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FREE RENDITION

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי

ברוקלין, נ. י.

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel, Everywhere
G-d bless you all!

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Selichoth,
5729. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

It has often been emphasized that all things in Torah - Torah meaning "instruction" and guidance - serve as guide-posts in our daily life. Our Festivals, needless to say, contain most important and over-all concepts, each festival according to its content. Pesach - the Season of Our Liberation - gives us an insight into the meaning of true freedom; Shovuoth - the Season of the Giving of Our Torah - primarily teaches us what Torah is; Succoth - the Season of Our Rejoicing - inspires us with profound feeling and perception of true Simcha (joy).

Rosh Hashana - which commemorates the Creation of the World, as we say, This is the day of the beginning of Thy works, a memorial to the first day¹ - provides an over-all concept of Creation and the destiny of the Universe.

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The question has been raised why Rosh Hashana has been designated as the "day of the beginning of Thy works", whereas actually Rosh Hashana corresponds to the sixth day of the Creation.

The answer was given² by our Sages of blessed memory: Inasmuch as man is the ultimate purpose and raison d'être of all domains of the Universe, and since with the creation of man the whole of Creation was completed and fulfilled³, man in effect embodies the entire Creation, as if before him nothing was created.

Nevertheless, the question begs to be asked, How can this be said, when there is a big world besides man, an impressive and noteworthy world, viz., "How manifold are Thy works, O G-d"⁴ and "How great are Thy works, O G-d"⁵? Moreover, considering the whole of Creation, man included, we find that the "speaking genus" (man) is much less than the order of animals, and still less than the order of plants, and least in comparison to inorganic matter (earth, minerals, etc.)?

The answer - and this indeed is one⁶ of the basic teachings of Rosh Hashana in regard to the entire Creation - is as follows:

The order in the scale of all created things, where inorganic substances exceed plants, and plants outnumber animals, and least of all is man, is based on consideration of quantity. However, when quality is considered⁷, the order is reversed: Inorganic matter, which has no signs of life and locomotion, is at the bottom of the scale; above it is the world of plants, endowed with growth but lacking the vitality and movement of animals; higher still is the world of animals which, since animals do not possess human intellect, is inferior to man - the highest of all creatures. For although an animal has an intellect of its own⁸, the animal intellect is not an end in itself, but a servant whose function is to serve the natural needs of the animal. The human intellect, however - provided the person conducts himself as a human being and not as an animal, also is, and mainly, an end in itself. Furthermore, the human intellect attains its goal and fulfillment not when it serves as an instrument for the gratification of the physical needs, as in the case of animals, but, on the contrary, when all such natural functions as eating, drinking, and the like become the servants of the intellect, in order that the person should be able to rise ever higher in intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

Yet, this is not quite the true fulfilment of the human being. True fulfilment is achieved⁹ when the intellect leads him to the realization that there is something higher than intellect, so that the intellect "surrenders" itself completely to that which is higher than intellect.

To put it more clearly: Human fulfilment is attained when intellect recognizes that man, and with him the entire Creation must strive for, and achieves, complete surrender to G-d, the Creator of the Universe and Master of everything and all in it.

On the first Rosh Hashana this fulfillment was attained by the first man, Adam. It was reflected in his effective call¹⁰ to all created beings: "Come, let us worship, bow down and kneel before G-d our Maker".

This concept directly relates to, and must permeate, our daily life, as evidenced also by the fact that the Psalm¹¹ beginning with "G-d reigneth, He robed Himself in majesty", has been instituted as the "Daily Song" (Shir shel Yom) for the sixth day of every week around the year. This is what the first man, Adam, accomplished when he acknowledged the Sovereignty of the Creator, elevating himself and all Creation to a level of complete surrender to G-d our Maker, King of all the earth.

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The general lesson to be inferred from all that has been said above is, in brief summary, as follows:

Reflecting upon himself, a person will see that most of his life and most of his efforts are taken up with things which, at first glance, are material and mundane, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like, with all preparations therefor¹². It is also evident that among the human species there is a greater number of "men of the world" than "men of the spirit". And in general one sees a vast material and physical world immersed in material pursuits. Hence, one may erroneously think that perhaps the material and physical aspects of life are the most important in the world -

Comes Rosh Hashana and teaches us that the opposite is true: To be sure, it took five days and part of the sixth¹³ to create all sorts of creatures. Yet, it was man, a very small part of Creation in time and space, that was the essence and purpose of the entire Creation. And in man, too, the essential thing is not the body¹⁴, which is "dust from the earth", but the soul, the living spirit which G-d "breathed into his nostrils"¹⁵; a soul which is "truly a part of G-dliness above"¹⁶. Only after man was created with the Divine spark in him did the entire Creation become worthy and complete. Thus man can justly be described as the "beginning" of Creation in all its domains, and Rosh Hashana, the birthday of man, as "This is the day of the beginning of Thy works".

A further instruction follows from the above: Speaking to our fellow-Jews about the necessity to fulfil the Mitzvoth in the daily life, in accordance with the command Of G-d, the Creator of the world, Whose Providence extends to each and everyone, everywhere and every minute - some may ask: If this is truly the purpose of Creation, how is it that those who observe the Torah and Mitzvoth in all details are as yet not in the majority? And how is it that Jews are altogether a small minority among the nations of the world? The answer is given in the emphatic message of Rosh Hashana: "This is the day of the beginning of Thy works" - the essential thing is not quantity but quality, so that even one person¹⁷ can elevate the entire Universe to a degree where not only he but all around him can perceive that "G-d reigneth, He robed Himself in majesty", thereby crowning G-d as King of all the Universe. This is also the primary aspect of the sounding of the Shofar - as a symbol of the "Coronation" of the Creator and King of all the Universe¹⁸.

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May G-d grant that everyone in the midst of our people Israel should achieve the above in his share of the world, so that in the sum total of the combined shares¹⁹ the whole world will acknowledge the Divine Kingdom, and we will speedily see the fulfilment and realization of our prayer; together with all our prayers: Establish Thy reign over all the world... that every creature²⁰ shall know that Thou didst create it... and everyone that has a soul shall declare, G-d, the G-d of Israel²¹, reigneth, and His Kingdom rules everywhere".

With the blessing of
Kesivo vachasimo toivo
For a good and sweet year,

/Signed / Menachem Schneerson

(1) תפלת ר"ה (ר"ה כז, א). (2) ראה בחיי בראשית א, ג. ר"ן לר"ה טז, א. חדא"ג: מהרש"א שם כז, א. ד"ה זה היום תש"ד, תש"ט ועוד. (3) ראהב"ר (פי"א, ו): כל מה שנברא כו' צריכין עשי'. (4) תהלים קד, כד. (5) שם צב, ו. וראה תו"א נו, ב. (6) עוד הוראות בזה - ראה מכתב דימי הסליחות דשנת תשי"ג, תשט"ו, תשכ"ד. (7) להעיר מהענין דמצד האור כל מה שלמעלה יותר הוא בבחי' ריבוי יותר והיפכו מצד הכלים (ביום השמע"צ, תער"ג. וראה תו"ח ואוה"ת ר"פ ח"ש ובכ"מ). (8) ראה ברכות סא, ב. ובכ"מ. (9) ראה שיחת י"ט כסלו דשנת פר"ת. ס' העיקרים מ"ג פ"א (בס' תורת שלום ע' 243). (10) זח"ג ס"פ אמור. וראה ג"כ פדר"א פי"א. (11) מזמור צג. סוף מס' תמיד ובפיה"מ שם. (12) ראה הקדמת הרמב"ם לפיהמ"ש (קרוב לסופה): ד"ה דע כי הקדמונים חקרו. (13) ראה רמב"ן בראשית ב, ג. חדא"ג מהרש"א לסנה" (לח, ב) ד"ה שעה. (14) שיצירתו ארכה כמה שעות (סנה" שם). (15) בראשית ב, ז. (16) תניא רפ"ב. וראה איוב לא, ב. (17) ראה משנה סנה" ספ"ד דמאדה"ר למדים כמה ענינים לכאו"א. ואדרבא - מדיוק הל' לפיכך כו' ללמדך - משמע דבשביל ללמדך - הי' כן. (18) ר' סעדי' גאון הובא באבודרהם - ומש"כ הרמב"ם בהל' תשובה (פ"ג ה"ד) תק"ש כו' רמז יש בו כלומר עורו ישנים כו' - הביא כענין שני. ופשוט שיש לחלק בין "ענין" ל"רמז". והרי ברמב"ם הובא זה בהל' תשובה ולא בהל' שופר. וראה בהל' שופר פ"א ה"ב. ובכל אופן - הרמב"ם חולק על הרס"ג שהרי כתב בהל' תשובה (שם) דתק"ש גזה"כ הוא. ואכ"מ. (19) להעיר מתניא פל"ז. (20) בעולם העשי' (סי' האריז"ל). (21) ואח"כ וע"י ישראל ממליכים אותו עליהם (ר"ה טז, סע"א) מלך ומלכותו בכל משלה (עיי' תו"א ו, ב).