

And say to them: “You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d. (19:2)

Hashem exhorts us to be holy, to sanctify ourselves. In other words, “being good” is insufficient. One must strive to be holy. How does one achieve holiness? Indeed, how does one define holiness in the Heavenly vernacular? *Rashi* explains *kedoshim tehiyu* as *perushim tehiyu*, abstinence from immorality, distancing oneself from morally profligate behavior. *Ramban* maintains that instruction to be holy is not limited to any specific observance or discipline; rather, it is an enjoinder to live a life of moderation. Just because an activity is permitted, one does not have license to overindulge. Such a person is called a *naval b'reshus haTorah*, a degenerate with the permission of Torah.

In the introduction to his magnum opus, *Shaarei Yosher*, *Horav Shimon Shkop, zl*, explains that true *kedushah* is achieved by dedicating one's physical and spiritual capacities to the benefit of others, both on an individual and a communal level – just as Hashem does. “Walking in Hashem's ways” means acting altruistically towards our fellow man. Just as Hashem's actions are rooted in benevolence, so, too, should human actions be thus oriented.

This approach underscores the idea that holiness is not an abstract state, but is actualized through concrete actions focused on the welfare of others. By expanding one's sense of “self” to include the needs and well-being of others, an individual mirrors the Divine Attribute of *chesed*, kindness, thus fulfilling the Torah's vision of a holy life.

Indeed, according to *Rav Shimon*, holiness is about separation. Rather than separating from immorality or distancing oneself from overindulging in what is permissible, we are instructed to separate from one's “self” and think/focus on others. Thus, we fulfill our Divine calling.