

Discourse 30

*“Vayedaber... Kedoshim Tihiyu... –
Speak... You shall be holy”*

Shabbat Parshat Acharei-Kedoshim, 13th of Iyyar, 5724

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁶³⁰ “Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, because I, *HaShem*-יהוה your God, am holy.” Now, we must understand¹⁶³¹ why this reason is given, that “because I am holy,” therefore, “You shall be holy.” Is it not so that “His holiness is beyond all comparison,”¹⁶³² and “who can be likened to You? who is equal to You? Etc.”¹⁶³³

Now, in his discourse on this verse (in the booklet of manuscripts recently freed from captivity),¹⁶³⁴ his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzeddek cites the statement in Midrash Rabbah,¹⁶³⁵ “It is written,¹⁶³⁶ ‘You are exalted’ – You practice

¹⁶³⁰ Leviticus 19:2

¹⁶³¹ See the beginning of the discourse entitled “*Kedoshim Tihiyu*” in Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 1, p. 174; Vol. 2, p. 420; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee, Vayikra Vol. 2, p. 533; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzeddek 153b; Beginning of the discourse “*Daber el kol Adat Bnei Yisroel*” 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 245); 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 387).

¹⁶³² See the liturgical hymn “*Yigdal*.”

¹⁶³³ See the liturgy of the “*Nishmat Kol Chai*” prayer.

¹⁶³⁴ Subsequently printed in Ohr HaTorah, Kedoshim p. 108 and on.

¹⁶³⁵ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 24:2

¹⁶³⁶ Psalms 92:9

exaltedness in the world... You granted holiness to the Jewish people forever, as it states, ‘You shall be holy.’” He explains¹⁶³⁷ that what is meant is that this is both a command [to be holy] and a promise that ultimately “You shall be holy.” (He brings an example of this from the explanation of the verse,¹⁶³⁸ “You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” which [also] is both in the form of a command and a promise.)¹⁶³⁹

He continues by explaining that the verse,¹⁶⁴⁰ “You are exalted forever *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” indicates the matter of eternality, similar to the teaching of our sages of blessed memory,¹⁶⁴¹ “Wherever [in Torah] the word ‘to Me-Lee-לי’ is stated, the matter is eternal and unmoving,” and is drawn from the matter of,¹⁶⁴² “I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed.”

This then, is the meaning of “You are exalted (*Marom*-מרום) forever (*Le'Olam*-לעולם) *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” That is, from the aspect of His exaltedness (*Romemut*-רוממות) there is a drawing forth of the aspect of forever (*LeOlam*-לעולם) without cessation whatsoever. In other words, even the holiness of the Jewish people is eternal without change (“You granted holiness to the Jewish people forever”). This is likewise understood from the verse, “I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed,” which concludes, “and you, the children of Yaakov have not ceased.”

¹⁶³⁷ Ohr HaTorah *ibid.*; Also see Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee *ibid.* p. 579

¹⁶³⁸ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹⁶³⁹ Torah Ohr, Tisa 86c

¹⁶⁴⁰ Psalms 92:9

¹⁶⁴¹ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 2:2

¹⁶⁴² Malachi 3:6

2.

Now, this verse enumerates three aspects of holiness.¹⁶⁴³ The first aspect is in the statement, “Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel.” This is because, in and of themselves (even before the command “You shall be holy”) the children of Israel are “a holy nation.”¹⁶⁴⁴ The second aspect is the statement, “You shall be holy,” this being holiness in addition to the holiness of the children of Israel as they are, in and of themselves. The third is the statement, “Because I am holy,” which is even loftier than the holiness of “You shall be holy.”

That is, even though the words “because I am holy” are the reason given for “You shall be holy,” nevertheless, the holiness of “I am holy” is loftier. This is as Midrash states¹⁶⁴⁵ on the verse, “You shall be holy,” “Does it perhaps mean [that you will be] on par with Me? The verse therefore states, ‘Because I am holy,’ meaning, ‘My holiness is above your holiness.’” However, even so, the holiness indicated by “for I am holy,” this being “My holiness [which] is above your holiness,” is drawn to the Jewish people. This is understood from the fact that the verse states “because-*Kee*-כי,” which is the granting of a reason for “You shall be holy.”

This likewise¹⁶⁴⁶ is the meaning of the statement in Midrash,¹⁶⁴⁷ “This is analogous to the residents of a province

¹⁶⁴³ See Ohr HaTorah *ibid.* p. 108

¹⁶⁴⁴ Exodus 19:6

¹⁶⁴⁵ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 24:9

¹⁶⁴⁶ See Ohr HaTorah *ibid.* p. 108

¹⁶⁴⁷ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 24:8

who crafted three crowns for the king. What did the king do? He placed one upon his head and two upon the heads of his children. The same is so of the three times that ‘Holy-Kadosh-קדוש’ is mentioned, by which the Holy One, blessed is He, is sanctified,¹⁶⁴⁸ “Holy, Holy, Holy is *HaShem* of Legions-*HaShem Tzva’ot*-יהו"ה צבאו"ת.” He placed one upon His own head and two he placed on the heads of His children.”

In other words, the [first] two levels, these being the [holiness of] the “congregation of the children of Israel,” and “You shall be holy,” are the two crowns that He placed on the heads of His children. The aspect of “I am holy” is the crown that He placed on His own head.¹⁶⁴⁹ However, even the aspect of “I am holy,” this being the crown He placed on His head, is drawn to the Jewish people, as stated before.

This is also understood from the fact that the drawing forth of all three crowns, (including the one He placed on His head), is brought about through the residents of the province. Thus, since this is a matter that was brought about by the toil of the Jewish people in their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁶⁵⁰ therefore, even the crown that He placed on His head is drawn forth to them. However, this will only occur in the coming future.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Isaiah 6:3

¹⁶⁴⁹ Also see *Matnot Kehunah* commentary to *Midrash Rabba* ibid.

¹⁶⁵⁰ As per the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory (*Talmud Bavli*, *Chullin* 91b), “The ministering angels do not recite song above until the Jewish people first recite song below etc.” We thus find that the crowning of the Holy One, blessed is He, by the angels, is dependent upon the Jewish people, specifically. See the discourse entitled “*Tze’ena u’Re’ena*” 5650, 5660, 5677, 5708, and elsewhere.

This is the meaning of the statement of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁶⁵¹ “In the future, the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) will have ‘Holy-*Kadosh*-קדוש’ recited before them, like the way it is recited before the Holy One, blessed is He.” Now, the “Holy, Holy, Holy” recited before the Holy One, blessed is He, refers to all three crowns. [And although our sages, of blessed memory, used the terminology “like the way,” meaning that it only is similar to it, nonetheless, at the very least, there is a similarity in this to the holiness of the Holy One, blessed is He.] However, this revelation will only come about in the coming future, whereas presently, only two aspects of holiness are revealed.

This may be understood according to the commentary of the *Panim Yafot*,¹⁶⁵² that when it states, “the children of Israel,” this also includes the fact that they are the children of Avraham and Yitzchak, as stated in *Midrash Rabbah*,¹⁶⁵³ that even Avraham and Yitzchak are (all) called “Yisroel.”

Now, based on the well-known matter,¹⁶⁵⁴ that the three forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, are the aspects of Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*, it is understood that the first level of holiness (indicated by the words, “Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel”), stems from the aspects of *ChaGa”T*,¹⁶⁵⁵ primarily from

¹⁶⁵¹ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 75b

¹⁶⁵² *Panim Yefot* to the beginning of *Kedoshim*, cited in *Ohr HaTorah* *ibid*.

¹⁶⁵³ *Midrash Bereishit Rabba* 63:3

¹⁶⁵⁴ See *Shaarei Orah* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate Five (*Tiferet*); *Pardes Rimmonim*, Shaar 22 (*Shaar HaKinuyim*), Ch. 4; *Me’orei Ohr*, *Ma’arechet Aleph*, Section 27, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁵⁵ An acronym for Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*.

the aspect of Splendor-*Tiferet*, being that Yisroel (Yaakov) is the aspect of Splendor-*Tiferet*.¹⁶⁵⁶

The second level of holiness, (indicated by “You shall be holy”) is the aspect of the Crown-*Keter* of *Zeir Anpin*, and the third level of holiness, (indicated by “because I am holy”) is the aspect of the Crown-*Keter* of the Long Patient One-*Arich*.¹⁶⁵⁷ It is this [third] level that will be revealed in the coming future. (This concludes the content of the Tzemach Tzeddek’s discourse.)

3.

With the above in mind, we can add to the explanation of the verse, “Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel etc.” That is, this verse enumerates all levels in the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) from below to Above. This is because, “the (entire) congregation (*Adat*-תַּדָּת),” refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*.¹⁶⁵⁸ This is because the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* includes all ten *Sefirot*, and it therefore is called a “congregation-*Eidah*-תַּדָּת,” in that “no congregation consists of less than ten.”¹⁶⁵⁹ Now, in regard to the fact that it is called “the

¹⁶⁵⁶ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*) *ibid*.

¹⁶⁵⁷ See the end of the discourse entitled “v’Heetkadisitem” 5626 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 86); See the end of the discourse entitled “*Daber El Kol Adat Bnei Yisroel*” 5634 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5634 p. 252); 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 95 and on).

¹⁶⁵⁸ See Me’orei Ohr, Ma’arechet Ayin, Section 5; Ohr HaTorah, Vayakhel p. 2,097-2-098.

¹⁶⁵⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 74b

entire (*Kol*-כל) congregation,” this is because Kingship-*Malchut* refines all the sparks included within her.

In regard to the words, “The children of Israel (*Bnei Yisroel*-בני ישראל),” the word “Israel-*Yisroel*-ישראל” refers to the [three qualities] of Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*, (as explained before). “The **children** of Israel-*Bnei Yisroel*-בני ישראל” (meaning that which is drawn down from *Yisroel*), refers to the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*, (similar to [the explanation of] the verse,¹⁶⁶⁰ “All your children will be students of *HaShem*-יהוה”), being that they are the offshoots of Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*. The words, “You shall be holy,” refer to the Crown-*Keter* of *Zeir Anpin*, and the words, “because I am holy,” refer to the Crown-*Keter* of the Long Patient One-*Arich Anpin*, (as explained before). However, even the loftiest level, which is “because I am holy,” is drawn to the Jewish people, as explained before that even the third crown is drawn to the Jewish people, being that it is brought about through their service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse],¹⁶⁶¹ “Holy, Holy, Holy is *HaShem* of Legions-*HaShem Tzva*’ot-יהוה צבאו” (which concludes), “the entire earth is filled with His glory.” For, since all three times that “Holy-*Kadosh*-קדוש” is mentioned relate to the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of those below, it therefore is drawn into “the entire earth.” It only is

¹⁶⁶⁰ Isaiah 54:13; See Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar 23 (*Erchei HaKinuyim*), section on “*Limmudei HaShem*-למודי יהוה,” cited and explained in Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch Vol. 2, p. 837.

¹⁶⁶¹ Isaiah 6:4

that presently the third crown is concealed, but in the coming future it will be revealed. This is as explained before, that,¹⁶⁶² “In the future, the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) will have ‘Holy-*Kadosh*-ש-קדוש’ recited before them, similar to the way it is recited before the Holy One, blessed is He.”

¹⁶⁶² Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 75b