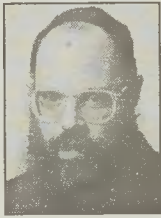


# יום טוב

## On Rosh Hashanah We Celebrate Our Birthday

By Rabbi Yossi Groner,  
Congregation Ohr  
HaTorah



On Rosh Hashanah we celebrate the 5763rd birthday of the world. Actually, according to the Talmud, Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the first two people on earth, Adam and Eve. The world was created six days earlier on the 25th day of Elul.

The purpose of creation was for mankind to transform the world into a spiritual garden, a place where God's presence is revealed through the daily tasks assigned to humanity. To signify the importance of mankind's mission in the world, God chose that Rosh

Hashanah would be celebrated on their birthday.

The days and minutes of Rosh Hashanah are considered to be the most precious moments of the year. They are like a time-release capsule in which the rest of the

days of the year are encapsulated. When we make the most of these precious moments, they will be a blessing to us for the rest of the year.

After all, the birth of mankind is one of the most significant events in the history of the world. At birth we were charged with a mission that has changed the face of the

earth forever. We were empowered by God to be productive and creative and to build cities in which to dwell and temples in which to connect with God.

The power God has entrusted to us is awesome. With divine ingenuity, we have discovered treasures of knowledge that have reshaped the world from a primitive existence to a modern scientific wonder world.

At the same time men have abused their power and have been destructive and barbaric. Most recently are the events of September 11, which we commemorate near the days of Rosh Hashanah.

On Rosh Hashanah, we reflect on our God-given powers. We

examine our actions in the past year with sincerity to see if we have used them properly in order to make the world a better place. As we stand in the presence of God exclaiming His sovereignty over the world, we resolve that the New Year will be better.

This year in particular, when we reflect on all the human suffering both in this country and in the Holy Land, we cry out to God and ask Him to bless us with peace and security and allow us to realize our potential in transforming this world into a garden worthy of His Divine presence. May this new year be a year of happiness and peace and a year of return to the Holy Land of Israel with our righteous Moshiach. ✡

Happy  
New Year



from  
Bill & Patty  
Gorelick

## Rosh HaShanah

By Rabbi Mordechai Roizman,  
Charlotte Torah Center  
Inspired by the teachings of  
Rabbi Noah Wienberg

If you ask the average Jewish person what Rosh HaShana is all about, the reply is: the Jewish New Year.

Forget the images of party hats, noisemakers, general merrymaking. There's not a lot of drinking going on, just a lot of praying, and eating.

Although most Jews attend services on Rosh HaShanah, often their only connection to Judaism, most don't know what made Rosh HaShanah the New Year.

People will say: 5,763 years ago the world was created and that's why it's the New Year.

But ... 5,763 years ago God created the first human being with a God-like soul, the ability to reason. Rosh HaShana is humanity's birthday.

Our holidays are not moments of commemoration, but of opportunity. The events occurred, then were transformed into days of growth and insight. Rosh HaShanah is an opportunity for quantum growth and insight into the nature of who we are, why we are here.

Consider the implication of Rosh HaShanah as the day that the God-like human was created. When you think of something being created, what comes to mind? Creation means a goal, a plan, purpose.

Rosh HaShanah is therefore the day that informs us that we are here for a reason, a purpose.

If that's the case then what is the opportunity of Rosh Hashanah? That we have a chance to understand what the purpose of life is and to get on track with it.

Now keep in mind that God lacks nothing. That's what makes God God. So what's the point of this perfect being creating? It didn't create for itself, it created for something else - us! King David tells us this world is an "act of kindness."

The Jewish people say God is our parent. What does a parent

want for its child? To fulfill its potential, to get the greatest pleasure that life has to offer.

That's God the parent, that's God the giver - the creation of the world and us is for our pleasure. The opportunity of Rosh HaShanah is for us to get in touch with our purpose - with the pleasure that we were created to attain. We are reminded that life is about pleasure by a delicious apple dipped in the sweetest of honey.

But what pleasure are we talking about? Parents want their children to have the absolute best. God is the same. God wants us to be enjoying all of life in the absolutely best way. Take a moment and look at life's pleasures. Are we getting the most out of them? Our family - do we reaffirm our love for them daily? Are we helping them to be the best so that there is more pleasure for them and us? What about ourselves? Do we value our talents and character? Have we extended ourselves so that we are affecting positive changes in our world, so that we and others can in turn reap the pleasure? Do we have goals that will increase our Jewish knowledge and identity so that our pride and pleasure in being Jewish will increase? Finally, what about a potentially pleasurable relationship with our Creator, who loves us so much that we have a whole world as a gift?

Who loves us and has given us everything? Parents. OK, now who are our biggest critics? Parents! We know that what we care about, what we love, we are going to judge. Why? Because that reflects its importance. Parents want their children to enjoy life and to grow and develop in their potential. The only way progress is measured is with loving judgment.

That's, exactly why Rosh HaShanah is known as Yom HaDin, the day of judgment. The day that God created us with a purpose, is the day that our loving parent in Heaven evaluates us, judges our progress.

We mentioned how judging

something indicates its value. That's why Rosh HaShanah is a joyful holiday. Sure there are a lot of prayers. But the atmosphere is not somber, but joyful. There is joy because if the Almighty created us with a purpose, and God judges us to see and make sure we are fulfilling our purpose, then we are of value. There is no greater source for self-esteem than this realization.

It's clear that judgment must mean responsibility. Parents judge their children in those areas where they are responsible. What does it mean where they are responsible? Where the children make their own decisions.

That's in fact what we are judged for on Rosh HaShanah. Every single choice we made. Did that choice move us to our purpose, a life of great fulfillment and pleasure, or did it move us away?

And you know something? We want to be judged! We want the best life for ourselves, we want all the real, deep pleasures there are. An athlete who wants to succeed will seek out the coach that will evaluate him; so also we want our "coach" to evaluate us.

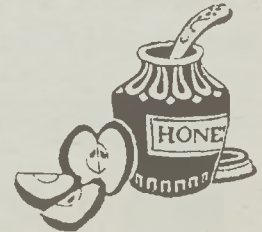
Our desire for judgment brings us to our final point. The one Mitzvah that Rosh HaShanah is famous for - the Shofar.

The blowing of the Shofar serves a dual purpose. It's the judge banging the gavel at the time of judgment. But in our case, we bang the gavel. We're telling God: We want to know where we've made the right and wrong decisions. We want to be judged because it means we're loved by God. The Shofar, though, is also a cry. It's our cry of pain and of joy. The pain of the missed opportunities, and the joy of knowing that it's the day of creation. That we can start anew, with a purpose. That the coming year will bring to us, our families, the Jewish people and the world the true pleasures of life.

From Meechal and myself, we bless the Jewish Community of Charlotte with a year of spiritual growth through a deeper understanding of Torah and the pleasure of being Jewish. ✡

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Sandra, Leon & Amy Levine