

# CHAGIM U'ZMANIM - EREV ROSH HASHANAH

*by Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari*

We read, ' There was no Man [yet] to till the ground' (Bereishit, 2:5) and Rashi explains that when Adam came and realized that they, the rains, were essential, he prayed for them and they came down so that all the trees and the grasses grew and flourished. 'The whole world is built on acts of loving kindness' (Tehillim, 89:3), so only Hesed operated in the world at the time of Creation, as nobody existed who could arouse spirituality from below. Before Adam existed, it was only Chesed that made possible the continuation of the whole of Creation. Even the creation of Adam himself was pure Chesed since only after that it is written, ' And Hashem took Adam and placed him in Gan Eden to cultivate and protect it' (Ber.2, 15). This added another spiritual dimension, ' To cultivate by means of mitzvot aseil and to protect by means of mitzvot lo ta'aseil' (Zohar (Part 1,27); the former brings down the Divine bounty from on high while the latter removes the evil forces, that is the whole purpose of our spiritual labor.

' This day is the anniversary of the start of Your Handiwork, a reminder of the first day'(Musaf Rosh Hashanah), for on the 25th of Ellul the world was created and on the 1st of Tisrei Adam was created. From the 25th of Ellul till the 1st of Tisrei everything existed only through the Chesed of Hashem and so every year, during these days, we strive to arouse Divine Chesed by our slichot of the 13 Divine Attributes. However, on Rosh Hashanah there occurs a change that corresponds to the change in the world after Adam; before he was created, as we have seen, there was only Chesed, afterwards he had to bring down Divine bounty through his own efforts. This additional perspective shows in the order of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, that is divided according to the same criteria.

' They blow the shofar and sound it in joy when they are seated and they blow the shofar and sound it in joy when they are standing' (Rosh Hashanah, 16a). The tekiot demeyushav are a memorial of the creation till and including Adam. Just as ' [He] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul'-which the Targum translates as a 'speaking soul', so these sounds of the shofar enter our hearts and influence us till we too become souls speaking of Hashem's chesed. Then on the basis of this spiritual power that is generated from on High, the tekiot deumad can become the symbol of our crowning Hashem through our own efforts by malkhuyot, zichronot and shofarot. Now the evil forces can be dispersed. That explains the continuation of the Gemara, 'in order to confuse the Satan'. He is confused by the speaking soul that is cleansed of sin that we received through Tekiot demeyushav and our consequent efforts anointing Hashem, through malkhuyot, zichronot and shofarot. Therefore we silence those who interrupt or cause to break the

sequence in any way between the tekiot, so that we can draw spiritual strength from the speaking souls that were created at the beginning.

So every person should know that we do not have any ability or effrontery to proceed to say malhkiyot without the chesed that Hashem first bestows on us. 'For who am I and what is my people that we should be able to gather strength to offer You anything? For all things come from You and only of Yours do we give You. (1 Chronicles, 29:14).

Our custom is to gather together on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and to intensify our saying of shelichot because it is the last chance to do teshuvah before the year ends- 'If not now, when?' However, there is an additional reason, according to all that we said above.

'Rabbi Yochanan said, that the angels were created on the second day, while Rabbi Chaninah the son of Rabbi Yochanan held that they were created on the fifth day. The name 'angels' represents messengers and they are meant to bring the Divine plenty down from on High, so it is appropriate that they were created on the second day as the world was continuously spreading and becoming material and it was fitting that this be through a messenger of the Divine plenty. Yet there are angels who give praises and sing them to Hashem, bringing of the world below to on High and these were created on the 5th day together with the mobile creatures. Even were we to say that the angels of song are the same as the messengers, we could say that they only got the power of song on the 5th day, together with those creatures.

'On the 5th day, they said, 'Sing joyously to Hashem, our strength' (Tehillim, 81:2), because on that day were created the birds and the fish that sing to Him' (Rosh Hashanah, 31a). To this Rashi comments, that when one sees all the diverse birds, one gives praise to He who created them. This is hard to understand, since surely when one sees all the great variety of plants, foliage and grasses that were created on the 3rd day, surely one should equally be stirred to praise their Creator? However, on the 5th day were created those creatures that they themselves offer song to Hashem, so their power to move us also to song is greater. The birds are in the heavens far above and like them, the angels who spread wings and fly. So on the 29th of Ellul that corresponds to the 5th day of creation, we multiply our songs and our selichot, even as it is said, 'One should always first offer praise and then pray' (Avodah Zarah, 7:b), that is, 'to hear the song and the prayer' (1 Kings, 28:8).

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