

## You shall be holy, for holy am I. (19:2)

Holiness for the Jew is a Divine mandate, whose meaning is debated by the *Rishonim* (*Ramban*, *Rashi*). *Rashi* posits that *kedoshim tiheyu* means *perushim tiheyu*, distance yourself from the illicit relationships detailed in the previous *parshah*. *Ramban* contends that is an exhortation to approach all aspects of life through moderation. Despite the fact that a particular behavior is permitted, surrendering to self-indulgence, gluttony and licentiousness undermines the goals of *kedushah*. Having said this, we turn towards what appears to be an enigmatic statement by *Chazal* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 24), “‘Be holy’ – I might think that this means *Kamoni* – like Me (Be holy like Me); thus, the Torah says, *Ki kadosh Ani*, ‘For holy am I’ – My holiness is above yours.” It appears from *Chazal* that a parallel might exist between Hashem's *kedushah* and ours – only Hashem's is greater. Can we possibly compare our level of holiness to that of Hashem – Who is the source of holiness?

In the *hakdamah*, preface, to *Shaarei Yashar*, *Horav Shimon Shkop*, *zl*, writes that the *mitzvah* of *kedoshim tiheyu* is the *yesod*, foundation and source, the *raison d'être*, of a person's life in this world. It demands that all our labor and toil be focused on – and dedicated towards – one goal: *tovas ha'klal*, the betterment of the community at large. We should neither do anything towards – nor derive any pleasure or benefit from – personal gratification. We must live to do for others. Thus, our lives will be sanctified. If our goal is to serve others, then everything we do for ourselves is, by extension, a service for others. After all, unless we are fine, we cannot help others. From a psychological perspective, one finds fulfillment when he contributes to the well-being of others.

As a result of this idea, *Rav Shimon* innovates an important *chiddush*, original thought. He applies the mandate of *Aseir t'aseir*, “You shall tithe (the entire crop of your planting),” a Jew must give up one tenth of his produce, profits, to help others in need. Likewise, says the *Rosh Yeshivah*, one should apportion one tenth of his time towards helping others. Some are blessed with material abundance, which they use towards alleviating the plight of others. Others are blessed with qualities and attributes which can be used to benefit those in need of such assistance.

*Na'eh doreish v'na'eh mekayeim*, the *Rosh Yeshivah* practiced what he preached. Indeed, he attributed his extraordinary success as a *Rosh Yeshivah/maggid shiur/mechaber sefarim* to his personal fulfillment of *aseir t'aseir*, giving up his precious time in the service of others. *Horav Leib Malin*, *zl*, and *Horav Dovid Lipshutz*, *zl*, both *talmidim* of the venerable *Rosh Yeshivah*, visited him to speak in learning (to discuss a particularly difficult passage in the *Talmud* and its commentators). The dialogue between them ensued for over an hour, after which the two “students” (each one was to become a *Rosh Yeshivah* of note) apologized for taking up so much of their *Rebbe's* precious time. *Rav Shimon* replied, “Do not think that the Rabbinic dictum, *Aseir b'ishvil she'tis'asher*, ‘Tithe so that you will become wealthy’ (*aseir* – tithe; *osher* – wealth, in a play on words) applies only with regard to *gashmiyus*, physical/material. It applies to *ruchniyos*, spirituality, as well. One might think that giving up his time from learning to help a fellow Jew is a ‘sacrifice.’ Absolutely not. By tithing his time, he will become wealthy in time: he will be able to better, more easily, be *mechadesh*, innovate; he will possess greater clarity in communicating his thoughts, and

will achieve it all in less time.”

When the *Rosh Yeshivah* reached his twilight years, his health deteriorated and his strength waned. His doctors “suggested” that he refrain from giving *shiur*, lecturing. He refused to listen to their advice, maintaining that Hashem grants a person life for the purpose of accomplishing more for Torah, providing opportunities for Torah to be disseminated to a larger segment of the greater Jewish world. Otherwise, what is the purpose of life? A life lived entirely for oneself, to further his own needs and not serve the interests of others, is merely an existence. It becomes “life” when it one lives it with the purpose of benefiting others.