



דרכים בפרשה

קדושים



דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם (יט:א)
Speak to the whole community of Bnei Yisroel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, Hashem your G-d, am holy. (19:1)

In *Havdalah* we say, “המבדיל בין קודש לחול...”. There is a major difference in ideology between the way a Yid approaches holiness and, *lehavdil*, a *goy*. The *goy* looks at anything physical in this world as an obstacle. If the quest is for holiness, then physicality cannot possibly play any role. (The greatest example of this is the accepted practice by Christians of their priests not getting married.) For Klal Yisroel, the *heiliger kinder* of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, the concept of *kedushah* is completely different. The *tachlis* of this world is to utilize that which we are given, both physical and spiritual, and to elevate it. The Gemara in *Yevamos* (62b) tells us: אמר רבי — תנחום אמר רבי חנילאי: כל אדם שאין לו אשה — שריו בלא שמחה, בלא ברכה, בלא טובה. במערבא אמרי: בלא תורה, בלא חומה וכו', רבא בר עולא אמר: בלא שלום — A man that does not have a wife is left without joy, *bracha*, Torah, protection or peace. Without a spouse, one cannot reach any true level in serving Hashem. This same concept is further underscored when it comes to bringing *korbanos*. We do accept sacrifices from gentiles; however, they are brought up as a *korban olah*, which gets fully consumed by the fire on the *mizbe'ach*. A *goy* is unable to comprehend the notion of bringing a sacrifice to Hashem and eating a part of it at the same time.

אתה קדוש ושמך קדוש — Your essence is holiness and Your name is Holy. Everything in the upper

worlds is 100% holiness. But down in this world, it is physical. Man was placed down on *this* world. The Gemara in *Chagigah* (16a) tells us that there are six things said about Man; three are like angels and three like animals. We eat/drink, multiply and produce waste like animals, and we have wisdom, stand erect and can talk *Lashon Kodesh* like the Angels. From here we learn that our purpose is to live with our animalistic side, all the while elevating it to holiness.

The *pasuk* in *Tehillim* says “השמים שמים לה'” והארץ נתן לבני אדם. The Koztzer Rebbe *zt”l* explained these words as follows: it is true that the heavens are holy — but who made it holy? Hashem did that! So too — והארץ נתן לבני אדם, the world down below — that was given to mankind to make holy. The Rebbe explained that in order to do so, we must make use of the means in this world. Just to have more angels down below is pointless; Hashem already has myriads of them upstairs!

The Torah tells us: לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה — אשר בשמים ממעל — “Do not make for yourself a carved image nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above.” The *seforim* teach us that this can also mean: לא תעשה לך פסל — don't make *yourself* into an idol. Meaning, by acting as though you live in the heavens, shunning this world completely in the secular

world's manner, you are essentially proclaiming yourself a heavenly being.

In the *midbar* we ate the *mann*. The *pasuk* tells us **ויענך וירעבך ויאכלך את המן** – “He afflicted you and let you hunger and then he fed you the *mann*.” As incredible as the experience of eating the *mann* must have been, the Torah still calls it ‘affliction’. What was the pain? Chazal tell us that this heavenly bread was 100% spiritual. This means that there was no opportunity for us to infuse our own efforts into it which would allow us to grow. (Of course, Hashem was in fact teaching us a different lesson with the *mann*, namely that everything comes from Hashem.)

With this, we can understand the Mishna in Avos (3:4) that says as follows: *R’ Shimon taught that when three people eat together and don’t share words of Torah, it is akin to eating from a table of offerings to dead idols. But if they shared Torah, it is as if they ate at Hashem’s table.* By taking in spiritual nourishment while eating, a person consecrates his table and the physical food that was eaten is now a *mitzvah*.

Perhaps it was Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai that taught us this Mishna because he learned this lesson firsthand. After exiting with his son from their twelve-year hiding spot in the cave, subsisting all that time on some carobs, water, and most of all – *kedushah v’taharah*, they saw a person working his land and they could not fathom how a person in this world can possibly busy himself with the mundane. R’ Shimon simply gazed at the field and it went up in flames. A *bas kol* immediately called out, instructing them to return to the cave. Twelve

months later, when they re-emerged, they saw a man carrying *hadassim* to honor the Shabbos with. They now understood that one can buy flowers or a pricey cut of meat and use it to honor the Shabbos. So now, Rashbi said, “Of course, eat at your table and even enjoy the food being served upon it – but make sure to think of Hashem while doing so, thus transforming it into a *korban*.”

Parshas Kedoshim contains fifty-one *mitzvos*. The theme of the *parshah*, of course, is holiness. How does one get there? The answer is not simply through fasting and dipping in the *mikvah*! Respect your parents; give *tzedakah*; don’t steal or cheat; be honest and have accurate scales; don’t speak *lashon hara* and love your friend like yourself. Through the daily *mitzvos* of *bein adam lachaveiro* (which are usually physical) as well, one becomes *kadosh*.

This may sound simple, but the truth is that what this really means is including Hashem in our day-to-day activities. Our exercise and coffee breaks now become transcended into lofty experiences as well because we are simultaneously thinking of Hashem.

Lest one may despair in this endeavor of trying to be a *kadosh*, I would like to share with you the inspiring words of the Sfas Emes on our *pasuk*. He writes that **קדושים תהיו** is not a *mitzvah* but rather a *havtacha* (guarantee)! The Torah is assuring us that if we try becoming holy people, it will happen.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,



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