

Rosh Hashanah

The first day of the month of Tishrei, is Rosh Hashanah, The Day of Judgment. What is it about the first day of Tishrei that makes it the day that Hashem has decided to judge the world?

Passover is celebrated on the 15th of Nissan, because that is the anniversary of the Exodus. Shavuot is celebrated on the 6th of Sivan, because that is the anniversary of the day the Jewish Nation received the Torah. What happened on the first of Tishrei, that makes it the day of judgment?

One of the answers given to this question is that this is the day man, Adam, was created. Starting with the 25th of the month of Elul, day by day, Hashem had prepared a magnificent world for man to live in. Even today, we are awe struck by the beauty and splendor of Hashem's glorious world, can you imagine what it looked like when it was pristine and just created? And then, on the first of Tishrei, Hashem created man and crowned him king of the universe. Everything that Hashem had created He put at Adam's disposal, to use as he saw fit.

The Torah teaches us that Adam was created as a fully grown man of approximately 27 years old. Having been, the hand-crafted masterpiece of the Master Creator, he had to be brilliant beyond our wildest imagination.

Imagine for a second, you are Adam, and you are 27 years old. You wake up one day, and realize you are alive, and for the first time in your life, you see the completed world, with all its millions of components, surrounding you. Grass, trees, birds, animals, sun, clouds, the list goes on and on. What would be your first thought?

“Who is all this for?”

“Why, for you!” comes the answer.

What is the next question? “What is it all for? What am I supposed to do with it?”

Is it possible that Hashem did not reveal to Adam why He created him and what his purpose in the world was?

The Torah tells us :

ספר בראשית פרק ב

(טו) וַיִּקַּח יְיָ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם וַיִּנְחֵהוּ בְּגֵן עֵדֶן לְעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ:

15. Hashem God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it:

Our sages ask the question: What need was there to *work* and *guard* the Garden of Eden? The Torah just told us that the trees grew on their own accord, and a river provided the necessary irrigation. It is allegorical. Adam was to work the garden through the study of Torah, and the performance of positive commandments, and to guard it by refraining from forbidden activities. This means that

Man's task in this world is to serve Hashem. The material blessings of this world are the tools that Hashem has given man to use to fulfill the mitzvot and to enable him to learn Torah.

The Mishna in Tractate Sanhedrin asks a question.

משנה מסכת סנהדרין פרק ד
לפיכך נברא אדם יחיד?

When Hashem created the vegetation, He said, "Let the earth be covered with vegetation!" When He created the fish, He said, "Let the seas be teeming with fish!" The same with the animals and all the other creatures in creation. When it came to creating man, Hashem created just one! Why was man created as an individual?

The answer is, to teach us that each and every man is as unique an individual as Adam, the first and only man was. Just as the entire universe was created just for him, so too it was created entirely for each and every other human being as well. Just as there was no other human around when he was created, so too there is no other human being around like me! There never was and there never will be. Adam was no more unique or special than I am.

משנה מסכת סנהדרין פרק ד
לפיכך כל אהד ואהד חייב לומר, בשבילי נברא העולם

The Mishna in Sanhedrin continues to say,

Therefore, each and every person is obligated to say, "The entire world was created just for me."

Each and every person has a special and unique mission for which he was put in the world.

Therefore, just as Adam was created, and was given all the accessories he needed to fulfill his mission in the world, on the first of Tishrei, so too, on that very day, each and every one of us is judged to determine what tools we are going to receive to in order to fulfill our mission in this world.

How is it determined? By what criteria does Hashem judge us and grant us our new tool -bag of goodies for the coming year?

Our Sages teach us a very deep and profound concept to answer this question.

The Talmud teaches us:

(3) תלמוד בבלי מסכת ראש השנה דף לא/א
דאמר רב קטינא שיתא אלפי שני הוה עלמא וחד חרוב שנאמר ונשגב ה'
לבדו ביום ההוא

Rav Katina said: The world will exist for 6000 years, and then it will be destroyed for one year. (one year of Shabbat)

Nachmanides explains that each of the thousand years the world will exist corresponds to one of the days of creation. In other words, the first day of creation, contained in it, in

capsule form, the entire first thousand years of creation. So too with each of the other days of creation, each contained in seed form, one thousand years of creation. To the point where the Vilna Gaon says, that if a person were to fully understand what transpired on the sixth day of creation, he would be able to understand and even predict all the events that are happening in our time. Since we are in the sixth millennium it corresponds to the sixth day of creation, and everything was set then.

This idea, that the world was created to exist for six thousand years, reveals the Torah's very different approach to time.

The conventional understanding of time, is that time is a beginning-less, endless continuum, that has no purpose and no goal. It just is. It is going nowhere as it marches relentlessly along, waiting for no one. We wake up one day to find ourselves alive, dangling somewhere in the middle of nowhere in time, and not knowing exactly what it is or what to do with it.

The Torah teaches us the opposite. The very idea that the world was created for a limited time, implies that there is a purpose and a goal for the creation, and that time is the medium through which we accomplish that goal. The word for *time* in Hebrew is זמן, which comes from the root which means *to prepare* as we are to use every moment

of time towards accomplishing the purpose and goal of the creation.

This concept can be better understood by using the example of a seed. Every seed, contains within it an entire forest. In the seed are the instructions for roots, trunk, branches, leaves and fruit. In each piece of fruit, there are numerous seeds, each of which can grow a new tree. In this world, it may take decades, maybe even centuries to see what was hidden in that very first seed. This is true because we live in a world that is under the restrictions of time.

Hashem lives outside of time, and He is not bound to wait to see the outcome of that seed. On the contrary, Hashem sees the seed, the first tree, the entire forest all at the same time. He sees all of time at one time. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, me, my grandchildren and so on until the end of time.

When Hashem created what He created on the six days of creation, He saw all six thousand years at one time. And on the sixth day of creation, the day that corresponds to the sixth millennium, Hashem saw each and every one of us who are living today, and put us in His plan for the world. Each of us has an essential role to play in the fulfillment of Hashem's purpose for the world.

What, then, is Hashem's purpose for the world? Rashi in his second comment on the Torah reveals the secret.

רש"י על בראשית פרק א פסוק א
בראשית ברא - בשביל התורה שנקראת (משלי ה) ראשית דרכו
ובשביל ישראל שנקראו (ירמי' ב) ראשית תבואתו

On the first two words of the Torah *בראשית ברא* *In the beginning Hashem created*, Rashi explains, “*For the Torah and for the Jewish nation.*” This is the reason that “*In the beginning Hashem created the heavens and the earth.*”

Simply stated, the world was created so that the Jewish Nation could model the perfect character and perfect behavior that are the domain of one who keeps the commandments of the Torah. The perfection of a Torah person, is a mirror image of Hashem’s perfection, and the mitzvot are the exercises that Hashem, our creator, has prescribed, that will bring a person to that divine perfection. When we would model perfect character and perfect behavior to the world, the entire world would recognize the truth of Hashem as the creator of all humanity, and follow suit with their seven mitzvot.

(Even though Adam was also created to learn Torah and keep the commandments, he had only six. They were: 1. To believe in Hashem, 2. Not to curse Hashem, 3. Not to murder, 4. Not to steal, 5. Not to commit adultery, 6. To have a judicial system to enforce the above.

A seventh commandment was given to Noah after the flood, when man was permitted to eat meat, and that was,

7. Not to pull a limb off an animal and eat it while the animal is alive. These commandments are the minimum requirement for every human being on the planet. To be a holy nation, one that represents Hashem, only the entire Torah with all its components provide the recipe for perfection and holiness.)

When a person lives his life according to the Torah, by following its commandments and perfecting himself, he is also preparing himself for the most sublime reward in the world to come.

With this we understand how time is to be used to prepare. It is to be used to prepare the world to see Hashem, and to prepare ourselves for our place in the world to come based on how we lived our lives in this world.

Hashem created the world in order that all humanity see and recognize Hashem as the creator. This goal must be realized. It is not possible that Hashem not accomplish His goal. If we do not bring it about through our actions, it will happen through the coming of Mashiach. This is the purpose of the Mashiach, to bring the entire world to the realization that Hashem is the Master of the universe. This is what we hope and pray for each and every day, for Mashiach to come and establish the Kingdom of Hashem in the world again, as it was in the days of King David, and King Solomon.

On the first of Tishrei this year, the very day that Hashem created the world, for the 5778th time, He is looking towards the future of His world to see if it on course to reach its destination. Does it need adjustment? Not everyone has performed their role to expectation. Many have fallen short, and now others will have to take up the slack. As Hashem looks at the new year, He is assessing and evaluating what tweaks are needed in order to set the world back on course to realize His Divine plan. Hashem is figuring out how He is going to divvy up the jobs and positions among each of his subjects, so that His agenda may reach fruition.

This is what Rosh Hashanah is all about. On this day Hashem is going to give out the positions to those worthy individuals who will play an important role in Hashem's Divine plan. With those positions come all the accouterments and accessories necessary to fulfill the role in the most successful and appropriate way.

How special we are to be living at this most crucial time in our history. We have been chosen for a most providential mission. Our sages tell us we are so close to the coming of the Mashiach, we can hear his footsteps in the distance. Let us enlist ourselves in Hashem's army and help the world recognize the amazing Creator through modeling the perfection inherent in the Torah.

For questions or thoughts, please feel free to contact me
at: Racohen@partnersdetroit.org.