

WHY WOULD G-D CREATE THE WORLD?

by Rabbi Dovid Green

Why would G-d create the world? No doubt you have asked this question. The Talmudic writings provide us with an answer. "G-d desired to have a 'dwelling place' in the lower worlds." The expression "lower worlds" means the places where G-d's existence is less apparent; where the choice exists to affirm or deny G-d's existence. This is His purpose for our existence in all of the many positive and negative circumstances we find ourselves in. In this week's parsha this lofty purpose was fulfilled. The Jews in the wilderness of Sinai built a Tabernacle and G-d made His presence dwell there.

However, it wasn't that easy. The Jewish Nation had the recent Sin of the Golden Calf hanging over their heads. In addition, there were many things that needed to be done first on that day. Sacrifices were brought on behalf of Aharon the High Priest, and on behalf of the Jewish People. Aharon blessed the nation, and nothing occurred. This was the eighth day of trying. After the seventh day the Jews came to Moshe and claimed responsibility for their failure to bring down G-d's presence. They were embarrassed for having served the Golden Calf. Moshe assured them that Aharon would be able to bring G-d's presence into the Tabernacle. On the eighth day Aharon tried. Still nothing. Then Aharon was ashamed. "It's because G-d is angry with me for taking part in building the Golden Calf." Immediately the two of them (Moshe and Aharon) went in to the Tabernacle, prayed for mercy, exited, blessed the Jewish Nation, and then G-d's presence indeed descended upon the Tabernacle.

We don't have a tabernacle. We don't have G-d's presence on the level which they experienced in the wilderness. We do, however, have the prescription. Two things are needed. First is the desire. Second is the concern about what I might be doing to bring G-d's presence into the world.

When a person recognizes his shortcomings, and longs to be realistically better, it brings, so to speak, great pleasure to G-d. When Moshe told Aharon to begin the service in the Tabernacle, Aharon hesitated out of shame. Moshe asked him "why are you ashamed, for this you were chosen." On a deeper level this is understood to mean, why should your shame cause you to hesitate? It is because of your shame that you were chosen for this job.

A person once came to his mentor to visit him. His mentor asked him "did you take that position as a Rabbi which I advised you to accept?" No Rebbe, I didn't," came the answer. "Why not?" "I was afraid to take responsibility for so many important communal and individual matters. What if I make a mistake?" To that the mentor asked, "Would you prefer someone who isn't afraid, who doesn't appreciate the gravity of the job would accept the position?"

We have an important purpose - to bring G-d's presence into the world. We know we're not perfect, but our souls yearn to be close to our Creator. What do we do? We put our shortcomings behind us. We focus on which areas need to improve and we begin a slow steady, incremental climb on the ladder of self-improvement. At the same time we humbly seek G-d's presence, and we dedicate our talents and our best efforts to bringing It into the world. Then we will merit the blessing which Moshe and Aharon gave to the Jewish nation just before G-d descended into the Tabernacle. "May it be G-d's will that His Presence should dwell on the work of your hands."

Good Shabbos.

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