reference in the Canberra spokesperson's statement was a denial of any public evidence of Iran's dealings with terrorism. Contrary to such claims Iran the main sponsor of Islamic terrorist groups — in the Middle East and beyond — as part of its policy of "exporting the Islamic revolution."

These sponsorship activities include military training, arming and finance for Hizbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Teheran is also fanning Islamic extremism against the PLO, Egypt, Algeria and Jordan, as any of these governments would acknowledge "publicly" if the Australian government were to ask.

For the "public record" here are some facts.

Hizbollah was established with the assistance of Iran in 1992. Hamas opened an "embassy" in Teheran

which would maintain "contacts and coordination" with Hizbollah in the Iranian capital. In December 1992, a second Hamas "political and military delegation" was sent to Iran, where it concluded a number of political and military co-operation agreements with Iran.

Iran's clients are responsible for the following attacks:

* The April 9, 1995 suicide bombings in Gaza in which nine people were killed — Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

* The January 1995 suicide attack at Beit Lid near Netanya in which 19 people were killed — Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

OPINION

Colin Rubenstein

* The October 1994 suicide attack on a bus in Tel Aviv in which 22 people were killed — Hamas claimed responsibility.

* The July 26 1994 attacks on the Israeli Embassy and a building housing the office of the British Jewish community both in London — British and Israeli investigators believe Iran and Hizbollah are

behind the attacks.

* The July 19, 1994 bombing of a commuter plane in Panama — a Hizbollah faction claimed responsibility.

* The July 18, 1994 car bomb in Jewish community offices in Buenos Aires, killing 96 people — Hizbollah claimed responsibility. Manucher Moatamer, an Iranian who defected in July 1994, warned the Venezuelan authorities about the Israeli Embassy bombing in London and that Iranian diplomats in Argentina were responsible for the Buenos Aires bombings.

* On March 11, 1994, a bomb attack against the Israel Embassy in Thailand was averted. Thai authorities issued arrest warrants for two Iranians.

* On March 17, 1992, 32 people were killed in an attack on the Israel Embassy in Buenos Aires. Two days after the blast, Sheikh Nassan Nassallah, the Secretary General of Hizbollah was warmly received at the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) in Teheran. In the wake of the bombing, Mehdi Karubi, the Speaker of the Majlis (the Iranian parliament), warned, "Israel will endure constant revenge strikes around the world."

* Over the past five years over 20 Iranian dissidents have been assassinated by Iranian agents, such as

Shapour Bakhtiar, Iranian Prime Minister under the Shah who was gunned down in Paris in August 1991.

To add to the terror picture Iranian intelligence operatives have recently been reported testing airport security systems worldwide in order to determine their weak spots.

Unaccompanied pieces of luggage have been sent on international air routes to see if airport security systems will detect them. Some of the unaccompanied luggage is sent via Teheran to destinations in Europe or the United States.

The "public" evidence of Iranian complicity in international terror can be extended. The more covert evidence available to Western intelligence agencies — and that includes Australia's — is even more compelling in its detail.

The conclusion is inescapable, despite efforts at obfuscation in Canberra, and it is this: In the case of our policy towards Iran basic international policy and longer-term commercial interests combine to justify an immediate reassessment of Australia's thinking.

▲ *Dr Colin Rubenstein is the Editorial Chairman of Australia/Israel Publications and a senior lecturer in politics at Monash University.*