

Weekly Teaching

June 8, 2018

When Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden they became fearful of their sin, and attempted to hide from God.

God looked for them by asking in a voice they both could hear: “Where are you?”

And, ever since that first time of asking this Divine question, every human being can choose whether to hear, or not hear God’s question: “Where are you?”

One of the primary purposes of prayer within our sacred tradition is to help answer God’s question to us.

We do not perceive God as our “servant”; rather we live in this world in service to God.

We pray not so much “to God” as “before God”.

The Hebrew verb *lehitpalel* (“to pray”) is actually in the reflexive tense of Hebraic grammatical form.

Lehitpalel emphasizes for us that our prayers are first to impact our own minds and souls, and then the prayers can go “before God”.

We Jews contemplate God through our prayers.

Every word of prayer, whether ritually prescribed or personally meditated upon, help us answer God’s question of “Where are you?”

Prayer becomes our internal spiritual GPS; we locate where we are, and then determine the best route for moving forward towards God’s greater presence in our own lives.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote that “we are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers.”

A fundamental question within our prayers: “What am I doing, or not doing, that should change?”

God permits our constant “re-routing” so as to return more closely to God’s path.

Let’s hear the Divine question more often: “Where are you?”

Let’s access our spiritual GPS that’s been built with a perfection of thousands of years of tradition and wisdom.

Let’s stand visibly before God and be able to answer standing straight: **“Hinnei—Here I Am.”**

And, with this answer, feel good that both God and we know exactly the place we are, and the place we want to go.

Shabbat Shalom,

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