



GROWTH

At The

YOM TOV TABLE

ROSH HASHANAH

Quantity vs. Quality

The world was created on the 25th of Elul, so it turns out that Rosh Hashana is actually the sixth day of creation, marking the creation of man.

Why celebrate the day of man's creation as the day of Rosh Hashana, "the beginning of Your handiwork"? Why not celebrate the actual day of creation?

In our big beautiful world, there are countless stones, fauna and animals. The most numerous in quantity are the rocks, stones and other inanimate objects, making up the vast majority of earth.

Next come plants, covering a huge percentage of the globe, yet less in quantity than inanimate items. Plants show signs of life, yet do not exhibit particularly unique movements and expressions.

The animal kingdom, though less numerous than plants, lives, breathes and roams the earth and seas. Animals have complex brains which they use to communicate, to further their own survival and tend to their needs.

Smallest in quantity is the human, some 8 billion.

Jews, some 14 million strong.

Our brains are more developed than animals, allowing us to do more than merely pursue our desires, but also to invent and to contemplate spirituality.

One of the central lessons of Rosh Hashana is that we are celebrating the creation not of the greatest in quantity, but the greatest in quality.

Moreover, the vast majority of our day is not usually reserved for strictly spiritual pursuits, but for more mundane matters such as eating, drinking and sleeping and the preparations for them. It may even seem that those who care at all about higher, spiritual matters are few in number.

Rosh Hashana teaches us the reality that though fewer in number, we are the point of creation. And not our physical body -- "dust from the earth" -- but our soul that G-d breathes into us at every moment.

Once we were created with our soul, the entirety of the world received its full meaning and purpose.

The main thing is not our quantity, but our quality. Each of us can have a positive impact on the world, changing it for the good. All it takes is one individual to elevate the entire world.

All it takes is one individual to tip the scales for the good, ushering in the Messianic era with the coming of Mashiach.

Maybe that individual is you.

Written by R' Shaul Wertheimer

Dual Devotion

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16a) teaches: "Rabbi Abahu said, 'Why do we blow the shofar with the horn of a ram? G-d said: Blow before Me with the shofar of a ram so that I will remember for your sake the Akeidah of Yitzchak ben Avraham, and I will consider it as if you had bound yourselves before Me.'"

Why the extra phrase "ben Avraham"? We know Yitzchak is Avraham's son. The wording highlights that the Akeidah was not the merit of one person but of two.

Avraham's greatness was his readiness to surrender everything — his promised future, his fatherly love — to fulfill God's will. He rose early, acted without hesitation, and placed trust in Hashem above every human instinct.

Yitzchak's greatness was no less remarkable. A grown man, fully capable of resisting, he chose to be bound, offering his very life in silent, unwavering faith. His sacrifice was not passive; it was an active, courageous decision to give himself entirely to God.

The ram embodies both. Avraham offered it as a substitute, and its horn now gives voice to Yitzchak's wordless devotion. The piercing cry of the shofar carries their joint legacy: the courage to act and the strength to yield.

On Rosh Hashanah, the shofar calls us to both paths. Sometimes we are asked to be like Avraham: bold, decisive, willing to change a habit, repair a relationship, or take a leap of faith. Other times we are asked to be like Yitzchak: steadfast, trusting, willing to accept and persevere when the plan is not our own.

When Hashem "remembers the Akeidah of Yitzchak ben Avraham," He remembers this partnership of action and surrender. May we enter the new year ready to bring both to our service of God, acting bravely, trusting deeply, and drawing close to Him with the sound of the shofar.

(Based on a concept from Iyun HaMoadim)

Dedicated in loving memory *leiluy nishmat* **Zulai bat Sara**