

# A Silver Lining of Covid



# the elul project

As we move through the month of Elul I am sure we are all reflecting on the Yamim Noraim to come and what 5781 will look like. So many of the symbols of this time - G-d's testing of Abraham in the Akedah, the sound of the shofar, the opening of the book of life and the closing of the gates take on new meaning after our experiences of COVID-19. When we celebrated Pesach in April we probably did not contemplate that once again we would be facing having to adapt to marking the high point of the Jewish year without being able to gather with our family, friends and communities.

How many times over the last six months have you exchanged comments with friends and colleagues about the strange times in which we are living? I suspect many. New expressions have come into our everyday lexicon - "stay safe", "lockdown" and "iso". Each of us has adapted to our new reality in different ways - some have found it more challenging than others but for all there is definitely a new version of normal. Many of those with children living at home have commented that one of the few silver linings in this often bleak reality has been the increased time they have spent with family.

For my husband and I, we have gone from being empty nesters, who had become very used to our own space, to welcoming back our adult daughter and her partner who moved in with us to escape a very small and cold apartment, to give them both more room to work from home and to keep the family together in these constantly changing times. They too have had to temporarily give up their own familiar home environment, space and independence to make life easier for the family as we traverse these new grounds together.

As we adapted to being a household of four adults, I have had the privilege of watching with admiration how these two young adults have modified their working style to fit our new realities - other than parents who have their children work within a family business, it is rare for a parent to have the opportunity to watch their children work on a daily basis and get such an insight into what they do for a living. We know that our children grow up and establish their own careers, but they will always be our children and it can be hard to envisage them in a professional environment.

The two lockdown periods during which we have shared our house have allowed me to experience their work and pressures first hand. We have talked more than ever before about what they do and the challenges that they face. I have seen the maturity that they bring to their work in areas often very foreign to those I have faced in my career. We have brainstormed problems that each of us are encountering in our work situations and, through doing so, have each gained a greater appreciation of each other's work.

We have been thrown together due to unprecedented circumstance however, I think, we have all learnt so much more about each other as adults and while we hope and pray that we will be able to return to some degree of normality in the near future, we will all come out of this period with a greater degree of understanding. The month of Elul is a time for reflection about the year that has been and the year to come. For me, I come out of this year with a greater understanding and appreciation of my children and their professional lives. They will always be my children, no one can ever change that for me, but they are children who have grown and developed. My hopes for 5781 are that they and each of us will once again be able to pursue our dreams fully, spend precious time with family and friends and embrace all the wonderful vitality of our community and the wider world.



**SHARENE  
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Sharene Hambur is a practising lawyer and has had a long involvement in the Victorian Jewish community holding a number of Executive positions. She is married to Sam and has two children.

## ABOUT THE ELUL PROJECT

An initiative aiming to share stories and teachings from Jewish women leaders in our community. Whilst many of us are stuck at home, or isolated from family over Elul and the High Holy Days, we hope this project will serve to inspire, nurture, and uplift during this difficult time.

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