

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

The Chofetz Chaim made the comment that someone who has a fear of Heaven will ask himself before doing something "is this prohibited", and that someone who does not have such a fear always thinks "this is probably OK".

While one should be a Yirei Shamaya'im (one who fears Heaven and Hashem), it's not always so easy. I recently heard a shiur given by Rabbi Benzion Twerski where he brought, in the name of one of his illustrious ancestors, the following question: "Why are there rings surrounding the centre of a target used by archers? After all, one aims at the bullseye, not the outer eight or so rings surrounding it. In fact, one fails if one hits those."

He answers that it is very hard to focus on and hit a small object from a distance. The purpose of the outer rings is actually to guide the archer to the heart of the target. The seemingly redundant outer rings are in practice what enables you to see the bullseye clearly and help you hit it.

So too, when we want to do what Judaism requires of us as well as we can, sometimes we have to traverse the outer rings, making a mistake or two. We may not have the right intention, the right concentration, the right conviction. Likewise, we may be doing something because we want the honour, the recognition and not solely because Hashem has told us to do it. Like the outer rings, these can be seen to be the guides, the signposts to eventually doing all the things we have to do for the proper reasons and with the right level of Yiras Shamayim.

From the month of Elul through Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur we have the opportunity to become skilled archers. As long as we want to get there and hit the bullseye for Hashem's sake, those "outer rings" will be the stepping stones as it were, to our success.

I'd like to thank everyone who has made this Rosh Hashanah to Succos issue possible. In particularly difficult circumstances, we've managed to produce a terrific and rich edition to hopefully inspire and entertain everyone. A big thanks, as always, to the wonderful JL team for making this possible. A special thank you to the many advertisers, old and new, who have wanted to be part of the issue and to show their support for what we do and to send their messages to our great community.

Thank you all. Here's to at least aiming at the bullseye and a happy and healthy year ahead.

Ksiva v'chasima tova

MARTYN SAMUELS, PUBLISHER



How are we meant to respond to our current plight?

The Rambam writes (Hilchos Taanis 1:3) that if the community experiences pain or suffering and we say that such a thing is just the way of the world, mere chance or happenstance, this is cruelty.

People ask how did this happen, but what we should be asking is why did G-d bring this? A recognition of the wakeup call that it is meant to be for all of us.

As Jews, we must recognise that there is a Creator, who does things for our good and who constantly supervises His creation at every moment, that our deeds are what cause these things to happen, and that by changing our deeds we can remove

the cause of our suffering.

But what if we simply ignore what's going on?

What if we don't react, and, instead, say things like: there are good times and bad times; these things happen; it's the natural course of events; we have to carry on and it will pass.

A person who speaks like this isn't speaking like a Jew – to say such a thing is cruelty because, as the Rambam continues, failing to see Hashem's hand in these events causes the community to cleave to its evil ways, with the result being that additional pain and troubles, chas v'shalom, will be visited upon us. Hashem behaves towards us the way that we behave towards Him; if we wish to see things as random, Hashem will let us do so...and bring more "random" events for us to suffer.

We live in an instant generation, wanting quick fixes and easy answers, but in the absence of prophets and prophecy, there are none. We need time, wisdom, and serious reflection as to what is the message behind all of this and where Hashem wants to see us make changes.

Consider this as just one example of the type of thing of which we should be taking note: for many, the two biggest draws to shul – socialising and eating – have been effectively removed and it remains to be seen for how long. It's like we're being forced to learn from scratch the purpose of shul again.

May we make the changes that we need to make and may Hashem bless all of His children with a wonderful new year.

ROBERT SUSSMAN, EDITOR

Inspired by and based on a shiur (SS34) by Rabbi Azriel Chaim Goldfein, ztz"l

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ON THE COVER:
OF THE MANY
SYMBOLIC FOODS
CONSUMED ON ROSH
HASHANAH, APPLE
DIPPED IN HONEY – IN THE
HOPE THAT OUR NEW YEAR
WILL BE A SWEET ONE – IS BY FAR THE
MOST UBIQUITOUS. SHANA TOVA
U'METUKA – A GOOD AND SWEET NEW
YEAR FOR EVERYONE, PLEASE G-D.

