

THE EVER-PRESENT

by Rabbi Label Lam

Rosh HaShana is the birthday of humanity. It coincides with the creation of man. The blowing of the Shofar may well be a reenactment of the blowing of the "breath of life" into the nostrils of the first man, endowing him and his descendants with a G-dly soul. It is the reception of that and development of that deeply seeded greatness that we quest for each year at this time. What does it mean to have a Divine Soul embedded within our beings?

The Gesher HaChaim lists a number of major differences between a human being and an animal. Amongst the items spoken about there is man's unique ability to perceive past, present, and future, and to see himself as a creature of history.

At a Bris in Jerusalem a great Rabbi stood up to speak and wish well to the grandfather, a accomplished Talmud scholar, on the occasion of the Bris of his first grand-child, "Mazel Tov" he said, "today you are a human being!" Everyone was stunned. Maybe there is some hidden insult implied here. Until now he wasn't human?

Then he went on to explain that in the animal kingdom it is common to find creatures that have an instinct to protect its young cub, kitten, fledgling you name it.

However, only by humans does a grandparent demonstrate love and care for his or her grandchild and grandchildren have fealty for grandparents. This is symptomatic of real soulfulness, to see one's self in a grander historical or familial context. The greater one's spiritual development the broader is his grasp of the importance of the historical relevance of his life, and its mission.

In the liturgy of Rosh HaShana. We say over and over again, "HASHEM Melech, HASHEM Malach, HASHEM Yimloch, l'olam va'ed". HASHEM is King, HASHEM, was King, and HASHEM will be King forever! While we are reciting this, I am thinking from my lowly place that HASHEM is the King in the past, present, and future! That's all! Now it dawns on me something more and beyond all - more.

What we are saying is "to HASHEM, Who is the King, there is no time." Time is a created illusion. The animal lives in the second and for the second. The animal soul has no sense of history or destiny, only brute survival. The G-dly Soul, however, is rooted in a sublimely transcendent source.

On Rosh HaShana, which is called Yom Zikaron" a Day of Remembering, we are choosing to connect to the Memory of the Universe, where nothing and no one is lost or forgotten. From that perspective, there is no future or past. Everything is alive and real in the ever present. HASHEM is King of

everything, all history and destiny, and at once.

Animals are, in that sense, forgetful. Their entire psychology and consciousness is anchored in separated segments of the instinctual present. That's not life, as we speak of wishing to be written into the Book of Life on Rosh HaShana.

"Real Life" is a world of remembrance, a meaningful connectedness of the dots of time. Every second, is wedded to whole a minute, an hour to a day, a week to a year, a decade to a century and a millennium. That historical snapshot is viewed by HASHEM Who rules over all time. We want to contribute valuable golden threads to the tapestry of HASHEM's grand plan, from the beginning of creation until the end of times.

From that lofty place the Shofar calls us to broaden our vision, as our G-dly Souls are awakened. Simultaneously it calls for us to reconcile the seconds of our lives, which is essentially an invitation to Teshuvah.

The phrase says, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present." Sure we are meant to cherish the present but not as a beast licks the bowl. There are 86,400 seconds in a day and each one is a ray of eternity to be lived with an eye of awareness open, for something more life affirming than the present: **The Ever- Present.**