

FROM THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR WWW.JEWISHLIFE.CO.ZA

Often, when learning about something deep, there comes a point where you realise you don't know anything about it at all.

It's so rich and complex that you find you're just scraping the surface.

This happens with many subjects, particularly Torah. As you uncover one layer of meaning another one lies beneath. And so on.

Rabbi Yedayah Hapenini Habadrashi, in the 16th Century, said that the GOAL of wisdom is to know that one knows nothing.

King Solomon, Shlomo Hamelech, said: "I sought wisdom and it was far from me." He was acknowledging that wisdom didn't allude him, after all he was the wisest of all men. He was showing that he had attained the goal of wisdom; he knew the world was so deep that whatever he knew was just the tip of what was there – far beyond a human mind.

The Rambam said, "Teach thy tongue to say 'I do not know,' and thou shalt progress." He is also quoted as saying: "The only thing one knows for certain is that one knows nothing."

Whether witnessing the open miracles in Egypt or the hidden miracles that we experience each and every day – all are deeper than we know. The effects of mitzvahs, the power of prayer, acts of chesed – all these and more are too monumental for our human brains to truly understand. The Eish Kodesh, the Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto, would say to his followers attending his shiurim in appalling conditions during the worst possible time of the War, that they mustn't try and apply their own reasoning and rationales to what was going on ... trust in Hashem and learning His Torah is the only currency. Truly a lesson for us all to take on board, especially in these times of fear and uncertainty.

So, it would seem that pure wisdom can only be achieved with the recognition that everything that happens is beyond our comprehension. It is Hashem's world, and it is beyond us to assume we know everything or indeed anything, except for this fact.

We hope you enjoy this Pesach special edition. There is a diversity of content that we hope is inspiring and entertaining for everyone wishing to celebrate this wonderful time of the year.

Thank you to Robert and his team for always finding new insights and angles to help us find more meaning in the Chagim. It is the differentiator that makes *JL* so popular and a thrill to be part of.

Thank you to all our advertisers for your continued support. It is great to see new advertisers as well joining the ranks. We rely on and thank you all.

Wishing you all much enjoyment, good health and a chag kasher v'sameach.

MARTYN SAMUELS, PUBLISHER



As Jews, we spend our lives doing mitzvot. In whatever situation in which we happen to find ourselves, our holy Torah dictates what we must do. We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and, now, we are slaves to Hashem. Hashem merely transferred our servitude from Pharaoh to Himself.

Accordingly, freedom from a Torah perspective is not the freedom from obligation, as the world likes to teach and uphold. A Jew's natural state, the one into which he is born, is one of obligation. Freedom is achieved as a result of the fulfilment of obligation. Our Sages speak about how the "hands" of a person's obligation "hold" him, and how only after the person has done what he was supposed to does he "go out" from those "hands". But, even that "freedom" is temporary and illusory, as a person who has fulfilled his current obligation simply walks straightaway into the next obligation and those hands once again hold him – only to be repeated again and again, without interruption, in a constant flux of moving from fulfilment of one obligation to another, until one is no longer able to do so anymore because of his death – at which point we call him *niftar*, from the root *patur*, "exempt" – as in he is now exempt from further obligations.

So, we are always busy with mitzvot – the only question is which mitzvah takes priority at any given moment. Unlike other religions, a Jewish life is one lived in connection with others, not in isolation. So, it is easy for us to become despondent as we huddle inside our homes – cut off from each other, from Shul and school, from having Shabbos and Yom Tov guests, from making simchas, and on and on.

Who would have ever thought that *not* going to shul would be a mitzvah?

But right now it is because we are all engaged in a mitzvah that trumps almost every other mitzvah in the Torah: the obligation to preserve our health. We say each day in davening, "*Idu es Hashem b'simcha*", "Serve Hashem with joy". He is our King and we are His servants. We do what He wants, and, right now, what He wants is for us to guard our lives and, in so doing, the lives of others as well.

Pesach is called by the Torah¹ "*leil shimurim*" (a night of protection), a night on which Hashem prohibited us² from leaving our homes when we were in Egypt because the final *makkah* (plague), *makkos bechoros* (the striking of the firstborns) was being carried out. It's entirely possible that this will be the first *leil* (night) of Pesach since that very first one that Jews around the world will be locked inside their homes, hoping and praying that the *makkah* (plague) striking the entire world spares us. We must pray that Hashem brings an end to this terrible plague and that He brings a *refuah shleimah beemheira v'yameinu* (a full recovery speedily in our days) to all those who have been touched by it. Wishing you and your family a chag kasher v'sameach.

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ON THE COVER:

The iconic pyramids of
Egypt, located in Giza -
some of what remains of
the once mighty Egyptian
empire from which Hashem
took us out over 3 300 years ago.



¹Shemos 12:42

²Shemos 12:22