

## **"And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him." (45:3)**

The *Midrash* states, "*Woe to us on the Day of Judgment, and woe to us on the Day of Reproof. Yosef was the youngest of the tribes, but when he said, 'I am Yosef,' the brothers were overcome with shame at their misdeeds. When Hashem will reveal Himself to each one of us, announcing, 'I am Hashem,' we will certainly be unable to respond because of humiliation.*" The commentators, each in his own inimitable manner, have interpreted the powerful words of this *Midrash*. Let us focus on the words "*to each one of us,*" or -- in the vernacular of the *Midrash* -- "*and Hashem will rebuke each one according to what he is.*" What is the significance of emphasizing the status of each individual?

*Horav Elimelech Moller, Shlita*, cites the opening statement of the *Mesillas Yeshtarim*. He says that man must come to terms with the notion that he has a duty to fulfill in this world. There is a goal set for him which he must strive to achieve. He must direct his vision and aspirations towards the realization of his personal goal. *Horav Moller* infers from these words that each individual has his own individual unique obligation and goals for which only he must answer on the Day of Judgment. Hashem does not expect us to realize someone else's goals. He demands that we live up to the expectations tailored to each of us individually. We must answer for our failure to achieve the level of our potential goal.

In the *Musaf Shemoneh Esrai* of *Rosh Hashanah*, we say, "*For when the remembrance of everything fashioned comes before you, everyone's deed and mission, the accomplishment of man's activity.*" *Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, z.l.*, gave new insight to the meaning of this prayer. Man can go through life and perform wonderful acts of kindness. He can accomplish great achievements, for which he will receive great reward. He has not, however, successfully completed his mission on this world unless he has achieved his own personal G-d-given goal.

Each and every person has his own "*raison d'être*" for which he was placed on this world. We may succeed in accomplishing someone else's mission, while neglecting our own. It is our function to use whatever *seichel*, common sense, with which we have been endowed, to assess our mission in life and realize its achievement.