



You Should  
Be Holy, Because  
**I YOUR G-D  
AM HOLY**

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## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Acharei Mos-Kedoshim

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

### Orientation for Spiritual Ascension

1. There is a positive Commandment to be holy.
2. *Rashi*: Separating oneself from forbidden sexual relationships causes sanctity.
3. *Ramban*: Sanctity-weaning oneself from what is permitted.
4. Hedonism: The antithesis of holiness.
5. G-d wants the Jew to be holy because He is holy.
6. G-d has no relevance to the material; The Jew engages in the material at a minimum.
7. The physicality of man is not inclined to the spiritual.
8. The *Torah* first delineates the kosher & non-kosher species, and then what is an abomination
9. First sanctify the vessel (the body) to function in spiritual arena (performing *Mitzvos*).
10. Psalms: The prerequisite to wisdom is fear of G-d.
11. Submitting to the will of G-d, one actualizes a relationship with G-d through *Torah* and *Mitzvos*.

### Establishing a Benchmark of Absolute Truth

1. A Jew is not permitted to turn towards idolatry.
2. *Rambam*: It is not only forbidden to read about the rituals of idolatry, one is not permitted to gaze upon an idol.
3. Any thought that may cause one to reject any of the fundamentals of *Torah* is forbidden.
4. Man's intellect is limited; he cannot grasp truth on an absolute level.
5. Permitted to veer after the reflections of his heart he would destroy the world.
6. Not having a concrete irrefutable position he would vacillate in his belief.
7. At Sinai, G-d openly communicated with every Jew.
8. They witnessed G-d speaking to *Moshe* and transmitting to the Jews, so establishing him as His prophet.
9. *Moshe's* prophecy is thus unquestioned.
10. Sinai is the reference point for the the Jew; no reason for the Jew to reflect on the truthfulness of these issues.

### Is There Inequity in G-d's Justice?

**Weekly Video:** How's One Atoned Without A Temple

**Parsha Upfront:** An Indicator Of Aberrant Behavior

## Weekly Torah Commentaries Series: Acharei Mos-Kedoshim



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### Meriting G-d's Assistance

"You shall be holy."

*Midrash*: "May He dispatch your help from holiness and from Zion shall you be supported." (Psalms)

What is the meaning of "May He dispatch your help from holiness?"

As a result of the sanctity of one's actions, one will merit Divine Assistance.

What is the meaning of "and from Zion shall you be supported?"

Based on how meticulously and perfectly one fulfills the *mitzvos*, one will merit that degree of support.

Divine Assistance is determined by the degree of sanctity of one's deed as well as the meticulousness of one's action. *Mitzvah* performance alone is not sufficient to merit Divine Assistance. It is the manner in which the *mitzvah* is performed that will determine its value.

Every *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* we supplicate G-d to "Sanctify us through Your *mitzvos*." Although one may fulfill the *mitzvos* which are innately holy, he does not necessarily become sanctified through them.

"*Hashem* spoke to *Moshe* saying – Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, *Hashem* your G-d."

The basis and source for the holiness of the Jew is his association with G-d. G-d wants the Jew to act in a context of holiness because He is holy.

One's holiness is rooted in his relationship with G-d. Although one may perform a *mitzvah* in a meticulous manner, if the individual is not sufficiently worthy, the *mitzvah* will not sanctify him.

On *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, which are days of Mercy, we supplicate G-d that despite our unworthiness, He should allow us, through His Attribute of Mercy, to become sanctified and thus allow us to merit our portion in *Torah*.



"But you who cleave to *Hashem*, your G-d, you are alive today." One's existence and vibrancy is determined by one's degree of being rooted in G-d, which is based upon his relationship with the Divine.

However, during the week we do not make this special request in our *Amidah* (Silent Prayer) because the weekday period is not necessarily a time of Mercy.

*Rambam*: Before one repents, one is abominable, detestable, and despised by G-d. Therefore, when the sinner performs the *mitzvos*, G-d rejects them and throws them back at him because he is not desirable. However, after the sinner repents he becomes beloved, precious, and special to G-d. This is when G-d will embrace one's *mitzvos*, thus allowing his *mitzvah* performance to sanctify him. This is the meaning of the words of King David in Psalms, "May He dispatch your help from holiness and from Zion shall you be supported."

## Rooting Oneself in G-d

*Midrash*: G-d said to the Jewish people, 'As long as the Temple stands, when you bring sacrifices within it, they will give you atonement.'

How is one atoned if the Temple no longer stands? One needs to engage in *Torah* study because its words are the equivalent of the sacrifices. The words of *Torah* will bring about atonement. As the Prophet states, "Take to you the words (of the *Torah*) and you will return to G-d." The *Torah* is the equivalent of every classification of sacrifice.

During the time of the Temple, they poured wine libations on the altar. So too the *Torah* is compared to wine, as it states in Proverbs, "You shall drink the wine which I poured."

They brought bread on the altar; so too, the *Torah* is compared to bread. "What is the bread of the Jew? It is the *Torah*."

They brought oil to the altar; so too the *Torah* is compared to oil. "Your garments should always be white and oil should not be lacking from your head."

Presently, since we no longer have the Temple, the only way one can achieve atonement is by engaging in *Torah* study, which is the equivalent of all the sacrifices.

*Gemara*: If one brings an offering without making a verbal confession, his offering is considered as an "abomination." In order for a sacrifice to bring about atonement, it must be predicated on one recognizing his failing, which can only be appreciated when one reaches a level of humility before G-d. The sacrifice alone is not sufficient to atone on behalf of the individual.

If *Torah* study is the equivalent of bringing sacrifices, it is logical to assume that the *Torah* study alone is not sufficient to bring about atonement. One must also engage in *Torah* with a sense of humility and negation in order for it to have the desired effect of atonement.

What is innate in *Torah* study that brings about atonement?

*Gemara*: "Great is the study of *Torah* because it brings to actualization (of *mitzvos*)."

*Torah* study has the innate ability to motivate a Jew in his spiritual development when it is studied properly.

*Chazal*: *Torah* study is the equivalent of all the *mitzvos* combined. *Torah* study contains the spirituality of every *mitzvah*. This is the reason that *Torah* study motivates the Jew to actualize *mitzvos* that he has not yet even come upon.

Since the *Torah* contains within it all of the spirituality of the sacrifices, if one studies it in a proper manner, it is the equivalent of bringing all of the sacrifices. Therefore, when one studies *Torah* as prescribed, it brings about atonement.

*Zohar*: "The Jewish people, the *Torah*, and G-d are one." The Jew's relevance and capacity to acquire *Torah* and his relationship with G-d are intertwined. The degree to which one engages in *Torah* will determine the degree that one cleaves to G-d because it is His Wisdom.

*Reb Chaim of Volozhin*: The concept of sin "*chet*" is (spiritual) deficiency. When one sins, he becomes distanced from G-d. This distance creates a spiritual vacuum. However, when one engages in *Torah* study, he is reconnecting to G-d. By doing so, he becomes part of the Omnipotent One. His study closes the schism that was caused by his sin. This is the result of atonement.

Just as the bringing of sacrifices with the proper intent allows the individual to reattach to G-d, so too does engaging in *Torah* study with the proper intent.

*Gemara*: “I (G-d) created the evil inclination, and the Torah as its antidote.”

*Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*: *Torah* only functions as an antidote to the evil inclination when it is studied with a pure intent (*l'shmah*). Since *Torah* study is a spiritual endeavor that counters and incapacitates evil, which permeates one's physicality, one must negate his self-interest in order for the *Torah* to be effective.

However, if one is lacking the element of purity, it will not have the effect of an antidote. Similarly, in order for *Torah* study to be the equivalent of all the sacrifices, it must be studied with a pure intent.

## Israel, Through You I Will Be Glorified

“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying – Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem your G-d.”

*Midrash*: G-d said to the Jewish people, ‘Before I created the world, the angels would praise and sanctify Me through you. They would say, ‘Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Israel.’

When Adam was created, the angels asked G-d, ‘Is this the one to whom we refer when we give You praise?’ G-d said to them, ‘No, he is a thief.’ As it states, ‘He ate of the tree.’

When *Noach* came into existence, the angels asked, ‘Is this the one?’ G-d responded, ‘No, he is a drunkard.’ As it states, ‘He drank of the wine and became intoxicated.’

When *Avraham* came into existence, the angels asked, ‘Is this the one?’ G-d replied, ‘No, he is the convert from whom *Yishmael* comes.’

When *Yitzchak* came into being, the angels asked, ‘Is this the one?’ G-d replied, ‘No, he loves My enemy.’ As it states, “*Yitzchak* loved *Esav*.”

When *Yaakov* came into existence, they asked, ‘Is this the one?’ G-d replied, ‘Yes.’ As it states, “Your name shall not always be called *Yaakov*, Israel shall be your name.”

The Jewish people carry his name ‘Israel’ as they are called ‘The children of Israel.’ At that moment, G-d sanctified the Jewish people for His Name. G-d said to the Jewish people, “Israel, through you I will be glorified. You were sanctified by Me before the world

was created; therefore you must be holy because I am holy.”

It is when the Jew emulates and reflects His profile, which is spiritual, G-d is glorified through the Jewish people. However, if the Jew does not choose to assume a spiritual posture, then G-d will not be glorified through His people.

“Let us make Man in our image, in our form.”

Since man was created by G-d to reflect His image, the angels asked G-d when Adam came into existence, “Is this the one to whom we refer when we give Your Praise?”

However, G-d told them that he was not the one, despite the fact that he reflected His image. Because he ate of the Tree, his spirituality was deficient. *Noach* was initially to be the one because he had found special favor in the eyes of G-d because of his dimension of spirituality. However, he was deficient. *Avraham*, despite the fact that he introduced monotheism into existence and dedicated himself selflessly to its espousal; he was not the one because of the deficiency of *Yishmael*. *Yitzchak* is referred to as the “unblemished offering” because he gave himself to be sacrificed at the *Akeidah* for the sake of G-d. Nevertheless, he was deficient because he loved his son *Esav*. However, *Yaakov* being the one who fully reflected G-d, because he did not possess any spiritual defect was the one through which G-d identified Himself. “*Yaakov* was the perfect man who dwelt in the tent (of *Torah*).”

“*Yaakov* descended to Egypt with seventy souls (*shivim nefesh*).” The word “souls” is written in the singular because although there were seventy individuals, they were the equivalent of one (people) in the spiritual sense.

*Rabbeinu Bachya*: Because of *Yaakov*’s spiritual distinction, he and his family are reflected in the spiritual realm. Just as *Yaakov* had seventy children that descended from four of his wives, so too are there are four groups of angels that encircle the Holy Throne of G-d. The four groups of angels are comprised of seventy angels.

Just as these seventy angels emanate from G-d, so too do the seventy souls emanate from *Yaakov*. G-d is therefore glorified through Israel because *Yaakov* reflects the spiritual infrastructure of G-d and His realm.

Since the Jewish people assume the classification of "Israel" as the progeny of *Yaakov*, so too they must emulate the spirituality of G-d to reflect that profile.

## G-d's Vindication of the Jewish People

*Midrash*: "G-d is elevated with Justice." (*Yeshaya*)

When does G-d become exalted in this world? It is when He judges the nations of the world. "G-d convenes and stands to judge the nations."

"G-d cleanses Himself from the idolaters and gives them reward for the small good deeds that they had done." (*Daniel*)

Why does G-d give the idolaters reward? It is so that they will not have any claim to the world to come. They will have no basis for vindication and merit. "After G-d will confirm that they received their just reward, He will judge them (for oblivion)." (*Yeshaya*)

At that moment G-d will be exalted and "the Holy G-d will be sanctified through charity (*tzedakah*)."

What is the meaning of this?

G-d will be sanctified through His Benevolence to the Jewish people. When they will be judged, He will come to their defense. "I will speak in righteous defense of the Jewish people to bring about salvation." It is through this that G-d is sanctified.

"At the end of time I will sanctify Myself through you (the Jewish people)." How is G-d sanctified through the Jewish people?

On *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* we say in our prayers, "You should give honor to Your people." Are the Jewish people honor seekers?

Throughout the millennia the Jewish people have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the glory of G-d. Because they are His people, the Jewish people have been persecuted and killed throughout the generations by the nations of the world.

We ask G-d to give His people honor by allowing the nations of the world at the end of time to understand that all of those who had suffered and sacrificed did so because G-d's Glory has the ultimate value.

When the nations will come upon this realization at the moment of truth, they will understand what the Jewish

people had done. They will realize that the Jewish people were the victims of the perpetrators of evil, and they are truly righteous. It is then that G-d will be sanctified through the Jewish people because of their unlimited sacrifice throughout the ages.

Despite all of the suffering that they experience, if the Jewish People continue to adhere to the dictates of the *Torah* and maintain their faith, it will ultimately bring about the greatest sanctification and glorification of G-d's Name. The Jew's behavior must demonstrate to the world that he is bound by the spiritual and is not an intellectual animal.

## Circumcision, the all Encompassing Mitzvah

"When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male... On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

*Midrash*: The *Torah* does not allude in any way that one should incur any financial costs regarding circumcision. Let us understand to what degree the Jewish people esteem the *mitzvos*. They go to great extents to fulfill the *mitzvos* and rejoice through them. G-d said, 'Because you keep My *mitzvos* and rejoice through them, I will increase the joy in your lives.'

It seems from the *Midrash* that the rejoicing of the Jewish people regarding the *mitzvos* is not limited to circumcision.

*Gemara Menachos*: The special joy of the Jew is unique to the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

*Gemara Shabbos*: The *mitzvah* of circumcision remains prevalent and intact among the Jewish people because it was always performed with joy.

When King David was in the bathhouse, he became distraught because he realized that in that setting he was detached from *mitzvos*. However, when he saw his circumcision he rejoiced saying, "I rejoice over your dictates as if I have come upon great spoils."

From King David's words, it is clearly indicated that there is something unique and special about the *mitzvah* of circumcision that causes an exceptional sense of joy.

"When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male."

*Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*: Why does the *Torah* need to mention the fact that the woman conceives and then gives birth to a male? Is it not evident that if she gave birth, she conceived?

The soul enters into the child at the time of conception, and the child's essence and potential is determined then. The *Torah* is stating that when a woman conceives, it is as if she had given birth. It is only a question of time for the child to develop into what he is destined to be. The male that is conceived and born after nine months is born with a foreskin.

When Adam was created by G-d, it was without a foreskin. Only after he had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, the foreskin developed and caused a covering of his male organ. Since the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge contained within it the element of "evil," it expressed itself in Adam through the foreskin. It is the representation of every form of impurity that came into existence. Thus, the foreskin is an impediment for the child to actualize his spiritual potential because it suppresses and denies the child his spirituality.

The *mitzvah* of circumcision was given to the Jew in order to correct and restore him to a state that has a semblance of Adam before he had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge. This allows the Jew to develop and advance in the spiritual realm as he was meant to.

When the circumcision is performed, it gives the child relevance to every aspect of his spirituality, which is the equivalent of all the *mitzvos* combined. Thus, the joy associated with circumcision is the combined joy of all the *mitzvos*.

This is the reason King David became ecstatic when he looked at his circumcision and said, "I rejoice over all of Your dictates as if I have come upon great spoils." At that moment, he had an understanding and appreciation that his entire spirituality was contingent upon his circumcised state. His relevance to G-d was due to his circumcision.

## **The Mechanism That Is Needed to Restore Existence**

*Midrash*: There was a dialogue between *Rebbe Akiva* and *Tornistropis*, the Roman governor of Jerusalem (who was the one who ultimately had *Rebbe Akiva* put to death.)

*Tornistropis* asked *Rebbe Akiva*, 'Whose accomplishments are more perfect – G-d's or man's?'

*Rebbe Akiva* responded, 'Man's accomplishments are more perfect.'

*Tornistropis* asked, 'Can man replicate the creation of heaven and earth?'

*Rebbe Akiva* replied, 'We are not discussing something that is beyond the human capacity. Rather, regarding something that is relevant to man, it is man's accomplishments that are more perfect.'

*Tornistropis* asked, 'Why do you Jews circumcise yourselves?'

*Rebbe Akiva* replied, 'I understood from the very beginning that this was the intent of your question. It is because of this that I responded that man's accomplishments are more perfect than G-d's.'

*Rebbe Akiva* then placed before him sheaves of wheat and fully baked loaves of bread. He said, 'The sheaves of wheat are the handiwork of G-d and the finished loaves of bread are the product of man's accomplishment. Which of the two is more perfect?'

*Tornistropis* replied, 'If G-d intended the Jew to be circumcised, why did He not create him to be born in a circumcised state?'

*Rebbe Akiva* responded, 'G-d gave the Jewish people the *mitzvos* in order to perfect themselves and be purged from impurity.'

"The Word of G-d purges and perfects." G-d presented man with an imperfect world and gave the *Torah* to the Jewish people in order to facilitate its perfection.

*Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*: Adam was initially created without a foreskin; however, as a result of partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which was evil, it developed. The foreskin was a direct outgrowth of the impurity that Adam had brought within himself. The foreskin, which is a covering of the male organ, represents impurity and spiritual blockage. G-d gave the Jewish people the *mitzvah* of circumcision to remove the foreskin, which is the impediment to their spirituality. Thus, the *mitzvah* of circumcision was given to the Jew to facilitate his perfection. It was only because of the failing of Adam that this *mitzvah* was necessary.



G-d's initial Handiwork contained no impurity. It was Adam, who through transgressing His Will, assimilated impurity into existence. Consequently, G-d endowed the Jewish people with the *mitzvos* of the *Torah* in order to spiritually rehabilitate and perfect the world that had been spiritually putrefied with the evil of the Tree of Knowledge.

*Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*: The negative commandments are intended to remove the illness of the soul. The positive commandments are intended to enlighten and illuminate the soul. As a result of the sin of Adam, the illumination of the soul was darkened. By adhering to the negative commandments of the *Torah*, the blemish is rehabilitated; however, illumination does not return to the soul. By fulfilling the positive commandments, the soul is illuminated.

*"Neir mitzvah v'Torah ohr."* (*Mishlei*) The *mitzvah* is the fuel and the *Torah* is the illumination.

Since man was the one who brought darkness upon himself, it is incumbent upon him, through the observance of the *mitzvos*, to bring about illumination.

However, one must first remove himself from evil before engaging in good. As Kind David writes, "Remove yourself from evil and do good."

G-d commanded Adam not to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil because it contained within it every element of evil that exists. In order to counteract the impurity that was infused into existence, G-d gave the Jewish people 365 negative commandments. Every one of the negative commandments addresses another aspect of evil that was unleashed into the world by Adam.

*Maharal of Prague*: 365 is the number that represents the order of existence. The solar year is defined as 365 days, which is the amount of time the Earth needs to make a complete rotation around the sun. Similarly, the 365 negative commandments restore the order of man and existence, giving existence the capacity to advance spiritually.



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