

"And you shall sanctify him, for the bread of your G-d he brings close." (21:8)

The commandment to sanctify the *Kohen* implies that an emphasis must be made regarding the prestige of the Kohen and the honor due him. Perhaps, as the *Kesav Sofer* writes, people were often tempted to show disrespect towards the *Kohanim*, because the *Kohanim* were dependent upon other Jews for their livelihood, in the form of the twenty-four priestly tributes.

This tendency to disdain the *Kohanim* is the reason that the *Torah* stresses the role of the *Kohanim* as trustees of the sacrificial service. The nation must be cognizant that this service is the vehicle that attracts Hashem's blessing over them. Thus, in reality the *Kohanim* give to the people much more than they receive in return. The people's duty to pay homage to the holiness of the *Kohanim*, however, is not dependent upon the performance of their priestly functions. On the contrary, even after the cessation of ritual sacrifices, it remains our moral obligation to preserve the holiness of the *Kohanim*. This obligation is derived from the *Torah's* stress upon *he shall remain holy*. He shall be afforded primacy in all matters of holiness.