

A sweet taste of the up coming Lag-BaOmer in parshas Kedoshim

Why did the Chavrayaa - Apprentices of Rashb"y become so exuberant when they reached parshas Kedoshim?

This Shabbas we will read parshas Kedoshim, where it states (Vayikra 19, 1): **”וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת: 'אלקים'—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and say to them: You shall be kadosh (holy), for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy. Rashi comments: This teaches us that this portion of the Torah was said at a gathering of the entire assembly of Yisrael, because the majority of the essentials of the Torah depend upon it. According to the Sifsei Chachamim, Rashi deduces this fact from the unusual wording: 'דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל'—speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael—rather than the usual: 'דבר אל בני ישראל'—speak to Bnei Yisrael—found throughout the Torah. Thus, we should endeavor to explain why HKB”H wished that Moshe deliver this passage specifically with the entire assembly present.**

By Hashem's good graces, we have just entered the month of Iyar. On the eighteenth of the month, all of the family of Yisrael will celebrate the joyous day of Lag Ba'Omer—the festive celebration of the parting of the divine Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, from this world. Hence, it is only fitting that we examine the reason for the exuberant reaction displayed by Rashb"y's holy entourage upon reaching parshas Kedoshim. The Zohar hakadosh states (Kedoshim 81a): **”תנא רבי אבא, פרשה זו היא כללות כל התורה וחיותם האמת. בפרשה זו נתחדשו סודות עליונים, בעשרה מאמרות—וגזירות ועונשים ומצוות עליונות, שכאשר הגיעו החברים לפרשה זו היו שמחים—this parsha presents the general principles of the Torah and the seal of truth—“emes.” Esoteric information—exalted secrets—is presented in this parsha. When the colleagues reached this parsha, they became exuberant.**

This Parasha Was Delivered to the Entire Assembly—Emphasizing Discretion within the Community

Let us begin by focusing on the jubilation of Rashb"y's colleagues regarding parshas Kedoshim. We have mentioned several times the Chasam Sofer's approach (Bereishis) concerning HKB”H's great love for Avraham Avinu—for not following in the footsteps of Chanoch. Whereas Chanoch isolated himself from the people of his generation while serving Hashem, Avraham abandoned the confines of his home to reach out to the people of his generation—in order to guide them in the ways of Hashem and His Torah. Thus, it is incumbent upon us, the descendants of Avraham, to adopt the philosophy and way of life he bequeathed to us.

Yet, if this is our legacy, why does the Torah command us: **”You shall be kadosh.”** According to Rashi, this terminology implies isolation and separateness. Seemingly, this is a directive from HKB”H to separate ourselves from matters of this world and to isolate ourselves. This contradicts the notion that HKB”H specifically desires that man reach out to teach his fellow man the ways of Hashem. Nonetheless, we find a noteworthy explanation in the writings of the Chasam Sofer in Toras Moshe:

”דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל וגו' קדושים תהיו, ופירש רש"י פרשה זו בהקהל נאמרה, לפי שרוב גופי תורה תלויים בה. ויש לומר על פי מה שכתב החובת הלבבות בגודל מעלת הפרישות והבדידות, שאין רצון הקב"ה להיות פרוש, דהיינו שילך במקום שאין אנשים - למדבריות ויערות, לבחון ולהשכיל את מעשה ה' כי נורא הוא, כי לא תוהו בראה לשבת יצרה.”

אלא רצון ה' יתברך להיות אוהב את הבריות ולחבר עמהם, ללמדם בינה והשכל בתורת ה', ואם אמנם שמעט בזה להשלים עצמו, אפילו הכי הוא רצון ה' להיות אוהב הבריות, שעל ידי זה מקרבן לתורה בחיבור ובדביקות זו, ואם כוונתו רק

לתכלית זה אז יהיה בחיבור עם אנשים ולבו דבק בה', ואף על פי כן [יהיה] פרוש מכל תענוגי עולם הזה, וזה הפרישות בחר ה'.

וזה שביאר כאן באמרו קדושים תהיו, שתהיו בפרישות, ונוכל לטעות שענין פרישות היינו בדידות הגוף, לכך נאמר דבר אל כל עדת וגו', והיינו פרשה זו בהקהל נאמרה, שיהיה פרוש אבל מעורב עם בני אדם, והטעם מפני שרוב גופי תורה, שיקויים התורה בגוף, תלויים בזה ללמוד וללמד ולהיות ממלכת כהנים.

Citing the Chovas HaLevavos, he states that it is not HKB”H’s will that we isolate ourselves from other people by living in deserts and forests, while searching for Hashem and investigating His greatness. Rather, it is Hashem’s will that we love others and reach out to teach them Hashem’s Torah—even at the cost and sacrifice of one’s personal edification. Nevertheless, a person should distance himself from the pleasures of this world; this is the separateness that Hashem desires.

This is the meaning of **“kedoshim tihiyu”—you shall be holy (kadosh)**; you shall remove yourselves and be separate. We might mistakenly interpret this directive as referring to physical isolation. Therefore, it was commanded that this passage be delivered to the entire assembly—indicating a form of separateness, while still together with others. The reason for this command was because this passage contains essential Torah precepts that must be learned and fulfilled and taught to others.

In the Cave of Rocks You Stayed, There You Acquired Your Majesty and Your Splendor

We have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 33b) that after making derisive remarks about the Roman Empire, Rashb”y was condemned to death. He fled and was forced to hide in a cave for thirteen years—separate and isolated from the rest of his generation. In the cave, he amassed his immense knowledge of “Toras hanistar”—the mystical aspects of the Torah. This is described in the piyut “Bar Yochai,” authored by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimon Lavi, zy”a, and recited throughout the community of Yisrael: **“בר יוחאי, מושב טוב ישבת, יום נסת, יום אשר ברכת, שם קנית הודך והדרך—Bar Yochai, you settled in a good dwelling, on the day you fled, on the day you escaped, in the cave of rocks you stayed; there you acquired your majesty and your splendor.**

We see that Rashb”y achieved his tremendous knowledge of Torah mysticism while isolated in the cave with his son Rabbi Elazar—separated from the rest of society. Yet, the moment

Eliyahu HaNavi informed him that the Roman ruler had died and the decree against him had been repealed, he immediately vacated the cave; he sought out his holy entourage and began teaching them the secrets of the Torah that he had ascertained in the cave. He followed in the footsteps of Avraham, realizing that HKB”H does not want us to separate ourselves from others, as Chanoch did. In fact, He desires just the opposite; HKB”H wants us to reach out to teach others Torah.

Furthermore, he contemplated why HKB”H commanded that parshas Kedoshim be delivered specifically to the entire assembly publicly. He concluded that HKB”H does not wish us to fulfill the directive of **“kedoshim tihiyu”** by isolating ourselves from others. On the contrary, He desires that we join together with others to teach them Torah. Yet, even in the company of others, we must continue to have private, holy thoughts. We can now understand the statement in the Zohar hakadosh. When Rashb”y’s colleagues reached parshas Kedoshim, they reacted enthusiastically. For they realized that in the merit of this passage being delivered publicly to the entire assembly, they were privileged to learn the secrets of “Toras hanistar” from Rashb”y.

Is an Abbreviation for Shimon Ben Yochai

In honor of Lag Ba’Omer, I was struck by a wonderful idea concerning the jubilation experienced by Rashb”y’s colleagues upon reaching parshas Kedoshim. First, let us explain what the gaon Chida, zy”a, writes in Shem HaGedolim (332) in the name of the Arizal. He presents an allusion to the neshamah of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai in the passuk (Tehillim 69, 19): **“עלית למרום—שבת שבי לקחת מתנות באדם—you ascended to the heavens; you took a captive; you took gifts because of man.** The word **“שב”י** is interpreted as an abbreviation for **Shimon ben Yochai**.

Now, our blessed sages elucidate this passuk as referring to Moshe Rabeinu when he ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael. He was forced to defeat the malachim, who wished to prevent him from receiving the Torah. This is chronicled in the Gemara as follows (Shabbas 88b):

“אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, בשעה שעלה משה למרום, אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקב”ה, רבוננו של עולם מה לילוד אשה בינינו, אמר להן לקבל תורה בא, אמרו לפניו חמודה גנוזה שגנוזה לך תשע מאות ושבעים וארבעה דורות קודם שנברא העולם אתה מבקש ליתנה לבשר ודם, (תהלים ח-ה) מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ובן אדם כי תפקדנו,

(שם ב) ה' אדונינו מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ אשר תנה הודך על השמים, אמר לו הקב"ה למשה החזיר להן תשובה, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם מתיירא אני שמא ישרפוני בהבל שבפיהם, אמר לו אחוז בכסא כבודי וחזור להן תשובה...

אמר לפניו, רבונו של עולם תורה שאתה נותן לי מה כתיב בה... (שמות כ-יג) לא תרצה, לא תנאף, לא תגנוב, קנאה יש ביניכם, יצר הרע יש ביניכם. מיד הודו לו להקב"ה, שנאמר (תהלים ח-י) ה' אדונינו מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ, ואילו תנה הודך על השמים לא כתיב, מיד כל אחד ואחד נעשה לו אוהב ומסר לו דבר, שנאמר עלית למרום שבית שבי לקחת מתנות באדם, בשכר שקראוך אדם לקחת מתנות."

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: When Moshe ascended to the heights, the ministering angels said before HKB"H: "Master of the Universe! What is someone born of a woman doing amongst us?" He replied: "He has come to receive the Torah." They said before Him: "The coveted treasure that was stored by You for nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the world was created! You intend to give it to flesh and blood?! (Tehillim 8, 5) What is a mortal that You should remember him or the son of man that You should recall him? (ibid. 2) Hashem, our Lord, how grand is Your name in all the earth that You bestow Your glory upon the heavens." HKB"H said to Moshe: "Give them an answer." Moshe said before Him: "Master of the Universe, I fear lest they burn me with the breath in their mouths." HKB"H said to him: "Take hold of the My Kisei HaKavod and answer them" . . .

Moshe said before Him: "Master of the Universe, what is written in the Torah that You are giving me? . . . (Shemos 20, 13) You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal. Is there envy among you? Is there a yetzer hara among you?" Immediately, they conceded to HKB"H, as it is said (Tehillim 8, 10): Hashem, our Master, how grand is Your name throughout the land. Now, it is not written: bestow Your glory upon the heavens. Immediately, every one of the malachim became a friend of Moshe's, and gave him something, as it is said: You ascended to the heavens, you took a captive, you took gifts because of man. As a reward for tolerating the malachim's insult, when they called you "a man," you took gifts.

In accordance with the Gemara, the Semichas Chachamim writes in the name of the kabbalists (Introduction 103b): : "הובא במקובלים שמושה בשעת עלייתו זכה לנשמת רבי שמעון בן יוחאי, והרמז "הוא שבית שבי" ששבה והשיג נשמת שבי" נוטריקון ש'מעון בן יוחאי" —during his heavenly confrontation with the malachim, Moshe merited the neshamah of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai; this is alluded to the

passuk; ש'מעון בן יוחאי is an abbreviation for ש'ב"י; in other words, he captured the neshamah of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and recruited it to assist him in defeating the malachim. Thus, we must endeavor to explain what possessed Moshe to recruit the neshamah of Rashb"y to assist him on his mission to the heavens to receive the Torah.

The Chasam Sofer's Tremendous Revelation Regarding HKB"H's Concept of Kedushah

After much consideration, I would like to propose an explanation based on a revelation from the great luminary, the Chasam Sofer, in Toras Moshe. He presents a novel understanding of the concept of kedushah as it pertains to HKB"H. An in depth explanation of his holy words is provided by the Arugat HaBosem on our parsha:

"דבאמת הבורא כל עולמות יתברך שמו נשגב מכל רעיון, ונעלם מכל חביון, ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל, ואיך יתכן לתוארו יתברך שמו בתואר קדוש דענינו על שם פרישות כמו שכתב הרמב"ן ז"ל, ואיך שייך לתוארו בזה, ומה פרישות תערכו לו. אבל ענינו נראה בסייעתא דשמיא על שם שכביכול פורש עצמו מגדולתו ומצמצם כביכול אור קדושתו, לשכון שכנתו על עמו בני ישראל לשכון כבוד בתוכם, על שם זה נקרא קדוש. למדתי דבר זה מתוך דבריו של מרן החתם סופר ז"ל על התורה עיין שם, אלא שהוספתי תבלין בסייעתא דשמיא בתוספת טעם לשבח."

In truth, the blessed Creator of the Universe is unfathomable and beyond human comprehension. So, how can we describe Him as "kadosh"—holy—which is a matter of being separate and isolated. Yet, it appears that this description is referring to his separation from His own greatness. For, He restricts and minimizes the light of His kedushah, so that He can rest His Shechinah on His people, Bnei Yisrael, and dwell among them. In this sense, He is referred to as "kadosh."

How beautiful are the words of the Keren L'David on our parsha! He presents the words of the Chasam Sofer and applies them to the mitzvah of building the Beis HaMikdash (Shemos 25, 8): "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"—they shall build Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them. In other words, HKB"H asks that: "ועשו לי מקדש"—we prepare a place for HKB"H's kedushah and His separation from His greatness, so to speak, to be displayed; and what exactly is His kedushah? "ושכנתי בתוכם"—that He rests His Shechinah among those living below on earth.

Based on this concept, he proceeds to explain the significance of the holy seraphim's triple proclamation recorded in the passuk (Yeshayah 6, 3): "קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו"—Holy,

holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory. These angels are singing HKB”H’s praise, declaring that He is: **“kadosh, kadosh, kadosh.”** Then they explain the nature of His kedushah: **“the whole world is filled with His glory”**—He diminishes and limits His greatness, so that He can descend and fill the entire world with His glory.

“קדשתם today and tomorrow” — reparation for Hashem’s Revelation on Har Sinai

Now, let us apply this idea to achieve a better understanding of Moshe Rabeinu’s reply to the heavenly malachim: **“What purpose would the Torah serve you? . . . Is there envy among you? Is there a yetzer hara among you?”** As a preface, let us explain the passuk that details the preparation necessary for Matan Torah (Shemos 19, 10): **“ויאמר ה' אל משה לך אל העם וקדשתם היום ומחר וכבסו שמלותם, והיו נכונים ליום השלישי כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם על הר סיני”**—**Hashem said to Moshe, “Go to the people and prepare them (וקדשתם) today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their clothing. Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day Hashem shall descend before the eyes of all the people on Har Sinai.”**

Based on what we have just discussed, we can explain the nature of the preparation required for Matan Torah—**“וקדשתם”**. At Matan Torah, HKB”H descended on Har Sinai to give Yisrael the Torah. The very giving of the Torah to Yisrael constituted a limitation and diminution of HKB”H’s infinite wisdom. Yet, as we learned from the teachings of the Chasam Sofer, this is precisely the nature of HKB”H’s kedushah—His ability to limit Himself and separate Himself from His infinite greatness and omniscience. HKB”H is able to limit His wisdom and descend to dwell among Bnei Yisrael and give them His Torah.

Therefore, as an introduction to Matan Torah, HKB”H instructed Moshe: **“וקדשתם היום ומחר”**—have them adopt a doctrine of kedushah below by separating themselves from worldly matters and activities prior to Matan Torah. By acting in this manner below, they will stir HKB”H to respond with an act of kedushah from above—the restriction, as it were, of His greatness in order to descend onto Har Sinai and give Yisrael the Torah. This then is the meaning of the passuk: **“וקדשתם היום ומחר”**—have them separate from worldly matters. Then the Torah goes on to give the reason why: **“והיו נכונים ליום השלישי, כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם על הר סיני”**—for in order to elicit this act of kedushah from HKB”H, they must first act with kedushah down below.

The Malachim Were Created Kedoshim but Are Incapable of Making Themselves Kadosh

It is well-known that the malachim are described as **“עומדים”**—standing in place, stationary—because they always remain on the same spiritual level at which they were created. This is reflected by the words of the prophet (Zechariah 3, 7): **“ונתתי לך מהלכים בין העומדים האלה—I will grant you “mehalchim” (those who can walk) among these “omdim” (those who stand in place).** The Shela hakadosh explains: **“mehalchim”** refers to human beings, who are born incomplete; they perfect themselves by walking and advancing from one level to the next; whereas the malachim are referred to as **“omdim”**; they are formed in their final and complete form; thereafter, they do not advance; hence, they are described as standing in place.

Upon reflection, this teaches us an important principle. The malachim are incapable of making themselves kadosh—as human beings can. The concept of kedushah is that a person is able to separate himself from his present state and elevate himself to another level. Hence, only human beings, since they possess a yetzer hara, are able to make themselves kadosh—by separating themselves from the yetzer hara. Subsequently, they can continue to elevate themselves from one level to the next by further acts of kedushah. A malach, however, remains forever on the same level; he cannot separate himself from his current state by acts of kedushah.

Yet, one might point out a seeming contradiction. In tefillas Shacharis, we recite: **“כולם אהובים, כולם ברורים, כולם גבורים, כולם קדושים—they are all beloved; they are all flawless; they are all mighty; they are all “kedoshim” (holy).** Thus, we find that the malachim are indeed referred to as **“kedoshim.”** To this, we answer emphatically. The malachim are only referred to as **“kedoshim”** with regards to the manner in which Hashem created them; they were created such that they would remain separate from mundane, worldly matters. Nevertheless, they themselves are incapable of making themselves kadosh by separating themselves from their current states and rising to a higher level.

Thus, we can shed some light on the matter of Moshe Rabeinu’s resounding, irrefutable response to the heavenly malachim: **“What purpose would the Torah serve you? . . . Is there envy among you? Is there a yetzer hara among you?”** In other words, granted, Yisrael possess yetzer haras; consequently, they can separate themselves down below and become kadosh. This,

in fact, is what transpired during the three days prior to Matan Torah. In that merit: **“Hashem descended upon Har Sinai.”**

You malachim, however, do not possess yetzer haras. Why, in fact, do you not have yetzer haras? Because you always remain on the same spiritual level; you are “omdim.” So, if you did indeed possess a yetzer hara, you would be incapable of elevating yourselves and overcoming it. This being the case, how can you possibly request that HKB”H give you the Torah through an act of kedushah—by limiting Himself and descending to the realm of the malachim? This would require an initial act of kedushah from below to trigger His response. Seeing as you are “omdim,” you are incapable of initiating such an act of kedushah.

Kedushah in Worldly Matters in the Merit of Rashb”y

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us address the Arizal’s assertion that the neshamah of the divine Tanna Rashb”y is alluded to in the passuk: **“עלית למרום שבית שבי”—you ascended to the heavens; you took a captive**—interpreting the word “שב” as an abbreviation for **ש’מעון ב’ן י’וחאי**. As we learned from the Semichas Chachamim, when Moshe ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael, he adorned himself with the neshamah of Rashb”y. We must endeavor to explain why he chose to take with him specifically the neshamah of Rashb”y.

Based on what we have learned, however, we can provide an explanation. As explained, it was impossible to receive the Torah without Yisrael first performing an act of kedushah, as it is written: **“וקדשתם היום ומחר**”—prepare yourselves today and tomorrow by being kadosh. By means of this preparation in kedushah, they triggered an awakening above—prompting HKB”H, so to speak, to act kadosh. They stirred Him to separate from His lofty magnificence and to limit Himself in order to descend onto Har Sinai.

We know that Matan Torah is repeated on a daily basis, as it is written (Devarim 5, 19): **“את הדברים האלה דיבר ה’ אל כל קהלכם**—these words Hashem spoke to your entire congregation on the mountain, from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick cloud—a great voice, which did not stop. Rashi explains in accordance with the Targum: **“a mighty voice which did not cease.”** For, HKB”H’s speech at Matan Torah was everlasting and constant; it does not cease even for a moment. This is the reason why we recite the daily berachah over the Torah in the present tense: **“נותן התורה”**—

Who gives us the Torah. Addressing this point, the Taz writes (O.C. 47, 5): the berachah over the Torah was formulated in the present tense conveying the fact that the Holy One gives us His Torah on a daily basis; as we engage in its study, he constantly provides us with new insights and explanations. Consequently, it is necessary for us to sanctify ourselves on earth on a daily basis by acting kadosh; in turn, this stirs HKB”H to act kadosh above—restricting himself in order to descend to this world to provide us with new meanings in our Torah studies.

A Person Is Entirely Defined by His Thoughts

It is worth considering the concept of kedushah regarding human beings. Simply put, a person must separate from matters of this world and consume only what is required for his subsistence. Notwithstanding, we know from the writings of the Arizal in Shaar HaMitzvos (Eikev) that the purpose of our service involving matters of food and drink is to elevate the sparks of kedushah concealed within the food.

We learn to what extent this applies from the Talmud Yerushalmi (end of Kiddushin 48b): **“עתידי אדם ליתן דין וחשבון על כל”**—**שראת עיניו ולא אכל**—a person is destined to be held accountable for all that he saw but did not partake of. The Pnei Moshe explains: because he does not make an effort to obtain them, to recite a berachah and to thank Hashem for these various species that He created in order to sustain mankind; it is as if he does not appreciate Hashem’s kindness.

The Yerushalmi concludes: **רבי לעזר חשש להדא שמועתא, ומצמיח**—**ליה פריטיו ואכיל בהון מכל מילה חדא בשתא**—Rabbi Leizer heeded this lesson; he would accumulate small sums of money in order to purchase many different types of fruit; he would eat of each type of fruit once a year. In light of this teaching, how can we define kedushah as separation from matters of this world?

Nonetheless, the true meaning of kedushah is that presented by the great Rabbi Tzaddok hakohen in Tzidkas HaTzaddik (144): **“במקום שהוא המחשבה של אדם שם הוא כל האדם, כי עיקר האדם אינו הגוף רק הנפש, והנפש אינה דבר רק כח המחשב ומהרהר והרוצה שבאדם, ומקום שמחשבתו אדוקה,**—**כך הוא כל צורת האדם באותו עת”**—a person’s essence is his thoughts; for, his essence is not his physical body, but his soul; the soul is not tangible but merely a force within man that thinks, contemplates and desires. Thus, where his thought is focused at any given moment defines him. His source comes from the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, zy”a, as presented by his loyal pupil in Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Chayei Sarah 3): **“כשמקשר ומדבק מחשבתו בו יתברך,**—

כל רמ"ח איבריו ושס"ה גידיו גוררין אחר המחשבה, וכמו ששמעתי מפורש מפי "מורי במקום שחושב האדם שם הוא כולו"—when a person's thoughts are associated with the Almighty, all of his 248 limbs and 365 sinews follow his thoughts; as I heard my teacher state explicitly: "Where a man's thoughts are is where he truly is."

The Purpose of the Mystical Aspects of the Torah

It is well-known that the foundation and pillar of Toras hanistar is that a person have proper intent in all his physical activities below in this world. He must dedicate everything to Hashem, focusing on and having in mind the various holy names and their specific implications. This is what the great Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna, ztz"l, confirmed regarding his uncle and teacher, the divine kabbalist, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy"a:

"וכזה ראיתי למורי דודי הקדוש רבינו צבי, שהיה אומר על כל דבר קטן וגדול לשם יחוד קוב"ה ושכינתיה בפה מלא, אפילו מעט מים ששתה היה שוהה ואומר כמה יחודים, ועד כשהיה שותה המים היה דוגמא דלעילא, להמשיך מים עליונים לשכינת עוזנו, ממנו להחיות נפש כל חי ברוך חי העולמים, וכן בכל דבר אכילה כל תנועה ולעיסה היה בדוגמא דלעילא, ומעט מעט שיאכל המשיך רב טוב לבית ישראל."

He witnessed that his holy uncle would utter: "For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, Blessed is He, and His Presence" out loud for all occurrences—major or minor. If he even drank a small amount of water, he would linger and utter several sacred names. Thus, he was transformed into a holy conduit connecting the heavenly influences above with the living creatures down on earth. He would perform this ritual for every activity he engaged in. In this manner, he brought abundant good to the people of Yisrael.

In this light, we can begin to appreciate why Rashb"y is referred to as "קדוש ה"—Hashem's sacred one—as we find in the Zohar hakadosh (Nasso 145a): "מאן הוא קדוש ה' דא רבי שמעון—who is "kadosh Hashem"? It is Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai; for he is respected both in this world and the world to come. In the merit of

the mystical, secret aspects of the Torah, which he revealed to the world, one can become kadosh—by focusing on the unique names of Hashem from the heavenly realms above with each and every act one performs. Thus, the Zohar concludes with the remark: "דאקרי מכובד בעלמא דין ובעלמא דאתי"—**he is respected both in this world and the world to come**--for even while he was still present in this world, he was also present in the world above; because everything is determined by one's thoughts and frame of mind.

With G-d's help, we can now comprehend the Arizal's comment that the neshamah of Rashb"y is alluded to in the passuk associated with Matan Torah: "עלית למרום שבית שבי"—where the word שבי is interpreted as an abbreviation for ש'מעון ש'מחאי. We can now suggest the following explanation. When Moshe ascended to the heights to receive the Torah, he prepared the remedy in advance of the injury, by taking with him the neshamah of Rashb"y. This enabled him to defeat the malachim and refute their claim to the Torah. For, it is solely in the merit of Rashb"y, who revealed the secret, mystical aspects of the Torah to the world, that a Jew can become appropriately kadosh—by having the proper focus and thus dedicating all of his actions for the sake of Heaven. As a result, midah k'neged midah—measure for measure—we arouse HKB"H above to separate from His infinite greatness and limit Himself, in order to descend onto Har Sinai and give Yisrael the Torah.

At this point, we can rejoice at having shed some light on our initial inquiry. Why did Rashb"y's holy entourage become so exuberant when they reached parshas Kedoshim? It is because they realized that only in the merit of Rashb"y, who taught his colleagues the Torah of mysticism—Toras hasod—that one is able to truly fulfill the mitzvas a'seh of: "קדושים תהיו"—**you shall be kadosh**. This feat is accomplished by engaging in worldly matters down below and simultaneously having in mind that everything one does is solely for the sake of Heaven—by having proper intent and focus. With such exalted thoughts it is considered as if one exists entirely in the heavenly realms—as the Baal Shem Tov states: "במקום שחושב האדם שם הוא כולו"—**where man's mind is that is where he truly is**.

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