

# WHERE ARE YOU?

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Creation. After 5756 years it still mystifies us. Where did the world begin, and where will it end. We often forget to ask a question which is much more pertinent than how many stars are in the Milky Way. We forget to ask what are we doing on this world and where do we fit into the great picture of creation. This week we are reminded of that question by no one less than the Creator Himself.

After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden, they were gripped with shame. They covered themselves with fig leaves and hid from the wrath of G-d. G-d, about to interrogate them, appears as if he is searching the Garden for them as if they would be fugitives from justice. Then seemingly in mock frustration, He asks a question quite unbecoming the Omnipotent, "Where are you?" I was always bothered. Why the shtick. He knew good and well exactly where they were, precisely what they had done, and why they were hiding. Why then the question, "Where are you?"

Perhaps there is a great lesson for us to learn from this. Even after we commit what we may think is the greatest sin and we wish that we would disappear, we tend to lose self-confidence and self interest. Hashem doesn't lose interest in us. He still asks for us. He wants to know where we are. He also wants us to know where we are.

***In the town of Chelm, there was a man who was quite absent-minded. Upon going to the bathhouse he was worried that without clothes he would forget who he was. He tied a red string around his big toe in order to make sure he would not lose his identity. Unfortunately the string slipped off his toe and wound itself on the toe of a fellow bather. Shocked by seeing the string on his neighbor's foot, he exclaimed, "I know who you are, but who am I?"***

We often are occupied in asking "where is G-d?" or "who is G-d?" Sometimes our questions are placed in the present, "where is G-d?" Sometimes they are asked about the past, "where was G-d?" We are so caught up in the search for the unknown and the unseen that we often forget to search for ourselves. It is possible that G-d's first question of man is an unremitting query that reverberates from time immemorial, "where are you?" Maybe we ought to ask ourselves constantly, "where are we?" We should it ask it as we analyze our standing in every aspect of life. After all, if G-d wants to know where we are shouldn't we want to know too?

Dedicated by Dr. & Mrs. Dwight Herschman & Dr & Mrs. Ronnie Herschman In memory of Paula and George Herschman

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