

29 Rosh Hashanah MORNING
Amidah - Standing Prayer

היום הרת עלם

hayom harat olam

On this day, the world was conceived

COMMENT:

"Harah" or "Harat" means pregnancy, conception or gestation. Not birth, but the process which leads up to birth. "Olam" can mean world, but "olam" by itself really means eternity, from a root that means "hidden."

So "Harat Olam" means, "pregnant with eternity", or "eternally pregnant." The day of Rosh Hashanah is pregnant with eternity.

What deeper evocation could one find of this wondrous creation than "eternally pregnant," always bringing forth new lives, new creatures, new species? Always dynamic, growing; balanced like a gyroscope, turning and turning? What greater potential in this moment, than for it to be "pregnant with insights, with hopes, that are as great as eternity"?

Jeremiah said, "Let my mother be my grave and her womb be pregnant eternally/ v'rachmah harat olam ." (20:17) This is the scriptural source of the expression "harat olam."

--DS

READER: So much can happen in a year.
In a year's time
our world can be irrevocably shattered,
or it can be reborn anew.

ALL: And now we stand together,
feeling still the resonance of a year now past.
A book now sealed.

READER: Now we stand together,
looking out with fear and hope
into a year stretching out limitlessly before us.
A book yet to be written.

ALL: Will it be a year of curse or a year of blessing?
Of wounding or of healing?
Though we cannot know the answer,
it is all we can do to send out our prayer,
our fears, our hopes,
our yearning.


READER: May the dreams we dare to dream
be written into the Book of Our Lives
and may it be an ongoing tale of blessing,
of wholeness,
of peace.

--BR

ALL sing:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים

Zochreynu l'chayim melech chafetz bachayim

 Remember us for life, king of desire for life

-- GJ (translator)

READER: When we really begin a new year it is decided,
And when we actually repent it is determined;

ALL: Who shall be truly alive,
And who shall merely exist;