

# דרכים בפרשה אחרי-קדושים

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## קדושים תהיו

There is a well known Gemara in Avoda Zara (20b) that discusses the many rungs on the spiritual ladder to greatness.

אמר רבי פנחס בן יאיר תורה מביאה לידי זהירות זהירות מביאה לידי זריזות זריזות מביאה לידי נקיות נקיות מביאה לידי פרישות פרישות מביאה לידי טהרה טהרה מביאה לידי חסידות חסידות מביאה לידי ענוה ענוה מביאה לידי יראת חטא יראת חטא מביאה לידי קדושה קדושה מביאה לידי רוח הקודש רוח הקודש מביאה לידי תחיית המתים

*Rav Pinchas ben Ya'ir would say: Torah leads to care (זהירות) in the performance of mitzvos. Care leads to diligence (זריזות). Diligence leads to cleanliness (נקיות). Cleanliness leads to abstention (פרישות). Abstention leads to purity (טהרה). Purity leads to piety (חסידות). Piety leads to humility (ענוה). Humility leads to fear of sin (יראת חטא). Fear of sin leads to holiness (קדושה). Holiness leads to רוח הקודש. רוח הקודש leads to תחיית המתים.*

If we look at the list, we see that the level of קדושה is all the way up there, just before רוח הקודש. For the regular person on the street, this would seem pretty much unattainable. And yet, in our parsha, the Torah gives each and every one of us the mitzvah of קדושים תהיו.

The Ohr Hachaim explained that by refraining from engaging in immoral activities, which is the לא תעשה in last week's parsha, one is actively engaging in a positive mitzvah of being holy. Accordingly, there is no person in Klal Yisroel that cannot fulfill on some level this great mitzvah of being holy. לומר שכל המקיים מצוה זו נקרא קדוש. ולטעם זה דקדק לומר **אל כל עדת בני ישראל** לומר כי מצוה זו שמצוה קדושים תהיו היא מצוה שישנה בכל אדם, שכל איש ישראל בקיימו מצוה זו קדוש יאמר לו, **ואין הדרגה בישראל שתהיה נמנעת מהשגה זו**

Perhaps we can explain it in another way, but before doing so, we need to address another question here: Why did the Torah chose to write this mitzvah in futuristic terms, קדושים תהיו, and not קדושים היו which is a present term?

It seems that one question will answer the other. The Torah will not just tell us to “be holy”. That is not something that just happens. As we have seen from Rav Pinchas ben Yair, there are many rungs that must be climbed in order to reach that level on the ladder. Rather, the Torah commands us to try and get there; to commit to climbing. In other words, to do our small little things that we can on our end to go step by step and then eventually, קדושים תהיו - you will become holy!

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.

Chazal tell us (Shabbos 104b), הבא ליטהר מסייעין אותו - *when one comes to purify, “they” help him*, i.e. he receives the necessary Heavenly assistance to allows him to succeed. Furthermore, the Gemara in Yoma (39a) states אדם שמקדש עצמו מעט מקדשין אותו הרבה - *a person that sanctifies (even) a little, they sanctify him a lot more*. There are many more words of Chazal that we can add, but the takeaway is that the Aibishter wants this of us and He is prepared to help us in every possible way to get there.

So how much must we do to get things started? The Midrash (Shir Hashirim 5:2) writes: אמר הקב"ה לישראל, פתחו לי פתח אחד כחודרה של מחט ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו בני, פתחו לי פתח אחד כחודרה של מחט ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו בני, פתחו לי פתח אחד כחודרה של מחט ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו בני. - *Hashem asks of us is that we open up to Him a hole the size of a needle “and I will turn that small hole into a major opening that even wagons can pass through.”* Perhaps this can be explained simply to mean, that if we make the effort in the smallest and easiest of tests, Hashem will give us the necessary strength to pass the greatest of tests.

A *choshuve Ben Torah* went to visit Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg Zt”l for a bracha and some words of inspiration. The Rosh Hayeshiva looked at the *yeshiva bachur* and pointed to his stained jacket. He told him that “a talmid chochom may not go out with dirty clothing.” The *yeshiva bachur* replied, “but I am not a talmid chochom.” The Rosh Hayeshiva retorted, perhaps, but right now you are trying to become one and it will not happen if you do not act the part. By doing what you are supposed to and demonstrating what your שאיפות (true desires) are, you will get there some day, but you need to put in the effort.

**מרדכי אפפפל, Good Shabbos,**