

Through those who are close to Me, I will be sanctified. (10:3)

When Hashem carries out His decree of Strict Justice, especially when – as a result of this decree – someone dies, Hashem’s Name is sanctified. There is no greater *Kiddush*, sanctification, of Hashem’s Name, than *missah*, death. It indicates that Hashem is in control, that He alone determines how long and under what circumstances one will live. The *Talmud (Niddah 30b)* comments concerning the *pasuk*, *Ki li tichra kol berech*, “To me will every knee bends” (*Yeshayahu 45*), *Zeh ha’missah*, “This is a reference to death.”

Indeed, the solemnity of a funeral – even one that takes place with a majority of non-practicing Jews in attendance - is compelling. Everyone dons a *yarmulke*, recites *Kaddish* and attempts to observe the various *halachos* intrinsic to the mourning ritual. This is because death evokes the spiritual dimension within a person and calls to mind the awesome power of death/mortality. It demonstrates to us that everything and everyone is nullified before G-d.

With the understanding that *Kiddush*, sanctity, means understanding that Hashem’s Presence and power fill the world, that He controls every aspect of Creation, we understand the meaning of *chillul Hashem*. *Chillul* (derived from the word *chalal*, hole, vacuum) is a statement that the sinner makes (by inference through his actions) that Hashem does not, in fact, fill the entire world. When a person commits a *chillul Hashem* he makes a statement: “G-d does not fill this place. I can do what I want.” With this in mind, *Horav Shimshon PIncus, zl*, explains why the only *kapparah*, atonement, for *chillul Hashem*, is death. When a person desecrates Hashem’s Name, he creates a void in the glory of Heaven, a void that can be filled only through a *Kiddush Hashem* of the same caliber of the void. This is death.

This is a frightening statement. The very idea that *chillul Hashem* can be repaired only through death is in and of itself alarming. The “why,” the statement inferred from his actions that G-d does not exist here is dreadful. We do not take *chillul Hashem* seriously. Otherwise, we would exert the greatest care in our public activity to make absolutely certain that a bystander who does not know any better does not suspect us of a misstep. The consequences can be devastating.