



פרשת נשא

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Eating and Holiness

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Part I.

The Kedushah of Abstaining

Who Was Albert Einstein?

In Mesichta Taanis, on *daf yud alef*, our Sages praise the person who takes upon himself *ta'aneisim*, fast days. It's talking there about someone who wants to volunteer to fast beyond the public fast days that the *halachah* requires. And it says as follows: כָּל הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּתַעֲנִית - *Anyone who fasts a voluntary fast, נִקְרָא קְדוֹשׁ - he's called a holy man.* Now, that's some praise - a holy man! Not everyone achieves that title. And here it's the Sages of the Talmud giving you that title! That's something!

You know last week Albert Einstein was crowned Man of the Century. That's what someone told me. You know what I say to that news? I say, "so what?" Who crowned him? That's the first thing we have to know - who crowned him? If he was crowned by a *frum* organization, let's say the

Agudas Harabbonim, then maybe. But who crowned him?! Time Magazine! Ignorant people. *Amei ha'aretz.* So it doesn't mean a thing to me.

But here it's even more than the Agudas Harabbonim crowning the person with the title of 'kadosh.' It's the Chachmei HaShas, the Sages of the Talmud! And they're crowning him not with just any title. A *kadosh!* Ooh *wah*, is that something!

Prishus in our Parshah

Now, where do we know that from? The Gemara says it's from this week's *sedrah*, from the Torah's description of the *nazir*: כָּל יְמֵי נִזְרוֹ קָדֹשׁ הוּא - *All the days of his separating he is holy to Hashem (Naso 6:9).* A *nazir*, because he assumed a period of time of abstinence - abstaining from wine, he is called a *kadosh* in the Torah. בִּי נִזְרָא לְקִיּוֹ - *The crown of Hashem is on his head (ibid. 6:7).* Because he devotes himself for a certain amount of time to be *parush*, to separate from wine *leshem shomayim*, the Torah puts a crown on his head, a crown of *kedushah*.

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And so our Sages took out from here, they extrapolated, that there's a lesson for how a person can make himself or herself holy. They see from here that when it comes to eating there is a *kedushah* in *prishus*, in limiting yourself, in abstaining.

Now, to people who are familiar with *seforim*, this is a well-known subject, this concept called *prishus*. In the Chovos Halevavos there is a *Sha'ar Haprishus* and in the Mesillas Yesharim also there is a big section on *prishus*. Everywhere in the *seforim* this subject of giving up unnecessary pleasures is treated – many times at length – and it includes a wide range of our activities and a big part of our *hashkafos*, all of the Torah attitudes and general attitudes that we need in life.

There is *prishus* in looking and *prishus* in spending and *prishus* in talking and *prishus* in traveling and in many other things too. Everyone can make for himself a program of *prishus* in all of these areas and achieve more and more *kedushah* all the days of his life. But we see here, from the Gemara, that merely to be *parush* from eating and drinking that already is going to make you a *kadosh*.

You're Not a Cow

What's the *kedushah*? It's a very big subject and I wouldn't be the one to explain it fully – you have to be a *kadosh* to tell others about it – but at least I can repeat to you what I heard from my *rebbeim* and from what I've read in our *seforim*. *Kedushah* means that you're taking control of your animal soul, your *nefesh behamis* – and instead your *seichel* is in control. That's a *kadosh*.

Now, the animal soul is something that even human beings possess. It doesn't mean you're a cow, but just like a cow, we have certain reflexes that continue to control our functions even without any thought. And if a person would follow only those inclinations he would be like the *beheimos* in the colleges and in the editorial staff of the newspapers. There are even *beheimos* who are sitting right now in laboratories and they're

getting Nobel Prizes for their great discoveries of science. They are wise people, capable, but if they allow their instincts to rule over them, then they, to a great extent, are no different from a cow.

Now, it doesn't mean that the instincts, the animal inclinations, are not valuable. They're very valuable! Eating, hunger, appetite, it's very important. More than important – it's a *nes*. How does it happen that you have an appetite? It's a miracle. You get hungry when your supply of energy runs low. The energy that you got from the last meal is used up and so your body lets you know that you have to refuel.

Autonomous Vehicle's Appetite

Now when you have a car and you're driving down the highway, the car doesn't feel any hunger. There would be no way of knowing it. All of a sudden, the car stops and you call up the mechanic at the garage. He says, "Mister, there's nothing wrong. Your gas tank is empty. Your gasoline ran out, that's all."

But suppose the car would get an appetite and let's say whenever it's getting low on gasoline, the car would automatically go over to the next gas station and stop automatically. That would be a wonderful thing; the car sidles over gradually and stops at a gas station to let you know it's time to refuel.

Could be one day they'll invent such a thing. Maybe. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu made that miracle long ago – He made it so that when your body has to be refueled, the body tells you, "I'm hungry." How does it happen? Nobody can explain that. Scientists can't explain how it happens. It's *mammesh* a *nes*. The body tells you when it has to refuel.

Miracles of Hunger and Satiation

Suppose you didn't desire to eat. Suppose you had to eat according to a certain plan, a schedule. So every morning you have to look at your schedule, "Am I supposed to eat now? How much

am I supposed to eat?” But suppose you lost the paper or suppose you’re too busy to look; you keep on running around until *chalilah* you drop dead.

But your body doesn’t let that happen. The body says, “Stop and eat! We’re hungry!” Ohohohoho! What a *nes* it is! And so you sit down and eat with an appetite. And when you eat enough, another *nes* happens. The appetite goes away. Why should it go away? It should continue and continue until you burst *chalilah*. You should have to look at the clock when to stop eating. No. Automatically you know when to stop eating. If that’s not a *nes*, then show me a better *nes* than that, that the body is created with such *chochmah*.

So you see that appetite is a gift from Hashem, a *nes*. And yet, it’s the *nefesh behamis*, it’s an instinct, and if someone allows it to take control, it begins to lord over the *seichel*. It grows in strength and it becomes the master.

The Spoiled Slave

And that’s what it says in Mishlei: מַפְיֵק מִנְעֵר עֶבְדוֹ וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ יִהְיֶה מְנוֹן – *If a man fondles his slave, he spoils his slave, the end is that the slave becomes the master* (29:21). Here you have a young slave, a nice-looking little boy. When he says, “Master, do you want a drink of water,” so you have *rachmanus* and you say, “No, I’ll get it myself.” You pat him on the head. You call him in and give him candy. You don’t let him do any work. You spoil him.

After a while, the slave is lying on the couch and you’re serving him. And when you get a little bit older and you want to make use of the slave so you say, “Look Mamrei; all the years, I was serving you. Now I’m old and weak, so get up and serve me.”

So Mamrei says, “What do you mean? You want to control me now? *Hee hee hee hee! Hee hee hee!* I should serve you?! Oh my! *Hee hee!* I’m out of practice!”

That’s what Shlomo is telling you. Watch out for your little slave boys. Not only slave boys –

your little sons and little daughters. Teach them to work when they’re little. Not that the mother should be the slave in the house. Let the little girls wash some dishes. Even though they might break one once in a while, teach little girls to wash dishes. Teach little boys to put things away. Everybody should have something to do in the house. Everybody should have some chore. Don’t let him say, “Let somebody else do it.” No, you must teach them. Otherwise, וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ יִהְיֶה מְנוֹן. What’s going to happen? The end will be that he’ll be your master. That’s how some translate *manon*. The slave becomes the master.

A Slave to Your Stomach

That’s a good *mashal*, but it’s only a *mashal*. It’s an excellent *mashal* but there’s something beyond that. We have a slave. The slave is our passions and our instincts and if we yield to them, *mefanek minoar avdo*, this is your slave, this body of yours.

Same thing with your stomach. Your appetite is your slave, and you’re expected to make good use of it. But if you yield to your appetite when you’re young and you eat candy all the time and drink soda all the time – like I saw a yeshivah boy coming Friday afternoon from the yeshivah. In one hand he had a popsicle. In the other hand, a bottle of soda.

So what happens? Number one is that when he comes home he can’t eat any right food. He eats garbage, whatever his stomach wants, and he’s unhealthy. Instead of being fortified with substantial food he’s filled with nosh, with something that’s just calories, and he’s not fit for accomplishing. He’s in a crabby mood too.

Crowned with Holiness

And if he gives in constantly to his *nefesh behamis* so his stomach is going to eat him into the grave *chalilah*. That’s what happens to very many people. By yielding to their stomach, the desire for *nosherei*, they get into an early grave. The majority

of those who have died young were the result of yielding to their bodies – not only eating; all kinds of bodily desires – and finally they couldn't control their bodies anymore (Rambam Deios ch. 4).

But more than staying alive our subject now is *kedushah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the servant of appetite, of eating, and it's a very loyal and capable servant. But it's a test, a test for achieving *kedushah*.

Because in addition to the *nefesh behamis*, human beings also have a *neshamah* which is capable of using judgment. And therefore, we all have a *neshamah kedoshah* and a *neshamah behamis*. That's what we're made of. And living successfully means that the *neshamah kedoshah* is expected to be in control. Living successfully means that by means of practice and training we are *magbir* the *seichel* over the *beheimah*. And that's called *kedushah*. That's why when the Torah says *תְּהִינּוּ פְּרוּשִׁים* our Sages tell us it means *פְּרוּשִׁים תְּהִינּוּ* – Be abstainers. Make yourself holy by means of saying no. And that's why the *nazir* is called a *kadosh*. That's why he's crowned with the title of *kadosh*.

Part II. The Cheit of Abstaining

Holiness and Deprivation

Now, what we said until now, about the *kedushah* of the *nazir* is only part of the story. There's another side, an opposite side. Because not only does the Torah crown the *nazir* with the title of 'kadosh' but he's given another less glamorous name. The *nazir* is called a *chotei*, a sinner.

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַקָּפָר, *תְּנִינָא* – We learned in a *beraisa*, *רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַקָּפָר*, *בְּרַבִּי אֶמְרָה* – Rabi Elazar Hakapar Berebi says, *מָה*, *'תְּלַמּוּד לֹאמַר 'וְכִפֵּר עָלָיו מֵאֲשֶׁר חָטָא עַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ* – what does the *possuk* mean when it says that 'The *nazir* has to bring an atonement because he sinned against his *nefesh*, his health.' *נֶפֶשׁ* means his health, the body. *וְכִי בְּאִיזָה נֶפֶשׁ חָטָא זֶה* – How did the *nazir* sin

against his body? What did he do? He didn't go skiing. He didn't go mountain climbing.

אֵלָא שְׂצֵעַר עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַיַּיִן – He's being blamed for depriving himself of wine. Wine in those days was a very important part of the diet. It was like milk today. They drank wine at every meal. Because he deprived himself of an essential part of his diet, that man is a *chotei*.

And therefore a person who becomes a *nazir* is sinning against his body and he has to bring an offering to atone for that sin. So it seems to be a *stirah*. He's a *kadosh* but also a *chotei*? What does that mean? How could the two things be true? If he's a *kadosh*, how could he be a *chotei*?

The Overweight Wife

So we'll explain it as follows. Suppose there's a couple, a man and a woman, and she is overweight. And she must reduce. The doctor says that she must! It's very important. So she decides that she and her husband are going on a diet. But the husband is not on board. "What is it my fault," he says, "that you want to reduce?"

So she says, "I can't help it. If we'll put those appetizing foods on the table, then I'll yield. And I'll be sick."

Suppose, however, he says, "But I have to work. You sit home all day long so you can get along with small things, but I have to work. I have to eat a big hearty breakfast to go out to work."

But she says, "It can't be helped. You're married to me! And right now the most important thing is my health. We have to do this together!"

So the loyal husband gives in to his wife. What won't he do for the sake of his wife?

The Holy Neshamah Wife

Now your body, the husband, is married to your soul – that's the wife. And the soul wants to be a *parush*; that way it can be trained towards

kedushah. But the body says to the soul, “I want to live a normal life. I want everything.”

So the soul says, “If I’ll give you everything, what’s going to happen to me? I’ll be ruined if I yield to every whim; I want you to be a *nazir*. I want you to separate from this world, to a certain extent, for my sake in order that we could be more devoted to Hashem. I want to make progress in my life and I’m only living a short time in this world.” The soul wants to make itself better.

But he must apologize to his body. “My poor body,” he says, “I’m sorry I had to deprive you of them. But I’ll bring an atonement. I’ll have to seek forgiveness for my sin against the body.”

That is the principle that is involved here. Although you’re chastising your poor body in order to make progress with your soul, to be a *kadosh*, but still you have to bring a *chatas*, you have to realize that you’re doing a wrong to the body. The body is not yours to mistreat. The body is like a child or an orphan given to you and it’s your ward. And you have to make the body happy!

A Mitzvah and a Sin

And in case you find it necessary to deny the body pleasures for your spiritual benefit – and you must! – but still, you have to bring an offering to atone for the body. You have to realize you did harm to the body, only that the Torah says, “Go ahead and do it anyhow, because you need it.” Even the best *nazir*, the most holy *nazir* must atone because he sinned against his body.

Now that’s in the case of a *nazir* who is justified in becoming a *nazir*. It’s a *mitzvah* to become a *nazir*. Nevertheless, in a certain sense he’s a *chotei* because he’s depriving his body. But what about us? Suppose a person deprives his body, not because he’s serving Hashem. Let’s say he’s eating things that are just a *nosh* instead of eating things that are wholesome for him. So that person is a *chotei* without any excuse.

And so we see that a person has to be very careful with his eating habits. The *parshah* of *nezirus* teaches us that a man is judged, he gains the approval or *chas v’shalom* disapproval of Hashem by means of his food, his eating habits. Of course, the highest approval means that a person is practicing all the time being a *kadosh*. Every day, constantly, he’s faced with the test of being a *parush*, a *kadosh*, from this or that – from superfluous things – and he’s always strengthening his *neshamah kedosha* over his *nefesh behamis*.

The Rabbi and The Nutritionist

But even if he’s not looking to be a *kadosh*, but at least, the minimum that’s required from him, he has to be careful not to damage his body. Now, it’s not my line of work to tell you details about what yes, what no – I’m not in the nutrition business. It’s a subject which I am not competent to speak about. I am sure that if the foods are free of pesticides and free of additives, I’m sure they are more healthful because there’s no question that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can concoct better things than Mankind can. If you have whole wheat bread, for instance, we understand that you have all the elements that Hakadosh Baruch Hu intended you to have; whereas if you mill out certain parts, so you’re losing out.

But more than that I cannot say. I would be happy to give information but I’m not the competent one. And so I’ll merely say this: The rule should be what the Rambam says (Hilchos Deios 3:2). He says **לֹא יֹאכַל כָּל שֶׁחָזַק מִתְאוּוָה כְּמוֹ הַכֶּלֶב וְהַחֲמוֹז** – *Don’t eat only things that your palate desires, like the dog and the donkey do.* You’re not an animal that eats only what it thinks is delicious to eat. **לֹא יֹאכַל דְּבָרִים הַמוֹעִילִים לוֹ** – *You should eat only the things that are beneficial for you.* So we see that following your desires, your *nefesh behamis*, means that you lack sense, like a donkey or a dog. And therefore that’s the only recommendation I’m able to give: Eat what’s healthful for you. We eat for the purpose of being healthy.

Sometimes Candy is Necessary

Now, will we specify for you that candies and cakes are wrong to eat? It would be foolish for anybody to make such a rule. Sometimes a candy or a piece of cake is important to give you a lift. Sometimes it's not wrong; many times people are down and they need a lift and then it's recommended that they take a nosh and enjoy life a little bit more than the regular routine. Yes, sometimes you can do things that are not wrong to do, only that they're not recommended, but you do it in order to raise your spirits. And for happy occasions too, sometimes people can be stimulated to a little more joy because of these things. Therefore, it requires discretion.

But ordinarily, things that are full of sugar and preservatives and other poison will cause you trouble. And usually it takes the place of the nourishing foods that you should be eating, and therefore it's not sensible for a person to waste his efforts on *nosherei*. Here's a person who likes to munch. So before going to bed he takes a bag of peanuts or pistachios and he sits down and munches, and munches, and munches. He munches away his life. That person is not taking care of his health. You don't need me to tell you; you know that yourself.

At least listen to the insurance companies. They are warning you all the time that you shouldn't overeat. It's their business – a lot of insurance money depends on this – and so they know what they're talking about. They say that it's perilous to have extra poundage on you.

Organic Food and Desert

And so the wise man is the one who chooses a diet that is healthy and nourishing. Not organic and special health foods; I don't know about that. But foods that are healthful and nourishing and that people can get the most benefit from, that's how a wise man should eat.

Who says you have to bring home pastries from the store. Teach yourself and your children to be satisfied with nourishing things. You don't have to *nosh* on candies and soft drinks with excess sugar and many other things that the body is much better off without. Children should be taught not just to sit at a table and drink juice one glass after the other or soda one glass after the other. Good clear water is good enough to drink at the table too. The first thing they do is they dive for the juice or the soda – they're teaching themselves to be slaves to their passions.

And so when you come to a place where they serve after the meal, puddings or ice creams, you can say, "This looks wonderful but I don't eat this." It's a good idea. Decide that you don't eat chocolate cake and finished. If you do that you're smart and you're also beloved by Hashem.

Do You Like This Yeshivah?

Now, I'm not in the business of giving *eitzos* but I'll tell you something that's been tried and tested by bigger people than me. Listen well because you can use this *eitzah* for other bad habits as well: Make a *neder* that the first time that you eat this chocolate cake it will cost you fifty dollars to *tzedakah*. To a *tzedakah* that you don't like!

If you're a Satmerer make a *neder* that you'll give fifty dollars to the Lubavitcher Yeshivah. If you're a Lubavitcher, you'll give to the Satmerer. Just one time; not forever. But trust me, you're going to keep putting off that first time. You'll make sure to skip the cake. If, *chas v'shalom*, you are *oiver* you'll have to give fifty dollars that week. Don't delay! And then you'll take another *neder* that if it happens again, the first time it'll cost you another fifty dollars. Little by little, I guarantee that you won't be interested in chocolate cake.

Don't disdain what you're hearing now because it's certainly a wise idea. Little by little you become a more healthy person. You won't be that *chotei*

who is constantly putting things into your body that aren't healthy. You'll live longer as a result. And you'll also become *kadosh*, yes. It's a holiness as well.

Part III. The Kedushah of Eating

Helping The Host

And now we come to a more interesting way – a more appetizing way – of becoming a *kadosh*. Yes, there is *kedushah* in *prishus*, no question about it. But we're going to see now that there is something even higher; because the Mesillas Yesharim says that there's a higher level of *kedushah* than abstaining from food. And that's the *kedushah* of *eating food*. A person can eat for *kedushah* too. Now, that's quite a statement to make and so we'll take it step by step in the time we have left.

The Medrash (Vayikra Rabbah 34:3) tells us a certain story about Hillel Hazakein. He was in the yeshivah together with his *chaveirim* and they were all being *oisek baTorah*, they were laboring in the Torah study. But after a certain time, Hillel got up to leave.

Now Hillel was known as a *masmid*; he was diligent in his studies and here he was one of the first to get up in the morning to go. It was surprising so his *chaveirim* said to him, "Where are you going?"

He said, "I'm going to do a kindness."

"A kindness to whom?"

He said, "I'm staying at a certain inn and I want to be kind to my host."

So we might imagine that Hillel was staying at some little humble place and he was going there to help them out.

A Jew Named You

Listen to what Hillel meant, to how it's explained. Hillel meant that he's staying in this inn

over here (*the Rav pointed at himself*); the inn called "I". Your *neshamah* is staying in this inn, this hostel, and you have to do a kindness to the inn – you have to feed him breakfast.

That's what Hillel meant – he was going to eat breakfast, to do a *chessed* with himself. And he wasn't saying it as a joke. He was saying it as a *yesod* in understanding Torah. When you sit down to eat, you're feeding a Jew. You have to love that Jew *kamocho* – you yourself are certainly *kamocho*, no question about it. Don't think you just love other people. Other people too but it's *kamocho* – you are the example. This Jewish body deserves that it should be treated right.

That was Hillel's attitude when he went to eat breakfast. He wasn't going just to fill his stomach, or to tickle his taste buds. He was going to do *chesed* with a hungry Jew. And so what of it if the Jew is himself?

Benefits of Breakfast

Now eating breakfast, it's surprising how much space the Gemara assigns to such a function. There's a whole *sugya* in Bava Metziah (107b) that talks about the necessity of eating something in the morning that's substantial.

When you fulfill that Gemara so you go out into the world fortified with some substantial food. The morning is a time where you burn up most of your energy because you're most lively in the morning but you have the gasoline in the tank; you have the energy to burn. Whereas somebody else who was never trained to do *chessed* with his body, so he grabs a nosh, something that's just calories, just sugar, and he runs out into the world so he's not fit for a grueling day of activity.

And it's not merely a physical deterioration. The Gemara says the one who eats breakfast is going to be in a good humor. It's *מְכַנִּים אֶת הָאֱהָבָה* – it brings in love of people. When a person feels well, he's capable of looking kindly at other people. But when he's in a crabby mood, then he doesn't like

people with all the attendant troubles that result from dislike of others, quarrels and *loshon hara* and *sinas chinam*. It's a remarkable thing how much the *ruchniyus* is dependent on *gashmiyus*, how much of your *avodas Hashem* depends on proper eating.

Eating Leshem Shomayim

And so Hillel is teaching us *how* to eat, how to eat like a Jew. You're not eating for fun, you're eating with forethought - for a reason "I am going to do a kindness at the inn I'm staying". That's an excellent intention - you're eating *l'shem Shomayim* now.

By the way, it's good to train yourselves. I would recommend that you should say it too when you start eating. It's not a bad idea, only that your wife shouldn't hear it - she'll laugh at you. Or your husband will laugh at you. But you should say it anyhow, even if they'll laugh: "I'm going to eat now *kedai she'uchal la'avod es Hashem*." That's what the Shulchan Aruch says (OC 231). You should eat in order to serve Hashem.

Wasn't it worth coming here tonight to hear that? Try it tomorrow morning. It doesn't cost any money. You say you're being a hypocrite? So I'll tell you that you'll never amount to anything if you don't try to be a hypocrite. A hypocrite is somebody who's trying to run ahead of what he is. And sooner or later he catches up with himself. To become somebody, you have to be a hypocrite. If you want to be sincere, you'll always remain a nothing.

So first say it for a few years. "I'm eating to serve Hashem." Say it and say it and say it. Finally you'll mean it. Let other people laugh. Mark my words - you'll have the last laugh.

Feeding The Saint

Once you achieve that, there's a next step however, a step closer to *kedushah*. Let's say you're practicing the first step for five years. After about five years - maybe even sooner - you'll try the second step. What's that? **לְעוֹלָם יָמֵד אֶרֶם עֲצָמוֹ** - A

man should always view himself, **בְּאֵלוֹ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל** - as if there's a holy man, a saint, a *kadosh* inside of him (Taanis 11a). As you lower the food to him, you're dropping it down, you're giving the *kadosh* something to eat. You hear that? You should consider yourself a *kadosh*. **בְּקִרְבְּךָ קְדוֹשׁ** - inside of you, there's a *kadosh*! (Hoshea 11:9). It's a remarkable statement!

How could you say such a thing - I'm a *kadosh*? Yes. There's a *kadosh* inside, there's a *neshamah* inside of you, a *neshamah kedoshah*. **נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתַּתִּי בְּךָ** - "The *neshamah* that I gave you, keep it alive". And so you're lowering food to a *kadosh* that's imprisoned inside of you and you're helping him continue to exist.

Now suppose you're not only imagining that you're a *kadosh* - the truth is, you should imagine it because you *are* a *kadosh*; like it says **וְשִׁכְנַתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם**. Hakadosh Baruch Hu dwells among the Jewish people, inside of them! So even the most simple *frum* Jew, man or woman, boy or girl, is a *kadosh*! But suppose however that you're an idealist too; imagine you're not merely an ordinary observant Jew, but you're a person of ideals.

Becoming an Altar

Let's say you studied these subjects that we speak about in this place. Let's say you listen to these tapes and you play them in your house and you try to live with the high idealism of a Torah Jew. You're a person who always is devoted to Hashem; you've trained yourself to think constantly about Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Whenever you see a *mezuzah* or *tzitzis*, you utilize it and you're constantly being reminded of Hashem. You can live that way.

Now don't think it's too extreme a concept. Men and women can aspire to that, it's possible to learn that. If you make up your mind that you desire to gain this *middah*, if you'll toil it will certainly be fulfilled in more or less measure. It grows upon you gradually and you walk around like a man who is walking secretly with Hashem.

Nobody knows who your companion is. Your companion is the Shechinah. He's always with you.

A person like that becomes a *mizbeiach*. He's an altar. He is *kadosh* just like the altar that was in the Beis Hamikdash where the Shechinah rested in its greatest glory. Why? Because the Shechinah rests on him too.

The Great Kohen

I'll tell you a story from the Gemara to explain a little more. In Mesichta Pesachim (57a) it says that a *bas kol*, a prophetic voice, rang out in the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdash to make an announcement. The people who were assembled in the Beis Hamikdash and they heard a voice above their heads ringing out, a mysterious voice from above that proclaimed as follows: **שָׂאוּ שְׂעָרֵיכֶם וַיִּכְנַס יוֹחָנָן בֶּן נַרְבָּאִי** – *Lift up your heads, oh you gates, and welcome in this great man, Yochanon Ben Narbai*. It means that Hashem was honoring him.

Now, what was the greatness of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Narbai? That's all the Voice said – “The gates should open wide for him.” But what was it that made him deserving of such honor?

Listen to this. **שֶׁהָיָה מְמַלֵּא בְרִסּוֹ מִקְדְּשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם** – *he used to fill his stomach eating the kodshei shomayim*. You hear the greatness of a man? He used to fill his belly with the sacred foods of heaven. He ate *korbanos*. How much did he eat? He ate a fabulous amount. He was a very fat man, very big, heavy man.

Now you don't get fat from fasting. He was eating! What was he eating though? He wasn't eating cake. He wasn't eating candy. He ate *korbanos*. **בְּיָמָיו לֹא נִמְצָא נוֹתֵר בְּמִקְדָּשׁ** – in his day, there was never any *nosar* in the Beis Hamikdash. There was never anything left over.

Recognized by Bas Kol

Now you might think this man was a glutton. *Chas veshalom*. The *bas kol* came and let us know

that because he was a man who lived for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, a man of idealism and *avodas Hashem*, his body was a *mizbeiach*. He was *kadosh*, a holy man, but he ate because he loved to serve Hashem and therefore he consumed the *korbanos* like a fire on the *mizbeiach*.

And it was so appreciated the greatness of his character, his intentions, that this is one of the rare occasions where a *bas kol* was heard in the *azarah*: “Lift up, o' gates, your heads – you have to become higher to let this high man come in, it is too small a gate for such a great man – and welcome in this big heavy man whose eating is *kulo kadosh*.”

Now of course it doesn't mean you should imitate him and get busy getting overweight. We're not going to deceive ourselves. We won't fool ourselves and think that we are Yochanan ben Narboi and you're going to sit down and eat like you're burning an offering on the *mizbeach*. No, it's very difficult. He did it *leshem shomayim* and that takes a lot of practice. It is necessary to be very prepared for *kedushah* – otherwise you get lost in the eating and it's nothing; it's just eating and gluttony.

We Have Potential

But we're learning here a very important point, that it is within our reach to attain some of this perfection. We see that the Shechinah rested on him and we all have that potential – to a certain degree – to achieve *kedushah* by means of eating.

Of course we never forget, we never leave go of practicing the *kedushah* of the *nazir* who was a *porush* and separated from wine and grapes. As long as we are in this world we try to become more and more *kadosh* by strengthening our *seichel* of self-control and causing the *neshamah kedoshah* to overcome the *nefesh behamis*. And you'll live longer that way too. You'll be healthy and strong and you'll live many good years because of that.

And yet at the same time, you'll be eating too. I'm sure all of you here eat sometimes, and so we always remind ourselves that we can achieve *kedushah* by means of our meals too. As much as possible we eat *leshem shomayim*; we're being *gomel chesed* to the body that we're residing in in order that we should be able to serve Hashem. And the more idealism we add in our lives the more our eating becomes the highest level of *kedushah*, of being a holy *mizbeiach* that consumes food for Hashem.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Living With Kedushah in Eating

Just like the *nazir* became *kadosh* by abstaining in his diet, we also can become holy through abstinence. This week I will *bli neder* not eat any cake [or some other food which is unnecessary for my health]. In order to strengthen myself in this *prishus* program I will take a *neder* to give a certain amount of *tzedakah* to a kosher organization that I don't love every time I don't control myself. This *neder* will help me to learn self-control, the first step towards Kedushah.

However, since I would like to go further towards Kedushah, I will also try *bli neder* to say the following before every time I eat this week "I am about to eat so that I can serve you better, Hashem". Eating this way fulfills the *halachah* in Shulchan Aruch and brings me closer to Hashem.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 23 - Forestalling Trouble | 41 - Avoiding Entanglement
- 436 - Eating For Perfection | 495 - The Nazir | 604 - Exile
- 625 - Perfecting The Mitzvos | 811 - It Will Be Good For You
- 933 - Best Day Of The Year | 992 - The Count Of The Bnei Yisroel

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



Someone who has a nature to come late, what's an *eitzah* to improve himself?



First of all, if he comes late because he goes to sleep late and he gets up late, so the first thing is to go to sleep early. He must get enough sleep. You must get sleep! And after a good night's sleep, have an alarm clock to wake you up.

Now, in case it doesn't help, make a *neder*. Listen to me; make a *neder* that the first time you'll come late will cost you \$50 for a yeshivah that you don't like. Just one time. Not forever. Just that the first time you come late you'll have to make a \$50 donation to the yeshivah. You'll keep on putting off the first time. You're getting up in the morning for \$50. If *chas v'shalom* you are *oiver*, so it costs you \$50 that week.

Then make another *neder*. The first time it happens again, another \$50. Little by little I guarantee you'll stop coming late.

TAPE # E-231

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