

## You shall not desecrate My holy Name; rather I should be sanctified among Bnei Yisrael. (22:32)

The Torah commands us to sanctify Hashem's Name and also to make certain not to profane it. The *Sefer HaChinuch* explains the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* as the only manner in which we may execute the purpose of our creation, "For man is created only for the purpose of serving Hashem. One who does not sacrifice his body in the service of his master is not a good servant. People give their souls for their masters, all the more so should we for the commandment of the King of Kings." We derive from here (*Rabbeinu Yonah* 3:143) that one who desecrates Hashem's Name, not only does he not do what is expected of him (*Kiddush Hashem*), but he reneges and does the opposite of his purpose in life.

The *Rambam* (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 5:10) adds another aspect to *Kiddush Hashem*: "Whoever refrains from sin or performs a *mitzvah* – not due to any compelling reason, such as fear or seeking honor, but acts solely because Hashem commands it, just as *Yosef HaTzaddik* exhibited fortitude in repelling the advances of Potifar's wife – he is *mekadeish*, sanctifies, Hashem's Name." In other words, a Jew who maintains his commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*, for no other reason than it is Hashem's *mitzvah*, sanctifies Hashem's Name. Just doing what we were created to do is *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*. No awards, no dinners – just doing our job – we fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*.

To enable a deeper understanding of the concept of what it means to execute our purpose in life, to adhere to Hashem's command and do what we are supposed to do – without fanfare and seeking attention – I quote from the *hesped*, eulogy, delivered by *Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl*, for his sister (cited by *Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl*) "The *Talmud* (*Moed Kattan* 25a) teaches: 'Whoever weeps and grieves over the death of an *adam kasher*, upright, G-d-fearing man, all of his sins are forgiven because of the honor he accorded to the deceased.'" The *Rosh Yeshivah* asked, "What honor did he render to the deceased? There was no public display of grief. His weeping and mourning was a private affair, as he sat in his room grieving for and lamenting the deceased. There is no honor when it is carried out inwardly, away from the public eye."

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explained that honor is not measured on the barometer of relationship to people, but rather, on the scale of *emes*, truth. When a person grieves over the passing of an upright Jew, Hashem sees. Nothing more is necessary. Hashem sees a Jew's sincere emotion – feelings neither motivated by – nor contingent upon – what people think and say and personal vested interests. When a Jew mourns the passing of a fellow Jew for no other reason than a good person has been taken from our midst, he renders the greatest honor to the deceased, because his grief has integrity. Thus, for the ultimate *kavod*, honor, that he gave to a worthy Jew, Hashem rewards him with forgiveness.

One might suggest that *Kiddush Hashem* is dependent on spotlighted acts of sanctifying

Hashem's Name. One who acts appropriately, although under the radar, not garnering attention to himself, is a fine Jew, but his actions do not bespeak *Kiddush Hashem*. The aforementioned *Rambam* teaches us differently. Merely refraining from sin or executing a *mitzvah* correctly, solely for the purpose of serving Hashem, is *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*. It is all about acting with spiritual integrity.

Living a committed life out of love and obedience to Hashem is *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*. We observe Jews doing the "right" thing all of the time: Jews who do not seek acclaim (or receive it); Jews who are the first ones in *shul* for every *tefillah* – because this is what is expected of them; Jews who set aside time in their often busy day to learn Torah; Jews who give *zedakah*; Jews who attend Torah functions and sit in the back. These Jews sanctify Hashem in their daily endeavor. They receive their plaque from Hashem. Such people live quiet lives, without fanfare in this world, but when they return "home," they are welcomed as visiting royalty, because they have sanctified Hashem's Name.

On a dark, cold Russian night, some two hundred fifty years ago, the saintly *Apta Rav, Horav Yehoshua Heshel, zl*, was sitting in his study learning Torah, when he heard a loud knock on his door. The *Rebbe* hardly slept; nonetheless, it was very unusual for someone to come visiting, unless it was an emergency. The *Rebbe* opened the door to greet an obviously distraught Jew. His clothes were in disarray, as if he had not changed them in days. He appeared very anxious, as if he were about to climb out of his skin.

"*Rebbe*," he pleaded, "my wife has been in labor for three days, but the baby has yet to emerge. The doctors claim that they may operate, but they say it is a dangerous procedure that may cause considerable damage to the health of mother and child – that is, if either of them survive the surgery. *Rebbe*, please help us!" With these words, he broke down in bitter, uncontrollable sobbing.

The *Rebbe* folded his hands on the table and lowered his head onto his hands, as if in deep contemplation or prayer. The *Rebbe* remained that way as if transfixed for a few minutes. The man did not know if he was being dismissed or if he should just wait. He opted for the latter and waited. Finally, the *Rebbe* looked up and said solemnly, "You may return home. The crisis has passed. You have a new son. *Mazal tov!*"

The man, who was beyond excited, wondered why the holy *Rebbe* was acting so seriously. Perhaps something was wrong. His fears were allayed as soon as he returned home to hear the healthy crying of his newborn son. He and his wife had just experienced a miracle. He burst into tears. Next morning, he returned to the *Rebbe's* home to express his gratitude to the *Rebbe*. He was stopped by the *chassidim* who asked him what had occurred the previous night concerning the *Rebbe*. He related what had occurred, but was clueless about what had actually taken place during the *Rebbe's* "trance." They implored him to ask the *Rebbe*. At first, the man demurred. *Baruch Hashem*, he was blessed with a healthy child. It was not his business how