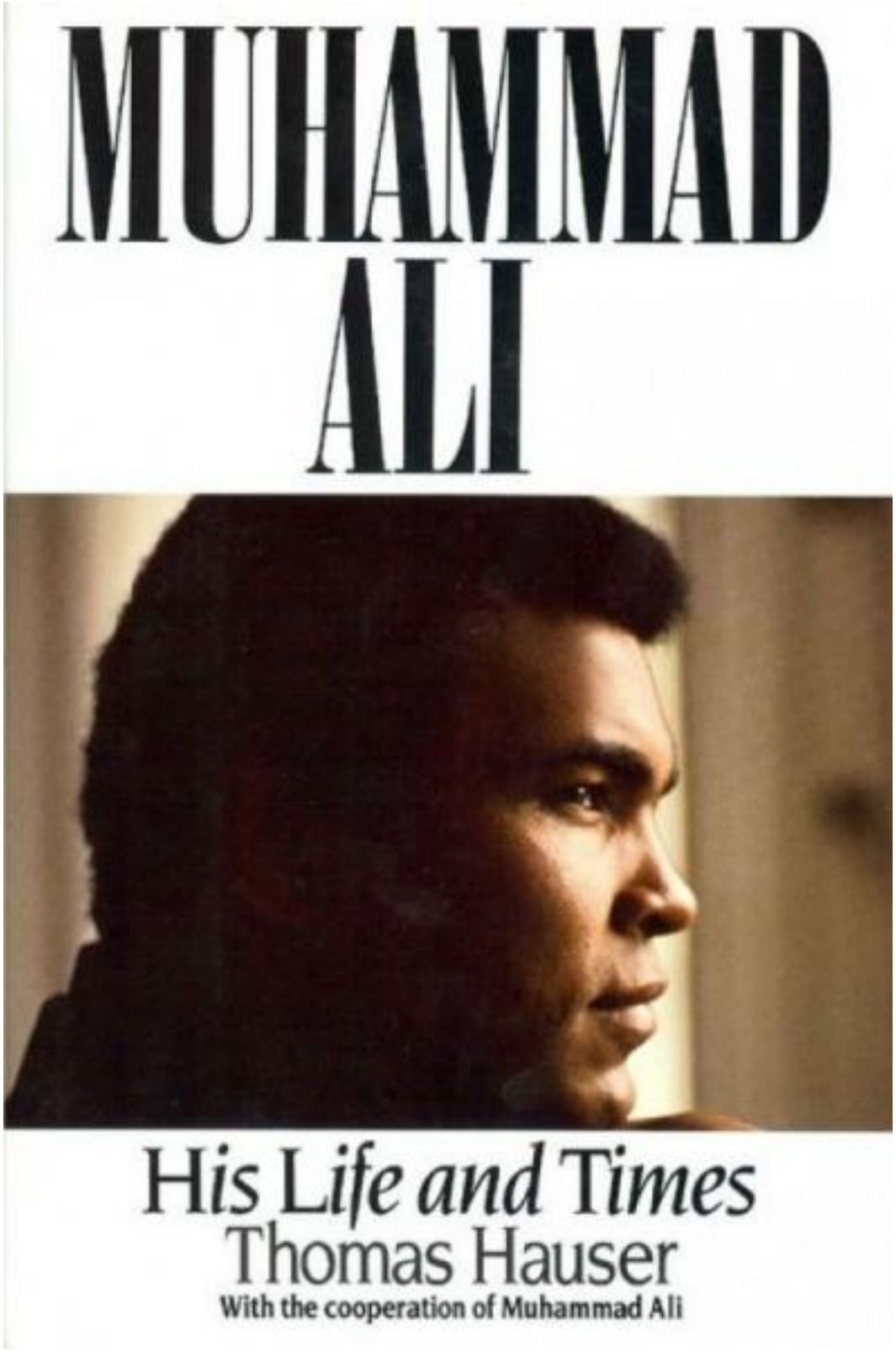

In the 1960s, Muhammad Ali stood as an exemplar of black pride and beacon of hope for oppressed people around the world. In recent years, he has been a symbol of tolerance and understanding.

Ali taught his children to rid their hearts of prejudice. The lessons took hold. One of his grandchildren, Jacob Wertheimer, was recently bar mitzvahed.

Coming of age rituals are an important part of every religion. Under Jewish law, when a boy reaches the age of thirteen, he accepts full responsibility for his actions and becomes a man. The ceremony commemorating this occasion is known as a bar mitzvah.

Jacob (the son of Khaliah Ali-Wertheimer and her husband, Spencer) turned thirteen on January 21 of this year. The bar mitzvah took place on April 28 at Congregation Rodelph Shalom in Philadelphia. One hundred fifty people were in attendance. Jacob's grandfather was among them.

"I was born and raised as a Muslim," Khaliah says. "But I'm not into organized religion. I'm more spiritual than religious. My husband is Jewish. No one put any pressure on Jacob to believe one way or another. He chose this on his own because he felt a kinship with Judaism and Jewish culture."

"The ceremony was wonderful and very touching," Khaliah continues. "The theme of Jacob's presentation was inclusiveness and a celebration of diversity. My father was supportive in every way. He followed everything and looked at the Torah very closely. It meant a lot to Jacob that he was there."

Khaliah says proudly that Jacob is an "A" student and a good athlete with Ivy League aspirations. She also notes that the bar mitzvah of Muhammad Ali's grandson is "a wonderful tale of what's coming in the world."

Ali, one assumes, would agree. Shortly before lighting the Olympic flame at 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, he proclaimed, "My mother was a Baptist. She believed Jesus was the son of God, and I don't believe that. But even though my mother had a religion different from me, I believe that, on Judgment Day, my mother will be in heaven. There are Jewish people who lead good lives. When they die, I believe they're going to heaven. It doesn't matter what religion you are, if you're a good person you'll receive God's blessing. Muslims, Christians and Jews all serve the

same God. We just serve him in different ways. Anyone who believes in One God should also believe that all people are part of one family. God created us all. And all people have to work to get along."

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Thanks for writing this piece. When I told the haters here about GOAT Ali blond-headed, Jewish grandson, they showed me the maximum amount of hatred. Huh! Show those muthasuckas that LOVE of all is straight-up DITTO with the GOAT Ali. Keep dat fo' real copy coming. Holla!

deepwater says:

freedom is popular. didnt all religions live in bethlehem peacefully until the palestinians got blamed for the german holocust and got thrown into the biggest concentration camp in history=gaza? christians,muslims,jews unite for peace again!

Radam G says:

TSS, you guys ought to put a photo up there of GOAT Ali's grandson Jacob. It would definitely shut up TSS reader SCLA Ali. I remember when that mutha and notorious TSS reader Kountedout called me _ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ____ ___ ___ for posting the GOAT's Irish background and spittin' about GOAT Ali's white and Jewish grandkids. Holla!

brownsugar says:

I red a science fiction book about an alien society that survived so long that all racial diversity on their planet intermingled and intermarried to the point that there was only one race left on the entire planet.

The gene pool of the entire planet was saturated to the extent that everyone shared the same DNA and there was no new DNA left on the planet.

So the population began to slowly die out because there was no new DNA left to share and thus no genetic diversity.

The entire planet boarded hundreds of thousands of huge interplanetary ships as they

embarked on a global diaspora to find a planet with new DNA material so they could incorporate it into their gene pool,..... of course,... after searching for a millenia, the only planet the aliens found that met their genetic criteria was earth. I wish I could finish the story,....but after a brief invasion,..... in the end,..... both species ended up transcending their own origin... an set out on another galactic diaspora.

not sure how this relates to the article about Ali's grandchild...sorry,... I forgot the transition line.

Radam G says:

Hehehehe! B-sug, stop it! Now you are the comedian.

Have you been sippin' on some gin and juice that the Roast brought you from Italy?

BTW! Where in da double fudge heck is TSS reader Bobby C. Dude has not check-in in a minute. Maybe those aliens got him and took him for his comedy DNA. Holla!

brownsugar says:

I knew you'd be able to smell what's cookin RG.

smilek says:

I met Muhammed Ali in person once in the late 90's when we were both picking up our Kosher meat orders at Main Line Kosher Meats in suburban Philadelphia. In those days there were no Hallal butchers so Muslins bought their meat from Kosher butchers.
Even though Ali's daughter did not grow up Jewish I can tell you for a fact that she grew up eating Kosher meat. Who knows, perhaps that is why she ended up marrying a Jewish guy?

The Shadow says:

Just found this article by accident.

And I also have a picture of Ali's Jewish grandson, Jacob. (He's not blond. Far from it, actually. As a matter of fact, he looks like a young Shadow.)

[url]http://blog.rabbijason.com/2012/06/muhammad-alis-grandsons-bar-mitzvah.html

It's still cool to see the diversity, tolerance, inclusion and love that have come to characterize the artist formerly known as Cassius Clay. (Like the One & Only Mauro Ranallo, I'm clearly a sucker for alliteration. Ha!)

Radam G says:

The hair color did what my son's red hair did -- turned closer to black as he got older. Or maybe I'm mixing Jacob with his younger brother. Holla!

The Shadow says:

[QUOTE=Radam G;36723]The hair color did what my son's red hair did -- turned closer to black as he got older. Or maybe I'm mixing Jacob with his younger brother. Holla![/QUOTE]

Could be! My hair -- when it was still on the loose -- turned golden blond during the summer time, too!

Two questions RG, what do you think of Floyd vs. Khan? And are Bradley's feet really size 13??? I heard Freddie Roach holler -- literally -- something about Bradley being easy work for Manny due to his big, clumsy feet. HAHAHAHA!

Radam G says:

ShowTime will hook it up for Money May and Khan to fight in Abu Dhabi. That is what the boxing grapevine and gossiping are shouting, anyway. Two billionaire Arab princes want that bout. One of the Arab prince is married to Janet Jackson.

YUP! Buffet Bradley's feet are "really size 13." His hat size is 9. I syet you not. Holla!

brownsugar says:

We'll see ... it'll be 8 months before Mayweather fights again. That's plenty of time to for the management to persuade Floyd. ....to depart from his comfort zone at the beloved MGM.

But it all depends on whether or not the ultra-chinny Khan can return to form against Alexander. Maybe he can get his confidence back. I hear the streets are paved with gold over there.