

He (Hashem) said to him, "Where are you?" (3:9)

When the Baal HaTanya was incarcerated by the Russian government, one of the leading "thinkers" of the day came to visit with him. This visit was just another opportunity to

present one of his mocking questions to the Rebbe. The answer was unimportant, his objective was accomplished by simply asking the question: "What is the meaning of the 'Ayeca?', 'Where are you?' which Hashem asked Adam? Did Hashem not know where Adam was?" The Rebbe looked at the thinker and responded, "Do you believe that the Torah is eternal?" "Certainly," he responded. The Rebbe said, "Since the Torah is eternal, this question has an eternal meaning to it. Hashem was speaking to Adam and to all of his descendants, 'Where are you? Where are you in your world?' Everybody has his own little world, his own unique purpose in life, his own personal goals to achieve. My friend, you are so many years old (the Rebbe knew exactly how old the man was). What did you accomplish with these years? Have you gotten any closer to fulfilling your purpose in life? 'Where are you?' is a question which Hashem asks of every person. Indeed, it is a question we should all ask of ourselves. Where are we – in the goals that were set for us? You do not really think that the Almighty places you upon this earth without any objective. You have a purpose; you have a potential. Where are you – in regard to that purpose? How far have you come in achieving your potential?" The man was so impressed by the Rebbe's response that he interceded on his behalf until the Rebbe was released from jail.

The above narrative is more than just another anecdotal story, it conveys a timely, trenchant message regarding the responsibility we have towards ourselves. Regrettably, we occupy ourselves so much with where everybody else is that we lack the precious time to introspect and ask ourselves: where are you?