

Kedoshim-As Understand By the Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov, Zt"l

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Vayikra 19:2 tells us we have to be *kedoshim*, holy because Hashem is holy. There is quite a lot of discussion among the commentaries about how we exactly we are to understand this mitzvah. The Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel of Riminov has a unique explanation of the Torah's command to be *kedoshim*. He first explains the Midrash that Rashi quotes that we have to be holy. 'One might think Like Hashem? Therefore the Torah states, "because I am holy", meaning that Hashem's holiness is greater than ours.'

The Rebbe asks how is it possible to think that we can be like Hashem. After all, there is really no comparison between us who are finite and Hashem who is infinite. To answer this, he explains that this mitzvah to be holy is the root of all Mitzvos. Most of the Mitzvos that we find in this parsha are logical Mitzvos that we do not have to struggle understand why they were given to us. Anytime a king issues decrees they will be followed if they are reasonable, logical and fit into one's sense of appeal. But when they are not so appealing, they will not be followed so readily so there are king's orders with punishments to give some guarantee that they will be followed. But the king never really knows whether his decrees are being followed all of the time or not. Furthermore, he never really knows if people accept his decrees in their hearts. Our Mitzvos from our king have a greater purpose. We are told in Tehillim 19 that they are good right and are more precious than gold. Furthermore the Gemara in Makkos 24A tells us that the whole purpose of our Mitzvos is to bring us to emunas Hashem and that is singular theme in all the Mitzvos that we have. Because the purpose of our Mitzvos is emunas Hashem, even logical Mitzvos such as honoring the elderly must carry with them fear of Hashem. We do the Mitzvos not because of logic or appeal but because they are Hashem's Mitzvos. In truth, the Torah is a contraction of Hashem's holiness that the world could not bear if it were totally revealed.

Indeed our job as Bnai Yisroel is to bring Hashem's glory into the world. Hashem endowed us with a neshama that can bear bring being in the King's palace. We do Hashem's Mitzvos and reach the highest levels of Kedusha which is even higher than the angels and all of the heavenly beings. By following Hashem's ways, even if they seem logical, we bring honor and glory to his name. Ideally, there should be no need to publicize one's good deeds. After all, Hashem always know what we do even if no one else does. However, at times we must publicize acts of righteousness to get others to do the right thing. Hashem however, can hide his kedusha all of the time and it is in this way we are not like Hashem. Bnai Yisroel, thought has an obligation as the king's servants to publicly glorify the king in all ways. When we go in the ways of the Torah we are indeed sanctifying Hashem's name. So when we, Am Yisroel, are moral and ethical, we not only do the logical right thing that is expected of all people but we bring glory to Hashem's name as well.