

FROM THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR



If the conversation turns to staying or leaving SA, it's interesting to where people suggest going. Places they have never been to now sound like paradise. If we speak to those currently living there or do a little research, one finds everywhere has problems, some not so bad, some far worse, but all have them. Even in the UK, which is universally considered a bastion of democracy, Brexit has thrown parliament into a constitutional crisis not seen since the Civil War nearly 400 years ago.

Politics, social unrest, wars, even the weather needs to be taken into consideration, but one thing is a common denominator around the globe – and that is the general lack of morality and the rejection of G-d.

We seem to be living in an age where “anything goes”, and certainly the belief that “with rights come responsibilities” is eroding fast. Ours has become the ‘me’ generation which has planted the ego firmly before anything else. Even truth is now how I choose to interpret it, rather than being evidence-based.

Is there a safe haven from this – a shelter from the storm? Is there a message we need to learn from a seemingly mad world? It's Hashem's world, so He must be telling us something.

The more these actions and attitudes prevail, the more distant the world becomes from a connection to Hashem. The harder it is to see Him. The test is to realise this and decide whether to follow the moral decline of the outside world with its bizarre attitudes and standpoints or do we say “let's restore sanity, re-set our minds, hearts, and souls to the original ‘factory settings’ we had at birth, at creation, and start afresh with a pure direct connection to Hashem”?

That shelter is teshuva, and on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur we can get back to the real reality and do just that. I hope you enjoy this special edition which Robert and the whole team have surpassed themselves in producing, with a wide range of content to appeal to all. It is wonderful to see even more new advertisers, some making their first appearance – welcome and thank you, and some making their 132nd appearance having been with *JL* since the first issue in October 2007. Thank you enormously for this! And to all our readers, a huge thanks, please keep reading and have a wonderful 5780.

Ksiva v'chasima tova.

MARTYN SAMUELS, PUBLISHER



Almost a decade ago, Gallup, the company famous for its public opinion polls, spent a few years conducting a poll comprised of randomly selected Americans asking them a series of questions about their quality of life. Based upon these studies, “The New York Times asked Gallup to come up with a statistical composite for the happiest person in America... Men, for example, tend to be happier than women, older people are happier than middle-aged people, and so on. Gallup's answer: he's a tall, Asian-American, observant Jew who is at least 65 and married, has children, lives in Hawaii, runs his own business, and has a household income of more than \$120,000 a year.”¹

Did you catch that?

The happiest person in America is an observant Jew. Keep in mind that Jews make up a mere 1.75 percent of the total US population. And among the total number of US Jews, observant Jews make up, at best, 20 percent (and more likely much closer to 10 percent) of the total Jewish population in the US – meaning that, of the total US population of 327 million people, a whopping one million are observant Jews (and likely somewhere much closer to half a million).

And, yet, the happiest man in the US, according to this unbiased poll, is an observant Jew.

But, this shouldn't be news to us or, worse, come as some sort of surprise. As we say each day at Shacharis, “Serve Hashem with joy.”² If we're not enjoying living as Jews, then, believe it or not, we're doing it wrong!

The Dubno Maggid offers a parable on this idea³: A guest arrived at a hotel and the porter, who schlepped the guest's suitcase up the many flights of stairs to the guest's room and was left feeling exhausted as a result, asked for a large payment as compensation. The surprised guest said, “If you're exhausted, you couldn't have been schlepping my suitcase because my suitcase only contained precious diamonds – it's very small and light!”

The Dubno Maggid explains that, if a person feels tired and exhausted from serving Hashem, it's a sign that he's not actually serving Hashem, but someone or something else entirely. Something worth thinking about as we approach some of the happiest days in the Jewish calendar.

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

ROBERT SUSSMAN, EDITOR

The above ideas are based on Dovid Lichtenstein's Headlines podcast (podcast. headlines.com - episodes 2/24/18 and 5/11/19)

¹Discovered: The Happiest Man in America, NY Times
²Tehillim 100:2

³On Isaiah (43:22)

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ON THE COVER:
IN HONOUR OF OUR ROSH HASHANAH ISSUE, A PHOTO FEATURING SHOFAR, HONEY, APPLE, AND POMEGRANATE, SOME OF THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS.

