



Days of Awe or Days of Awful; Resiliency in the Time of Corona

Part of the power of the Aseret Y'mei T'shuvah-the Ten Days of Awe is that they are finite. We are taught that our lives hang in a thin balance between life and death. Through the power of prayer, tzedakah and t'shuvah (repentance) we can alter our destiny. Though symbolic, imagine if this were literally true. That there was something extremely specific that we could do that would ensure that we would live another year.

But part of the power of these days is the uncertainty each day brings. The very fact that life is fragile is what gives it meaning, and urges us on to find purpose in our short, fragile lives.

Since March we have been living in a terrible time of uncertainty. The fear of an unseen virus. The impact of our communal response. Jobs lost, social distancing, a longing for normalcy. It has been awful.

Would it help if we knew when all of this would end? Perhaps. Certainty is calming. Predictability is what allows us to live our lives under the illusion that no harm will ever come to us. It is one reason that when harm does come, it is so shocking and unnerving.

But for now, we have to live with uncertainty and ambiguity. That is where we are right now. We are in the midst of our Days of Awe and our Days of Awful.

What we are left with is our ability to choose which period of time we are in. Are we living in the midst of a time where our actions can shape our lives for the better? A time in which our faith, the performance of simple acts of kindness, and self reflection will make a difference in our lives or are we living in a time of disappointment, sadness and despair?

Victor Frankl survived the Holocaust. Afterwards he sought meaning in his experience and wrote a powerful book, **Man's Search for Meaning**. In this book he taught, "The last of the human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Living in a time of ambiguity and uncertainty is not easy. But there will come a time when all of this is over. When you look back, what will you have discovered about yourself? What did you do to turn the "awful" to days filled with "awe?"

In praying for a new year of sweetness and peace, I pray too that each one of us is written into the book of life with the ability to celebrate the simple precious moments that greet us each day.