


CHABAD

 RESEARCH UNIT

שבת.....*for Friday nights*.....קדש

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 Rosh Hashana and Shabbat Shuvah

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REPEATING THE FIRST ROSH HASHANAH

DOES ROSH HASHANAH JUST HAPPEN, OR DO WE HAVE A PART IN IT? Reconnecting with friends and family, putting right upsets which might still linger, and making some good resolutions for the coming year are all ways of carrying out our part in the Rosh Hashanah Festival. We make these steps forward to G-d, and hopefully He responds with blessing and goodness.

However, another way of understanding our part in the New Year is to consider the idea that on this day we repeat what happened on the very first Rosh Hashanah.

Although we often think of this as the day that the world was created, the Sages tell us that in Rosh Hashanah commemorates the day that Adam and Eve were created. This was on the Sixth Day of Creation, the first Friday.

On the earlier days of Creation, and also earlier on the Sixth day itself, the entire universe came into being: except man. Nature, created by G-d, but in a sense concealing G-d, provided the arena in which



In Memory of Mrs Chawa (Evelyn) Loewenthal ע"ה
 Rosh Hashana 5752. Dedicated by her son, daughter-in-law,
 and grandchildren ש"י

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Adam and Eve were about to be brought into being and fulfil their unique role.

Then, finally, on the Sixth Day, Adam and Eve were created. Their bodies were made from 'the dust of the earth', itself part of Nature, and G-d breathed a sacred Soul into them, giving them a Divine aspect. They now had a unique task: to reveal G-dliness in the world, which the Sages describe as inducing all existence to recognise G-d.

"Come," they said. "Let us all together worship G-d, our Creator!" (Ps.95:6).

This was a crucial step: they brought Divine illumination into a world of concealment. When Man and Woman look at the world, with recognition of the Divine, then the world itself changes. The world recognises G-d and reveals its own inner Nature, that it is an expression of G-d.

Every Rosh Hashanah, we the Jewish people repeat this special event. Like Adam and Eve, we call on all existence to recognise G-d. But how do we do that?

One answer is that within ourselves is a microcosm of all existence. Our body, with all our personal appetites and desires, represents the world created during the days of Creation. And there is also the Soul, our true self, the inner spark of the Divine.

When our soul makes our body recognise G-d and serve Him, by resolving to keep the Commands of the Torah, we are in fact repeating and re-enacting the achievement of Adam and Eve on the first Rosh Hashanah. Within our own lives, we make the physical recognise the holy. The Sages tell us that this affects all existence, and is an important step towards the time when all humanity will be bathed in knowledge of the Divine.

Thus on Rosh Hashanah, through our attempt to repeat the achievement of the First Rosh Hashanah, making the natural, physical part of our selves recognise G-d, in response we are granted a truly Happy New Year! ¹

1. Based on points from a discourse "Zeh HaYom" by the Lubavitcher Rebbe said on Rosh Hashanah 1980, published in 1987.

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ROSH HASHANAH

THE BIRTHDAY CAKE

Chavale and Leah were helping their mother prepare for Rosh Hashanah, which was in only a few hours. As Chavale poured the honey cake batter into a pan, she remembered something.

“Oh, I almost forgot! I wanted to make a birthday cake for Rosh Hashanah.”

“A birthday cake? Whose birthday is it?” her mother wanted to know.

“The world’s, of course!” Chavale answered. “Exactly five thousand seven hundred and seventy two years ago the world was created.”

Her mother was puzzled. “I thought you said last Shabbat a few days ago that it was the anniversary of the world being created on that day. How can the world have two birthdays?”

Leah explained “That’s because it took six days to create the world. So a few days ago, 25 Elul, which was last Shabbat, it was the day the world was begun - the first day of Creation. But tomorrow, Rosh Hashanah, is the sixth day of Creation, when the world was complete and Adam and Eve were created”.

“So which is the real birthday?” her mother asked.

“Rosh Hashanah, that’s when we start counting the new year, We learnt that the reason tomorrow is counted is because that’s the day that people were created, Adam and Eve; and the whole reason that Hashem created the world was to make a dwelling place for Himself down here, and He needs people to do that,” Chavale said.

“How do they do that?” asked her mother. “How can people make a dwelling for Hashem?”

“Hashem’s dwelling in the world comes through Mitzvot being kept and Torah being studied. They make the physical world into a more holy place where Hashem can dwell. Only people have the ability to do Mitzvot and study Torah. So the real birthday is when the people were made...”

Leah put in, “We have to work hard at doing lots of Mitzvot so that Moshiach will come, because that’s when the whole purpose of Creation will be fulfilled. Then everyone in the world will know about Hashem, and follow His laws!”

“Yes,” said Chavale. “The Jewish people will keep the 613 laws of the Torah and the non-Jews will keep the Seven Laws of the Children of Noah. The whole world will be happy!”

Their mother smiled, “Well it certainly sounds like a good reason for a birthday cake. We could make the honey cake into one - I’ll make you some icing so you can decorate it. Then you will really have a sweet New Year!”

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