

## *I Am Hashem*

This week's *Parsha*, *Yisro*, contains the *Aseres Hadibros* (Ten Commandments). The first commandment begins with the familiar words, *I am Hashem, your G-d, that took you out of Egypt*. The *Iben Ezra* (a famous commentary on *Chumash* who lived during the 1100's) poses a natural question regarding this introduction. He asks, "Why does *Hashem* introduce *Himself* to the *B'nei Yisroel* in this manner? Wouldn't it be more befitting and impressive to begin the commandments with *I am Hashem, your G-d, that created the world in which you live*, emphasizing that the world as we know it is *His* world and the following commandments are the values *He* wants us to live by?"

*Hashem* made a conscious decision when selecting *His* choice of words for the first commandment. Yes, it is true that *He* created the world, and yes, it is true that *B'nei Yisroel* believed that *He* created the world. However, they were not present to personally witness this creation.

Instead, *Hashem* wanted to introduce *Himself* to *B'nei Yisroel* in a way that was more meaningful to them so they would have a better understanding of *Him*. By identifying *Himself* with *His* role in taking them out of Egypt, *He* provided them with the opportunity to think about what miracles they had recently witnessed in Egypt as well as at the Red Sea. *Hashem* wanted *His* people to reflect on those experiences and realize that they had a personal connection with *Him*, that *He* was not just an abstract concept.

The idea of reflection is an extremely important concept for us to teach to our children. This ability to reflect and realize the goodness that we receive every day from *Hashem* is an integral component of our relationship with *Him*. If we understand this concept, we will be able to point out the *Hashgacha Pratis* (individual attention) that *Hashem* pays to each of us. Experiences such as meeting people at just the right time, special opportunities that present themselves and the many coincidences that help us in our daily lives are just a few examples of how we benefit from *Hashem's* miracles. After all, "... aren't coincidences miracles where G-d chooses to be anonymous?"

Although we are in exile and we no longer experience the obvious miracles like in the past, if we examine our experiences, we will find *His* presence in them. As *B'nei Yisroel*, it is our responsibility to learn from our experiences so we will be able to fulfill the first commandment of knowing *Hashem* every day of our lives.