

Kedoshim

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The *mitzvah* to be holy is an interesting one because it is one of the few for which a reason is given. God told us that we have to be holy because He is holy. But if that is the reason for the *mitzvah*, then why does it only apply to the Jewish people, especially since we have seen how many other religions have tried to make it part of their approach as well?

Because it has to do with access to higher levels of soul, and that has to do with being Jewish. Since a Jew has to observe 613 *mitzvos*, or at least as many as apply to them, they need an expanded spiritual capacity. For this reason, we have access to higher levels of soul, which means access to *kedushah*, holiness.

Holiness is not something a person creates and can make up. It is the way to measure closeness to God, and there is no faking that. It's like standing at the bottom of a ladder and looking up at a second-floor window. You can imagine climbing through the window, but if you can't get onto the ladder and make the climb, you'll never have the experience of it.

Likewise, it is one thing to imagine a relationship with God, but you can't have a close one if you can't climb up the soul ladder, which has five "rungs." The lowest is called *Nefesh*, and above that is *Ruach*, and above that is *Nesbamah*. The next two levels are impossible to access for anyone at this time, and they are *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. But as the *Arizal* says on the first page of *Sba'ar HaGilgulim*, few ever get past the level of *Nefesh*, spiritually trapping them on the most mundane and unholy level of reality, *Asiyah*.

Performing Torah *mitzvos* with intention to do the *mitzvah* rectifies the level of *Nefesh*, and gives a person access to that level of light. Using speech for Torah purposes rectifies the level of *Ruach* (wind), which is necessary for speech, and increases Divine light and holiness in a person's life. Using your mind for Torah purposes, especially having added intention when performing *mitzvos*, rectifies the

level of *Neshamah*, giving a person access to a higher level of Divine light, which increases their level of holiness.

Based upon this, the *mitzvah* to be holy is really encouragement from God to get on the soul ladder and climb towards Him. It is God saying, “Don’t be complacent and accept your current level of access to Divine light. Increase it and join Me.”

It is like a computer program. After downloading the free trial version, you will notice that only a few items are available from the drop-down menu, the upper ones on the menu being grayed out. That’s to tell you what you’re missing out on if you don’t pay for the full version, which of course has the functions that make the program worthwhile.

Similarly every human being has a “free” version of the soul, because a person needs at least a *Nefesh* to live and function in the most basic way. But if you look, you will see that the upper four levels are “grayed out,” that is, inaccessible until you make the appropriate “payment” to access them. That means doing the necessary *mitzvos* in the way they are meant to be done.

But here’s the thing. It is not only a person’s level of holiness that increases with each soul level they ascend. It also increases their quality of life because, though Torah Judaism to an outsider seems to limit life, the truth is, it allows a person to get more out of life. So when the Torah later says, “*Choose life that you may live*” (*Devarim* 30:19), it means choose to climb the soul ladder, become holier, and get more life.

Over the years I have designed the covers for my books, and have taken pleasure in doing it using a basic word processing program, while others spend a good chunk of money on sophisticated graphics programs. But I have also come to realize that, as a result, my covers lack a certain professionalism, pushing me in the direction of finally making the investment. And as technology advances, the gap between what they can do and what I can do only gets wider.

Likewise, there is no faking holiness, no matter how much you try or dress the part. The gap between real holiness and fake holiness gets larger each year, as society increasingly loses its moral compass, resulting in growing spiritual darkness. There is only one way out: Get on the ladder and start the climb to increase Divine light and enhance personal holiness.

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