

People of holiness shall you be to Me. (22:30)

It is not enough for a Jew to be good and upright. While these are noble, enviable attributes for anyone else, we answer to a Higher Authority and a Higher calling. We must strive to attain *kedushah*, holiness. Our *neshamos*, souls, are pure, and it is incumbent upon us to do everything within our ability to sustain the soul's pristine nature. It is due to this Heavenly mandate to achieve *kedushah* that the dynamic concerning what we may do, where we may go, what we may eat and how we should live comes into play. For a Jew, everything comes under the rubric of *kedushah*.

Horav Nachman Breslover, zl, teaches that *kedushah* is *simchah*, happiness. One who is filled with positivity, whose outlook on life is joyful, views every juncture in life, regardless of the challenges that must be overcome, as an opportunity through which he may come closer to Hashem. This is unlike the misguided concept equating *kedushah* with asceticism. One who is holy does not run from the world. He is not depressed. A *kadosh* infuses his holiness to become a vehicle of joy and inclusiveness – not gloom and isolation.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, posits that *kedushah* in man represents the highest degree of moral freedom in which the moral will is no longer engaged in a struggle, but is absolutely ready to do the will of Hashem. Furthermore, he adds, in Judaism, the entire concept of holiness is especially connected with sanctifying. Holiness is not to be concentrated. It should not be the exclusive domain of a mere few. The purpose of holiness is to sanctify others. Holiness is not a private enterprise.

In order to maintain the pristine nature of our *neshamah*, it is essential that we exert much care to establish safeguards that will prevent any unwanted, mundane “particles” from breaching the perimeter of holiness. While holiness is about sanctifying, it is different when we go out to “them” than when “they” come in to us. Our *machaneh*, camp, must remain unsullied by outside influences. This concept is easily understood when it involves the mundane. Unfortunately, when we address issues of the spirit, we confront an element of resistance. The following story highlights this disparity.

Horav Yitzchak David Grossman, Shlita, Rav of Migdal Emek, accompanied Ezer Weizman (at the time he was President of Israel, prior to that he had been head of their airforce) on a tour of a factory that made computer chips to be used in industry, but also in navigating the fighter jets flown by the pilots of their airforce. Thus, Weizman had a special interest in touring the “chip” section of the factory. The manager welcomed his interest and said he would be happy to take him on a tour of this restricted area, but (he apologized) the President would have to don protective clothing, with a face mask and protective glasses. Since *Rav* Grossman was a guest of the President, he, too, agreed to wear what appeared to be something akin to spacesuits. Indeed (*Rav* Grossman quipped), they looked like two astronauts. At the end of the tour, *Rav* Grossman was honored with saying a few words in recognition of the critical work being performed at the factory and its contribution to the welfare of the pilots. He also tendered his personal gratitude for being asked to

join them on the tour.

He said, "I thank you for availing me the opportunity to learn an important lesson concerning our *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty." When he said this, the President turned to him incredulously and asked, "what lesson concerning your service to G-d could you have possibly derived as a result of the tour?"

"People wonder, why is it that it is only the Jews who have dietary laws prohibiting them from consuming certain foods? Why are there so many stringencies with regard to what we ingest? Gentiles may eat anything they want; in contrast, we have a very selective diet. Today I realized the reason for this. When we were about to walk into the room where the chips are produced, we were asked to don special clothes. Why? The slightest foreign speck of dust that comes in contact with a chip can alter its accuracy. When one of our pilots is flying hundreds of miles an hour, when he is on a mission, the slightest deviation can have the most tragic consequences. The chip must be pristine.

"We, too, have *neshamos tehoros*, pure souls, which, if exposed to the wrong foods, become contaminated and blemished. Only, we, *am Yisrael*, have a *neshamah* that is a *chelek miMaal*, part of Hashem Above. It is perfect – if we keep it perfect. Thus, we are enjoined against consuming any food that would taint our *neshamos*.