

Yom Kippur 5772

BS"D Yom Kippur 5772

There is some confusion regarding the respective functions of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

1- Rosh HaShana is Yom HaDin – the Day of Judgement – when HaShem passes judgement of who will live and who will die in the coming year. Yet there is no more than a mere hint of sins and tshuva (repentance) in the tfilot (prayers) on Rosh HaShana; while the major thrust of repentance is on Yom Kippur. On Rosh HaShana we proclaim HaShem's kingship and mastery over all that exists, but the three cardinal principles of tshuva: vidui (confession), charata (regret) and kabala le'atid (resolutions for the future) are strangely absent. Isn't this bizarre for people standing before the High Court of Heaven whose very lives are in the balance?

2- The Gemara (Rosh Hashana 16b) states:



Rabbi Kruspedai said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Three books are opened on Rosh HaShana. One for the arch-sinners, one for the righteous and one for the yet undefined. The righteous are immediately signed and sealed to live, the arch-sinners are immediately signed and sealed to die, and the judgement of the yet undefined is postponed until Yom Kippur.

Rabbi Yochanan's teaching is problematic: 1- If arch-sinners are condemned to die in the coming year, why are so many still with us in this world? 2- If the righteous are signed and sealed for life, why do so many righteous people die at a young age?

I submit:

HaShem created an unfinished world, into which He implanted stimuli designed to evolve all the world's entities into future stages of development. The process of evolution is the most powerful force inherent in all that exists.

The Big Bang produced the rudimentary elements of hydrogen, helium and the mysterious, theoretical photon, and from that time on, our universe has been busy creating galaxies and their stars which explode as supernovas, producing the complex elements we now find in the atomic table.

Human beings and the societies we create are the essential part of the evolutionary process. Societies which men create produce great evils, which in turn are replaced by seemingly better ones, which in time produce their own evils until they too are replaced with a better set of circumstances which creates their evils, ad infinitum.

Channeling the direction and momentum of all things, ever so subtly, is the invisible Hand of HaShem. The Creator has an overriding plan for his creations, which will in time achieve the predetermined goals which are the most hidden secrets of the Creator.

Rosh HaShana is not a day for repentance. It is the time when HaShem assesses what has been achieved towards realizing His predetermined plan and what is yet left to be accomplished. He then turns to the highest of His creations – man – to determine who among us will contribute to advancing the world to its next level in the evolutionary process.

Tzadikim (righteous) are signed and sealed on Rosh HaShana to live, because they certainly contribute to the world's perfection. But there are tzaddikim who HaShem has determined that they have reached the pinnacle of their contribution and He brings them to another dimension where they receive their eternal reward.

The evildoers die because their presence here would cause the

world to regress into the more primitive levels of immorality rather than to advance it. However, there are evildoers who HaShem requires to be alive in order to advance the world to its next level. As the Gemara (Sukka 52b) says:



There are four things that HaShem regrets creating: galut (exile), Kasdim (Babylonians), Yishmaelim (descendants of Yishmael) and the yetzer hara (man's evil inclination).

This is a thought provoking idea. Why did HaShem bring these four into the world and then regret doing so? Just don't create them and have no regrets!

But the Gemara is telling us that these four evils are necessary for the world to advance in the evolutionary process aimed at achieving the goals HaShem set for us. Think of a catalyst whose presence in a chemical reaction does not add anything substantial to the result, but merely increases the speed of the reaction.

In contrast, on Yom Kippur, HaShem examines the individual not in terms of his potential contribution to the goals of creation, but how he has conducted himself in the tiny kingdom of his private world. On this day, we confess and regret our wrong doings, and resolve not to repeat them.

Or to put it plainly: On Rosh HaShana HaShem, as it would be, looks inwardly to see how His predestined plan is progressing; on Yom Kippur HaShem observes the most minute details in the lives of every man, and then weighs and balances all the determinants of that life and hands down judgement for the coming year.

This sheds light on the unusual term used by Avraham Aveinu when replying to HaShem's sudden call to him at the beginning of the Akaida (the binding of Yitzchak) episode.

In Beresheet 22:1 the Torah relates:



And it came to pass after these things, that HaShem tested Avraham and called to him, "Avraham," and he (Avraham replied) "hinaini" (I am here).

"I am here," is a strange reply when the accepted one would have been a simple "yes".

Tradition has it that the Akaida occurred on Rosh Hashana, which is the basis of the mitzvah to sound a ram's horn (shofar) to bring before HaShem the merit of the Akaida when a ram was sacrificed in place of Yitzchak. Hence, HaShem's call to Avraham occurred three days prior to Rosh HaShana.

Avraham was aware of the essence of Rosh HaShana when HaShem focuses on those individuals who would be essential in bring to fruition the goals for which the world was created.

Avraham replies, "Hinaini" meaning: I am here at Your service to fulfill any and all missions which You place upon me.

HaShem is the King, and Eretz Yisrael His palace.

And as with a king who appoints ministers to serve him closely in the palace, and others who do not enter the palace but serve the king as caretakers, gardeners, cleaners, etc., HaShem has His personal palace personalities who assist him in realizing the goals of the kingdom, and others who fulfill more mundane tasks.

The major goals of HaShem are being realized by His chosen people in Eretz Yisrael, while the Jews in the galut also serve the King, albeit in secondary roles.

So, let us pray for a year when all Jews will be aroused to realize the greatness of the times in which we merit to live,

and fill the Holy Land with HaShem's children. This would indeed be a major step in realizing the yet hidden goals of HaShem the Creator.

Gemar Chatima Tova

Nachman Kahana

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