

FROM THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR



A strange thing happens when one reads a book. The Vilna Gaon says that there are, in essence, two books in existence when a person reads. One book is the way the author wrote it. The other is the way the reader reads it. They can be similar to each other, or they can be worlds apart. Among his many insights about Rosh Hashanah, Rav Moshe Shapiro, ztz"l, quotes the Gaon and says that as Hashem created the world with letters and letters become words, words become sentences, paragraphs become chapters, and chapters become a book – then, really, Creation is a book.

An author writes his book with everything following as he wants it to be read. The reader, though, can be totally detached from the real intention with the result that he creates his own book. He can dip into it as he wishes; a chapter here, a chapter there. It's a choice.

At Rosh Hashanah, with two Books open before Hashem, one of Life and one of Death, we are judged on this very point. The day itself is "the day of the beginning of Your Works, a remembrance of the first day" – the creation of man. Every year at this time, just like that very first day, we are being created anew. Are we worthy? We can want to be in tune with Hashem and His Book of Life, to be as connected to the true intention as possible or detached from it, writing our own version. Appreciating Hashem's intention and how valuable every moment of life is when lived as He intended should tell us whose book to read.

As we present our 11th Rosh Hashanah edition, a huge thank you must go Robert, Chandra, Rizelle, Liz, and Dovid, who every month make JL the best it can be, as well as to Ilan and our regular columnists and contributors for their unrivalled quality content. Likewise, to our growing number of advertisers without whom we just wouldn't be here. There are some beautiful adverts within the inspiring articles and we are grateful to every one of them and all our readers for their tremendous support and commitment. We hope you enjoy this special edition.

Ksiva v'chasima tova.

MARTYN SAMUELS, PUBLISHER



The New Year gives us a chance for a fresh start. The power of repentance is the power of renewal, of rebirth. It's the chance for a clean slate, with neither debits nor credits to our names.

Why is it that we walk around in a haze, unimpressed by the things that we see each day? It's because we've become accustomed to seeing these things each day from the time that we were young, and we take them for granted. We look at the world around us through the eyes of a child.

Even our perception of Hashem – how we see Him and relate to Him in, for example, the Chumash and the Siddur – is comparable to that of a five-year-old, the age at which most of us first encountered Him.

We can become so used to davening and bentching that we say the words without really thinking about what we're saying.

Therefore, we need to awaken ourselves, to awaken our spirits. We have the opportunity right now to become completely new people and see the world through fresh, new eyes – awed by its incredible wonders.

When we enter the shul, we need to do so like it's the first time that we've ever entered a shul – to stop and ask Whose house is this, Who lives here? When we open the siddur, we need to make an effort to do so like it's the first time that we've ever looked in it, like it's the first time that we've ever davened from it. We need to turn the words over in our minds and contemplate their basic meaning as we say them. We need to consider things like: what are we asking for and why are we asking for these things?

The customary blowing of the shofar at the end of shacharis each weekday during the month of Elul is meant to serve as a wake-up call – to rouse us from our slumber, from the auto-pilot mode on which we generally operate and navigate each day, doing things by rote, our actions often completely divorced from any real meaningful thought.

Now is the time to do these things, to make changes in our lives; don't let it slip away.

From everyone at JL, we wish you a happy and sweet new year.

ROBERT SUSSMAN, EDITOR

Based on a sicha by Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus, ztz"l.

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ON THE COVER:
HONEY DRIZZLED IN
THE SHAPE OF AN
APPLE. ON THE FIRST
NIGHT OF ROSH
HASHANAH, WE
CONSUME VARIOUS
SYMBOLIC FOODS IN THE
HOPE THAT WE WILL BE BLESSED WITH A
GOOD YEAR, OF WHICH THE MOST
WELL-KNOWN IS AN APPLE DIPPED IN HONEY.