

And Adam named all the domestic animals and the birds of the heavens, and all the wild animals. (2:20)

The *Midrash* states that Adam, after having named the various creatures, was asked by Hashem, "What shall your name be?" He answered, "I shall be called Adam . And what is My Name?" asked Hashem. To this Adam responded, "Hashem." This interchange between Hashem and Adam obviously demands explanation. We may suggest the following: Man is able to achieve the greatest levels of intelligence and culture. He can attain such heights of profundity that he is able to select the correct name which truly describes the essential characteristic of every living creature. However, he still may not understand his own essence. Man is not always cognizant of his own characteristics, his potential, and his purpose in life. Man sometimes does not know that he is an "Adam" and therefore different from all other living creatures. This was Hashem's query to Adam. "Do you know your own name and purpose?" When Adam correctly responded to the first query, Hashem once again questioned him, "Do you know My Name?" Man with all his intellect and wisdom must realize that unless he reflects on the source of everything he can still corrupt himself and perform the most reprehensible acts. The awareness of man's name is not enough; it is necessary to know Hashem's Name. No culture, despite its greatest achievements, is assured of overcoming its animalistic desires unless there is an awareness and recognition of Hashem. We have witnessed some of the most scientifically and intellectually developed societies sinking to the nadir of depravity and brutality, committing wanton murder and destruction. This was Hashem's message to Adam. It is not enough for man to know what he is and represents; it is necessary for man to have the cogent awareness of the existence of Hashem and His constant presence over him.