

Kedoshim – Rabbi Yosef Serebryanski

Be Holy

Alone and together

Holiness, Piety and Faith

Be holy

Protection from inside out or outside in (Leviticus Ch. 19-20).

In order to be one hundred percent protected, a person would have to transverse life without being recognizable to other people. Exposing one's true self to others to any degree subjects the person to scrutiny, and thereby to judgment. There are some people who are understanding and basically non-judgmental. However, sadly, too many of us do not fit that description.

Being holy within gives us an energy protection. However, that protection is not all-encompassing, especially when referring to protection from one's ego or self-deprecation. Holiness is a definition and as such has its own limitations.

The genetic code we inherit from our parents, as well as the environment in which we are raised determines our personalities, opinions, and general ability to pursue spiritual, educational and material desires and goals. Yet, while environment and genetic code impacts upon our decisions and behavior, it too has limitations in that it cannot dictate the total pursuits of the soul.

Generally, people think that "Holy" is only about being concerned with the pursuits of spirituality. Yet the Torah was given with direction about how to be holy in one's physical actions as well. It is about how to conduct oneself in all manner of things, even including everyday mundane physical functions, i.e. eating, drinking, sleeping, doing business, etc.

One example of how the Torah maintains a balance or interaction between the spiritual and physical is in the issue of the Sabbath, keeping the seventh day holy. The supreme message is the example that the Sabbath is kept on a weekly basis to show that not only did the Creator create the world but is also constantly involved in creating and recreating it.

The lesson to be gained here is the ability to see the holiness of the Creator in each aspect of life. While there are various expressions of this, we can open ourselves up to see that the life force of each element is the energy of the one true Creator.

There are people who are limited because they only see the forces in nature. When they have an experience with one of these forces they then adopt and worship it as God. Thus there are people who have chosen to excise small particles from the creation and worship them individually as Gods. While what they are worshipping may be a power in the creation. Yet, it is not separate from the Creator and worshipping it as such is idol worship.

It is interesting to note that people's souls also have various spiritual sources. One reason that idol worship occurs may be due to the limited spiritual source of an individual person's soul. Acting within this limited belief system has allowed them to attribute grandiose expectations of any of the separate microcosms within the Creation. It's okay that these individuals see these powers as being supreme, as long as they can acknowledge that each power on its own is limited in its capacity. They must accept the fact that there is one Creator that is far beyond the scope of their ability of perception or understanding, and is essentially the life force of all existence.

We are told that all the revelations of the future depend upon what we do now. This is because the spiritual energy that we create through our work, actions, speech, thought and belief is what we connect to after we pass from the physical realm. Thus expressing the desire of the Creator while we are in the physical world is the highest form of spiritual elevation that man can achieve.

The future revelation of the Creator will be greater than the Godliness that people know now, which is generally the Godliness that relates to us through the spiritual worlds.

In our work and life, it is important to share with others since in essence we are all one. When a person keeps everything for himself then he blocks his own energy. This energy eventually implodes and he dies. This is also true of a family that practices inbreeding, which can cause major birth defects and destruction to the family lineage. In effect, that is why every group needs someone who connects with others outside their group to prevent eventual destruction.

Serving creation through love is what is deeply needed these days. Too many of our leader's express love only in terms of themselves and the promotion of their egos. The best expression of true love is to love everyone as part of yourself and yourself as part of everyone.

Keeping any amount or type of hate in your heart is self-destructive. While boundaries are sometimes needed to protect one's self, hate is not really a protective boundary. Rather than protect the person who harbors it and uses it as a shield, it can do great damage to that person. Projecting hate perpetuates and heightens stress, which can cause illness to the person who tries to use it.

One of the most important accomplishments of love is that it is able to remove the blockages that exist in the heart. If they are not removed they have the potential to kill the person who holds onto them. Loving yourself in this way will also help loving others. Balancing the love is another challenge. Most people do not live in the same space as you and language is often miss-translated or not understood by others.

The essence of the soul does not change. The matter that changes are the expressions and dealings that a person goes through in life on earth.

What purpose is there in being holy and pure on this earth?

How can a person be holy in this world?

We are to be holy as this reflects the Creator who is holy. The connotation of Holy to most people means being separate. We are in this world because the Creator wants us to be here. The people who practice holiness as a means of escape are often not fulfilling their purpose for being in this world. If we are to be holy it is best to be able to conduct oneself with holiness and, at the same time be able to live amongst and deal properly with, people. This may be difficult but it definitely is more balanced, and it is the proper way to deal with the challenge.

Sometimes, in order to be holy, the first thing one must do is to be pleasant and mix easily with people. In this framework we are elevated within and are able thus to elevate our surroundings. Being in this world and above it at the same time is how we can best be holy. There is no reason to show others that you are holy, it is your personal journey.

In the things that we do and judge as mistakes, or as impure, it is important to see the Creator life force. This elevates us as well as the action. Wrong and right are usually a judgment based on the perception of the viewer. When we see the power beyond us it elevates the situation and thereby ourselves to another level.

Redemption of the future is dependent upon our not being stuck in what exists but in knowing how to go beyond it. Many prefer to keep people in a space that seems logically balanced or to maintain the prevailing status quo. That “safe” mode of operation gives the impression that everything is good. Actually that is okay if you want to live only in the present moment and not in the next moment. It will not help if you want to survive the chaos of the future and live beyond the chaos.

“You should be holy because I am holy.” Since we are a reflection of the Creator we also create. Then there is the comment that “My holiness above is from what you make holy.” If you make yourself too holy, then you take your abilities to an extreme. This leads to more and more extreme behavior which also does not allow one to appreciate the proper balance in other people.

Love and hate in your heart, how does it work?

“Love to your friend as yourself” (it does not say, love your friend as yourself; it says, love to your friend). This means that just as you are not jealous about what you have, so too do not be jealous about what your friend has. You do not have to give all that you have, just as you don’t expect for yourself that someone should give you everything that they have.

The verse has many meanings, all of which depend on how we explain the words. Your friend can be your body or your soul. The way you give love to your friend is a reflection of yourself. For some people it is learning how to love themselves as a result of how they love another person. For some other people the way they love themselves allows them to learn how to love others.

When you earn money or have much produce, it is important to share. After bringing the sacrifice in the Temple, all of it has to be consumed on that day, with nothing left over. One must share it with family and others in order to see that it is totally consumed. Regarding produce, one must leave a corner of the field for other people to take whatever they want. Just as you must be considerate of others when giving of what God blesses you with, so too you must not steal from others. This applies in business as well as in personal matters.

To wait with the land refers to the first years of a tree growing before we use the fruit (which initially there is not much of). One lesson from this in life is to wait until the Creator has brought forth the energies that He wants in the creation before we attempt to do anything. We often want things done immediately or as soon as possible but learning patience helps us see the Creator in this world. To listen and learn gives us patience to love and be loved.

Sharing with others is also part of sharing with ourselves. Sharing creates balance in the creation. Sharing brings and expands life. Sharing fosters life.

Separating one nation from the nations to be an example for others?

Abraham was separated from his idol worshiping family to serve one God. The Jews were taken out of Egypt to serve one God. Meanwhile many people serve the God that they have an experience with. This is often idol worship as they are

...serving a force in the Creation but not the One Creator. Judaism in Hebrew is yahadus, which means acknowledgement (of one Creator).

In Hebrew the world is called olam. The term olam means concealment. Concealing the Creator that created the world and all that we know. In the future all nations will serve one Creator and all people will be involved in knowing the Creator.

Allowing all the nations to study about the oneness of God in the Torah will take away some of the blindness and allow the oneness to be revealed sooner than later. People will realize that the light that they want to experience comes from the darkness, which comes from a higher light, which comes from a higher darkness. Ultimately it is not darkness, rather a concealment of the Creator in order to create.

(Leviticus 20:27) "Demayhem Bom" means that sometimes you need to give your blood for what you believe. Each one of us must determine what his or her personal sacrifice in this world is.

In conclusion, there is internal and external protection. People have external and internal protections but often become confused or hurt when those protections don't work. When that happens it should be understood as a message to change something in one's life. It may necessitate a small change, or a major change. Either way, it is important to pay attention to the messages we receive and to effect the proper changes that are required of us.

Alone and together

How holy is Holy? If all is the Creator then there is nothing else, so what are we fighting about? If all we see is the limited existence, then eternal peace will never happen.

The Rambam (Maimonides) writes (Hilchos Deos 6:1) not to live in a place where people have negative opinions and corrupt leaders. If there is no such place, then

one should live in seclusion among nature. This only serves to save the person from people who create blockages in serving the Creator.

There is another part of life where a person needs to connect with others who serve the Creator in order to truly come to higher holiness and more complete oneness. The only one that can be completely alone and whole is the Creator but we as creations need to join with others to remove aspects of our personal limitations.

The Mo'or Voshemesh writes that this is why Rashi (Leviticus 19:1) explains that to **“be holy”** was specifically said when the people were congregated all together. A person can think that being separate makes them holy which it does to some degree but to be truly Holy it has to be with people.

The Midrash Rabbah (Vayikro 24:9) states that **“you should be (Holy) kedoshim”** cannot be like the Creator. **“Kodosh”** (Holy) means being alone and the way the Creator is alone is different than humans. The Creator being alone is also part of everything since the Creator fills all space.

With a human being alone means separate from everything. Thus, for a human to be truly Holy he/she has to also be part of the creation not separate. A person needs to be part of a group that is attached to the oneness in creation.

In order to fully attach oneself with the oneness of existence, love is an essential ingredient. It does not happen through being secluded as Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk explained the words (Jeremiah 23:24) **“If a man conceals himself and I will not see him”** to mean that the “I” and oneness of the Creator will not connect with the person who does this.

The main seclusion of a person is to be among people while being constantly focused on the greatness and awesomeness of the Creator. This brings us to another interpretation of the words of the Midrash and Torah. The Holiness that is above depends on the Holiness that we achieve below. By a human seeing the Creator in everything, the Creator is brought into everything in the realm that the person exists.

Another aspect of the verse in Leviticus 19:1 is the Hebrew word. It would be grammatically correct to say heyoo kedoshim not teeheyoo kedoshim. The

meaning of teeheyoo is not that “**you should be Holy**” but that “**you will be Holy.**”

From the Torah we learn that in the end we will all be holy. The swifter we move to attain that Holy space the swifter will come the day of redemption.

Holiness, Piety and Faith

Over eight hundred years ago Maimonides wrote, “In our time most people have stopped thinking. They develop their convictions by ‘upbringing’ and reinforce them by ‘habit.’ Once they become over involved in certain notions of the past, they cling tenaciously to these ideas without thought, and have a feeling of repulsion for opinions other than those (to which they have become accustomed).”

Left unchecked, the course of human nature does not alter itself. If we do not heed the lessons of the past, how can we grow into the role of the future? We believe that all of the advanced technologies we have acquired have obliterated our blindness.

Maimonides realized that the people in his time were not thinking. How much more so is that true in our times? He foresaw that the absence of the natural thinking (filtering) process would be the cause of much destruction.

We relate to slavery as it existed in the days of early mankind. It goes back to a time before the development of our current conscious memories. Enslavement of people strips them of rights that promote independent choices and clear thought. Thus, the basis for restriction has been ingrained into the minds of many people. Modern day slavery may be imposed by people on other people, may be voluntary or may be the result of repetitive non-productive behavior. The latter is accentuated by the bombardment of “dictatorship,” false advertising and disinformation given by those who have an agenda whether monetary or otherwise.

In Leviticus chapter 19 it states “**Be holy.**” The verse then continues, telling people not to align themselves with “**masked gods**” that will block their connection from the Creator.

“Masks” separate or blind people from the truth and light. One must be vigilant about finding the truth in a world that is changing in every instant. Clinging too strongly to the past is destructive. The key is to learn from the past and balance it with the present. Otherwise the words and memories of the past, which are out of sync with the present, cause the drowning of the good along with the bad.

When we believe that all is truly **One**, we can understand that seeing or using the word God in a physical or spiritual form is limiting by way of definition. The perspective of a person reflects the limitations of that person. There are those who predominantly think and love either the spiritual or the physical. This single mindedness reflects their limitations.

In order to achieve proper balance, one must see the spiritual and physical reality as being one and the same. This, as well as all other reality, was formed from the desire of a source that has no description. Therefore, the oneness is beyond the limitations of any description. Thus, when a person connects (with that) then all existence becomes equal. Only then can we be assured respect and love. Proper conduct flows and is accepted as natural.

For many, the word “holy” functions to create the separation of people from the rest of the world. We may think of a separation based on holiness as being admirable. Yet, that same separateness can also be unholy. It is often used to refer to being separated from physical concerns. This unfortunately results in separating people from humanity, as it caters to individual pursuit of elevation. It gives rise to lack of desire to “share” the motivation for elevation.

To define a specific thing, thought, or action as being holy is strange if you claim to believe that all is truly one. Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov taught that everything that was created has a spark of holiness – divinity. It is that spark that elevates this world to a higher vibration and frequency when we make a connection.

The conduct of a pious person occurs when one is truthful and balanced in action. A person who lacks knowledge or fails to even attempt to think for his/her self is not pious. Piousness can only exist if a person takes responsibility for his/her thoughts, speech and actions.

In order to insure growth each person needs to study and learn, since when there is no growth in this world the opposite is happening. Growth and decay appear to be opposites. Yet in the overall picture the existence they are both equally part of the movement of creation.

(Proverbs 10:31) **“The mouth of the righteous flow wisdom”** and (Habbakuk 2:4) **“The righteous with his faith causes life”** yet (Isaiah 57:1) **“The righteous person perishes and no one takes it to heart.”** People do not seek to understand how to properly connect with that which is righteous. That does not result in connection with the divine in each creation and part of existence. They spend too much time trying to convince others of the justification of their actions and dictates.

When people learn to focus solely on their own growth connection, true piety will emerge. It is then that those who surround them will learn truth by example instead of actions motivated by fear and judgment.