

## "And you shall not profane My Name, but let Me be hallowed in the midst of Bnei Yisrael." (22:32)

When we accepted the *Torah*, we became the bearers of Hashem's Name as reflected in the lifestyle we lead as individuals and as a community. We are charged to be *kadosh*, holy, and to radiate this demeanor for the entire world to see and emulate. With every refusal to defer to a life of *kedushah* and any attraction which draws us away from fulfillment of this charge, we are *kkjnw* desecrate, Hashem's Name. As *Horav S.R. Hirsch z.l.* asserts, we justify our existence and validate our possessions to the degree of our affinity to *kiddush* Hashem, sanctification of Hashem's Name. If we deny this mandate, either by negative activity or by non-activity, we make that Name a *kkj*, a lifeless empty and powerless corpse. We show that one can be a Jew and still not affirm that the will of Hashem is the absolute.

This *chillul* Hashem becomes magnified depending upon the degree of one's mental and spiritual superiority. To deviate from the honest, moral, holy and virtuous lifestyle demanded of a Jew is to live the life of *chillul* Hashem.

Chazal saw in the "*I shall be hallowed in the midst of Bnei Yisrael*," the quintessence of the Jewish mandate for *kiddush* Hashem. It has been the central motif of the Jewish lifestyle and the high point of all national prayer gatherings. Hence, when ten males gather for prayer, this idea finds enthusiastic expression in *kaddish* and *kedushah* prayers.

*Kaddish*, a term which evokes sensitive Jewish feeling, is one of most revered and emotional prayers. It is a declaration of faith in the Almighty, of loyalty to him, and confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Jewish ideals. *Kaddish yasom*, the mourners' *kaddish*, is emotional in the sense that it is recited for one who has departed from this world. It may be recited by an old man or by a young boy, who has tragically lost a parent at an early age. It is a prayer that has spanned generations and has been accepted by all Jews. It is a Jew's way of affirming the spiritual legacy of his ancestors.

Indeed, many alienated Jews have returned to faithful observance as a result of the *kaddish* they have broken-heartedly recited for their departed loved one. As *Chazal* state, the soul of the departed derives atonement and immense spiritual pleasure as a result of the *kaddish* recited in his behalf.

*Horav Yosef Ch. Sonnenfeld z.l.* told an amazing story, which reflects the extreme importance of *kaddish*. In the city of Pressburg, Hungary, there lived a couple who for many years had allocated a significant sum of money to the local *yeshivah*, earmarked exclusively for anyone who had died with no one to say *kaddish* for him. After a while, the husband died and the couple's business began to decline rapidly. The widow was soon bankrupt. She was left to tend for herself and her two daughters who had reached marriageable age with no visible means of paying for their dowries

and weddings. Nonetheless, the woman's immediate concern was to maintain the fund for the *kaddish* to be recited.

The bereaved widow went to the *Roshei Ha'yeshiva* and entreated them to continue the *kaddish* recital despite her present inability to fund the practice. Moved by her plea, they readily acquiesced to her request. Although her monetary troubles were far from solved, she left the *yeshivah* with a smile on her face.

As she walked down the street, she was startled suddenly by the presence of a dignified elderly Jew. Since the man was a total stranger, she was surprised when he struck up a friendly conversation with her. He questioned how she was managing financially and what was being done to provide for her two daughters. When the man asked her how much was needed to marry off her daughters, she was so taken aback that she responded with the necessary amount. The gentleman immediately produced his checkbook and wrote a check for the amount. He told her to take the check and have it cashed at the local bank. Due to the significant amount of the check and to allay any suspicions of fraud, he suggested that they go to the *yeshiva* and summon two students to serve as witnesses for the transaction.

The dazed woman hurriedly went to the *yeshiva* and produced two witnesses who verified the entire transaction. She went to the bank and produced the check to the teller who, upon seeing the amount, called for the owner of the bank. The owner of the bank took one look at the check and collapsed in a dead faint. After being revived, the shaken banker asked the woman if she could identify the elderly gentleman. She responded in the affirmative, and she said she was even prepared to produce two witnesses to corroborate her story. After producing several photographs, which the woman identified as being pictures of her mysterious benefactor, the banker instructed the teller to honor the check.

As soon as this was accomplished, in a trembling voice the banker began to explain the strange story which had unfolded before their eyes. The banker told the woman, "The man who gave you the check was none other than my father who has been dead for ten years! Last night, he appeared to me in a dream and said to me, 'From the time you left the faith, married a gentile woman, and stopped saying *kaddish* for me, I had no repose until a certain woman arranged for *kaddish* to be recited for any soul who had no one else to say it for them. Tomorrow, this woman will come to the bank and produce a check signed by me for the amount she needs to marry off her daughters. You are to honor this check.' When I awoke this morning, I was obviously shaken by the dream. After relating it to my wife, she assured me it was pure nonsense. When the woman presented the check, however, I knew it was all true. Now I must do something to change my ways, so that I can finally bring some peace to my father's soul."

Concluding the story, *Reb Yosef Chaim* remarked, "Do you know who those two students were? They were my friend *R' Yehudah Greenwald* and myself. The banker became a true *baal teshuvah*, penitent; his wife became a sincere convert, and they merited to raise a fine observant family."