

## The Path to Follow

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MASKIL LÉDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita**

## Ways to Achieve Kedushah

**“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the entire assembly of the children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d”** (Vayikra 19:1-2)

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to gather all of Bnei Yisrael and command them to be holy, just as Hashem is entirely holy and elevated. What did Hashem intend by saying to Moshe, “You shall be holy, for holy am I?” Is it possible to achieve even a minimal measure of Hashem’s kedushah? After all, Hashem is entirely above nature, since “He has no semblance of a body nor is He corporeal.” It is almost like telling a poor person to conduct himself like a rich man when he does not possess the means to do so.

This question is magnified since Moshe Rabbeinu issued this command to all of Bnei Yisrael, including infants and young children. They too were included in the command, obligating them to sanctify themselves in holiness, just as Hashem is holy. While this command is difficult and unfathomable even for adults, how much more so for young children.

We can clarify by explaining that the command to be holy is not only conceptual, but a person must perform a positive action in order to become sanctified and spiritually elevated. The aspirations of a person should not remain theoretical alone, but he should actively be involved in achieving this lofty goal. For example, there are many people who wish with all their heart to become wealthy and live respectably, however, they do not take any steps towards realizing their dream. They sit at home and dream of being rich. Hashem commanded man to perform a minimal act, towards achieving kedushah, which is the effort that man is required to make, in order that he ultimately merit Hashem’s Divine assistance from Above.

Therefore, one who wishes to get married should actively involve himself in his search, either personally, or through people that are close to him, and make others aware that he is seeking his mate. However, if a person neglects making an effort towards finding a spouse, he cannot complain if his shidduch is delayed. This is described by the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:3) “Open for me

an entrance as narrow as a needle and I will open for you an entrance as wide as a hall.” These words imply that a person is obligated to perform just a small act, which is the effort that man is required to make, in order to merit much success in his endeavors. He should not assume that his efforts contradict his trust in Hashem.

Just as this is obvious regarding physical acquisitions, so too a person should invest efforts in spiritual endeavors, in order to merit rising to great heights and drawing close to Hashem, Who is the epitome of kedushah. This is expressed in our daily prayer: “Holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions” (Yeshayahu 6:3). When a person conducts himself in a way that reflects “saying [that you will undertake the mission], acting [upon it], and accomplishing [it],” Hashem grants him special blessings in his efforts, since “whoever seeks purity is assisted in his endeavor” (Yoma 38b).

In order to implement the command to be holy, we must fulfill the injunction to “go in his ways” (Devarim 28:9). This is accomplished by imitating Hashem’s ways, as Chazal say a person should emulate Hashem’s behavior (Shabbat 133b). When a person clings to Hashem’s attributes, and strictly conducts his daily schedule according to Hashem’s will, he merits reaching the level of “You shall be holy.” However, good intentions are not sufficient; they must be expressed through a specific act in order to realize one’s lofty goals.

Moshe Rabbeinu issued this command to the entire congregation, including infants, in order to teach the following lesson to Bnei Yisrael: The training for achieving kedushah and purity begins already at a very young age, even when the child is still in his mother’s womb. Since a mother has tremendous influence on her fetus, she must be careful to guard her eyes from forbidden sights (Shevet Mussar 24) and hear only words of holiness and purity, which have the potential of leaving a lasting impression of holiness on her unborn child. Accordingly, she will be worthy of giving birth to a righteous and pure son (Bartenura, Avot 2:8). Similarly, when a couple is meticulous in guarding the laws of family purity, the children are born in purity, and they possess the ability to advance in spiritual greatness.

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## Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

### Flying off the Handle

On a trip with my secretary from Paris to Israel, we stood in the security check line at the airport. The line was long and so was the one next to us. Suddenly, a new line opened up. The clerk summoned us to follow him to the newly-opened line with our documents.

We did as we were told, when suddenly, we heard shouts of, "Why are you cutting ahead of the line?! Don't you see people waiting? Wait patiently for your turn!" It was a Jew who showed no signs of Jewishness.

We tried explaining to him that we had stood for a long time at the next line and the clerk told us to come to the head of this

line just as it opened. But our explanations fell on deaf ears. The man refused to yield to our logical explanations. We therefore generously offered him our place and resigned ourselves to a longer wait.

I realized that a quarrel begins by each side assuming he is more important than the other side. This leads to arguments and dis-sention.

After my secretary and I finished the security check, we saw that this man was detained with his luggage for a long time. Our check-in had taken a very short time, and we were therefore able to spend time on other, more enjoyable pas-times than having our luggage

and our persons thoroughly screened.

When we later met this man on our flight, he came over to us and asked our forgiveness. He must have understood that he was punished from Heaven for his misbehavior.

Had we responded to the man's accusations in like manner, we would most probably have caused a chillul Hashem. The man certainly would never have regretted his wrongdoings. It was our attitude of tolerance toward him which gave him pause to reflect on his deeds, reaching the conclusion that he had erred, and impelling him to ask our forgiveness.

## The Haftarah



**The haftarah of the week: "Yonatan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon" (Shmuel I 20:19)**

The connection to the parashah: This Shabbat precedes the New Moon of Iyar (Rosh Chodesh is the next day on Sunday and Monday), thus the connection to the haftarah, the portion read which mentions "Tomorrow is the New Moon."



## Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

### Admonishment

One who wishes to be meticulous and not sin by believing lashon hara and gossip should regularly admonish his family about this and describe to them the enormous reward awaiting those who are careful in their speech, and vice versa, its terrible punishment, rachmana litzlan. In this way they will not stumble in their speech and sin by believing lashon hara and gossip.

## Reasons for Jewish Customs



The month of Iyar is known as a month in which one can merit a cure.

This is because the source of all illnesses and mal-function originates from the foods one eats which are not suitable for him. In the month of Iyar the manna began to descend from Heaven. The manna was called "lechem abirim" – food of angels. It was food that was entirely absorbed in the organs and did not cause any illness or discomfort. Consequently, all the sick people got healed in Iyar. This segulah remains today, making the month of Iyar a special time of healing.

Another reason for the special quality of healing in this month is because the first letters of the month Iyar (אייר) spell Hashem's promise "אני יהוה רופאך" – "for I am Hashem, your Healer."



## Words of Wisdom

### Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

#### **The Way to Educate Children**

“...*(ונטעתם)* and plant any food tree, *(וערלתם)* you should avoid its fruit as a forbidden growth; for three years they shall be *(ערלים)* forbidden to you, they shall not be eaten” (Vayikra 19:23)

And plant... and avoid... The pasuk is also describing the growth of a child.

For three years they shall be *(ערלים)* forbidden – *ערלים* can also mean a speech defect. This alludes to a three year old child who cannot speak well.

Then in the fourth year, all [the tree's] fruit shall be holy – since the father then sanctifies his child by beginning to learning Torah with him.

Praised to G-d – He is praised by Hashem.

In the fifth year, you may eat its fruit – at the time when he becomes obligated to study the Torah. From this point he should, “increase your crops.”

From this Chazal inferred: “A five-year-old begins Scripture; a ten-year-old begins Mishnah.” Since in this world, a person has a son – takes him to the Beit Hamidrash, and toils with him to teach him Torah. If the father's sins causes the son's death – then he dies and his father will have no joy from him.

Hashem says: In this world, since you possess a Yetzer Hara, you sin and your sons die. However in the World to Come, I will remove the Yetzer Hara from you and from your sons and you will have children and be joyful, as it says (Yeshayahu 65), “They will not struggle in vain nor produce for futility.” (Midrash Tanchuma)

#### **Preparation for the World to Come**

“And the gleanings *(טקל)* of your harvest you shall not take” (Vayikra 19:9)

Why were they commanded about *טקל* – gleanings?

The Torah was created so that Yisrael should toil in it and fulfill its commandments meticulously, so that they should receive their reward and thereby profit in this world, as well as acquire a portion in the World to Come. Hashem did not instruct Yisrael about any issue without commanding them to perform it as a mitzvah, in order to give them merits.

One who goes out to plow – can perform a mitzvah. One who harvests – can perform a mitzvah.

Thus, it states, “And the gleanings of your harvest you shall not take.” (Midrash Hashem Bechochma Yosad Aretz)

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik  
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita



#### **Sanctify Yourself Through That Which is Permitted to You**

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the entire assembly of the children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d” (Vayikra 19:1-2)

Parshat Kedoshim was transmitted in an assembly (Safra, Kedoshim 1) before all of Bnei Yisrael, and not in groups as the other commands were. The entire congregation used to gather around the king once a year on Sukkot in the Beit Hamikdash, and he would read this portion of the Torah aloud. Chazal teach (Tanchuma, Kedoshim 2; Vayikra Rabbah 24:9) that the opening command of this parashah obligates Am Yisrael to be holy because Hashem is holy. However, one should not assume that he could ever attain the same level of kedushah as Hashem. A person should be aware that, notwithstanding, Hashem's kedushah is greater than his own. This concept requires in depth explanation.

Furthermore, we may wonder how such an unfathomable assignment was issued to the entire congregation, including the young children. After all, it would seem that these ideas are way above their comprehension. Why were the children required to listen to this command being issued? In addition, what is the reason for the contiguity of parashat Acharei Mot to Kedoshim? Also, what is the connection between the various commands of this parashah, such as (Vayikra 19:3) “Every man shall revere his mother and his father and you shall observe My Shabbatot,” and (ibid. 19:4) “Do not turn to the idols,” with the opening pasuk (ibid. vs. 2) “You shall be holy, for holy am I?”

Hashem obligates every Jew to become holy, as it says, “You shall be holy.” Hashem informed His people that they each have the potential to become a holy person. However, despite their holiness, they will remain alive, unlike the angels, who upon declaring “Holy, holy, holy” (Yeshayahu 6:3) immediately die from the intense holiness of their words and are burned in the river of Dinur in sanctification of Hashem's Name (Chagigah 14a). Contrary to this, Hashem promises Bnei Yisrael that they will remain alive, despite attaining holiness.

Hashem asked Moshe to transmit this parashah in an assembly, in front of the entire congregation, including the children, to impress upon them that they are essentially holy and are therefore required to guard their kedushah. Although they cannot grasp the depths of this concept, the impressive assembly will remain etched in their hearts and will escort them throughout their lives until they will mature and understand the meaning of the pasuk (Vayikra 19:2), “You shall be holy, for holy am I.” It has been proven on many different occasions that young children who were present by various affairs, but could not appreciate the breadth of the event because of their young age, nevertheless were impacted by it. The impressions of their experience continued to escort them throughout their lives. Eventually, when they grew older and became capable of appreciating its meaning, they were able to grasp its importance and derive the full benefit of their experience.

The Torah used the words “You shall be holy,” in the form of a command. This implies that the command was in effect even though the young children could not comprehend or absorb its essence. Ultimately, when they would grow older, becoming more intelligent, they would be required to fulfill this command appropriately.

Once, someone asked me why I wake my little boys up early to say the Selichot prayers prior to Rosh Hashanah since they do not understand much of what is being said. I answered him that although they do not grasp its meaning now, however I am certain that their participation in these Selichot prayers will affect them significantly when they grow older.

# Wellsprings

## Chapters in Child-Raising



Among the many roles of the Jewish mother, as is well-known, she works full-time to protect and guard her children. The woman is the one who creates the protecting “walls” of her house, as Chazal say (Yevamot 62b): “Any man who lives without a wife, lives without a [protecting] wall.”

This wall that we are discussing is the protective wall of the house meant to protect and safeguard her husband and children. She guards her husband from things that are damaging to his spirit. She distinguishes between good and evil, beneficial and harmful, the nature of the home and the spiritual upbringing of the children.

This feature is unique to women. Chazal teach (Berachot 10b), “A woman recognizes the character of a guest better than a man.” Anything new that enters the house is analyzed by her healthy intuitive instincts. In this way she is able to prevent her children from harmful encounters that hinder their spiritual development.

If we look at Jewish history, we see how our Mothers employed this positive feature and created a protective wall to guard their offspring:

Sara Imenu, because of her love for Yitzchak, sensed even before Avraham that Yishmael was going astray, and she asked her husband to separate him from her son, Yitzchak, as it says, “Drive out this slavewoman with her son, for the son of that slavewoman shall not inherit with my son, with Yitzchak!”

Her primary reason for this, as Chazal explain (Shemot Rabbah 1:1), is

her fear, “Perhaps my son will learn from his ways.”

Rivkah Imenu cautions her son Yakov against marrying the local girls. She expresses her anguish to Yitzchak and says, “If Yakov takes a wife of the daughters of Heth like these, of the daughters of the land, what is life to me?”

The mother of royalty, Batsheva, warns her son Shlomo against things that would damage the strong foundations upon which he was raised: “Give not your strength to women...” “It is not proper for kings to drink [much] wine” (Mishlei 31:3).

The mother of the Amora Rabbi Nachman shielded her son in a unique way, as illustrated in the Gemara (Shabbat 156b): The mother of Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak was told by astrologers that her son would be a thief. [Consequently,] she did not allow him to be bareheaded. She told him: Cover your head, in order that you should have yirat Shamayim, and pray for mercy that their [astrologers'] predictions should not materialize.

This is how our Mothers created a protective wall for their children. And, what about us? How can we guard our children in our days? Nowadays a child is exposed to the corrupt spirit that erodes all the values that he is raised with. Every time he leaves his home to walk on the street, he is at risk of damaging his spirituality.

I shall quote here as an example the cry of Maran HaGaon Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach, zt”l in his opening address at the Yarchei Kallah of Yeshivat Ponevezh, where he aroused people to the reality that in our times there is a great need to fortify ourselves, because we face many adversaries, and we

must gather strength to fight the dangerous tide.

“The streets are full of immorality which is indescribable. Look where we have come to! How do the streets look? Nowadays it is very hard to go outside and walk on the streets. Even one who has to go out to buy just a small item cannot walk on the streets. Anyone who passes a showcase, or anyone who travels by car or train or plane, is exposed to terrible immorality. See where we have come to; it is impossible to walk outside!”

So tell me, fathers, can you afford to allow your daughters to roam the streets? Or can you allow your sons to go out unsupervised? Can we trust them? Tell me, in such times, how can we sit calmly, wrapped in a tallit in the Beit Hamidrash, without knowing where our children are wandering. We should be going out to the streets with a cry: There is a fire burning! It is impossible at this time to sit quietly in peace. Believe me, my dear fellow Jews, we must strengthen ourselves in these times!”

We must internalize the basic foundation that the child’s most powerful protection is his mother’s home.

The protective walls of the home are not its walls of brick, but the walls of the heart. The mother creates within the walls of her home an inner world full of love and care. The children gather under the wings of their mother, and their trust in her love and devotion to them creates a fortified wall of protection, which shields them from all foreign influences.

## Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

### ***Teshuvah Inspired by the Picture of the Tzaddik***

A Jewish merchant from Paris engaged in buying and selling imported merchandise, without declaring them in customs. Fear and worry were his constant companions. He was terrified that at any given moment someone would inform on him, and he would be arrested for tax evasion.

Once, he received a truckload full of fabric, and he hurried to unload the goods, taking care to hide them in a secret place. However, his greatest fears were realized when his “friends” informed the authorities that he was selling merchandise which he had not declared for tax purposes.

The police quickly arrived at the scene in order to search the place and confiscate the merchandise. The merchant was afraid that the police would go up to the second floor, where there were hundreds of yards of fabric which he had not declared. He quickly hung a picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan

on the staircase. He was confident in the power of the tzaddik and waited to see what would happen.

The police, equipped with accurate information, searched the ground floor, but found nothing. They decided to go to the second floor, but a miracle took place. Each policeman who started going up the stairs came down abruptly for no comprehensible reason. The police must have realized that the goods they were looking for were probably on the top floor, but for an inexplicable reason, they felt that they were being driven away.

In the end, they wrote a report stating that they had conducted a complete search of the place, but had not found any merchandise that had to be declared.

This was an extraordinary miracle, which occurred in the merit of the merchant’s faith in the tzaddik. The picture of the tzaddik,