

YOM KIPPUR AS THE ECLIPSE OF ROSH HASHANA

Dear Friends,

Although the sun's corona is constant, because of the sun's brilliance, the corona is only visible to the naked eye at the time of an eclipse. August 21st gave scientists the opportunity to see the corona clearly, and, in some states, completely. In nature, you sometimes need temporary darkness to see the light in its fullness. One could say the same about nations. The violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, precipitated by the darkness of hatred, then compounded by the remarks of President Trump, also revealed the light of goodness, which was evident in the all but universal condemnation of the actions of alt-right demonstrators and perpetrators, in the many gatherings in support of those who opposed their actions, and in the contributions to organizations that work for equality and justice in our country.

The High Holidays provide the same opportunity for us as to see our individual 'coronas.' On Rosh HaShana we celebrate the separation of light from darkness and the creation of the sun and the moon. The brilliance of our own creation is shadowed by error and misdeed, which we confront in the ten days that bring us to Kol Nidray. By refraining from food and drink, and from bathing and intimacy for twenty-four-plus hours, we effectively rehearse death, the ultimate darkness. We sit together, each in our own eclipse, to emerge, we hope to new possibilities for life. Indeed, Yom Kippur is the day-long eclipse of Rosh HaShana, which is meant to bring us back to the best of ourselves.

As we approach this penitential season, my wish for each of you is that the full radiance of your corona will be revealed to you by time the shofar is sounded at Yom Kippur's end.

With warm wishes for a healthy, prosperous and good New Year,
Lee