

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 157

Kedoshim | Holiness is a Barrier Before the Inclination

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Rotating Millstones	1
Moses and Hillel the Elder	9
Hillel at the Water Drawing Ceremony	12
The Commandment to "Be Holy"	13
The Commandment to "Walk in His Ways"	15
What is Wanted From Us?	17
Creation for the Sake of Choice	19
Conquering the Inner Self	21
Round and Round We Go	23
Revealing the Inner Goodness	24
The Cry of Hillel the Elder	25
Summary and Practical Applications	26



DONATE

Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

Publisher and Distributer of the Teachings of
Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l



500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47
Teaneck, NJ 07666



en@h-l.org.il



www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en



HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel



(954) 800-6526



HameirLaaretsEN



HameirLaaretsEN



054-870-8737

Message Us to Join Our WhatsApp Groups

Parshat Kedoshim

The Rotating Millstones

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Pozner recounted the following tale:¹

The spread of Christianity in the world caused Jews everywhere to be subject to the mercy of the Gentiles.

They, in their hatred, concocted vile plots, usually followed by decrees of expulsion and destruction against the Jewish people, and Jewish blood was spilled like water in sanctification of G-d's name.

Occasionally, there were rulers who countered this norm, and G-d instilled in their hearts goodwill, which led them to show kindness to the Jews of their country.

One such country was located in the continent of Asia.

In this country, the king showed his kindness to his Jewish

subjects, and they lived in peace and tranquility, every man under his vine and under his fig tree. The Christians did not frighten nor harm them, for the king always rallied to their aid, defended them, and stood by their side.

The Jews had hoped to live there in tranquility, but they were one day targeted by the local priest's fury. This man was a great sorcerer, and with his immense powers of impurity, he harmed and tormented them. He occasionally even managed to kill Jews with a mere glance in his eye when they passed him on the street.

The fear felt by the Jews was immense. They had no choice but to lock themselves in their homes out of fear of the sorcerer who roamed the city streets and sought to harm them.

The community leaders were deeply concerned and sat down to devise a plan to rid themselves of this cursed priest.

Since the king usually showed them kindness and protected them from every trouble, they decided to meet with the king, reveal all the priest's deeds to him, and plead with him to remove the priest at once from his post and relocate him to someplace else.

Quickly, a few respected men were chosen to form a delegation to meet the king, and with prayers on their lips, they set out at once on their mission.

When the king heard about these cruel and wicked deeds of the priest, he became enraged and ordered his servants to bring the priest before him.

The messengers went out urgently on the king's orders, and after a few minutes, the priest stood before the king.

The king immediately began to pour out his wrath on him, rebuking him for his evil deeds, and finally warned him sternly not to

dare harm any Jew in the kingdom from this day and onwards.

When the king finished speaking, the priest opened his mouth and said with guile: 'My lord and king, surely you know that the Jews are sinners, for they do not accept the Christian doctrine. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with killing such people, on the contrary - it should be considered a great deed according to our Christian faith'.

After a moment, he added: 'Let the king declare a public debate with the Jews.

Let them choose a wise Jewish scholar as they wish who will debate me on matters of faith. I am even willing to stipulate in advance, that if I lose the debate, the king will give the Jews the right to do with me as they wish.

But if I win - the king will be convinced of my righteousness, and a decree of the king will compel every Jew to convert to Christianity, and whoever refuses will design his fate for death'.

The priest fell silent, pleased with himself.

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

His sorcery skills would give him superiority in any debate he entered, and even before the debate began, he had the ability to annihilate the debater. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Jews will take this capability into account, and none of them will agree to stand against him.

The words of the wicked priest found their way to the king's heart. On the contrary - he thought - let the Jews try to contend against the priest.

If indeed he defeats them, then they are all truly brazen heretics, and I am no longer obligated to protect them from the Christians.

Immediately, he called for the leaders of the Jewish community and informed them of his decision - to arrange a debate between the priest and a Jewish sage on matters of faith.

He announced the date of the debate, which would take place in the city's central square, and informed them of the significance of its results - depending on whether the priest would win or not.

Stunned and shaken, the community leaders left the king. The sudden change in the king's attitude and the threatening debate was the fruition of their darkest nightmare.

What would they do now ?

Where would they find someone who would agree to stand in a debate against the wicked priest, who can kill anyone he desires with just one look ?

The city's rabbi decreed a general prayer assembly.

Men, women, and children all gathered in the synagogue and increased in fasting and prayer.

With cries and supplications, they stood before G-d with one request in their mouths: 'Our Father, our King, tear up the evil decree'.

Meanwhile, the community leaders urgently gathered at the rabbi's house to decide on the identity of the contender who would debate against the wicked priest.

Who is capable of standing against sorcery and neutralizing its power ?

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

Many names were suggested, and many people were found capable of debating on the principles of faith, but against sorcery - no one could contend.

The assembly was about to conclude without any results when one of the attendees stood up and proposed his idea:

'**Across** the nearby Sambatyon River, reside our brothers, the descendants of Moses, who are righteous worshipers of G-d and among them is a Sanhedrin that judges capital cases. Perhaps one of them, for the sake of saving our lives, will agree to come to us and stand in debate with the wicked priest? These righteous individuals will surely be able to stand against the sorcery of the witchcraft priest'.

The attendees looked at him with sadness and said, 'The idea you proposed is quite good but is not practical at all. The Sambatyon River spews out stones all week long, and only on Shabbat does it rest.

Thus, the only possibility to cross it is only on Shabbat, and

to cross it would be a desecration of the Shabbat.

The situation we are in is a matter of saving lives, and as such, it would be permitted to desecrate the Shabbat and cross it to their side and have someone there cross over to our side, however the return across the river for both men is not a matter of saving a life, and remains prohibited.

Thus, anyone who crosses the river, would not be able to return, not on Shabbat, due to prohibition, and also not throughout the week, due to the rock-spewing river, and would need to forever part from the world they know so well and move to the 'other galaxy', forever.

The attendee heard their words carefully, yet continued calmly: 'We have no other choice. I propose that we announce that we are looking for a Jew willing to make this sacrifice'.

At once, at every opportunity and in every place, the search for a volunteer was the talk of the town.

Knocks were heard on the door of the rabbi's house. The

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

rabbi opened it and standing at the entrance was Rabbi Meir, the son of Rabbi Isaac Shatz. 'Rabbi, I am willing to go'.

Tears of emotion appeared in the rabbi's eyes.

Rabbi Meir approached the rabbinical court and divorced his wife so that she would be allowed to remarry, and on Friday, parted from the members of the community and from his only daughter.

Tears filled everyone's eyes, as they lifted a prayer to G-d who dwells on high that Rabbi Meir's journey be successful and that the entire community be saved from the dreadful decree hanging over their heads.

Rabbi Meir took his belongings and set out on a journey from which he would never return - towards their brethren who were encamped across the river.

Until he reached well outside the city, the members of the community accompanied him, and continued to gaze at him as he walked away and disappeared into the horizon.

Upon reaching the riverbank, Rabbi Meir sat and waited for the onset of the Shabbat. In his hand, he held a letter that the community rabbi had sent, and in his mouth, he whispered a silent prayer for the success of his mission.

The river before him was turbulent, and large and sharp stones spewed forth from it.

Then, at the very moment Shabbat entered, the waters of the river turned a clear and calm blue.

Rabbi Meir crossed the river and met the sons of Moses.

He approached their leader, handed him the letter, and with great emotion, described the severity of the danger threatening the people of his city.

The sons of Moses too now sent out to the community the declaration: 'Seeking a volunteer'...

Not long after, a tailor approached the rabbi and said: 'Rabbi, I am willing to go'.

Tears of emotion and admiration appeared in the rabbi's eyes.

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

The tailor approached the Beit Din and freed his wife with a bill of divorce, for he too would cross the Sambatyon river never to come back, and immediately began spiritual preparations for the transition.

Throughout that week, Rabbi Meir was inspired with a great divine Spirit, and composed the well-known *piyyut* (liturgical poem) in honor of G-d and the Torah - the 'Akdamut'.

The following eve of Shabbat the time had come again, this time the tailor would cross the Sambatyon river to the other side on the day of Shabbat when it would again be calm, all to save the lives of the Jewish community that Rabbi Meir had come from.

The tailor parted from the members of the community and from Rabbi Meir. They all accompanied him to the riverbank and wished him success in his efforts, and that Heaven's name be sanctified through him.

Before parting from him for the final time, Rabbi Meir gifted him with the 'Akdamut' song he

had composed and requested that the tailor distribute them throughout the Jewish diaspora, so that his memory would be remembered.

As Shabbat entered, when the river ceased throwing its stones, the tailor began crossing it, until he reached the other side.

The community members stood and waited there with great hope for salvation, and when they saw him, their hearts filled with joy.

Immediately following Shabbat, a delegation went out to the king to inform him about their selection of a representative they had prepared for the debate.

The king heard and quickly notified the priest about the Jews' agreement and they set a date for the debate.

A huge stage was set up in the city square for this purpose, and on the appointed day, it was filled with the king and his advisors, the priest and his entourage, and, distinctively, the Jews and their scholars.

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

The tailor and the priest ascended the stage. An evil gleam appeared in the priest's eyes, and he set his eyes upon the Jew intending to kill him with his demonic enchantments, but to his great surprise, his sorcery was unsuccessful.

A great fear crept into the priest's heart, but outwardly, he maintained a calm demeanor and turned to the king: 'My lord the king, before we begin the debate, I would like to delight the king and perform a miraculous feat'.

He approached two large and heavy millstones that rested beside the stage, took them in his hands, and carried them over his shoulders towards the stage.

Then, he threw them with great force into the air, and behold, an incredible wonder occurred - the stones remained suspended in the air and began to rotate on their own as if grinding wheat.

All those present were astonished at this feat.

The priest quickly turned to the tailor and said to him: 'Could

you perform wonders as well before the eyes of the crowd, and delight the heart of the king with similarly wondrous acts?'

The tailor confidently replied: 'Around the square where we stand, are trees tall and wide. Choose one of the two options - either I will bend a tall tree until its top reaches the ground, and you will hold its top to prevent it from springing back up. Or you bend the tree to the ground, and I will hold it to prevent it from springing back'.

The priest, despite his sorcery, did not know how to bend such a tall tree, and decided to choose the first option, thinking to himself that surely the Jew would fail in this daunting task he took upon himself, and would thus relieve him of the need to hold the bent tree.

However, to his astonishment, the tailor descended from the stage, approached the especially wide and tall tree chosen by the priest, and in one swift motion bent its top to the ground.

He called out loudly to the priest: 'Now come and hold the

Parshat Kedoshim - The Rotating Millstones

tree's top to prevent it from springing back up, and show your strength before everyone'.

The priest, with a look of pallor on his face, hurried towards the tree and grabbed it.

At that very moment, the Jewish tailor suddenly released his hand, and with a strong swing, the tree sprang back up, hurling the priest into the air - and at the two millstones that were still spinning and grinding the air.

In the blink of an eye, the priest was ground between the two millstones to a fine dust.

Suddenly, the Christian townsfolk lowered their heads in shame.

The king, who was most impressed by the Jew, declared the righteousness and vindication of the Jews, and immediately ordered to cancel the decree of their annihilation.

He further proclaimed that from this day forth, no one should dare to harm the Jews or disturb

the practice of their faith, and whoever would violate this order - would seal his fate with death.

The Jews returned to their homes in song and joy, carrying the tailor on their shoulders all the way to the rabbi's house.

The next day, a feast of thanksgiving to G-d was held, attended by all the Jews of the city.

During the feast, the rabbi spoke and urged the people to strengthen their faith in G-d and His Torah, after which the tailor shared his words of praise and thanks to G-d for His miracles and wonders.

At the end of his speech, he took out the "Akdamut" song given to him by Rabbi Meir and passed on his request that they publish it and publicize it throughout the Jewish diaspora to retain his memory among them.

Indeed, the piyyut was accepted, and in all Ashkenazi communities, it is customary to

Parshat Kedoshim - Moses and Hillel the Elder

sing it on the festival of Shavuot before the Torah reading.²

The piyyut "Akdamut" is a lengthy song of 90 lines, which spans several different subjects: Praise of G-d, a description of the service of the angels, and the great merit of the people of Israel.

It concludes with the line: 'Exalted is G-d in the beginning and in the end, he desired and loved us, and gave us His Torah'.

Which comes to say: G-d loves His people Israel with a great and hearty love, and this is expressed in the fact that He gave us His holy Torah.

Indeed, the greatest gift that G-d has given to the people of Israel is His holy Torah.

There is much to expand upon, but as usual, we will focus below upon one aspect.

Moses and Hillel the Elder

The following was related by Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel (Imrei Noam, Beha'alotcha - Discourse 2):

The Torah portion of Beha'alotcha begins with the verses: "And the L-rd spoke to

Moses, saying, speak to Aaron, and say to him, when you kindle the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light toward the central lamp" (Numbers 8:1-2).

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. In 'Sichot HaRan' (letter 256), it is written as follows:

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov praised the Akdamut very much, and said: Since the people of Israel are so immersed and accustomed to goodness, therefore, they do not feel the great praise of the Akdamut song that is said on Shavuot.

He also said: The virtue of the Akdamut song with its tune, as people are accustomed to sing it in the known melody, is very

wonderful and is a very great novelty. He then began to say some words from Akdamut with the known tune, and said that Akdamut is a song of desire.

All this he related as he was sitting at the meal of dairy foods on Shavuot after his early morning prayer as is customary on Shavuot. During the meal there was another individual that was then praying in the synagogue and sang Akdamut, and then he spoke to us of this holy song and greatly extolled its virtue.

Parshat Kedoshim - Moses and Hillel the Elder

The Menorah had seven branches, three on the right side and three on the left side, and one central branch. The central branch (the middle lamp) is called 'the face of the Menorah' because it is not in the branches but in the body of the Menorah itself.

G-d commanded Aaron: 'the seven lamps shall give light toward the central lamp' - when you light the lamps, tilt the wicks of the three right lamps and of the three left lamps toward the middle lamp.

This is the straightforward interpretation of the verse.

However, the holy Kabbalist Rabbi Nathan Neta Shapira revealed³ that when he studied these verses, it was revealed to

him from heaven that here is hinted the connection between Moses and Hillel the Elder.⁴

This command was said to Moses ('And the L-rd spoke unto Moses, saying'), and in the continuation of the verse it says 'toward the central lamp' - and the final letters of these four words spell out: 'Hillel'.⁵

This hints to us the spiritual connection between the soul of Moses, to whom this command was given, and the soul of the holy Tanna Hillel the Elder, who were both sourced in the same spiritual roots, as revealed by Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Arizal.

Moreover, Hillel the Elder continued Moses' leadership many generations later.

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

3. 'Megaleh Amukot' (Va'etchanan 74).

4. Hillel the Elder lived 100 years before the destruction of the Second Temple.

From him emerged the distinguished lineage of leaders of the house of Hillel which lasted 450 years and spanned over 15 generations.

Hillel greatly increased Torah study in the land of Israel, and it was said

about him (Sukkah 20.): 'When the Torah was forgotten from Israel - Ezra came up from Babylon and established it. When it was forgotten again - Hillel the Babylonian came up and established it once more'.

5. In the Jerusalem Talmud, Hillel is written with the letter Yud.

Parshat Kedoshim - Moses and Hillel the Elder

This isn't the only instance, the connection between the soul of Moses and the soul of Hillel the Elder is hinted in the Torah three times:

The first time, at the beginning of Moses' mission to redeem the people of Israel from Egypt when G-d revealed Himself to him in the burning bush and commanded him to go and redeem Israel. G-d said to him regarding Aaron: "And he shall be your spokesman" (Exodus 4:16) - the acronym of which spells out 'Hillel'.

The second time is the above mentioned instance, when at the peak of his leadership, Moses was given the commandment regarding the lighting of the Menorah in our Torah portion.

The third time, is at the end of his life's mission, at the time

of his passing, where it is said: "And for all the mighty hand, and for all the great wonders, which Moses demonstrated before all of Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:12), 'Moses demonstrated before all of Israel' - the final letters of each word spell out 'Hillel'.

We see then, that there is a great correlation between the holy attributes of Moses and those of Hillel the Elder.

Just as Moses was exceedingly humble, as the Torah testifies in the Torah portion of Beha'alotcha: "Moses was very humble, beyond all men upon the face of the earth"⁶ (Numbers 12:3), so too, Hillel the Elder was exceedingly humble.

After this introduction, we move on to discuss the joy experienced at the Water Drawing Ceremony.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

6. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef once explained that if regarding every person the Sages instructed us and say (Ethics of the Fathers 4:4): 'Be very very humble', then Moses our teacher was 'very humble' an additional third time beyond the two

required of every person. This then is the meaning "And the man Moses was very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth', meaning that Moses was humble even beyond what is expected of every 'man on the face of the earth'.

Parshat Kedoshim - Hillel at the Water Drawing Ceremony

Hillel at the Water Drawing Ceremony

During the time the Temple stood in Jerusalem, we were privileged to offer sacrifices on the altar, and in addition there was an additional commandment - to pour wine on the altar.

During the festival of Sukkot, we had an additional commandment, to pour water on the altar.

This commandment of water libation was only practiced once a year, during the festival of Sukkot.

The priests together with the people would descend to the Shiloach spring, draw water into a golden vessel, and pour it on the altar along with the wine libation of the daily morning offering.

During those seven days of Sukkot, a great joy would dwell upon the people of Israel, and this joyous celebration was called 'The Joy of the Water Drawing Ceremony'.

We find in the Rambam (Lulav 8:13-14) a description of this joy:

How was this joy conducted?

The flute was played, and music was performed on lyres, harps, cymbals, and every person with the musical instrument they knew how to play, and those who were skilled sang vocally. They danced, clapped, tapped, leaped, and performed acrobatics, each according to their ability, and recited words of songs and praises.

It is a commandment to increase in this joyous ceremony, and it was not celebrated by the common people or just anyone who wished, but rather by the great scholars of Israel, the heads of the academies, the members of the Sanhedrin, the pious, the elders, and men of deed.

They would dance, clap, play music, and rejoice in the Temple during the festival of Sukkot, and the common people, men and women, came separately to see and hear.

In the teachings of our Sages, we have several descriptions of

Parshat Kedoshim - The Commandment to "Be Holy"

this joy. Here is one of them
(Sukkah 53a):

"**It** is said about Hillel the Elder when he rejoiced at the Water Drawing Ceremony, he would say: 'If I am here, everyone is here, and if I am not here, who is here?'"

During the Joy of the Water Drawing Ceremony, the righteous scholars engaged in breathtaking dances and extraordinary singing that intoxicated the soul, the Divine Presence was revealed, and all those present drew buckets full of the Holy Spirit.

The Commandment to "Be Holy"

This Shabbat, G-d willing, we read Parshat Kedoshim.

This Torah portion contains 64 verses, including 51 commandments - 13 positive commandments and 38 negative commandments.

The Zohar highly lauds this Torah portion, stating:

"**This** Torah portion is the general principle of the Torah, and it is the seal of truth of the divine signet ring.

Suddenly, in the midst of it all, Hillel the Elder stood up and proclaimed: 'If I am here - everyone is here.'

The famous question arises, how could Hillel the Elder, who was equated in humility with Moses our teacher, speak so about himself?

Did he really consider himself so significant that if he was present, it meant everyone was present?

Before we answer, let us first discuss this week's Torah portion.

In this Torah portion, the mysteries of the Torah were renewed with ten utterances, decrees, punishments, and supreme commandments, and when the companions reach this Torah portion, they rejoice."

The closest disciples of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who had the privilege to learn the secrets of the Torah from him, are called "companions" in the Zohar.

The Zohar reveals to us that when these holy companions

Parshat Kedoshim - The Commandment to "Be Holy"

reached Parshat Kedoshim, they were very joyful.

Although, of course, the entire Torah brings great joy, as it is said: "The statutes of the L-rd are right, rejoicing the heart" (Psalms 19:8), nevertheless, upon reaching this Torah portion, they experienced an additional joy because they knew that every verse in our Torah portion is another unique pathway and a wonderful direct line to reach G-d and whoever is proficient in this week's Torah portion knows exactly how to reach G-d.

The Torah portion begins with the verses: "And the L-rd spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto

them: Be holy; for I the L-rd your G-d am holy" (Leviticus 19:1-2).

This first commandment mentioned in our Torah portion is the commandment of "Kedoshim Tihiyu" (Be holy).

The basic meaning of the commandment "Be holy" is that we be separated and guarded from illicit relations, as brought in the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah, Parshah 24): "Why is the Torah portion of illicit relations (of the previous Torah portion) adjacent to the Torah portion of Kedoshim? To teach you that wherever you will find a barrier against illicit relations, you will find holiness, and anyone who guards themselves from illicit relations is called holy."⁷

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

7. R' Neta Gurelik, who hailed from the city of Minsk and was an enthusiastic Chabad Chassid, was close to the Breslov Chassidim and stayed in Uman for a while.

During the years of the revolution, the communists decreed that he be sent for three years to Siberia, where he for some reason found favor in the eyes of the camp commanders, and they offered him the lighter work of heating the huge hall where the prisoners were housed throughout the night.

Then, the daughter of a priest who had been sentenced to imprisonment arrived at the camp.

They placed her as well to work in the hall, him on one side, and her on the other, the halls were enormous.

Every day from the early morning hours until the late hours of the day, during the hours when all the prisoners were taken out for labor, they were left alone, in the hall.

Parshat Kedoshim - The Commandment to "Walk in His Ways"

Therefore, this commandment was stated before the assembly of the Jewish people (as commented by Rashi), as it is written: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel" - because the matter of guarding the boundaries of holiness and modesty is a very primary and fundamental matter in Judaism, and

due to the severity and importance of the matter, Moses was commanded to say it before all of Israel.

There is much more to expand on this, but we will now focus on the first verse: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: Be holy".

The Commandment to "Walk in His Ways"

One of the commandments we are commanded is "Walking in His Ways".

Its message in essence is that we should walk in the ways of G-d as brought in the 'Sefer Hachinuch' (Commandment 611):

"We are commanded to conduct all our actions in the way of integrity and goodness to our

fullest capacity, and to direct our dealings between ourselves and others with kindness and compassion, as we know from the Torah that this is the way of the L-rd and it is His desire from His creations so that they may merit His goodness, for He desires to perform kindness, and this is what is said: 'And you shall walk in His ways' (Deuteronomy 28:9).

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Rabbi Neta Gurelik, was very much concerned that the desire to alleviate the loneliness might overcome him, and would every day go outside to the dense forests of Siberia, and cry and shout out in a loud voice and say: "Master of the Universe, I do not want to fail, please G-d, Merciful Father, take my soul, kill me here in the forest so that I will not sin."

He would cry and weep this way every day.

Finally, the three years that were decreed upon him ended, and before leaving the labor camp in Siberia to return to normal life, the prisoners came to say goodbye to him. The priest's daughter stood up before them all and said: "If there is still a holy man in the world, it is he!" ('Siach Sarfei

Parshat Kedoshim - The Commandment to "Walk in His Ways"

Our Sages of blessed memory interpreted this commandment:

“Just as G-d is called compassionate, so should you be compassionate; just as G-d is called gracious, so should you be gracious; just as He is called righteous, so should you be righteous; and just as He is called holy, so should you be holy as well.

This commandment is practiced everywhere and at all times, by men and women'.

Rabbi Hanoch Henich of Alexander emphasized that holiness belongs to everyone, deducing from the language of the verse:⁸

We do not find anywhere in the Torah that it is written 'Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel' except in Parshat Kedoshim.

Had it been said here to speak to the heads of the tribes,

the simple people would say to themselves 'what do we have to do with holiness that belongs only to the heads of the congregation, to the great ones, to those with high and lofty souls.'⁹

Therefore, it is said here 'Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel', without any exception, meaning that every one of the children of Israel can be holy.

The reason for this immediately follows: This is because G-d testifies 'For I am holy'.

This is like a rich father who said to his son: you have nothing to worry about, your father has enough money for all your needs.

G-d has enough holiness for every one of the children of Israel who wishes to fulfill his commandment and accept holiness upon themselves.

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

8. His words were brought in 'Otzar Ephraim' Parshat Kedoshim (page 1056).

9. In greater specification ten levels among the Jewish people are detailed in the

beginning of 'Tikkunei Zohar' (Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 1b):

Kings, the righteous, seers, prophets, Torah scholars, mighty, pious ones, wise men, sages, and leaders of Israel.

What is Wanted From Us ?

We have thus far explained that just as G-d is holy, so too He demands from us to be holy.

However, this is indeed a great wonder. As Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, the 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' once asked:¹⁰

G-d demands from us to walk in His ways.

Even in the attribute of holiness we were commanded "Be holy; for I the L-rd your G-d am holy" (Leviticus 19:2), but how is it possible to demand from us, mere human beings of flesh and blood, to sanctify ourselves with His holiness ?

He answered thus:

What is required of a person is to be, as much as possible, removed from materialism.

That is, his actions should be for the sake of Heaven and not for his own material, selfish concerns; He should be an influencer and not influenced, a giver and not a taker. This is what it means to be removed from materialism at our level.¹¹

To understand these words of his, we need to start from the beginning...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

10. 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' (Volume 4, Page 147).

11. **The** following story illustrates how a person can transcend their own ego ('He'emanti Ki Adaber'):

The three of them walked together, the father the saintly Rabbi Aryeh Levin, and beside him his two sons who were still not of Bar Mitzvah age, Refael age eight and Shimon age six.

'Wait here,' the father requested and approached the nearby grocery store, paid the seller, and began to choose and

fill a paper bag with candies, cakes, a piece of halva, and colorful sweets.

'Where are we going, dad?' the little ones asked.

'To give a sweet gift to a family relative,' he replied.

After 20 minutes of brisk walking, they stood in front of the psychiatric hospital near Kfar Lifta.

Rabbi Aryeh asked his two sons to rest under the carob tree, 'I'll return in ten

Parshat Kedoshim - What is Wanted From Us ?

minutes, and meanwhile, review Mishnayot from the Tractate of Shabbat and I will test you when I return.'

They knew that inside the big house there lived people who were unstable.

They also surmised that someone lived there whom their father loved and cared for, maybe a family relative.

Four years later, when the State of Israel was declared and the British left the country, the psychiatric hospital was evacuated, the patients were dispersed, and many of them died during the difficult times that followed.

The children imagined that their family relative had probably died as well, and didn't know about his whereabouts.

Many years later, Rabbi Aryeh passed away. From the unending stream of comforters that arrived, the sons of Rabbi Aryeh learned about yet another aspect of kindness that personified their revered father.

One day during the Shiva, an elderly man wearing a peaked cap and holding a plastic basket with vegetables arrived.

'Hello, my name is Avigdor, you don't know me, but I knew your father more than 25 years ago.

I was a nurse in the psychiatric hospital in Kfar Lifta. One morning your father stood at the entrance of the hospital and asked: 'Excuse me, I hear terrible ear-splitting screams coming from here, who is screaming this way ?!'

Rabbi Aryeh, your father, immediately noticed upon entering the ward, a tall but

hunched over patient who screamed like a madman words without meaning or connection, as he jumped and kicked and banged his head against the concrete wall.

'I approached your father, who then asked me: Why is he screaming? And why is everyone else beside him quiet?'

'I explained to him how the hospital operated.

Not every patient was entitled to psychiatric medication. According to the British directives, only a patient who had family members who showed interest in him, and pressed a bit in the right places, deserved to receive medication.

This patient, who was named Nechemiah Bodlevsky, had no acquaintance or relative. He was a Holocaust survivor without a home.'

Avigdor continued his story: Rabbi Aryeh suddenly shouted excitedly 'Nechemiah Bodlevsky? I am a family relative of his. I can't believe it, Master of the Universe, Nechemiah survived the Holocaust and here he is before me !'

'Then your father approached Nechemiah the madman, hugged and kissed him warmly and lovingly, took out a few candies from his pocket, and instructed me to inform the British authorities that he demands emphatically that they take care of him and supply him with medications, and he pulled out two shillings to help with the costs.

'Every Rosh Chodesh, your father would come to Nechemiah, who most of the time sat

Creation for the Sake of Choice

In six days, G-d created the world and everything in it: the inanimate, the plant life, the living animal species, and mankind.

On the sixth day of creation, G-d created man in His image and likeness, as it is said: "So

G-d created man in His image, in the image of G-d He created him" (Genesis 1:27).

Man was created with a pure love for G-d. His heart was full of longing, yearning, and a burning passion to merit closeness to G-d.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

in a daze, uttering a confused sentence here and there, with a paper bag full of candies.

He would sit with him for a quarter of an hour, talking to him with great warmth, while Nechemiah would silently chew, calm and relaxed.

Before parting from him, Rabbi Aryeh would kiss Nechemiah on his forehead and bless him to have a complete recovery, and Nechemiah would smile happily.

Nechemiah never recovered.

Two days before the declaration of the state, when we were in the midst of evacuating the hospital, he suffered a heart attack and fluttered between life and death.

We managed to stabilize his condition, and when he came to, he signaled to me and asked to convey a few words: 'Avigdor, I want you to know, the rabbi with the long beard who has brought me candies every Rosh Chodesh, is truly righteous.

He is not a family relative of mine at all, and I had never met him until the day he

came to the hospital with the candies. I know, Avigdor, that it was only because of him that I have been getting medication.

Before he arrived, I screamed like a hungry lion in a cage, and if I have had only a few moments of happiness in my terrible life after surviving the horrific Holocaust, these were the precious minutes spent with Rabbi Aryeh each month, with the candies and the halva, with the kiss on the forehead and the blessing from all his heart.

I ask you Avigdor to tell him that I love him, and I ask for his forgiveness for never having told him thank you, please tell him thank you on my behalf.

Tell him Avigdor the truth, that aside from these final moments of mine, I couldn't utter a single complete sentence.

Avigdor, this is my last will.'

The nurse completed his emotional tale to Refael and Shimon Levin about their illustrious father.

As Michtav M'Eliyahu (Volume 2 - Page 137) wrote:

Our Sages of blessed memory have told us of the greatness and holiness of Adam.

He was the direct creation of G-d and even after his death, his heels shone like suns (Bava Batra 58a), meaning that even the lowest part of his deceased body shone with so much holiness that it made even the light of the sun insignificant compared to it.

We can only imagine how immense his level was during his lifetime, and all the more awe-inspiring was his level before the sin.

Our sages also said: Adam reached from the earth to the

heavens and from one end of the world to the other (Chagigah 12a), meaning that he encompassed the entirety of creation within him.

It is even said that when he was created, the ministering angels mistook him for G-d and wanted to pronounce "Holy" before him (Bereshit Rabbah, 8:10).

We may wonder: The reason that G-d created His world in the complex and lowly form that we know today is to create before us a reality of choice.

G-d desired to create a world where the two forces of impurity and holiness are revealed, and that man would stand between them - and choose good.¹²

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

12. The concept of 'free choice' is clearly written in the verse:

"I call upon heaven and earth to bear witness before you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose life, that you and your children may live' (Deuteronomy 30:19).

This verse comes to say:

Know that a person's life in this world is composed of years, months, days, hours, and moments.

The power of choice accompanies a person throughout all the days of their life.

Our sages hinted this by saying (Ethics of the Fathers 4:3): 'There is no person who

But if the level of Adam was so great, and the Creator of the world was revealed to him, what choice did he have? Can one who physically sees the reality of the Creator choose a path other than holiness?

The answer is straightforward, and will be expounded on further: Adam certainly had a choice, even before the sin. It was only that the choice he had was fundamentally different from the power of choice that we are familiar with.

Conquering the Inner Self

The Michtav M'Eliyahu continues and explains:

mixture or inclination towards the opposite at all.

When G-d created the world, He created two separate camps, one camp of the forces of holiness, and the other camp of the forces of impurity.

However, surrounding him, stood forces of impurity, casting their eyes towards him and thinking: we must subdue him.

Each camp had its own territory, and they did not enter into each other's domain.

The choice Adam had was either to continue and fortify himself within his inner, exalted, and holy world or to exit his inner world and 'visit' the camps of impurity.

When G-d created Adam, He created him entirely righteous, composed only of the forces of holiness alone, and all his actions were straight, holy, and purified, completely good without any

When the time came, and the signal was given, the war began.

The forces of impurity encloded themselves in the

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

does not have his moment,' meaning there is no person who has a moment free of the possibility of choice.

That is to say, at every given moment, a person has the option to choose between good and evil, and between action and inaction.

serpent, and approached Adam whispering enticements: you must eat from the tree, you are compelled to taste, hey, it's worth listening to me.

The echo reverberated within his heart: I don't want to sin, I don't want to eat, but the war was terribly fierce. The forces of impurity threw fireballs, burning coals, boiling lava and liquid fire.

Impurity continued to circle around, drawing forth thick ropes, red hot blazing threads, and a hellfire.

The air was squeezed from his lungs, his vision blurred, and the utter confusion of senses was just a short time away.

Adam lost the battle and ate from the Tree of Knowledge.

At that moment, irreversible damage occurred; the forces of impurity managed to penetrate into his heart and the hearts of his descendants and settle there.

From that point and on, the entire battle changed.

From then on, when the evil inclination wants to tempt a person to sin, it immediately surfaces within their heart, saying: I want to sin. I want to speak lashon hara (evil speech), I want to defile my eyes with impure sights..

An echo is then heard within their heart: You're starting to lose, and if you do actually sin, you will lose all your holiness.

In the words of the Michtav M'Eliyahu:

“Ever since the sin of the tree of knowledge, the voice of the evil inclination is heard within the person saying in the first person tense: 'I' want, and 'I' desire.

Whereas the good inclination speaks to us in the tense of second person: 'You' are obligated, it is forbidden 'for you'.

Meaning, the intellect and moral compass (the good inclination) demand from us the good and the right, while initially, our desire identifies with the temptation.

This was not so with Adam, for "G-d made man upright"

Parshat Kedoshim - Round and Round We Go

(Ecclesiastes 7:29), he naturally did what was proper to do.

His desire and will were directed only towards doing good and the right.

The evil was outside of him, hence the serpent had to come 'from outside' to tempt him."

The evil inclination could not lead Adam to feel: 'I crave to do so and so,' because to crave something against the will of G-d was utterly absurd and foreign to him. Therefore, it came to him in the tense of 'you', a voice coming to him from outside, not from within his 'I' which was entirely good.

Round and Round We Go

Since that dreadful period when the evil inclination managed to penetrate mankind's inner world and settle in his heart, a new situation arose, where humans are imprisoned and bound within their inner world.

There, inside the inner world, there are no policemen or soldiers, no barbed wire fences or guard dogs, and yet, it is rare that people break through these limiting walls and escape outward.

You too may be reading these words, and ask yourself the same question: Why aren't we able to break down these dreadful walls in our heart ?

The answer in one word: Confusion.

The evil inclination, residing within the heart, blurs our desires.

When it tempts us, it speaks to us in the first person tense 'I' want to sin.

Its voice is so convincing that we think that it is what we truly want. But that's the power of the evil inclination - the power of confusion.

For the true desire of every Jew is only to serve G-d and to bring Him satisfaction, but because of the confusion, one may slip and fall.

As Michtav M'Eliyahu says (Volume 4 - Page 286):

The inclination thus steals from a person his most precious resource

Parshat Kedoshim - Revealing the Inner Goodness

- the inner 'I', and deceives us that what it wants, is really what I want.

In truth however, the inner core of a Jew desires to perform the commandments and to stay away from transgressions and this way to cling to the Source of Life itself (Maimonides, the Laws of Divorce 2:20).

Revealing the Inner Goodness

Let us return to the earlier words of the 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' that quoted:

Holiness requires a person to be, as much as possible, detached from materialism. That is, one's actions should be for the sake of Heaven and not for personal and material interests. To be an influencer and not influenced, a giver and not a taker. This is to detach from materialism in a manner we can all relate to.

When a person identifies instead with their 'I', with their desires and personal wants, they are far from holiness.

Holiness is about mimicking the level of Adam before the sin,

As long as a person fails to clarify what is his true will, he spins around himself, imprisoned and locked within a sea of desires, and is not even aware that he's on one giant merry go round.

As our Sages have expressed (Taanit 23a): 'There are those who sleep for seventy years' - their entire lives pass in an internal sleep.

when his 'I' was identified with the divine will, and the good and holy.

To quote the 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' (Volume 1 - Page 255):

“When the enticement of the evil inclination is so strong that we think its desire is in fact our desire, it has penetrated our very essence. We will then find that it entices us in the first person 'don't **I** need this and this',
‘I want this and this’.

In contrast, when the true 'I', the inner spiritual 'I', is then inspired within us and disciplines us with reproof in our heart, we will immediately recognize its language in the second person: 'Awake, why do *you* sleep'.

Parshat Kedoshim - The Cry of Hillel the Elder

The evil inclination thus has stolen our perception of ourselves, and has made us despise our true spiritual essence, making us hate ourselves to the point of self-destruction.

If we adore the evil inclination and despise ourselves, what hope do we have?

Now let us return to the question we opened with in the beginning.

The Cry of Hillel the Elder

During the joyous water-drawing festival, the participants were filled with joy and received a revelation of the divine Spirit. A great spiritual abundance was then bestowed upon them from above, even beyond what their 'vessels' could contain.

Hillel the Elder saw this and was alarmed: This abundance could deceive them.

This spiritual abundance might make them think that their inner world was perfect.

He therefore stood before the congregation and proclaimed:

Be careful, and do not be deceived. Check within yourselves to discover with whom your inner selves - your 'I' is identified, whether with the evil inclination or with the good inclination.

In the words of the 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' (Volume 4 - Page 286):

“The evil inclination steals from us the most precious thing - our 'I', and deceives us into thinking that what it wants is what I truly want.

In truth however, a Jew wishes to observe all the commandments and avoid all transgressions (Maimonides, the Laws of Divorce 2:20), and truly aspires to cling to Eternal Life.

This is what Hillel the Elder said (Avot 1:14) 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me' - meaning if was robbed of my inner self, and the 'I' is not truly mine, who then is for me, there is a real lack in my achievements. This is also the meaning of the statement that Hillel proclaimed

Parshat Kedoshim - Summary and Practical Applications

during the water-drawing festival, 'If I am here, everything is here'.

Let us now return to the opening verse of this week's Torah portion: "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel, and say to them: Be

holy; for I the L-rd your G-d am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).

May G-d grant us the merit to discover our true 'I', which is traced and connected to the divine 'I' that encompasses everything.

Summary and Practical Applications

1. This week's Torah portion, Parshat Kedoshim, is of great significance.

The Zohar, highly lauds this Torah portion, stating: Parshat Kedoshim is the essence of the entire Torah, and it is the true seal of the divine signet ring. In this Torah portion, secrets of the Torah were revealed regarding the Ten Commandments as well as laws, penalties, and lofty commandments, and when the disciples of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai reached this Torah portion, they were joyous.

2. Certainly the entire Torah brings great pleasure joy, as it is said: 'The statutes of the L-rd are right, rejoicing the heart', yet upon reaching this Torah portion, the joy of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's disciples was even greater because

they knew that every verse in our Torah portion guides to another path and passageway to reach G-d. One who is proficient in this Torah portion knows to interpret it and discover how to reach G-d.

3. The first commandment mentioned in our Torah portion is the commandment: 'Be holy'.

The simple meaning of the commandment 'Be holy' is to be separated and guarded from improper relationships, as this is the key to holiness.

Maintaining the boundaries of holiness and modesty is fundamental and essential to the Jewish faith.

4. On a deeper level, the concept of holiness is that a person, as much as possible, should detach himself from materialism.

Meaning, one's actions should be for the sake of Heaven and not for personal, materialistic interests.

One must be an influencer and not influenced, a giver rather than a taker.

When a person identifies that their inner 'I' is full of desires and personal wants, they realize that they are far from holiness, for the essence of holiness is that a person identifies with what is good and holy.

5. The evil inclination, knowing this, causes 'confusion'.

The enticement of the evil inclination is so profound that it makes us think that its desire is our desire, thus penetrating our very being.

The evil inclination, standing at the gate of the heart, blurs our desires.

When it tempts us, it speaks in the first person 'I want to sin'. Its voice is so convincing that we think it is

what we truly want, and this is the power of the evil inclination - the power of confusion.

In truth however, every Jew's desire is merely to serve G-d and please Him.

However, due to this confusion, they fall and stumble.

6. By achieving holiness and distancing oneself from immorality in thought, speech, and deed, one creates a barrier around themselves that differentiates between the good inclination and the evil inclination.

Through maintaining holiness, one is essentially saved from the 'confusion' of the evil inclination, and is granted the clarity within the inner world to differentiate between the true, and holy 'I', and the deceiving masquerading 'not good I'.

May G-d grant us the merit to discover our true 'I', which is traced and connected to the divine 'I' that encompasses everything.

Shabbat Shalom !



Megillat Ruth

With explanations and insights by Rabbi Yoram
Michael Abargel, of blessed memory



Softcover | Comfortable Print



www.hameir-laarets.org.il

+1 (954) 800-6526 +972-54-867-3086

666 HaKatzir Street, Netivot | 6 HaMeginim Street, Kiryat Ata





B"sd



A unique and rare opportunity

The Blessing of the Sons

The Prayer of the Shlah



Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita, son and successor of **Rabbi Yoram**,
Will pray at the gravesite of the holy Shlah on the eve of Rosh
Chodesh Sivan for the success of our precious children.
On auspicious times and moments, and all year long, there is
nothing more important than our children!

To add the names
of your children:

☎ +1 (954) 800-6526

☎ +972-54-867-3086

Free distribution

Preserve publication sanctity by use of Genizah

Shabbat Times Kedoshim

3rd of Iyar, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:44 pm	8:49 pm	9:15 pm
Miami	7:39 pm	8:35 pm	9:10 pm
Los Angeles	7:27 pm	8:27 pm	8:58 pm
Montreal	7:55 pm	9:06 pm	9:26 pm
Toronto	8:13 pm	9:22 pm	9:44 pm
London	8:21 pm	9:43 pm	9:52 pm
Jerusalem	7:10 pm	8:01 pm	8:54 pm
Tel Aviv	7:08 pm	7:58 pm	8:51 pm
Haifa	7:08 pm	7:59 pm	8:52 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:06 pm	7:57 pm	8:49 pm

Pathways to the Heart

*From the Words of
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

We must rule out the notion that people have to be joyous only upon the birth of a son. Rather, whatever is born we must be happy and thank G-d for the treasured gift that is entering our home.

When your daughter will grow older, seek a G-d fearing Torah scholar for her, and even offer him what he desires, so long that he study Torah with fear of Heaven, and he will be for you like a son.

There are sons-in-law who are cherished even more than sons, and much pleasure and pride is derived from their refined and humble behavior. How then can they not be loved?



Become a Partner!

For Donations:

American Friends of Netivot Inc
Signature Bank

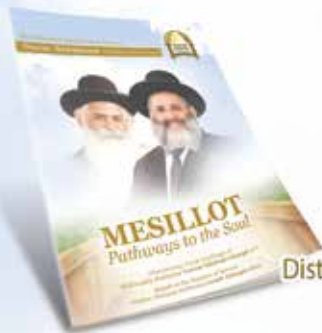
Account # 1504470357

261 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10016

Routing # 026013576

Or Visit: Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate

RECOGNIZED BY THE IRS AS A 501(C)(3)
TAX DEDUCTIBLE ORGANIZATION



Do You Enjoy Mesilot?

Distribute Pathways to the Soul in
Your Synagogue!

Receive Mesilot Weekly Anywhere Worldwide!

- Free of Charge -

Join Now!



Ask The Rabbi!



Media

hameir-laarets.org.il/en

Hameir Laarets

(954) 800-6526

054-870-8737

en@h-l.org.il



Français

joindre :



Русский

присоединиться:



English

to join:



Español

Para unirse:



עברית

להתווספות:

