

10.

Rosh Hashanah

The Day G-d Split Adam and Eve

From Dependence to Independence to Interdependence



*Dedicated in loving memory of Mrs. Frumeth Polasky,
פרומא בריינא בת ליפא וליבא ע"ה, marking her first yahrtzeit on 5 Tishrei.*

*May the merit of the Torah study worldwide accompany her soul in the
world of everlasting life and be a source of blessings to her family with
much health, happiness, nachat, and success.*

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Rosh Hashanah

The festival of Rosh Hashanah—the name means “Head of the Year”—is observed for two days beginning on 1 Tishrei, the first day of the Jewish year. It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and their first actions toward the realization of mankind’s role in G-d’s world.

Rosh Hashanah thus emphasizes the special relationship between G-d and humanity: our dependence upon G-d as our Creator and Sustainer, and G-d’s dependence upon us as the ones who make His presence known and felt in His world. Each year on Rosh Hashanah, “all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep,” and it is decreed in the Heavenly court “who shall live, and who shall die . . .

who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise.” But this is also the day we proclaim G-d King of the universe. The kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe is dependent upon the renewal of the divine desire for a world when we accept G-d’s kingship each year on Rosh Hashanah.

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king. The cry of the *shofar* is also a call to repentance, for Rosh Hashanah is also the anniversary of man’s first sin and his repentance thereof, and serves as the first of the “Ten Days of Repentance,” which culminate in Yom

Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Another significance of the *shofar* is to recall the Binding of Isaac, which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah, in which a ram took Isaac's place as an offering to G-d; we evoke Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son, and plead that the merit of his deed should stand by us as we pray for a year of life, health, and prosperity. Altogether, we listen to one hundred *shofar* blasts over the course of the Rosh Hashanah services.

Additional Rosh Hashanah observances include: a) Eating a piece of apple dipped in honey, to symbolize our

desire for a sweet year, and eating other special foods symbolic of the new year's blessings. b) Blessing one another with the words "*Leshanah tovah tikateiv veteichateim*—May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year." c) *Tashlich*, a special prayer said near a body of water (an ocean, river, pond, etc.), in evocation of the verse, "And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea." And, as with every major Jewish holiday, after candle lighting and prayers we recite Kiddush and make a blessing on challah to begin the festive Rosh Hashanah meals.

I. THE DAY HUMANS WERE INVENTED

The Origins of Rosh Hashanah

TEXT 1

TALMUD TRACTATE ROSH HASHANAH, 10B

תניא, רבי אליעזר אומר: בתשרי נברא העולם; בתשרי נולדו אבות; בתשרי מתו אבות; בפסח נולד יצחק; בראש השנה נפקדה שרה, רחל ורחל ורחל; בראש השנה יצא יוסף מבית האסורין.

It is taught: Rabbi Eliezer says, “In Tishrei the world was created; in Tishrei the patriarchs were born; in Tishrei the patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on Rosh Hashanah Sarah, Rachel, and Chanah were remembered by G-d and conceived; on Rosh Hashanah Joseph came out from prison.”

Babylonian Talmud

A literary work of monumental proportions that draws upon the legal, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, and historical traditions of Judaism. The 37 tractates of the Babylonian Talmud contain the teachings of the Jewish sages from the period after the destruction of the 2nd Temple through the 5th century CE. It has served as the primary vehicle for the transmission of the Oral Law and the education of Jews over the centuries; it is the entry point for all subsequent legal, ethical, and theological Jewish scholarship.

Creating Humans

TEXT 2

BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:21-24

וַיִּפֹּל ה' אֱלֹקִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן, וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו
וַיִּסְגֹר בְּשׂוֹר תַּחְתָּנָה:
וַיִּבֶן ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִן הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה, וַיְבִאֶהָ
אֶל הָאָדָם:
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם, זֹאת הִפְעַם עֵצָם מֵעֵצָמִי וּבְשׂוֹר מִבְּשׂוֹרִי, לְזֹאת יִקְרָא
אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זֹאת:
עַל כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אִמּוֹ, וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ, וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:

And the L-rd G-d caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept, and He took one of his sides, and He closed the flesh in its place.

And the L-rd G-d built the side that He had taken from man into a woman, and He brought her to man.

And man said, “This time, it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called *ishah* (woman) because this one was taken from *ish* (man).”

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

TEXT 3

MIDRASH BEREISHIT RABAH, 8:1

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן: בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את
אדם הראשון, דיו פרצופים בראו. ונסרו, ועשאו גביים, גב לכאן
וגב לכאן.

Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachman said, “At the time G-d created Adam, He created him ‘two-sided.’ G-d then separated [Adam and Eve], leaving two ‘backs.’”

Questions

TEXT 4

RABBI MOSHE ALSHICH, TORAT MOSHE, BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:21–24

הנה ראוי לשים לב: למה עשה ה' ככה, ולא בראה עפר מן האדמה
כאשר יצר את האדם?

It's worth thinking about: Why did G-d do it this way? Why didn't He create Eve from the earth as He did Adam?

Bereishit Rabah

An early rabbinic commentary on the Book of Genesis. This Midrash bears the name of Rabbi Oshiya Rabah (Rabbi Oshiya “the Great”), whose teaching opens this work. This Midrash provides textual exegeses and stories, expounds upon the biblical narrative, and develops and illustrates moral principles. Produced by the sages of the Talmud in the Land of Israel, its use of Aramaic closely resembles that of the Jerusalem Talmud. It was first printed in Constantinople in 1512 together with 4 other Midrashic works on the other 4 books of the Pentateuch.

Rabbi Moshe Alshich 1508–1593

Biblical exegete. Rabbi Alshich was born in Turkey and moved to Safed, Israel, where he became a student of Rabbi Yosef Caro, the preeminent codifier of Jewish law. Alshich's biblical, homiletical, and ethical teachings remain popular to this day, most notably, *Torat Moshe*, a commentary on the Torah. His students included Rabbi Chaim Vital and Rabbi Yom Tov Tsalalon. He is buried in Safed.

II. ANSWERS, ANSWERS, ANSWERS

The Human Connection

TEXT 5

RABBI YITZCHAK ARAMA, AKEIDAT YITZCHAK,
BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:18, SHAAAR SHEMINI

שהיתה חברת הזכר והנקבה במינים הבלתי מדברים בלתי הכרחית – רק לענין החיות זרע על פני האדמה. כי לזולת זה – לא תצטרך חברתם זה לזה, לא לעזר ולא להועיל. לזה יספיק שיברא כל אחד מהם בפני עצמו ויהיה לזכר עם הנקבה יחס מיני לבד, כי אותו היחס ייחדם וחיברם בטבע לענין ההוה, שהוא הישארות מינם.

אמנם, זה האופן מהחיבור והזיווג – לא יאות ולא ייתכן למין האדם, כי לפי טבעו, הצורך אשר לו לחברה, הוא גדול: לספק צרכיו, לאכול ולמכסה, ויתר הענינים מצורך השאיר מינו. כי הצרכים ההם הם הכרחיים לחיות עצמותו, והשאיר מינו הוא צורך טבעי, מכוון לבוראו אשר צוה אותו בן. וכמו שאמר החוקר (פרק י"ב מאמר ח' מספר המדות) כי לא לבד להוליד בנים הם שוכבים יחד, כי לכל שאר הדברים אשר הם לצורך החיים. ולזה ראתה חכמתו יתברך, שלא יהיה זיווג האדם ואשתו על היחס המיני ההוא לבד, כשאר הבעלי חיים. אבל שיהיה להם יחס אישי מיוחד, הוא יחזק אהבתם וחברתם, להעזר זה מזה בכל עניניהם עזר גמור ושלם, כאשר יאות להם.

והוא מה שאמר: "לא טוב היות האדם לבדו", כלומר שיהיה כל אחד מהזכר והנקבה בפני עצמו, כשאר הבעלי חיים הרועים על ידיהם, שאינן צריכים לחברה זה לזה. אמנם ייתכן שתהיה לו חברה נאותה ומשותפת לו כפי צרכו, ולזה אעשה לו העזר הראוי והנאות לו, שהוא עזר כנגדו, כלומר – כנגד צורכו ושוה לו.

Rabbi Yitzchak Arama 1420–1494

Spanish rabbi and philosopher; known as "the Baal Akeidah," after his work, *Akeidat Yitzchak*, an influential philosophic and mystical commentary on the Torah. After initially serving as head of the yeshiva, in Zamora, Spain, he was appointed as rabbi and preacher for the community of Tarragona. His writings were received favorably by his peers, including Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel. After the expulsion of 1492, Rabbi Arama ultimately settled in Naples, where he is buried.

Between animals, there is no reason for them to interact with one another save for the purpose of perpetuation alone. Without that, there is no reason for them to create a social contract—not to help one another or for any

other sort of interaction. Thus, it was reasonable to create males and females independently, leaving their relationship to be an exclusively sexual one, for it is the natural drive every creature possesses to self-perpetuate that drives sexual relationships.

But for the human being, this is untenable. For the human naturally possesses a great need for social interaction to provide food, shelter, clothing, and other needs vital for its survival, as designed by the G-d who programmed it so. A man and woman do not sleep together just to create children; rather, their interaction includes all matters vital for their survival. It is for this reason that G-d, in His infinite wisdom, designed that a man and woman shouldn't be known to each other in an exclusively sexual way like other animals, rather that they should build a uniquely human bond of love and partnership to help one another in all matters appropriate for them.

This, then, is what Scripture states, "It is not good for man to be alone." In other words, it is not good for a human man and woman to exist independent of one another like other animals, who really don't need such companionship. Rather, the human being is capable of a far greater partnership—and so, "Let me make a partner beside him," that is, a partner appropriate to his needs and worthy of one another.

The Hollywood Myth

TEXT 6

RABBI MOSHE ALSHICH, TORAT MOSHE, BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:21-24

אמנם, יתכן כי לפניו יתברך עלה במחשבה לברוא שני גופים, זכר ונקבה, עפר מן האדמה, אך ראה כי יהיה פירוד בינו ובין האשה ולא יהיה זיווגם עולה יפה. כי אפילו עתה, שנבראת הנקבה ממנו ממש – קשה לזווגם כקריעת ים סוף, ומה גם אם מראשיתם היו נבראים בפירוד!

It is entirely possible that G-d did indeed consider creating two separate bodies, male and female, from the ground. However, G-d foresaw that doing so would create distance between man and woman and challenge their partnership. Even now, after G-d literally fashioned the woman from the man, marriage is still impossibly difficult; imagine how much more so had they been created independently from the beginning!

Furthering the Love

TEXT 7

TALMUD TRACTATE EIRUVIN, 18A

מלמד שקילעה הקדוש ברוך הוא לחוה והביאה לאדם הראשון, שכן בכרכי הים, קורין ל"קלעיתא" – "בנייתא".

“And the L-rd G-d built the *tzela*”: This verse teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, braided Eve’s hair and then brought her to Adam, as in the coastal towns, they call braiding hair *building*.

Female Empowerment

TEXT 8

MIDRASH, BEREISHIT RABAH, 18:1

נָתַן בָּהּ בִּינָה יוֹתֵר מִן הָאִישׁ, דְּתַנִּינָן: . . . בֵּית י"ב שָׁנָה וַיּוֹם אָחָד
נְדָרֶיהָ קַיָּמִין . . . אֶבֶל לְזָכָר . . . בֶּן י"ג נְדָרָיו קַיָּמִין.

Women were given more *binah* [understanding] than men. . . . As the Mishnah teaches: a girl’s vows are binding at twelve years old while for a boy this is at thirteen years of age.

Sensitivity

TEXT 9

RABBI YITZCHAK ARAMA, AKEIDAT YITZCHAK,
BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 2:18, SHAAR SHEMINI

עֲשֵׂה כֵן כְּדִי שֶׁתְּבוֹא לוֹ בְּהִיסָח הַדַּעַת, כְּעֵנִין מְצִיאָה פֶּתְאוּמִית,
וַיִּשְׂמַח בָּהּ מְאוֹד.

G-d did it this way so that Eve would come to Adam like a surprise find, causing him immense joy.

III. A KABBALISTIC VIEW

Back to Adam and Eve

TEXT 10

RABBI ISAAC LURIA, ETZ HACHAYIM, SHAAR HAKLALIM §13

שתחילה, בהיותה אחורי ז"א – היא יונקת ממנו, ואז נעשין
הכלים שלה כולם על ידי האור של ז"א היוצא לאחור . . . ואחר
כך "ויביאה אל האדם" – פנים בפנים.

The way it was designed at first, the dimension of Eve drew life from the back and side of Z"A, the giver. In this design, everything she receives is from the light of Z"A that goes out the back. . . . Thereafter, "She was brought to Adam"—face-to-face.

Rabbi Isaac Luria **1534–1572**

Known by the acronym "Arizal," or simply "the Ari." Founder of the Lurianic school of kabbalah. Born in Jerusalem; raised in Egypt; died in Safed. Rabbi Luria studied Talmud under Rabbi Betzalel Ashkenazi, compiler of the *Shitah Mekubetzet*. Despite his youth, he was accepted among the rabbinic elite of Safed. The Ari never recorded his teachings; they were collected and transcribed by his disciples. His leading disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital, is generally considered the most authoritative recorder of the Arizal's teachings.

A G-dly Connection

TEXT 11

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, TANYA, SHAAR
HAYICHUD VEHA'EMUNAH, CH. 3

ומה שכל נברא ונפעל נראה לנו ליש וממשות, זהו מחמת שאין
אנו משיגים ורואים בעיני בשר את כח ה' ורוח פיו שבנברא. אבל
אילו ניתנה רשות לעין לראות ולהשיג את החיות ורוחניות שבכל
נברא, השופע בו ממוצא פי ה' ורוח פיו – לא היה גשמיות הנברא
וחומרו וממשו נראה כלל לעינינו, כי הוא בטל במציאות ממש
לגבי החיות והרוחניות שבו, מאחר שמבלעדי הרוחניות היה אין
ואפס ממש, כמו קודם ששת ימי בראשית ממש.

The reason all creation appears as an independent entity from G-d is only because we do not perceive with our eyes of flesh the G-dly energy that animates it. Were our physical eyes granted permission to see the energy that animates every creature from the word of G-d flowing through it, we would not even see the material matter at all. After all, the material substance is entirely of no matter relative to the spiritual energy that animates it, for without that spiritual energy, the material substance would revert to nothingness, as it was prior to Creation.

**Rabbi Shneur
Zalman of Liadi
(Alter Rebbe)
1745-1812**

Chasidic rebbe, halachic authority, and founder of the Chabad movement. The Alter Rebbe was born in Liozna, Belarus, and was among the principal students of the Magid of Mezeritch. His numerous works include the *Tanya*, an early classic containing the fundamentals of Chabad Chasidism; and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, an expanded and reworked code of Jewish law.

TEXT 12

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, TORAH OR, 5B

פירוש וענין "היות האדם לבדו", היינו להיות הכל המשכה בבחינת גילוי מלמעלה . . . שיהיה בבחינת גילוי מאליו ומעצמו למטה, שאז היה הכל בבחינת ביטול . . . "אעשה לו עזר כנגדו" שיהיה עזר וסיוע מבחינת "כנגדו" דוקא, דהיינו מבחינת הצמצום וההסתר המנגד להתפשטות ההארה כנזכר לעיל, שמחמת זה מתהווה הגוף ונפש הבהמית שהם בחינת יש ונפרדים כנזכר לעיל, ומזה דוקא יהיה העזה, כי מהעלם זה – נעשה אחר כך אור חוזר למעלה מעלה.

The idea of man "being alone" in a cosmic sense is when G-dly energy comes as an initiative from on High, completely subsuming everything upon which it shines. . . . "Let me make a partner opposite him" represents the notion that help comes to the human specifically from that which "opposes him," namely from that which detracts, dilutes, and "opposes" that G-dly energy. From that dilution, the body and egoistic soul—conscious beings—are created. But it is specifically from this that "help" comes, for it is from the concealment that a greater light rebounds, lifting the person ever higher.

The Bride with the Groom

TEXT 13

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, IBID.

ובכל זה יובן מה שאומרים בברכת חתנים, בברכת "שמח תשמח": "משמח חתן וכלה", ובברכה אחרונה, שהיא "אשר ברא", אומרים: "משמח חתן עם הכלה".

פירוש: כי הכלה . . . תחילה היא מקבלת האור מהחתן . . . וזהו "חתן וכלה". אמנם אחר כך הוא "משמח חתן עם הכלה", שעל ידי הכלה הוא משמח את החתן, שהרי נעשה לו עזר ממש ותוספת אור מבחינת "כנגדו" כנזכר לעיל. וזהו שנעשית עטרה לבעלה.

We can now explain an anomaly in the wedding blessings. First, we recite, "Blessed is the One . . . Who gladdens the groom and the bride," but in the final blessing, we recite, "Blessed is the One . . . Who gladdens the groom with the bride." [Why the difference?]

The explanation: At first, the bride receives energy from the groom . . . namely, the "groom *and* bride." Thereafter, G-d gladdens the groom *with* the bride, for she ultimately becomes a true helper, adding a dimension to him coming from being "opposite" [and independent from] him.