

them and continued, "Then ... I want you to know that I forgive each and every one of you for all of the anguish you caused me and my family and I bless you all that you should be written and sealed for a ἄλλῃ ἑτίᾳ, a good and peaceful year."

In shocked reticence, they left his house. One of the neighbors turned to the *Rov*, asking him why he had decided to immediately forgive them publicly. R' Yosef Chaim explained that the Days of Judgment had already arrived. "I was concerned that these people would feel bad about what they did. They would want to come and ask my forgiveness but would be too embarrassed to approach me. In order to rationalize their not asking forgiveness, they would convince themselves that they had acted correctly all along. This will further entrench them in their sin causing them to be punished as a result of me. I therefore announced from the start that I forgive them. This way, if they will have any thoughts of regret, there won't be anything holding them back from doing a complete and total *teshuva* - repentance."

TORAH GEMS

(ónâî úléóú) 'ǎǎ íéîlǎò ǎǎǎǎ ìě èòùîá ǎéîòé íǎǎ ílǎò úǎǎ íǎǎ

The *gemara* (:é àðüà üàø) brings a disagreement regarding the exact day of creation. One view is that the world was created in the month of *Tishrei*; thus, *Rosh Hashanah*, on the first of *Tishrei*, is a commemoration of that day. The opposing view is that creation occurred in the month of *Nisan*. *Rabbeinu Tam* reconciles and declares "íéēç íé÷-là èøáá àìàà àìà" - they are both correct! In *Tishrei*, Hashem created the world àäùçîá - *in theory*, while in *Nisan*, Hashem put His thought into practice and created the world àüðîá - *in actuality*. But if the physical world was indeed created during the month of *Nisan*, why is the Day of Judgement for every living creature, on the first of *Tishrei*?

The *Rebbe, R' Yisroel Tchortkover ZT"l* gives a fascinating answer. Human nature is the will to be good, do the right thing and fulfill the service of Hashem in the best and most optimal manner. Yet, obstacles pop up to block our way. The *Yetzer Hara* is always at hand to discourage us and the strains of earning a livelihood, maintaining our health and raising our families always seem to tug at us and lead us away from what we should be doing. Thus, on the first day of *Tishrei*, the day thousands of years ago that Hashem created the world in thought, if not in action, He will judge us by our thoughts and good intentions, as well as by our actions! Hashem's kindness is shown even in judgement. As we say, " *יָאֵלֵךְ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּיוֹם הַבְּרִיאָה*" - "*This day the world was conceived.*" This day, the day when creation of the world was originally intended, will include our good will and intentions in judgement.

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מעשה אבות....סימן לבנים

A number of days before *Rosh Hashanah*, a complicated and bitter dispute between a husband and wife came before the *Rov* of Yerushalayim, **R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"l**, who was also serving as the leader of the *Beis Din* - Rabbinical Court. After hearing both sides and giving the matter much serious investigation and thought, the judges rendered their decision. As it was, the side that lost the decision felt that they had been wronged. Later that day, they angrily burst into the house of R' Yosef Chaim and began shouting at him in an insulting and threatening way. Family members and bystanders were appalled, but throughout the tirade, R' Yosef Chaim just sat quietly and continued to study from the big *gemara* that lay open before him.

When their shouts and insults had reached a crescendo, he suddenly arose to his full height and turned to face them. "Listen carefully to what I have to say," he said in a low and decisive voice, to the suddenly quieted room. "If your claims against me are correct and my court and I have erred, you have already stated your case against me before the heavens. I hope that *Hashem* will forgive us; a judge must base his decision on what he believes is the correct rendering based on what his eyes honestly see. Understand, now and for all time, that is what we did." All those present held their breath in anticipation.

"However," he continued, now raising his voice to a roar, "If we were correct in our judgement and you are the ones who made a mistake, then ... then..." and he paused in mid-sentence. The faces of those brazen intruders now turned white with fear, wondering what harsh condemnation the great *Rov* would bestow upon them for their evil intent. R' Yosef Chaim looked straight at