



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,
OU ISRAEL

The second of the two *parshiyot* we will read this coming *Shabbat*, *Parshat Kedoshim* of course begins with the instruction that we must seek holiness-"*Kedoshim tihyu, ki Kadosh Ani Hashem Elokechem-You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your Lord, am Holy.*"

Our *Chazal* in the *Midrash Rabba (Vayikra Rabba 24)* interpret this verse to mean -*Yachol KiMoni-Hashem* instructs us "Be like Me"- that we should strive to be holy, to emulate Hashem.

The ***Biala Rebbe zy'a***, asks how can we, imperfect human beings, possibly be like *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*? The Rebbe explained that our verse reminds us that every single Jew has a *neshama* a portion of divinity innate within each of us. Therefore, despite our imperfections, we must recognize that every single member of *Klal Yisrael* is indeed inherently holy.

The ***Oheiv Yisrael, Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apt zy'a***, looks to another very perplexing *Maamar Chazal* to explain our verse. The Rebbe asks, how can we as mere human beings emulate *Hashem* in his infinite wisdom?

The *Gemara* in *Brachot (daf vav)* tells us that just as we are instructed to put on *Tefilin*, so to *Hashem* also dons *tefilin*. Our *tefilin* contain the verse:

Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad(Hear Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One), while *Hashem's tefilin* contain the verse: *Mi K'Amcha Yisrael, goy echad 'Aaretz- Who is like you Israel, a unique people on Earth...*

The Rebbe explains, surely this teaching

cannot be taken literally, that *Hashem* who is beyond any physical form or limitation actually dons *tefilin*! Rather there is an important message being communicated via this parable. Just as our *tefilin* contain the verse of *Shema*, attesting to our unwavering devotion and love for *Hashem*, so too, *Hashem's* proverbial *tefilin* contains a verse showering praise, love and devotion upon the Jewish People!

The Rebbe explains that we learn from this beautiful teaching, that even if we view this and every *mitzva* as an opportunity to cling to God, to demonstrate our love and fidelity to the Master of the Universe, **that love and fidelity pales in comparison to the enduring love that Hashem feels for the Jewish People.**

The Rebbe's keen insight regarding this *mitzva* of *tefilin* really provides us with a new understanding of how we relate to each of the *mitzvot*.

Mitzvot are not solely an opportunity to cling to *Hashem*, to demonstrate our commitment and trust in the *Ribono Shel Olam*, but also to simultaneously experience *Hashem's* divine embrace, to realize that *Hashem* bestows his unending love upon all of *Klal Yisrael*.

May each of us be blessed to emulate *Hashem*, to live lives of *Kedusha*, to see the *Kedusha* inherent within one another, and also to feel and experience *Hashem's* divine embrace. ■

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TIRTZA JOTKOWITZ, ESQ.

tirtzaj@gmail.com • 052-509-3356 • 02-625-6475
(845) 425-8871 • (845) 694-7645