

"And you shall not desecrate My holy Name, and I should be sanctified among the Bnei Yisrael." (22:32)

The *pasuk* contains the solemn admonition against profaning Hashem's Name, as well as the positive precept to sanctify His Name. The *Torah* commands us to sanctify and exalt Hashem's Name by the very nature of our moral conduct. The passive application of "*Kiddush Hashem*" through martyrdom is also implied. We are mandated to sanctify His Name through life and through death. This *mitzvah* is to become an inherent component of our personality. Such supreme dedication to Hashem had been a beacon of inspiration to us throughout the generations.

In our own times, during the period of the Holocaust, the spiritual resistance to the bestial decrees of the sadistic Nazis, the courage expressed by our people in living as well as dying with dignity, should be recorded and remembered in detail. The dedication of the believing Jews, who summoned up an incredible and invincible reservoir of commitment to *Hashem* and His *Torah*, was the true "Jewish resistance." Because of their total devotion to Judaism, their sense of pride in being the *Am Ha'Torah*, these individuals were able to face life and death in the ghettos with dignity and serenity. *Halachah* encompassed every aspect of their life. Even in their last moments, they confronted death with an amazing sense of *emunah* and ecstasy as they performed "*Kiddush Hashem*."

The Piazesner Rebbe, z.l., observed that he who is murdered in *Kiddush Hashem* does not suffer at all. His anticipation of dying "*al Kiddush Hashem*" elevates all of his senses to the point that his material being is dissolved of itself. He, therefore, feels not pain, but rather the joy of fulfilling this *mitzvah*. In the *Sefer Kedoshim*, the *Slonimer Rebbe* cites the *Zohar*, observing that *Hashem* dyes His "garment" in the blood of martyrs who perish "*al Kiddush Hashem*."

Horav N. Alter, z.l., emphasized that the imperative of *Kiddush Hashem* may assume various forms, but central to this *mitzvah* is the admonition not to degrade ourselves before the gentiles. A Jew must live life and face death with the dignity becoming one who is cognizant of the Divine component in man. This awareness stimulates the Jew's trust in *Hashem* and inspires him with the courage to carry on, despite all odds, the heritage and legacy bequeathed to him.