

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

You are One in Eight Billion

By Yonatan
Hambourger and
Tzali Reicher

From Wednesday evening until Friday night, Jewish people around the world will gather in synagogues and share festive holiday meals to celebrate the Jewish New Year: Rosh Hashanah.

Unlike New Year's celebrations marked by wild parties and fireworks, Rosh Hashanah is a day of introspection and reflection. It is a two-day period when we are judged for our actions over the past year, and when God decides what the coming year will bring. It's a time to reaffirm His kingship over us and pray that we are inscribed for a year filled with joy, sustenance, and happiness – not just for ourselves and our families, but for the entire world. It's a solemn day, a day loaded with meaning.

As we spend hours in the synagogue, we note in the prayers that Rosh Hashanah is the day that commemorates the creation of the world. The traditional liturgy states, "Today the world was born." Yet, according to Jewish sages, the world was actually created six days earlier. That means Rosh Hashanah is actually the sixth day of creation – the day when humanity was brought into existence. This leads to an intriguing question: Why do we celebrate Rosh Hashanah as the day of humanity's creation, rather than the creation of the world itself, which doesn't have a celebration of its own?

On the surface, the day G-d actually created the universe is a much worthier day to celebrate! While humanity waited to be created, G-d was still in his creation. Everything had been created, but it was alone entirely connected to its Creator, without any sense of separation, and without us complicated humans to ruin the spiritual bliss that was.

So why, then, does Rosh Hashanah, which marks the sixth day, the creation of humanity, hold greater significance than the creation of the universe?

The reason lies in the special role of humanity. Unlike every other part of creation, which operates according to divine will without choice or awareness of the creations, humans have the unique ability to choose. We are given free will – the power to consciously recognize and accept God's presence or to reject it. This freedom to choose brings a new dynamic into the world: the possibility of willingly embracing a higher power. Jewish thought often compares this to the difference between tyranny and sovereignty – a tyrant rules by force, while a sovereign's authority is accepted by those who are governed.

This capacity for choice makes humanity's creation a pivotal moment. It marks the beginning of a conscious relationship between the world and its Creator, where humans have the power to either acknowledge or deny the divine. Our ability to think, reflect, and choose to align with a higher purpose is what makes Rosh Hashanah, the day humanity was created, a true beginning. It's not just about the physical existence of the world but the start of an active, conscious partnership with the divine.

Jewish tradition teaches that God created the world to be a "dwelling place in the lower worlds," a place where even the most ordinary aspects of life could be filled with divine purpose. For this to happen, it's essential that humans recognize and actively participate in fulfilling this purpose. Before humans existed, the world seemed separate from the divine, but with the creation of humanity, a bridge was formed between the physical and the spiritual. Humanity was not only created to foster a personal connection with the divine but also to help the entire world become aware of this connection. This is why Rosh Hashanah is seen as the birthday of the world – it marks the day when the world began to realize its ultimate purpose.

But this grand vision only comes to life when every one of us plays our part. It's easy to feel small in a world of eight billion people, to think that our actions are insignificant in the grand scheme of things. Yet, Jewish tradition teaches us that each person is a vital part of this creation. G-d needs every single one of us to help make the world a better place. Each of our choices – no matter how small – has the power to ripple outward, touching lives, inspiring others, and ultimately transforming the world. So, even when we feel like a tiny drop in the ocean, we must remember that we are each uniquely needed, each an irreplaceable partner in the unfolding story of creation. When we all contribute our light, together we can bring about a world that is truly filled with goodness, peace and purpose.

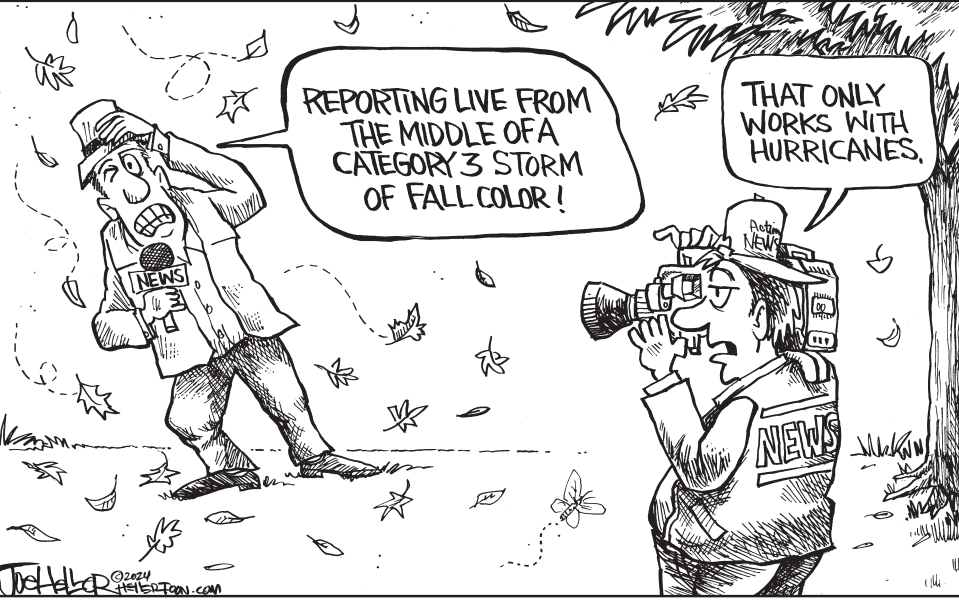
So, as we celebrate Rosh Hashanah, we are reminded not only of the beginning of the world but of our special role as partners in creation. It's a call for each of us to bring light and meaning into our lives, to use our unique ability to make the world a better place, and to hope for a future filled with understanding, unity and peace.

May we all be inscribed for a good and sweet year, for us and all humanity!

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi and writer serving spiritual seekers of all persuasions on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer serving communities throughout the regional South. You can reach them at y@tasteof Torah.org.



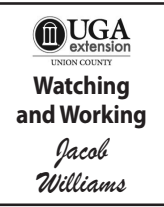
Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



J. Halber

Ladybugs

Ladybugs are moving inside at this time of year. Let's talk about where they came from and what you can do to try and get rid of them.



Most of the time the ladybugs that move inside to hibernate through the winter are Asian ladybugs. I often am asked if the government is releasing Asian ladybugs and that's why they are in their house. The government does not currently release Asian ladybugs. The US Department of Agriculture did release Asian ladybugs during the 1960s to the 1990s. Ladybugs are beneficial insects because they eat many soft-bodied insects that are pests. They were released so that apple and pecan growers would not need to use as many insecticides. Georgia is one of the states where they were released. However, now Asian ladybugs are found in states that did not have releases.

Asian Ladybugs look very similar to our native ladybugs. Females usually have several multiple spots, while the males have fewer spots. Their color can range from tan to orange to red. The best way to tell them about from our natives is that they have a dark M or W (depending on which side you look at them) on the back of their head. Asian ladybugs don't have very many natural predators in the US. That means they can spread very easily. It makes them good at controlling aphids on plants outdoors, but makes them a nuisance in the fall and early spring.

In the fall, many of them will try to make their way inside. Once a couple get in, it's hard to keep more out. Ladybugs will use pheromones to let other ladybugs know that they've found a good spot to overwinter. Therefore, you usually won't see just a couple, but dozens or even hundreds. They usually will congregate on the sunny side of a building. Buildings that have light and dark contrasting colors on the outside will be more attractive to them. Older buildings are more attractive too because they will leak more heat out.

Ladybugs don't injure people. They, also don't reproduce indoors. They won't attack wood, food, or clothing. They can secrete a yellow substance when disturbed. The yellow secretion smells bad and can stain. They use the yellow stuff as a defense mechanism against predators.

So the big question is, how do you get rid of them? If they are inside a simple method is to just vacuum them up and then throw them in the trash. Sealing cracks around doors or windows is a good way to keep them from entering in the first place. Ladybugs are small, so they can use a crack that's 1/8th of an inch. There are ladybug traps that use black light to attract them. These can be effective at capturing ones that have already entered, especially if you use it in a dark space, like a closet or attic. If you have a serious infestation, it's best to call a pest control company.

Ladybugs can be a nuisance inside the house, but remember that they are beneficial to farmers and gardeners. If you have questions about ladybugs contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters To The Editor

"Democracy"

Dear Editor,

All over the news these days, candidates are hollering that a vote for the other candidate will end democracy as we know it. I certainly hope so but not for the reasons that you might think. Our founders abhorred the idea of a democracy, which is why our country was founded in the Constitution as a Republic. Article 4, Section 4 of the Constitution states: "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence." In fact, the term democracy is not found in either the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution.

Democracy when it is broken down is that majority wins. At first glance, you might applaud this. I do not. Another translation would be mob rule. A beautiful example of this was given by the president of Hillsdale College's Constitution class (free online) where he uses a classroom to give this illustration. Let's say there is a teacher with 20 students. There is one student in the class named "Jimmy." On the first day of class, the teacher decides to gather the class and tells Jimmy that he is going to pay for everyone's meal regardless of whether he can afford it. Jimmy rightly objects to this. So the teacher puts it to a vote. Nineteen students and the teacher vote that Jimmy should pay for their meals. 20 to 1. Majority rules!

In a Republic form of government, an individual's rights have a higher importance than the majority rule. In fact, an individual's personal right takes precedence over almost anything else. So Jimmy cannot be made to take everyone to lunch but, if he so chooses, can offer to take them to lunch. If the government can take something of yours without your permission with or without fair compensation, it is not a republic but a dictatorship.

An individual's right should be held in the highest regard. Your rights are not allowed to infringe on someone else's right. With rights comes two things that are chained to that – responsibility and consequences. You are to use your rights responsibly and, after exercising those rights, you are responsible for those consequences. Take the latest item in the news over the last year or two – Student Loans. You have the right to apply for a student loan. You have the right to accept a student loan if you are able to obtain one. You have the responsibility to make the payments that you agreed to when you took the loan. If you don't pay the loan back, then you have the consequence of your paycheck being garnished, your tax refund intercepted, or it taken from your checking account.

A former WSB radio host illustrated the idea of democracy as well by using two wolves and a sheep deciding what to eat for dinner. Mutton anyone?

So the next time you hear someone call the United States a democracy, they do not understand the principles of the Constitution or the country. Some parties desire mob rule for their own benefit because then your individual rights are demoted to being overrun by whoever is in charge.

Michael Brown

Ask God

Dear Editor,

I cannot remain silent. We have a very important election in just a few weeks. I pray for my country. I pray that everyone will ask God to let them know how they should vote.

Psalm 32:8 reads, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."

God is not in confusion. Go to Him in prayer, ask Him. What do you want me to do? And then listen in your heart. He will let you know, and He will give you peace.

It is my prayer to God that many, many people will be praying for our country.

Gratefully,
Cecilia Murphy

Towns County Community Calendar		
First Monday of each month:	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday:	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month:	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month:	Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month:	Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:	Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

Deeper In The Dip

It's 6 a.m. on a Friday morning and I'm sitting comfortably with a cup of coffee, counting my blessings. We've had a foot of rain here so far, and all that water is going where it's supposed to go and not into our basement.

At the moment, there are at least 2 million people without power from Florida to the Carolinas. So far, there are no trees down here in the cove. The road hasn't washed out. The lights are still on. I don't have to climb a pole or ride a bucket in a downpour to restore someone's power. Someone else is sacrificing their comfort and risking their safety to hazard the storm so the rest of us can sleep in or drink coffee and speculate. There is much to be thankful for.

We watch network news so infrequently that when there is a weather event we want to monitor, we have to download an app for the Roku. Most of the time, all the weather information I need is gleaned from a glance at the radar app: Is it raining? Is the rain headed in my direction?

Today was different, and there is a clue to generational change in the previous paragraph: "a weather event we want to monitor." There is a vast difference between the time when we got our weather information from the newspaper (or looking out the window) and today's collaborative events where we "monitor" the situation in real-time with weather apps, websites, 24-hour news channels (or all of these at once), and then compare notes with other participants on social media.

Technology brings mixed blessings. Statistically, we are safer because of it. The three-day forecast now is as accurate as the one-day forecast in the 1970s. The average fatality rate for a hurricane then was 20, and now, even with a greater population, that number is around 6. The same is true for tornadoes, as the average annual death rate has decreased from around 100 to about 70.

On the other hand, the constant talk, the hype, the barrage of "breaking news," and repetitive coverage also brings heightened anxiety, information overload, sleep disruption and mental fatigue, fear and panic—and we're just talking about weather here, not to mention all the other bits of falling sky that we have to weather when there isn't a weather event to endure.

The sky is lightening now, and the rain has paused for the moment. The weather guy on the television is explaining again how a rotating tropical system causes rotating bands of rain to rotate. There's that video again of the car driving through the puddle, and the creek out of its banks.

Our little network of neighbors has already begun to check in. We were lucky. We are blessed. Our sharpened chainsaws, fueled and ready, will probably sit idle for another day. Perhaps some of the groceries we saw streaming out of town in heavy traffic will be used to celebrate our collective good fortune, while about 3,600 people without power in our area will be glad they were forewarned in time to prepare.

It was a tragic event for many, and at the time of this writing, the floodwaters are still rising, but it could have been much worse for Georgia. The weather guy is now explaining how the water is deeper where the road dips down. Too much information, perhaps, and the information always gets deeper where the recliner dips down as well. I think it's time to get up.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546
Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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Towns County Herald

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