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**נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"**

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד  
 רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,  
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

## Parashat Kedoshim

### Holiness is Not Asceticism, it is Sanctifying the Mundane

#### Questions:

- 1- The *Parashah* begins with a commandment for the Jewish Nation to be holy because Hashem is holy. This is somewhat puzzling: How can Hashem request from us to be holy and abstain from mundane pleasures due to the fact that He is holy? Our Sages have taught us that Hashem does not demand from a human being that which he is incapable of performing, since he is a man and not an angel. How, then, can man, who has been formed from dust of the earth, the most physical of all the world's components, be expected to transform himself into an angel and even greater still?
- 2- When we glance ahead at the continuation of the *parashah*, we find that it deals with *mitzvot* between man and his fellow and between man and Hashem, but it mentions nothing about asceticism or separating oneself from the mundane in order to be holy. This is odd, because it is apparently what the *parashah* is meant to be dealing with. The *parashah* is even called *Kedoshim*, because it deals with sanctifying oneself.

#### What is *Kedushah*, Holiness?

To answer the above questions, I would like to mention something amazing I saw in the *sefer Parashah u'Pishrah* by Rav Gorelik *shlita*. I will relay the general message written there with additions of my own. Society believes that a holy individual is one who is separated from all physicality, and that the more he afflicts himself and weakens his body, the holier he is. However the Torah teaches us that this is not the Torah perspective and not the Will of Hashem. This is as our Sages teach us in *Masechet Taanit* [11a] that one who fasts is called a sinner. Similarly it states in the *Yerushalmi* [*Kiddushin* 4:12] that a person will have to stand trial before the Heavenly Tribunal over each item of food that he saw but did not partake. Indeed, the Rambam [*De'ot* 3:1] has written, "Perhaps a person will say that since jealousy, lust, and honor, etc. are evil paths and remove a person from the world, 'I will separate myself from them to the farthest extreme.' [He will do this] to the extent that he will not eat meat, drink wine, marry, live in a nice home, nor wear nice clothing; rather, just sack-cloth and coarse wool, etc. similar to the priests of the idol worshippers. This too is an evil path, and it is forbidden to act accordingly; one who does so is called a sinner... Therefore the Sages have commanded an individual to abstain only from those things that the Torah has required him to abstain, and that he should not take oaths and vows to forbid himself from permissible items... Included in this are those individuals who constantly fast; they are not treading the good path. The Sages have forbidden man to afflict himself with fasting. For all of these things and everything similar, Shlomo has commanded and said, 'Do not be overly righteous nor overly wise. Why be left desolate?'"

The following is proof that this behavior is not the Will of Hashem: If it was, Hashem could have created man's body like that of an angel, without the need for food, clothing, or sleep. In that sense, it would be similar to the existence of the Jewish Nation in the desert, when they ate the *mann*, bread from Heaven, over which they did not toil, and which did not cause the one who ate it to exhume any waste. Additionally, the Torah states that the clothing of the Jews did not get worn out or tattered. If so, why did Hashem create man with the need to eat, drink, and sleep, things on which many years of man's life are spent on [see *Masechet Shabbat* 89]? This because it is man's duty to sanctify himself and examine his deeds. This is as the Rambam continues to write [ibid. 3:2], "A man must focus his heart and all of his deeds only for the sake of coming to know Hashem. And his sitting, rising, and speech should all be for this thing. How so? When he engages in business dealings or performs labor in order to earn compensation, it should not be in his heart to only earn money; rather, he should do it for the sake of obtaining the amount of the things that the body needs, such as



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food, drink, living in a home, and marrying a wife. Also when he eats, drinks etc., he should not do these things with the intent of simply deriving pleasure, to the extent that he only eats that which is sweet to the palate... Rather, he should eat and drink only with the intention of maintaining the health of his body and limbs. Therefore he should not eat everything that the palate desires, like a dog or a donkey; rather, he should eat things that are useful for the body, whether bitter or sweet, and he should not eat those things that are harmful to the body even though they are sweet to the palate, etc." On these words, *Maran* the *Kesef Mishnah* writes, "All those who do so are called 'holy.

**Being Sensitive to One's Fellow Man is Holiness**

The aforementioned principle does not only apply to sanctifying the mundane actions of this world, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping. It applies also to all of man's actions in his home and amongst his friends. He must act in a regal manner displaying outstanding character traits, with sensitivity towards his fellow man. This is the *kedushah* that the Torah requests from every Jew. Accordingly, the Torah details many examples of how an individual is required to think about his deeds and make sure that they are along the holy Torah's path.

**Story About the Baron, R' Shimon Rothschild**

I saw a story in the *sefer Sipuro shel Yom* that the *tzaddik*, Rebbi Shlomo of Bobov, a grandson of Rav Chaim of Sanz, once arrived at the mansion of Baron Rothschild. The Baron was understandably overjoyed to greet him and, in his excitement, gave the Rebbe a tour of his glorious mansion which was furnished beautifully and tastefully. One of the special things that the Baron proudly showed him was an apartment which he used only on Pesach, which contained all of the necessary Pesach utensils and items. However, Rebbi Shlomo did not express any amazement over this, despite the Baron's obvious excitement. Sensing this, the Baron turned to Rebbi Shlomo and exclaimed, "Any Jew that could merit selling his house which is full of *chametz* and use a special Pesach home should certainly be filled with joy. Why are you not amazed by such a thing?" Answered Rebbi Shlomo, "You know that my grandfather, Rav Chaim of Sanz fulfilled each mitzvah with the utmost *hiddur*, beautification, despite the poverty that pervaded in his home. If there was a *hiddur* in having a special home for Pesach, my grandfather would not have forgone it for any amount of money. Why is there no *hiddur* here? *Chametz* is symbolic of the *yetzer hara* and *matzah* of the *yetzer tov*. The Torah wants each man to burn the *chametz* from the nooks and crannies of his home, and eradicate the *yetzer hara* from wherever he may be, and repent. Only after doing so, can he eat the *matzah* and strengthen the *yetzer tov* inside himself. However, if one has a separate apartment for Pesach, there is no effort expended in searching or burning of the *chametz* at all. Therefore, the *yetzer hara* remains inside of him. The Torah does not command us to flee the *chametz*; rather, to search for it in the nooks and crannies. The way of the Torah is to engage the reality and not to flee reality." The Baron was understandably amazed at the Rebbe's words.

**Greatness is Living Like a Jew**

I saw quoted in the name of the *Shach* a comment on the Torah's words, "That man should do [mitzvot] and live by them." Indeed, *Chazal* learn from here the a threat to one's life pushes aside any mitzvah, but one can also understand in the following manner: namely that Hashem wants a person to **live** a life of *Kiddush Hashem* despite all of the trials that face one who wishes to fulfill the Torah and its mitzvot, and not only to die *al Kiddush Hashem*. For to die *al Kiddush Hashem* is but a single act, but to **live** *al Kiddush Hashem* is every day and every single moment of one's life.

Shabbat Shalom,  
 Rav Mordechai Malka