

EDITOR'S VIEW

Spare the rod and develop responsible, loving citizens

HITTING our children is part of our heritage. Think about it. Your parents probably hit you. Their parents hit them and so the tradition of violence against children was passed down from one generation to the next.

In some homes, other than the open palm, a father's weapon of choice was the belt. For mums it was the rolling pin, wooden spoons or even shoes.

Not only was bad behaviour punished. Any attempt at sharing an opinion or arguing an opposing view was stifled because, not too long ago, the prevailing culture was that children were meant to be seen, not heard.

In schools, teachers were free to hit. Some victims still remember, almost with fondness, how they feared telling their parents they were assaulted by a teacher. If they did, their parents would punish them because teachers were never wrong.

These victims of violence often argue that there was nothing wrong with how they were treated because they turned out okay.

Well, that's not entirely true. You just have to look around you at the level of violence in our homes, our community and in our society to realise we are not okay.

There are many reasons for this. High levels of unemployment and inequality is one reason. A failing criminal justice system is another. But equally important is the fact that parents have legitimised the use of violence at home.

A parent who hits his son is saying it is okay to use force when someone does something or says something you don't like. A parent who hits a daughter is telling her it is okay to be slapped or kicked by someone who loves you.

It may not be the intention. But it is often the unintended consequence. After all, children copy more of what their parents do than what they say.

We therefore welcome the decision by the Constitutional Court that spanking your child is unconstitutional.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng noted in the judgment that parents had the responsibility to mould or discipline a child into a future responsible citizen.

He spoke about a positive parenting approach which is about teaching a child good behaviour and the dos and don'ts of life.

"It also entails a more effective parent-child communication to help a child realise the adverse consequences of unacceptable conduct and to generally guide her on how best to behave in life," said the Chief Justice.

For many it will be a new way of parenting. They will have to start by unlearning much of what their parents taught them.

The Quote

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

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War is not as sexy as it used to be



SMOKE and flames rise from an Aramco factory in Abqaiq, Saudi Arabia, last week. | Reuters African News Agency (ANA) Archives

But that might change...

JUGGERNAUT



KANTHAN PILLAY

make for good television; which is one of the reasons why we are not hearing more about a potentially catastrophic conflict playing itself out right now in the Middle East.

On September 14, drones targeted two major oil facilities run by Aramco, Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil giant. The pre-dawn attacks turned the plants at Abqaiq and Khurais into fireballs.

The two plants produce 5.7 million barrels of oil per day. To put this into perspective, we in South Africa consume 621 000 barrels per day.

Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed responsibility for the attack. There is good reason to believe them. Since 2015, the Saudis – backed by the US and UK – have been at war with the Houthis.

The Saudi bombing campaign in Yemen has killed or injured more than 17 000 civil-

ians.

The Houthis say that they used newly-developed drones, some equipped with turbojet engines, for the attack. They had displayed some of these to media in July this year.

They say 10 of these were used in the attack on Abqaiq and Khurais.

In spite of the Houthis having claimed responsibility as well as having both the motive and capability for carrying out the attack, the US has blamed Iran.

President Donald Trump has announced a deployment of US troops to Saudi Arabia. In return, the Iranians say they are "ready to destroy" any country that launches an attack on its territory. Is war coming?

Nearly all crude oil from the Middle East flows through the Straits of Hormuz. In the event of war, Iran would effectively shut down this waterway.

The Abqaiq oil complex is the starting point of the East West Petroline, a natural gas line, which has been converted to crude oil transport, and which bypasses the Strait of Hormuz.

But whether the attack on Abqaiq, which is Saudi Arabia's biggest crude processing and desulphurisation facility, came from Yemen or Iran, what has been demonstrated by the attack is how easily it can be done.

Iran has hundreds, if not thousands, of unmanned aerial vehicles (as drones are properly known).

Nearly all of these have been developed

within the country. Among these is the Simorgh, a reverse-engineered copy of a Lockheed Martin RQ-170 Sentinel combat drone captured by the Iranians in 2011. It carries four precision guided bombs.

If the US were to attack Iran, that country has promised to retaliate against every country with a US presence in the region.

Qatar hosts the biggest US military base in the region and one of the biggest in the world with 10 000 US service personnel. Distance to Iran: 200km.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) hosts 5 000 US troops. Distance from Iran to Dubai: 130km.

Oman provides airbase and port facilities to the US in six locations. Distance from Iran to Muscat: 130km.

Kuwait maintains a force of 2 200 US troops. Distance from Kuwait City to Iran: 150km.

In other words, should the US decide to attack Iran, it would be a very different scenario to attacking Iraq. In the long term, the US would reduce Iran to rubble, but in the process would come the total obliteration of the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain along with the oil fields in Saudi Arabia.

And no Hollywood special effects team is going to be able to match that.

Srikanthan is one of the names of Vishnu. Another name for Vishnu is Jagannath, "the unstoppable force", which gives us the modern word juggernaut. Kanthan Pillay writes about understanding the unstoppable forces which shape our lives in technology, commerce, science and society.

'Family' restaurants ought to be safe spaces too



DARREN MAULE

OH! So, you're a "family" restaurant! What does that mean?

Just because you have a kiddies menu or a plastic jungle-gym, in a public space, or public restaurant in South Africa does not – as sad as it is in 2019 – qualify you to call yourself a family restaurant. If you're going to call yourself a "family restaurant", you are going to have to put a few more measures in place. As evidence of the Dros rape case presents.

Here was a little girl, who was inside the "family restaurant", who was raped in the women's bathroom by a patron. Your mind starts asking yourself and others: how could you have protected her against that?

In order for you to call yourself a family restaurant TODAY – where parents can feel safe with their kids in your restaurant – you're going to have to start guarding against that "other" threat too.

Things are a little bit different for me because I am a super-paranoid father. I have been in the public eye for a long time, so I am always vigilant of my surroundings. I am constantly aware of the people who are around me and I am ultra-protective of my child.

Whenever we are out, no matter whether it's at the beach, shopping, or at a restaurant/family restaurant, my child is always within my sight. Every single second!

In fact, even when she is out on a play-date or sleepover with friends (which are few and far between, compared to when we went out on sleepovers and spent all day playing outside), the parents, neighbourhood and history are scrutinised on a 20-point-checklist by me, before I consider a sleepover or a play date.

But that's me; I am a super paranoid parent, and yet I still don't feel my child is



THE writer says he is protective of his child, and whenever they are out his child is within his sight. | Pixabay

totally safe.

In an ideal world, you should be able to go out to a restaurant that calls itself a "family restaurant", and let your kids go do their thing so they have a good time, and you have a good time with your friends, then you all meet up after you have paid the bill and you go home, and everyone is safe and happy. But that is not the reality anymore. I think, today, if an institution is going

to advertise itself as a family restaurant, I'm going to need a little bit more from you than smiley potato wedges and luminous slides.

There are a few places, mostly kid-focused places, where some have a bracelet where a child can't leave the premises without an alarm going off.

I have also been to some venues where you sign your child in, and you have to sign your child out when you leave.

But the Dros incident leaves us wondering... the perpetrator of the crime didn't even leave the restaurant.

It can happen in the restaurant and I think more is going to have to be done to safeguard against that if you want to be certified "family friendly".

Perhaps by placing trained, friendly, professional staff – permanently – in each of the bathrooms.

Perhaps by having someone, who just sits and monitors security cameras and is proactive instead of reactive. Proactively searching out risks.

I'm sorry to say, but we do actually have the technology for facial recognition systems.

We should use that. And if anyone is flagged as being on a predator list or has a history of paedophilia/abuse they are identified and denied entry. I know our Constitution demands free movement for all citizens, but if you can't play well with others then you automatically give up the right to go to a family restaurant.

Labelling yourself a "family restaurant" is no longer a question of whether you have an environment where kids are stimulated.

There now has to be a level of security and checks, and proactive management going on.

In fact, until it's safer, you should apply for a licence that states you are a bona fide safe family restaurant.

Family restaurants should mean safe restaurants. Let's focus more on safe stations and not play-stations.

Let's forget child-minders and rather consider child guardians. Is it asking too much? It's getting harder and harder to feel brave enough to leave the house.

Will I get burgled if I leave? Will I get hijacked en route? Will my car still be there when I'm done?

Surely, once you're safely inside the restaurant, you should be allowed to relax? Can I please have a little peace of mind while I partake of my Panettone?

Maule is a stand-up comedian, actor, and entertainer. He also heads up the East Coast Breakfast team