

Hashem spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am Hashem." (6:2)

The opening *pasuk* of this week's *parsha* serves as a response to Moshe Rabbeinu's question/demand of Hashem which ended the previous *parsha*. Moshe asked Hashem why He intensified *Klal Yisroel's* workload after his arrival in Egypt as Hashem's emissary. It is as if his arrival had made things worse. Hashem said to Moshe, "I am Hashem," which is interpreted to mean that Hashem has a *cheshbon*, reckoning, for everything that occurs. Pharaoh will receive his punishment in due time. Moshe's arrival in Egypt had a specific purpose - even if Moshe did not understand the implications. In truth, the response did not address the core of the question. The *Torah* does not give a rationale for what happened. It was as if Hashem told Moshe, "Don't worry, it will be all right."

Chazal pose a similar question to be asked later, in *Shemos 33:13*, when Moshe asked Hashem "Make Your way known to me." Hashem responded, "And you will see My back, but My face may not be seen." What relationship exists between the question and the answer? Moshe sought an explanation, the reasoning behind His actions. The response was that Moshe could not see Hashem's face. Obviously, there must be a deeper meaning to these questions and to the response they elicited.

Horav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, zl, explains that both these questions address the same idea. The question and answer is primarily the same in both. Man is a visitor on this world for a limited period of time. Consequently, he does not have the opportunity to perceive occurrences in their full context, from beginning to end. He observes events happening; he has questions, because for the most part nothing seems to be logical in context. The famous question, which nags at everyone, glares at him: Why do the wicked prosper? If man could only see beyond his own limited stay, he would see how everything fits in and all of life's ambiguities would suddenly make sense. This concept can be compared to a person who was born and raised in the wilderness. He has never observed people planting and harvesting crops. One day he notices people taking little seeds of grain and burying them in the ground to become rotten. Not having the faintest idea about the process of planting, he will surely think that these people have lost their minds. Later on, however, when he sees the people harvesting the fully matured crops, he will comprehend what really took place.

Moshe asked Hashem to please show him His ways, to give him the opportunity to understand what is the process for directing the world: How does Divine retribution work? Why do some people suffer more than others? Hashem responded, "You will see My back." Only at the end of time, when Moshe leaves this world unrestricted by physical limitations, will he be able to look back and see the rationale behind every occurrence. The phrase, "My Face, you will not see" is an allusion to taking things at face value, viewing events closely up front without the advantage of looking at the whole picture. Man does not understand the occurrences of his lifetime, because

they are all part of a large mosaic.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* asked Hashem not to send him to Egypt. He was sent, and the work escalated. The persecution became more aggravated. So he asked Hashem, "Why? Why did You make it worse for this nation?" Hashem responded, using the Name *Elokim* implying *middas ha'din*, the attribute of strict judgment - "I am Hashem." The Name Hashem, implying *rachamim*, mercy, and *Elokim*, implying judgment, are both the same. Judgment and mercy work together. *Middas ha'din* serves as a preamble for the compassion of *middas ha'rachamim*.