

# OVER THE HILL

YOUNG PERSPECTIVES ON ANCIENT TRADITION

VOLUME III  
**SHAVUOT 5776**

קדוש

קדוש

קדוש

**“ THE NEED TO STRIVE FOR  
ABSOLUTE HUMAN PERFECTION,  
KEDUSHA,  
IS ADDRESSED TO EACH AND EVERY  
MEMBER OF THE NATION...**

**NO STATION IN LIFE**

**NO GENDER**

**NO AGE**

**NO STATE OF  
PERSONAL  
FORTUNE**

**IS EXCLUDED. ”**

**- RABBI SAMSON  
RAPHAEL HIRSCH  
PARSHAS KEDOSHIM**



קדוש

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It is very fitting that the theme for this year's San Diego NCSY Torah Journal is "Kedusha" - indeed it would do each and every Jew well to spend even just a few moments to cursorily think about the concept and what it truly means. As a community, we spent a good chunk of the past year grappling with and exploring the concept of Kedusha together. It all started when I was challenged by a mentor of mine to do something "beyond your imagination" for our annual THX Shabbaton. Not being one to shy away from a challenge, I began to think.

Starting down this rabbit hole was great fun, I had the opportunity to not only engage young minds in deep, meaningful conversations about the true meaning of Kedusha, but I got to build a full-scale model Mishkan which would become a community-wide experiential exhibit exploring the concept of Kedusha, suffice to say I had a blast. But, in building the program, I also recognized the need to give over a foundational concept, one that I hope I sufficiently passed on to all who came through the doors of the exhibit - Torah learning is great fun, indeed it is the thing can make a Jew feel most alive, but it also must be approached with a deep sense of reverence and trepidation.

All those who came into the exhibit were asked to remove their shoes and take a moment to feel the ground beneath their feet, to be mindful of the gravity of their deeds and of their speech, to whisper, and to tread with purpose and try to be conscience of The Divine. This is how we must approach concepts that sit at the foundation of the entire world. To quote the Sefer HaChinuch in his poetic introduction to the Mitzvah of constructing a Temple:

ואכן מיראתי להתקרב אל משכן ה', כי ידעתי כל הקרב הקרב אם לא יתקדש למדי לא יראה הבית וחי

**Indeed, I am afraid, gripped with awe and reverence, to draw close to the Dwelling of Hashem, for I know that all who draw close, who draw close to the Dwelling of Hashem - if they have not adequately sanctified themselves - will not see the House of Hashem and live.**

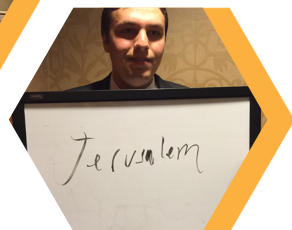
With these words echoing in our consciousness, let us begin our exploration of Kedusha.

Adam Simon

San Diego Director, NCSY

What comes to mind  
when you hear the word...

**“KEDUSHA”**



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# GROWTH IN KEDUSHA

BY JOSH SEGAL



I am not perfect. In fact, I am far from it. I am a Jewish teenage boy who doesn't always follow all the laws of the Torah. I'll admit to that. But there is one thing that I've always had a difficult time admitting to myself; I can change.

In the book of Leviticus, G-d spoke to Moshe giving him a message for the people. In his communication, it was said, "You are to be holy, for I the LORD, your G-d, am holy." Following this is a list of commandments given from G-d. Some examples include honoring your mother and father, the prohibition of idolatry, and the laws of sacrificing.

Upon reading this, many questions began to flood my mind. It is said that we must be holy because G-d is holy. How can I compare to the almighty G-d? He is holy, but I will never reach that level of Kedusha. I pondered what it meant to be holy. Looking back at the

writing, this statement was followed by a list of commandments. I wondered if that was what it meant to be holy; following all the commandments of Hashem. After further research, I found that one attribute of Kedusha was in fact abiding by the mitzvot. After finding this, I became rather disconnected from my Judaism. I couldn't possibly follow every single commandment. I'm not perfect. If I can never live up to such high expectations, then what was the point of even trying?

For a few weeks after, I would show up late to Davening, if I even showed up at all. It just felt like no matter what I did, I would never be good enough. I would tell my friends that I was tired, I apologized to my Rabbi, and then I continued with the rest of my day. It wasn't until recently that I approached my Rabbi and explained to him what had been troubling me. I told him that I felt



that I couldn't be good enough in Judaism. There were all these expectations to follow every single commandment and to be holy, like G-d. If I couldn't do that, then why bother in the first place? But then my Rabbi pointed out something that really changed my perspective.

#### **WHY DO I SEE IT AS BLACK AND WHITE?**

In my mind, there was no area of gray. If I couldn't be the "perfect" Jew, then what was the point at all? Then my rabbi taught me an important lesson: There is always room for growth, in every single human being and in every single aspect of life, including Judaism. He told me, "No one is perfect, not even me."

This idea immediately stuck with me. It was not only Judaism that I viewed as being black and white; this was a concept that I have struggled with in many areas of my life. I felt that it was crucial to remember that there is always room for growth. That fact that we need to grow doesn't mean that we aren't good enough. Instead, realizing that you need to grow is the first step in reaching Kedusha.

No, I am not perfect. No, I do not keep all of G-d's mitzvot. But does

that mean I should just give up? I now believe that when G-d said we must be holy like him, he wasn't trying to put any weight on our shoulders. Instead, he was trying to give us something to aspire to. No one will ever reach the level of G-d. But the idea is that you can grow into being something greater than yourself. The beauty of this idea is that there is always hope. I didn't used to believe that I could change. But that was because I thought you were either holy or not holy. Now I see that there is another reality. None of us are perfect, but we are all on the path to reaching Kedusha. In the end, it is the effort we put in that will determine our true greatness.

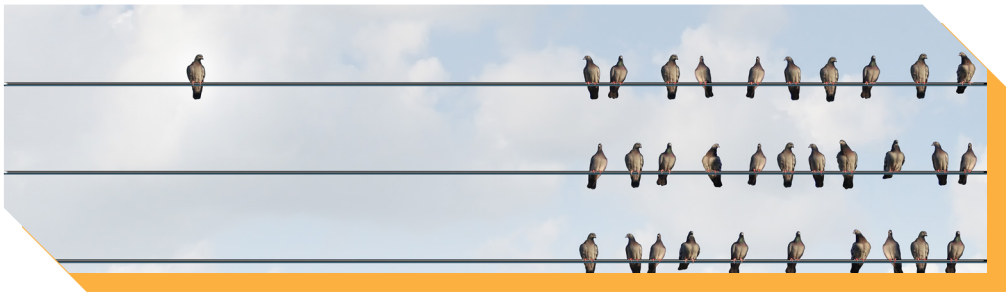


#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR JOSH SEGAL**

Josh Segal is a Junior at SCY High School. He is an integral part of the San Diego NCSY Teen Leadership board. He is a brilliant writer and story-teller with an eye for detail and a biting wit. He will be continuing as a part of the NCSY Executive Teen Leadership Board next year.

# SEPARATE & DISTINCT

BY LEETAL WINICK



The root **קדש** is used hundreds of times in the Torah. It's used in reference to creation, it embodies the laws governing our relationships, it is connected to the Holy Temple, and it used in describing the Jewish nation; everything which encapsulates Judaism and plays a vital role in our religion is commonly connected to this root - **קדש**. The question I'd like to confront in this Dvar Torah and the question which each Jew must confront at some point in their life, if not everyday, is, "What does Kedusha - Holiness truly mean?"

Rav Tzadok Hacoen says that in order to uncover the true essence of a word, you must look into the first place that it is mentioned. The root word Kadash was first used to describe the seventh day of creation in Parshat Bereshit. After Hashem creates the light and dark, the heavens and earth, the ocean and land, the sun, moon and stars, the fish and birds, the animals and man/woman, Hashem rested.

**וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שָׁבַת  
מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים, לַעֲשׂוֹת**

**Hashem blessed the seventh day and made it holy, He sanctified it because on that day Hashem rested from all His work that Hashem had made.**

In contrast to the six days which came before, on this seventh day - the day of rest, Hashem not only blesses the day but also sanctifies the day by deeming it "holy". This day was not like its fellow days, it was a day which was separated from the former six days of work. This separation created a distinction, and this distinction created an elevation, an elevation which gave the day the description of being *kadosh*, holy. Rashi too uncovers this meaning of separation in sefer Vayikra. In Sefer Vayikra, Parshat Kedoshim, before Hashem gives over many laws to Moshe (who then gives them over to Bnei Israel) Hashem says,

**דַּבֵּר אֶל כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ  
כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם**

**Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, say to them: "You shall be K'doshim, because I, Hashem your Master, am Kadosh."**

Hashem refers to the Jewish people as being "*קְדוֹשִׁים*" and Rashi asks, "What does this holiness entail?". To this question he gives the answer that the Jewish people separated themselves from sexual immorality. He goes on to say

**שְׂכַל מְקוֹם שֶׁאֵתָּה מוּצָא גֵדֵר עֲרוּרָה אֵתָּה מוּצָא קְדוּשָׁה**

**For wherever one finds a barrier against sexual immorality, one finds holiness**



In this context Rashi is stating that the Jewish people just like the seventh day of creation separated themselves. This separation again creates a distinction and an elevation. The Jews separate themselves from certain averot, bad deeds, and because of this separation they "מוצא קדושה", find holiness.

On Shavuot when the Jewish people are standing Neged Ha'har, opposite the mountain, waiting to receive their future, Hashem unites them by calling them a גוי קדוש, a holy nation. Through our evidence from Parshat Bereshit and Parshat Kedoshim we are able to come to a deeper understanding of the word which shapes our nation. As a holy nation we are separated and elevated. Hashem has chosen our nation to take upon ourselves the covenant He has proclaimed and with that we become a special nation.

As stated above Rashi commented on the word קדשים תהיו . He said that the Jewish people separated themselves from sexual immoralities. But the Rambam disagrees with this understanding. He states that the Jewish people's ability to מוצא קדושה; find holiness was not solely when they separated themselves from sexual immoralities but rather whenever they separated themselves - even from things which are permitted. When we, the Jewish people, are standing Neged Ha'har and Hashem calls us a גוי קדוש, with these words Hashem is choosing our nation to take it upon ourselves to separate the good from the bad, the holy from the non-holy, the physical from the spiritual.

On the holiday of Shavuot when we the Jewish people accepted Hashem's Torah

we also accepted the title of K'doshim which ultimately separates us from our fellow nations. Seemingly paradoxical (but true), we became a nation which was separated and elevated, guarded and infused with a sense of Kedusha. We promised to infuse the physical world with the spiritual world, separating ourselves from the bad and filling that void with spirituality.

Kadosh is a word that is beyond a simple definition. Kadesh, kadosh, kedusha all denote separation. The seventh day of creation is kadosh because it is a day, which is separate from the rest of the days of creation. Hashem is Kadosh because He is separated and elevated from terrestrial beings. The Jewish people are kadosh when they take it upon themselves to be separate, but ultimately the true meaning of Kadosh depends on the situation. The key is to be distinct and separate. In every situation that means something different, both in how we separate ourselves and what we separate ourselves from.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR **LEETAL WINICK**

Leetal Winick is a Senior at Torah High School of San Diego. As the President of San Diego NCSY's Executive Teen Leadership Board she has been a vital part of the operations and grown into a strong Bat Torah. She will be continuing her growth at Midreshet Torah v'Avoda in Jerusalem this fall.

# HOLY CONNECTIONS

BY ELI MILSTEIN



Parshat Kedoshim famously begins with one of the most inspiring and oft-interpreted verses in the Torah.

**דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם  
קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם**

**Speak to the entire assembly of the  
Children of Israel and say to them,  
be kadosh because I, HASHEM your  
Lord am Kadosh. (Vayikra 19:2)**

Here is stated one of the most ambiguous directives we have, and yet, in contrast to most other mitzvot, here we are given a reason to accompany. The ambiguity stems essentially from a lack of a clear of definition for the word kadosh - so often translated as "holy" or "sanctified", yet both of those words themselves seem to fall flat when probed for substance. Rashi famously explains kadosh as separate, we are instructed to separate ourselves from temptations and worldly desires. Of course, Rashi leaves us to try and understand how he would explain the last few words of the verse,

the reason for our instruction - that God is Kadosh so therefore we should be - it is surely difficult to describe God as separate from physical temptations, for there is little connection to begin with between the Infinite, Divine, Being and a struggle which is surely the sole domain of our human hearts.

The exalted spiritual master, the Ishbitzer Rebbe, gives his own explanation of the phrase. He begins by writing, "קדושה לשון הזמנה" - Kedusha means invitation or connection" it means being part and parcel of something much larger than my self. The Master of the World is informing us that we should always be kadosh, always be connected, expecting redemption, expecting inspiration, waiting for a Divine light to shine and light our eyes with Torah.

"כי קדוש אני" - The verse continues that the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe is Kadosh, and is always ready, present in all

moments and in all acts, always waiting to redeem Israel. We too are thus charged with the need to be ready for that higher consciousness to come at all times, and not to get ourselves caught up in lame matters, in worldly things from which real redemption will never come.

As the verse goes, **חסד ואמת אל** "יעזבוך", "Let Kindness and Truth not leave you." (Mishlei 3:3) The Ishbitzer plays with the words of the verse a little bit and explains that the verse specifically says that kindness and truth will not depart, not that one should not depart from the kindness and truth. **חסד של אמת**, true kindness, he explains is a kindness that never fades away, it will never depart. One who is expecting and awaiting Divine inspiration will be able to receive such true kindness. The key is to not run from the Eternal Divine Truth, it is our duty to be *kadoshim* - to stand face to face with God.

The Ishbitzer's view of *kedusha* is essentially spiritual connection, it is a level of consciousness in which I can recognize my own Divine nature, I am constantly aware that I am a soul, I am a unique image of God and I am therefore

bestowed with the impressive task of living up to such a status. I have to always be seeking for that Divine connection, always looking for any opening to take me beyond. Too often I try to run away, to involve myself with things that won't bring me ultimate inspiration, I try to hide my head in the sand, looking to shake the responsibility, to pretend that maybe this one more time I'll succeed in freeing myself of my role in this world. But the truth is that I am a manifestation of the One, and the soul-voice inside me will always find a way to tell me otherwise, to try and set me right, to tell me, **"קדושים תהיו"**. There is no escaping the soul's constant desire to reconnect to the Source, the only way out is through, all we can do is commit, moment after moment, to the lifelong task of *kedusha*. Maybe then, if I really search, if I really make myself a vessel for the Divine light, I might receive a bit of inspiration to stay with me for the long run, a little Eternal Kindness to get me through the next hurdle.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR **ELI MILSTEIN**

Eli Milstein is currently learning in Yeshivat Otniel. Before he graduated from SCY High School two years ago he was a member of San Diego NCSY's Executive Teen Leadership Board and was responsible for SilenceYourEgo, CreateYour8, Project Earth, and many more projects.

# YITGADAL V'YITKADASH

BY FERNANDO SUR



Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will.

May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen. May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen. He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

When one loses a relative, thousands of emotions fly into their mind. Sadness, anger, hatred. They shut down all other senses and close their minds off from everyone. No words can help heal the gaping hole left in their hearts. After the loss, and burial, the per-

תגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא. אמן:

בעלמא די ברא כרעותה וימליך מלכותה ויצמח  
פרקנה ויקרב משיחה. אמן:

בחיכון וביומיכון ובחיי דכל בית ישראל בעגלא  
ובזמן קריב. ואמרו אמן:

הא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמא:

תברך?

וישתבח ויתפאר ויתרוםם ויתנשא ויתהדר  
ויתעלה ויתהלל שמה דקדשא בריך הוא.

לעלא (בעשי"ת ולעלא מכל) מן כל ברכתא  
ושירתא תשבחתא ונחמתא דאמירן בעלמא.  
ואמרו אמן:

הא שלמא רבא מן שמיא וחיים טובים עלינו ועל  
כל ישראל. ואמרו אמן:

עושה שלום (בעשי"ת השלום) במרומיא הוא  
יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל ואמרו אמן:

son immediately begins the Shiva process, a 7 day mourning process where one separates from society to accept and learn to live with the loss. At that point, they begin saying Kaddish.

About 5 months ago, I lost my father. After a 4 month battle with

cancer, his soul finally rested. His loss at first hit me like a train. I felt like a skyscraper came down, and crushed my entire being. But, I decided I wanted to hide that. I felt that I needed to remain solid like a rock and store the explosion of emotions. But, eventually, I couldn't hold it back. I had to release everything I had kept hidden.

One morning, while saying Kaddish at school, it all hit me. I realized everything I held inside needed to come out, and saying Kaddish helped me do that. One would think that someone who is mourning would pray about a loss or would mention his loss in his daily prayer. Rather, Kaddish mentions nothing about that. Kaddish helps us realize the incredible, awesome, powerful entity that is G-d. We bless G-d and urge the people of our community to bless him as well. Again, one would think we mention our mourning and grieve the loss, but, we don't. The question is, why do we praise G-d? Why don't we mention our pain and our loss?

We praise G-d because we acknowledge his greatness. We acknowledge that everything he does is for a reason and for our greater good. Even if we might be

angry, and completely feeling hatred towards G-d, Kaddish helps us realize that what he did, he did for a reason. Not only does it help us recognize G-d's greatness but it also uplifts the soul we are praying for. The fact that we are making a blessing to G-d, and are helping the community bless G-d as well, in the merit of a person, uplifts their soul.

**Blessed and praised.  
Glorified and exalted.  
Extolled and honored.**



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR FERNANDO SUR**

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# THE JOURNEY

BY HAREL AMSALEM



Throughout this publication we have been focusing on what Kedusha really means, how it appears throughout the Torah and how it applies to different aspects of our lives. It must be clear to the reader by now that the root definition of the term “Kadosh” is separation. At the same time, we know that our ultimate goal as Jews is to live our lives according to God’s Will in order to elevate ourselves spiritually and become closer to Him. However, Hashem is the holiest being that exists, He is the Holy One (as commonly referred to), in Isaiah (chapter 6) we find the phrase:

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ ה' צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts;  
the whole earth is full of His glory.

How can we expect to draw close to Hashem if He is infinitely holier and thus infinitely separated from us?

Isn't this an impossible goal?

The short answer is yes, it is impossible to reach the level of God’s holiness. However, drawing closer to Hashem is very possible. When the Jews were standing next to the mountain, moments before receiving the Torah, Hashem tells them that if they obey Him they will be to him a **גוי קדוש** (holy nation). Hashem is calling us, as a nation, holy. The Holy One is expressing to us that we have the potential to separate from the physical and elevate ourselves spiritually. Yet there is more behind the description of **גוי קדוש**.

In tractate Nedarim (48a), the Gemara quotes a Mishnah that reads:

הרי הן מקודשין לשמים

Behold they are sanctified for heaven

It goes on to explain that sanctified in this sense means **להיות לשמים** (belongs to heaven). Furthermore, Tosafot in tractate Kidushin (2b) explains that when the



Gemara uses the phrase **מקודשת לי** regarding the wedding ceremony it actually means “you are set aside for me and designated for me.” This shows us that Kedusha can also mean “to belong to in an exclusive manner.”

When going back to the p’sukim in which Hashem describes us as a **גוי קדוש**, he says we will be to Him a **גוי קדוש**, very similarly to the two sources from the Talmud. When calling us a holy nation not only is God letting us know our potential but also telling us that we belong to Him, that as a nation we are exclusive and designated for Him. More so, when looking at the phrases that surround that pasuk they are filled with God speaking of how we belong to Him and are His people. God is showing us that we have the most potential within us to have a relationship with Him; He is spelling out for us that we are 100% capable of drawing closer to Him by obeying what he commands of us.

Although we know that it isn’t possible to attain the God’s level of Holiness. The greatness is not in the destination but rather in the journey. Yes, Hashem is the holiest being, but He had the kindness to show us our potential in getting

closer to his infinite level and give us the guide which tells us what to do to achieve that. We must be thankful to Hashem for giving us the tools we need to achieve our ultimate mission as Jews and take advantage of the opportunity the Torah grants us.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR HAREL AMSALEM**

Harel Amsalem is a Senior at SCY High School. As Vice President of West Coast NCSY’s Regional Teen Leadership Board, he has produced amazing film projects as a writer, director, and producer. He will be continuing his Jewish growth at Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh in the fall.

# NOW AND THEN

BY EITAN FEIFEL



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 God."" (Vayikra 19:1)

God is holy. The Jewish people are holy. We all strive to be holy. However, what does it truly mean to be holy?

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word 'holy' as:

**Dedication or consecration to God or a religious purpose.**

This definition is seemingly broad and ultimately meaningless, it gives a feeling as if any person can wake up one morning and decide they will be 'dedicated to God or a religious purpose.'

The Jewish people, however, 'define' holiness by using a word, deserving more than just a literal translation, Kedusha. 'Kadosh', or 'Kedusha', appears many times in Judaism: mourners recite Kadish, the Chazzan recites Kedusha in his repetition of the Amidah, on Shabbat we make Kiddush, and in Torah and Tefilah the word Kadosh is read numerous times. With this, we soon become so comfortable with the word Kadosh that we easily overlook

its true meaning.

To truly understand what it means to be Kadosh, holy, we must first know where the word comes from. Chazal suggests that Kedusha means to be "poresh min ha'arayot - abstain from sexual prohibitions". To say this is to imply that without this commandment, there would be no reason for one to live a moral lifestyle.

One thing that stands out from this explanation is the fact that we strive to fit "Tzelem Elokim - The image of God", and we are commanded to be holy because, as it says, 'God is holy'. If being holy is defined as "poresh min ha'arayot", how does that relate to God?

It becomes apparent that the concept of Poresh has more significance than just abstinence. True abstinence implies that a person has an inner desire which he or she is withholding from, exhibiting self-restraint and denial to his or her inner urges. Poresh, however, is more than just denial and self-control. Poresh is a reflection of a person's inner nature, showing that one's energies are no longer attracted to the physical desire, the Arayot, and

he or she flows naturally towards true wisdom, Chachma.

God, in his very nature, is not inclined to the physical Arayot, he is infinitely distant from them. Therefore, to be truly Poresh, one must have all energies flowing toward gaining wisdom, Chachma. As it seems, to do so would be to truly be holy.

The Ramban offers a slight variation on this idea of Kedusha. He points out that Kedusha is much more than just avoiding that which is forbidden, it is avoiding that which is permissible as well. Avoiding what is forbidden to us such as the sexual relationships, non-kosher foods, and all other averot is only the first step toward Kedusha. The Ramban explains that to be truly Kadosh one must also control what is permissible to him or her. When concerning Kashrut, one may think that as long as what he is eating is Kosher then he can eat like a glutton and drink excessively. Within the Ramban's rubric, to be Kadosh one would control their gluttony and drinking habits and keep them both on a modest level.

When we received the Torah, God commanded us to be holy. Today, the Jewish people face a greater struggle with finding their ability to strive for holiness. With the technology and media which surrounds our lives, we can easily become absorbed by it. With this, the path away from Kedusha starts off innocently as one merely indulges in what is apparently permissible to him. Slowly but surely this indulgence leads

one to stray off into what is forbidden.

Perhaps we can suggest that Rashi was explaining what the means of reaching kedusha was for the Jews of that day, whereas Ramban is telling us that on our level, separation from the arayot is merely a starting point. If we truly want to achieve holiness we must go beyond merely separating from the arayot but we must separate ourselves from anything which appears to be "permitted" but will ultimately lead us astray.

Perhaps merely separating from the arayot was enough to catapult the Jews at Har Sinai to achieve holiness but today we, who have fallen so far, need more to achieve the same results.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR **EITAN FEIFEL**

Eitan Feifel is a Junior at La Jolla High School. He serves as the Founding President of NCSY's Jewish Club at La Jolla High School and will be serving the West Coast Region as Vice President of the Regional Teen Leadership Board this coming year.

# KODESH//CHOL

BY SHAYNA SRAGOVICZ



The concept of Kedusha is one that is hard to put on paper. Its reality looks hardly like its resume and the English language is unable to truly capture the essence of Kedusha or explain every aspect of its manifestation in this world. Not only is it hard to explain, it is also hard to translate; words such as sanctity, separation, consecration, and holiness are used to identify what physical residue is left by the effects of Kedusha, but these words don't often mean very much, even when Webster's dictionary comes in to help. I start this essay with the disclaimer above in order to clarify that I am not a Kabbalist that has studied the inner workings of the spiritual world. I have not dedicated my life to discovering why or how or what God does to make the Earth spin. Instead, I am simply trying to understand my duty as a Jew to integrate Kedusha into my life.

Although it is exciting to jump right into a "13 step process" of how to fill your life with Kedusha, it is important to first understand the background of Kedusha and where and when we interact with it. The word Kodesh or its variations are seen on almost every page in the Siddur. Many blessings include the phrase "asher kidshanu" which contains the root Kodesh, and after a while, the word starts to lose its meaning. How can something so far-reaching be mentioned so casually so many times? Let us investigate this through the places where

Kedusha is found during prayer.

The two most striking places where Kedusha is mentioned are Kiddush on Friday night to welcome in Shabbat and Havdalah on Saturday night to welcome in the new week. Kiddush on Friday night is an excerpt from the beginning of the second chapter of Bereshit, Genesis. The text explains the creation of the seventh day. The process was a transition from the sixth day: work, to the seventh day: rest. God rested from his work, blessed it, and made it Kodesh. If the translation of the word Kedusha meant holiness or sanctity then God would not have blessed it and made it holy. It is clear that the seventh day is separate and different from the sixth day, as indicated by the words that God rested from the work he had previously done. So Kedusha, here, cannot mean separation or consecration. Rashi connects this verse to the Ma'an given to the Jews in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. On Friday, every person received a second portion of food to save for Shabbat and was not given a portion on Saturday. This makes Kedusha not simply about "declaring" Shabbat holy; instead, it is about physically making Shabbat special.

Pertaining to Havdalah, the word Kodesh is mentioned in the last blessing under the phrase "bein Kodesh l'chol," between Kodesh and Chol. Although we usually translate Chol as "mundane," the root definition

of Chol is sand; billions of uniform grains of sand cover the beaches around the world and, in one handful, thousands of grains can be held, none of them unique. The week days are the mostly the same. Despite the names assigned to them, Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday are all the same because people go to work or to school and come home to eat dinner and are stuck on repeat. The phrase expresses that God is separating between the mundane and the Kodesh. On Shabbat, one has the ability to connect with an entity greater than this world; therefore, twenty-five hours are dedicated solely for rejuvenation for the week to come. The week is necessary, but Shabbat is Kodesh.

According to Kiddush, the definition of Kedusha is actively making Shabbat special and unique from the mediocrity of normalcy. According to Havdalah, Shabbat is not "separation" itself, it is the act of separating. After this extensive trek in determining what Kedusha may mean on a physical level, the application of Kedusha and the process in integrating it may not be out of the ball park. Although I do not have an outline of steps or a guidebook, Kedusha can only be a part of one's life if he or she wants it to be. Understanding Judaism and integrating it is not a leisurely stroll: it is a marathon.

Kedusha is a force in this world brought on by the spiritual world and interactions with it range the entire spectrum of religiosity; however, constant growth is highly encouraged by the Rabbis and everyone should strive to learn and improve. Kedusha is not a tangible box that can be held or carried in a purse or pocket. Kedusha is the recognition of God and the efforts to make oneself unique in order to honor Him. This can be done through thought, action, and speech.

Changing one's attitude is important when trying to understand God's manifestation in this world. Constant judging, cynicism, and lack of appreciation and attention to others can inhibit one's ability to appreciate Kedusha, especially in times when it is heavily present such as on Shabbat or Holidays. Creating small goals every day or week may help in opening one's eyes to the beauty of this world. Appreciating small things such as nature or even technology and attributing those to God guides the mind towards constantly appreciating the source of human abilities. Setting aside one day to count how many times one gossips focuses the mind. Actions, although guided by thought, have the ability to be without thought. Focusing on creating positive habits such as standing up when a respected adult walks in the room or saying "Bless you" when someone sneezes, creates new reflexes that remodel the body to be good. Speech is a complicated aspect of humanity. The power of words is something that no teacher ceases to preach about. Speech is not hard to improve if thought and action provide a strong base.

Kedusha is a complicated relationship to understand. The connection between the physical world and spiritual world allows us to tap into the Kodesh that is God. Whether Kedusha is defined as making something special or actively separating to become closer to God, it is a process that takes time and effort but can be integrated into our daily lives. With prayer three times a day, Shabbat once a week, and holidays throughout the year, the opportunities for spiritual growth are not scarce.



#### ABOUT SHAYNA SRAGOVICZ

Shayna Sragovicz is a Sophomore at Torah High School of San Diego. She was the winner of San Diego NCSY's Torah Casino Night earning two seforim sets among other individual seforim and is a dedicated student of Torah wisdom.

# SHABBAT: ISLAND OF KEDUSHA

BY ARI KRASNER



In parshat Kedoshim, G-d commands Moshe and the Jewish people to “be holy.” After reviewing some of the technicalities included in this commandment, Rav Hirsch clarifies this statement, by explaining that striving for holiness and “absolute human perfection” is a commandment the Jewish people to take on individually, on an ultra-personal level. Each and every one of us is responsible for completing this task, on our own levels and at our own paces. This commandment defies all boundaries, and applies to everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status, age, or sex. Although we all face different circumstances, we are all human beings, and we all live on Planet Earth. We are all the same in Hashem’s eyes, and this translates to what we are required to accomplish and how we are required to think and conduct ourselves.

As Jews, we are all required to uphold ourselves to a higher standard in order to achieve a state of “Kadosh,” which according to Rav Hirsch is equivalent to achieving absolute

human perfection. It is only when our nation conducts itself with this end result in mind, that our nation as a whole can truly become holy, and achieve a state of Kadosh. Only then can we act as a light among nations by guiding and ensuring the existence of the world’s moral compass.

This idea of Kedusha can be challenging specifically in the years immediately following high school. These years are where some of the highest levels of learning and self discovery in contemporary society occur. However it is also a time where individual priorities and values are often times second guessed, and at times abandoned, for the cooler, trendier ways of acting. One great way of preserving oneself, and maintaining a level a level of Kadosh , even in such challenging times, is by preserving Shabbat.

Once someone graduates from high school, they may find themselves celebrating Shabbat in new and foreign atmospheres, be it in Yeshiva or Seminary dorms in Israel or in shuls on college campuses. Shabbat may



become much harder to keep, and it may be a challenge that consists of walking up a few extra flights of stairs, or missing out on an amazing concert only happening once on a Friday night. Personally, the idea of partying on a Friday night has never been appealing to me, as I place a higher premium on maintaining my personal integrity and preserving Shabbat in the most relaxed and holy atmospheres that I can find. Even though it is challenging at times, I try to do everything in my power to establish Shabbat as something truly special in my week.

In the years after high school, Shabbats may not be as easy to preserve as you expected they would be. You will likely have to work to build a community, or to find a niche group of students that you personally connect with. But regardless of your individual circumstances, preserving the pristine nature of Shabbat is integral to achieving “Kedusha” as Rav Hirsch defines it. This preservation has the ability to radically change your life and the perception that those around you have of Judaism. Shabbat helps us build community, and an intentional community gives us peers we respect and role models we look up to. Role models are the key to this “human perfection.” Thus a key to preserving yourself, and maintaining Kedusha, is through preserving Shabbat.

Human beings act and naturally follow examples, we often “go with the flow,” with our behavior and how we conduct ourselves. This is precisely why it is so important to strive for a peer group that establishes pure, holy, and good values as a priority. This is why it is crucially important to develop spiritually on a personal level. Only when one preserves their pristine nature by surrounding themselves with peers that challenge their individual character for the better can one reflect this state of being and achieve the “absolute human perfection,” which Rav Hirsch directs us to achieve.

My piece of advice to those reading this is to never forget about your religious priorities, and to always remember what they mean to you. Remember that it is your job to act in a holy manner, and that the ability of our people to become completely pure and holy as a nation rests squarely on your shoulders.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR ARI KRASNER**

Ari Krasner is currently a Sophomore at The George Washington University. He is the Founding President of the Tamid Fellowship for Jewish Students, an Intern at NCSY's Alumni Collegiate Fellowship, and the Creator of GiveButter.com a social fundraising platform.

# THE HOLIEST OF RELATIONSHIPS

In honor of my grandmother, Azie Judah z"l

BY DEBORAH JOSEPH



“Eshet Chayil” is about A Woman of Valor, but what does that really mean? This multi-layered poem was written by King Solomon as part of a book of great wisdom – the book of Mishlei, or Proverbs. We sing this on Friday evening before Kiddush as we welcome in Shabbat, a day filled with holiness. The Jewish people and G-d are compared as a bride and groom and through this we understand that in finding an Eshet Chayil, one has found the embodiment of what every Jewish person should be.

As we go through “Eshet Chayil,” we see that it discusses both physical and spiritual aspects of life. It says “Sheker Hachen Vehevel Hayofi, Isha Yirat Hashem He Tit’halal,” which explains that physical appearances are nothing, but a woman who fears G-d is praiseworthy. There is a world much bigger than us and G-d is much bigger than anything

around us.

It talks about physical maintenance and upkeep. This woman cares for her family and works hard to make sure they have food and are properly clothed. She teaches of wisdom and kindness and anticipates the needs of her household. “Eshet Chayil” can be read as a metaphor for the relationship between the Jewish people and G-d. Our relationships with G-d and with others require proper maintenance and this is a way in which to understand how to properly interact with both. Relationships are built upon solid foundations and while G-d is one solid part, we must be the other part. “Eshet Chyail” is written alphabetically where each verse starts with a different Hebrew letter and just as the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are the building blocks of Creation, so too is the Eshet Chayil. If we view this as the Jewish people, they must be

a partner in the strong foundation of their relationship with G-d. If we view this as who a man should look for in a proper wife, then it symbolizes the strong foundation that a woman creates in their home. What could be a more fitting time to talk about this than Shabbat and Shavuot – both are times where a marriage is considered to be taking place between G-d and the Jewish people.

According to the Talmud, women were created with an extra dose of wisdom and understanding. “Eshet Chayil” opens with the words “A woman of valor, who can find? Far beyond pearls is her value.” In Hebrew, the word for “inside” (penima) is similar to the word for “pearl” (penina). A pearl is formed inside an oyster as a defense mechanism, when a coating from the oyster layers over the irritant or something unknown to protect the oyster. It is appropriate that the Eshet Chayil is compared to a pearl because just as a natural pearl is formed inside an oyster, she too goes through trials and challenges, but perseveres. She balances commitments and responsibilities in the home, community and workplace and through all of the

imperfections that life presents, she develops her relationship with G-d and knows that He will support her through everything. Through layers of courage, wisdom, persistence, and strength, she transforms into a pearl and radiantly shines through.

“Eshet Chayil” shows us the importance of building and maintaining our relationships and the potential each of us has within. We must find the Eshet Chayil in others since she is the embodiment of every Jewish person and see her in ourselves. Just as there are two people involved in a marriage and both are key pieces to the support and foundation of the relationship, so too is the relationship between the G-d and the Jewish people. Even with all of the difficulties life may present, we must remember that the strength and wisdom can be found within and G-d is always there to support and help us overcome so that at the end we brilliantly shine, just as the Eshet Chayil.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR DEBORAH JOSEPH**

Deborah Joseph is a Contract Administrator for Northrop Grumman, but more importantly she has been a dedicated advisor and intern for San Diego NCSY and the West Coast NCSY Alumni Team. She is a popular Torah educator and role model for the teens of San Diego.

# INCLUSION: THE HOLIEST OF HOLIES

BY DANIEL FRIEDMAN



"Today is the 49th day of the omer, which is 7 weeks of the Omer." We are commanded by God to count the 49 days following the second day of Pesach which lead up to Shavuot. The pasuk, however, reads slightly differently: "And you shall count for yourselves...Seven complete Shabbatot, until the day after the seventh Shabbas, count 50 days." The Netteevot Shalom asks why do we only count 49 days, if the commandment is actually to count 50 days? If the commandment is to count 50 days, we should count 50 days, or the pasuk should say "count 49 days."

He answers by quoting the Chasidic Master Noam Elimelech, who says that the holiness of the parchment we use to write a Torah, Tefillin or Mezuzah is holier than all of the holiness of the letters, because each letter only contains its own holiness, but the parchment has the holiness of the entire Torah, as well as the individual letters. The holiness of the 50th day includes the holiness of the 49 preceding days, because it connects them all together. We count the 49 days in order to reach the 50th. The 50th day is parchment which connects the other 49 days, and therefore is filled with their holiness.

Rav Kook zt'l writes about the letter Alef in his book Raysh Meleen. He shows that the Alef is made up of three letters, a Yud on top (The Upper Yud), a Vav in the middle, and the Lower Yud. The Yud represents Divinity. The Upper Yud represents the Divinity above, the Divinity of the spiritual world. The Lower Yud represents the Divinity of this world, the Di-

vinity of the physical world. And the Vav is the connection between the two. If you notice, the two Yudin are not in direct contact, but rather set slightly apart. Rav Kook zt'l likens holiness to water. He believes the holiness above is so strong that if it were connected directly to the physical world we live in, it would be flooded and destroyed by the power of the holiness above. As a result the holiness from the Upper Yud flows in the Vav, and builds up slowly, until it can peacefully flow in the Lower Yud.

The Alef is the beginning of everything. The beginning of the Alphabet, the beginning of language and therefore communication, the beginning of creation, the beginning of God's name, and the beginning of Adam Harishon's name. Rav Kook zt'l likens the Alef to the inception of a thought, at its purest moment. Have you ever had a thought, and had a hard time expressing it? It's because language is flawed, language is limited, and language is bound by the physical world. Language's limitation is why we sing, because music is pure, and cannot be corrupted by the physical boundaries of language.

Once you had this thought, you, your mind, and your soul go through a process to bring it into reality. You think about it, you develop the thought, and then you speak it into this world.

The final step in bringing a thought from inception into reality is action. You must do what you have said, and what you have thought. Otherwise the thought, the speech, the inspiration will die. The thought is the

spark, the action is the kindling.

In Rav Kook's Alef, the thought begins in the Upper Yud, in the upper world, in the purity of your mind, it is spoken and translated into this world in the Vav, and then is put into action in this world in the Lower Yud.

Alef is the first letter of the first name ever given to any person, because it exemplifies how we as people should live our lives. Our thoughts should begin with divine intention, they should be processed and well thought out, they should be shared into this world, and then they must be put into action.

The holiest part of Alef is that it serves as the ultimate connection between the purity of the spiritual world, and the action of the physical world. Like the 50th day, and the parchment of a Torah, it is the connection, the unification, the inclusion of the whole that is the holiest of holies.

Is it any wonder then, that our Mentor, our Leader and our Rabbi is named Adam? Since I began my work with San Diego NCSY, Adam has always worked tirelessly through these three phases. He structured his Shabbatonim to follow this process. THX is all about developing our own relationship with Torah, planting the seeds in our minds as we struggle with the text. Then over the course of the year we work on translating that into this world. This translation happens at Jewsdays, where the NCSYers give divrei Torah, they speak their pure thoughts into existence. Finally the last Shabbaton is Jew It Yourself, the final shabbaton is dedicated to action, to putting the thought that has been translated into words into action.

He follows this process in his personal life as well. He strives to ensure his thoughts begin with the divine intention. Then he develops them, and translates them into this world, working on them until he finally feels they are ready. Finally comes actions, where he puts all of his strength into the actualization of his thoughts. We all know Adam to be a person

of philosophy and thought, but also of action.

Most of all though, Adam has sought to unify life, people, and Judaism. He is happy to connect people, but what makes him happiest is including people. San Diego NCSY is a place where everyone belongs; everyone is included, because that inclusion is the holiest of holies. Each of his NCSYers and students has their own unique blend of holiness, and what makes Adam and Chava so amazing is that they work to include each person's distinct contributions.

We have been blessed beyond measure to have Rabbi Adam and Chava Simon as our Directors, our Leaders, but most importantly as our friends. I have learned so much from them, and am so indebted to them for the opportunities they have given this chapter to grow and achieve amazing things.

On a personal note, I will miss the conversations, the late night secret Torah sessions, the mentorship, the friendship and so much more. In short I will miss you, Adam and Chava. As limited as language is, it is what God has given me to say thank you. Thank you for everything.

The most amazing part about the Holiness we have all created together here, is that it cannot be limited by physical distance. We will be forever connected by the Alef we have created here. It is eternal.

May all we merit to dance in the streets of Jerusalem side by side with Adam (and the ladies separately with Chava) as we celebrate the final redemption.

וּפְדוּיֵי ה' יִשְׁבוּן וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR DANIEL FRIEDMAN**

Daniel Friedman is the West Coast Director of Education for the Jewish National Fund, but more importantly he is an NCSY Advisor and has served as Volunteer Assistant San Diego Director. He is San Diego's all time most popular advisor and role model.



# GOD GOT WE

MAP

ft. Alex Sefia & Rabbi Berel Wein

מודה אני לפניך	ישתבח שמך
מלך חי וקיים שהחזרת בנישמתי	לעד מלכנו
בחמלה רבה אמונתך	האל המלך הגדול הגיבור הנורה קדוש הוא

**We go up (We go up) and never come down (x3)**  
We go up and never come down

Sun rises bright, yes my eyelids do open  
Stabilized mind on a ride, hybrid coastin'  
Roast Grande coffee this bread I've been toastin'

I'm so in, my morn flow a motion  
For All I know is map has been thankful

Oh Gd, renewed my soul  
My Faith is restored

Skateboard cruisin' up to temple, grace be to Gd

Some days just too dreadful, when I'm countin' all my  
problems

Petal picking off a flower, love me or not  
Remember my life based on one thing,  
Remember things die but Gd lives, Salam

Recipe composed of the praises, I'm poaching up  
nothing basic you know these words ain't tasteless  
Oh Gd, (Oh Gd x3) be exalted by them praises

Symphony dwindling His specifics been hinting that  
this an intimate difference  
Gd's psalm been laced with

Traces of his angels dust copped up and ascended in  
heavens basement,

Spirit flowing fluid in the bloodstream, no platelets  
Black straps tight in the presence of His greatness

Triumphantly strengthened

Glorifreakingcation  
Children in my nation

We number one bound, no consolation

We got Gd, and Gd got we

Now everybody join hands and sing

ברוך שאמר	שמע ישראל
והיה העולם	ה' אלוהינו
ברוך הוא	הי אחד

This be the time of the day when I need  
Gd by my side when my mind ain't at ease  
4th quarter shots if I choke, let me breathe  
Everything will be okay, Kehlani  
Blessed He Be

I do this for Gd, day to day  
I'm blessed to say im still fond of it all  
And I bow to You when I'm ripped and I'm torn

Oh (x5) Yuh (x3) Yeah (x5)

Thank you (x5)

So that, that's given to prayer Prayer is called  
"Avodah SheBalev- The service of the heart"

And the heart is a very wondrous instrument  
Yehuda HaLevi says in one of his famous poems he  
compares the Jewish people to a, to a heart  
"Yisrael Lev SheB'Umot" he said the Jewish people  
are the heart amongst all nations.

CHECK OUT THE MUSIC VIDEO AT [SANDIEGO.NCSY.ORG/GODGOTWE](http://SANDIEGO.NCSY.ORG/GODGOTWE)



# HOLINESS HOW-TO

BY SIENA RAPPOPORT



דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת להם קדשים  
תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם

“Speak to the entire gathering of the  
Children of Yisrael and say to them,  
‘You should be KADOSH, because I  
am KADOSH, Hashem your Lord.’”

Sforno looks into this passuk and asks the important question: What does it mean to be Kadosh? The passuk states that we should be Kadosh because Hashem is Kadosh. Sforno clarifies that this means in order to be Kadosh, we must resemble G-d. While that may seem like a great answer, it then raises the question: How does one resemble G-d?

Let's backtrack a sefer or so to parshat Ki Tisa in Shemot. In parshat Ki Tisa, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are stated. Hashem gave us the Thirteen Attributes as a method of forgiveness after we committed the sin of the golden calf...

ה' א-ל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת  
נצר חסד לאלפים נשא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקה

“...Lord, Lord, All-Powerful,  
Compassionate, and Gracious, Slow to  
Anger, and Abundant in Kindness, and  
Honest, Preserves Kindness for Thousands,  
Lifts Sins, and Forgives the Rebellious,  
and Forgives Mistakes, and Cleanses...”

Every year on Yom Kippur, we recite and remind G-d that He is all Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are a prime example of a way we can be like G-d, because they are meant to be displayed by G-d and the Jewish people alike. The Talmud even states:

“God wrapped himself in a tallis and taught Moshe His 13 attributes of mercy, Saying: ‘Whenever the Jews fail, if they practice these 13 attributes of mercy, I will forgive them.’”

By saying and practicing these 13 traits, G-d promises that He will deal affectionately with us in return for our kind actions towards others. So, to the question “How does one resemble G-d?”, The answer is quite simple:

One must practice and embody G-d's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. That's how to be Kadosh.

[WESTCOAST.NCSY.ORG/13WEEKPROJECT](http://WESTCOAST.NCSY.ORG/13WEEKPROJECT)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR **SIENA RAPPOPORT**

Siena Rappoport is a Junior at Torah High School of San Diego. As an active member of San Diego's Teen Leadership Board she has been integral in the creation of innovative programs such as the 789 Shabbaton and has launched her own initiative, The 13 Week Project. Check it out!

# UNLIMITED TRANSCENDENCE

BY DANIA HALPERIN



In the beginning of Parshat Kedoshim, Hashem tells Moshe, "Speak to the entire assembly of the Bnei Israel and say to them, You shall be holy" (Vayikra 19:1-2). Rashi points out how it specifically states, "The entire assembly of Israel," which teaches us that this mitzvah was announced publicly to everyone.

Many commentaries argue about what the meaning of "You shall be holy" actually is. Rashi interprets it as a mitzvah of abstinence, being removed from sin and forbidden physical desires. The word "Kadosh" means separates "you shall be Kedoshim" would mean you shall be separate from what is forbidden.

The Ramban argues with Rashi and states that "You shall be Kedoshim" is in fact, referring to being separate from supposedly permissible activities. The concept being "sanctify yourself by withdrawing from that which is permissible to you." The Ramban declares that without limitation, a person can become a glutton or an overindulgent person.

So how can one accomplish this? Where do we find the line between what is allowed and limitation? Does this mean you have to become a monk and live an isolated life away from any enjoyment, marriage, family, food and all good things in life? Definitely not.

In a recent shiur I attended, Rabbi David Aar-

on gave context to the Ramban's definition of "Kadosh." He explained that Kedusha could be better defined with an English word:

## TRANSCENDENCE

But, how can someone reach transcendence?

One can only truly enjoy the pleasures of this world if s/he is not enslaved by them. By having control, showing abstinence and being Kadosh through limitation, you are free to truly enjoy everything without being controlled by your physical desires. This way you enjoy the physicality of life out of pure but meaningful pleasure rather than "uncontrollable greed." Holiness is all about being whole. Kedusha or transcendence means you are so above this world and yet, still you are able to be in it. As a person above this world you won't become trapped in physicality and you will maintain your freedom to enjoy it with balanced discretion.

The "Holiness" of a monk is not what God wants. God gave this commandment to mankind and not angels because Hashem knows humans have desires. We are commanded to develop our holiness by channeling our desires with limitations and thereby enhancing our pleasures through transcendence.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR DANIA HALPERIN

Dania Halperin is currently learning Torah at Machon Ma'ayan in Israel. Last year she was awarded numerous awards and scholarships at NCSY's Annual Banquet and delivered an inspirational personal story at Ebbing. She hopes to continue her Jewish growth at a Touro College in the fall.

# WHAT IS JUDAISM, ANYWAY?

BY **BERNARDO HALPERIN**



“What does being Jewish mean?”

I frequently ask myself this question. Everyday going to public school, surrounding myself with teens just like me of all different cultures, religions and ethnicities, makes it's it a constant struggle in identifying myself as a Jew. Without the correct acknowledgment of our identity, our Judaism can easily be lost or diluted. To begin with, if you really think about it, Jews defy all conventional definitions of a “people” or “nation”. We tend to lack a common race, culture and to some extent, historical experience. We all share our eternal rights to the Land of Israel, but realistically the majority of us haven't even set foot in the holy land. What defines us as being Jewish is our relationship and commitment. We are Jews because G-d chose us to be His “cherished treasure from all the nations... a kingdom of priests and a holy people” (Exodus 19:5-6). That is what it means to be Jewish,

to be a “Holy People”. God chose us to play the most important role in the implementation of His purpose in creation: to orient our lives in accordance to his will, developing a universal reflection of His goodness and perfection. According to Jewish Law, a person's Jewishness has nothing to do with lifestyle or self-perception because even someone that is totally unaware that he is Jewish is still a Jew. What truly defines Judaism is the relationship between the Jew and the Creator. The call of Shavuot is for us not to just simply acknowledge the relationship with God but rather invest in that relationship.

The observance of the mitzvot isn't what makes one a Jew, it isn't even Israel, or what you wear. It is our inherent connection with God that makes us Jewish. That's what being a holy people is all about.



## ABOUT **BERNARDO HALPERIN**

Bernardo Halperin is a Junior at Patrick Henry High School. He is the Founding President of NCSY's Jewish Club at Patrick Henry High School and will be joining San Diego's Executive Teen Leadership Board this coming year.

# KEDUSHA DURING SHAVUOT

BY RACHEL SRAGOVICZ



Kedusha, or sanctity, is an important and central theme in Judaism. It implies that one should live their life morally and abstain from things that are wrong. We should want to be holy because it is bringing us closer to God. Leading a lifestyle of “prisha” means to not only hold yourself back because of appreciation towards human nature, but have a natural instinct to treat yourself and the world with care. It is important that we have the natural desire to do good and not just fear God’s punishment. God desires man to achieve happiness by living life in line with his essential nature.

Chazal did not fully partake of the pleasures of this world. This does not mean that they sought after an austere existence. They did not believe in repressing their desires simply because they felt there was a virtue in moral restrictions. Chazal did enjoy the benefits that God offered in this

world. We are told that Rebbi was very wealthy and there was nothing lacking from on his table. However, he did not direct his energies to the physical. He had the blessings of the physical world which he did not deny, but his energies were not drawn to the physical. His energies naturally flowed to chachma.

Whereas by lyov, Chazal tell us that the reason lyov lost his wealth was because he had an over attachment to materialism. He viewed it as an end in and of itself. However, after he realized that the physical was only a means to relate to Hashem, not an end, was he capable of regaining his riches.

During the holiday of Shavuot we are looking at the Torah as if it was the first time we were receiving it. With an open mind and new outlook we can change the way we live our lives and use the physical world to help direct us to God.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR **RACHEL SRAGOVICZ**

Rachel Sragovicz is a Freshman at La Jolla High School. She is an active member of NCSY’s Jewish Club at La Jolla High School and will be joining San Diego NCSY’s Teen Leadership Board this summer.

# HOLY SPEECH

BY SHOSHY MILSTEIN



3300 years ago at Mount Sinai, God said to the Jews, “You will be a kingdom of priests and a goy kadosh -- a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Today, how would you describe your life? Joyous? Stressful? Maybe successful or fulfilling? How many of us would describe at least a significant part our lives as holy? Have we lost touch with holiness, and in what ways can we find and create kedusha in our everyday lives?

While the exact definition of kedusha, or holiness, is hard to find, Rashi explains (in his commentary on Leviticus 1:1) that God spoke to the prophets using “lashon tuma- impure language”, but speaks to Moses using “lashon chibah, affectionate language”. Since chibah, affection, and kedusha, holiness, are both described as the opposite of tuma-impurity, it is possible to look at impurity as the opposite of affection, and kedusha as a type of affection.

If kedusha is intimacy, then its opposite, tuma, would be distance and disconnection. Loshon harah, speech that

destroys relationships, is inherently impure. During biblical times the act of lashon harah produced visible leprous abrasions, requiring isolation and ritual purification. Similarly, Rabbi Menachem Recanati said, “Kedusha is the preservation of the unity of the worlds, and tuma is the ‘troublemaker who separates close-ones.” Lashon harah in biblical times literally separated close ones by the consequence of isolation. Today, lashon harah separates close ones spiritually and emotionally by creating a break in the relationship.

So what is one way to fill your life with a little more kedusha? Try to refrain from speaking lashon harah, or to notice when impure words or gossip is being spoken and see if there is a way to stop or avoid it. Generally speaking, take time to work on your relationships and “closeness”. Whether that be your relationship to God, to your parents and family, or even yourself.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR SHOSY MILSTEIN

Shoshy Milstein is a Junior at Coleman Tech Charter School. She is a strong leader who will continue to lead her peers as a member of San Diego NCSY's Executive Leadership Board this coming year.

# CHOICE & CONTROL

BY SHAYNA FARAJZADEH AND REBECCA RAOUFPUR



B'har (Hebrew for "On the mount") is the 32nd weekly Torah portion. It is made up of 2,817 Hebrew letters, 737 Hebrew words, and 57 verses, and can occupy about 99 lines in a Torah Scroll.

The parashah tells the laws of the Sabbatical year (Shmita) and limits on debt servitude (a person's pledge of their labor or services as security for the repayment for a debt or other obligation.) Its basically a collection of laws which teach us about holiness.

To be holy is to be distinct, separate in a class by oneself. This is an important lesson for us to take to heart in today's world because of the increased importance holiness should play in our lives. Holiness is passed by ritual, prayer, your connection with g-d, formal

declaration, and the following of laws. We can often forget how holy we all are. It is easy to shift our focus from our neshamas which hold our holiness. But it so important to control our thoughts and actions to focus on holiness. We have been given the gift of control. We have control over our minds, our hearts, and can decide to focus on our neshama and take control of our holiness. We can make the world and ourselves good and through that keep of connection with God strong.



## ABOUT SHAYNA AND REBECCA

Shayna and Rebecca are Freshman at University City High School where they are active board members of NCSY's Jewish club on campus. They will be joining San Diego NCSY's Teen Leadership Board this coming year. No, they're not sisters, but they'll try and convince you otherwise.

# TEMPORARY KEDUSHA

BY SHIRAN ARUSI



There's a very interesting idea concerning Har Sinai and what it means to us. We know that by far the most significant event that happened to the Jewish people was on Har Sinai- Matan Torah. However, today we aren't going out looking for Har Sinai or pushing our way to daven there or take a tour of this incredible landmark. Why is that? Furthermore, why are we so intent on visiting Har Habayit in Jerusalem? Sure, it's holy, but so is Har Sinai. Is it because it's just in a more convenient location? Or because it's such a controversial issue today? I think it's definitely something deeper than that.

Har Sinai represents temporary Kedusha, whereas, Har Habayit represents a more permanent Kedusha. So what exactly is the difference between these two? Har Sinai was just a mountain top that was made temporarily Kadosh and used as a specific mission for a certain thing which represents the spiritual high and spontaneous inspiration we feel right after hearing a good shiur or getting back from a great Shabbaton. It's temporary, and who knows how long it will last. Har Habayit represents permanent Kedusha, the consistent things we connect with in our lives, and something that we will always make holy, like Israel or the Torah which will always be permanent in our lives.

The beauty of Har Sinai is that although it was a place with such temporary Kedusha, we

were able to receive on it the most amazing and permanent Kedusha we ever received as a nation. So what exactly are we supposed to take from this? As a nation, we need to be able to understand this concept in a deeper way- to understand that something temporary and something permanent actually go hand-in-hand. To appreciate the now and the spontaneous, but also, to master a routine and to build a connection with that. In simpler words, we can't build a routine out of nothing and with no meaning. We'd get bored and give it up because it will lack a solid foundation. Furthermore, we can't build a connection with spontaneous inspiration because it can go away within a few days and then we're left with nothing. For example, davening- you could just look at it as a routine that you do every day, but get bored of, or you could get little boosts of inspiration here and there that will actually make your daily davening so much more meaningful. So it's completely fine and not at all degrading for something to be temporarily kadosh because in order to fully connect with Hashem, our relationship must be built on both Kedushas. We can't live without both or else we're not giving our all to Hashem. Hashem leaves for us these little moments of inspiration to encourage us to connect with Him. We must understand that and use them to boost and sharpen our connection that we have with Him and just keep growing from it.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR SHIRAN ARUSI

Mazel Tov! Shiran Arusi just got engaged! She is currently studying at Bar Ilan University after spending a year learning Torah at Midreshet Moriah and making Aliyah. Although she is a native of El Paso, TX she attended Torah High School of San Diego and was a member of NCSY's Regional Board.



# KIDUSH HAYOM

BY NILI SHORE



I love Shabbos. We spend the entire week working hard and dealing with monetary things, but once we get to Shabbos all that stress and hard work is put to rest. Throughout the week we may do things to bring holiness or Kedusha into our lives, like saying our morning prayers, saying brachot before and after eating and drinking, being kind and helpful to others, etc. But the holiness we experience on Shabbos does not compare to the holiness we experience during the week. The Kedusha that is present on Shabbos is all encompassing. There are no distractions or laborious jobs getting in the way of our connection to Hashem. We must celebrate Shabbos because it is one of the Ten Commandments. We light candles to symbolize Shalom Bayit or peace in the home. We dress in elegant attire to reinforce the Kedusha

of Shabbos. We take our time to pray. We spend the day learning Torah. We eat and drink special and symbolic foods, like wine, challah, cholent, kugel, and gefilta fish. We even get to say an extra section in davening on Shabbos called Musaf. We are able to fulfill so many more mitzvot on Shabbos thus bringing down Kedusha into our lives. After saying Havdalah, which is the final blessing of Shabbos, we enter the new week feeling rejuvenated and recharged to take on whatever lies ahead in the week to come. Those who keep Shabbos have a greater sense of Kedusha and faith in Hashem throughout the week. May every Shabbos from now be experienced with the highest levels of Kedusha and more.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR NILI SHORE

Nili Shore is currently a Junior at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. She was an active member of NCSY's leadership board while in High School and NCSY's Alumni Group. She is still a leader in her Jewish community in New York at Stern College.




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A parent's dream is to watch  
their children grow up and  
be successful, happy, and  
productive members of society.

Watching Adam and Chava over the  
past almost 10 years achieve that  
goal in San Diego has been beyond  
fulfilling. We are so proud of you!

May they continue to be successful,  
happy, and productive wherever  
their life journey takes them.

Adam and Chava, you make us  
proud in all that you do!!!!

We love you very much!!!!

**Mommie and Daddy**  
(aka Mawa and Poppy Simon)




**The Jewish Federation of  
San Diego County would like  
to thank Adam Simon for his  
service and dedication to  
our Jewish community.**



**Jewish Federation**  
OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY







Mazel Tov Adam and Chava  
for the amazing contribution  
you have made to inspiring our  
children and the community.


The position may get filled, but  
you will never be replaced!

We wish you Hatzlacha in all  
your future endeavors.

We will miss you.

**Hilda and Jeremy  
Cohen and family**





We would like to thank  
Adam and Erica (Chava) Simon  
for all their hard work and  
dedication to our community.


**Philip and Dorit Silverman**

## Adam and Chava,

You have always been the most incredible role models for the young men and young women of San Diego - and for us.

We will greatly miss you as you fulfill all of our greatest aspirations - to live and study Torah in Eretz Yisrael.


With great love and admiration,  
**Rabbi Michael and  
Chavi Peikes**



Dedicated to a couple who  
have impacted the lives of  
our youth and have helped  
change the face of our city.

With deep appreciation and  
admiration and blessings  
for a future dedicated  
to Harbotzas Torah.


**Rabbi and Mrs. Wohlgelernter  
and Congregation Adat Yeshurun**



Thank you to Rabbi Adam and Chava Simon for their selfless dedication to SCY High and the teens of the San Diego-La Jolla Jewish community! Your enthusiasm, innovative spirit, and commitment to our teens' spiritual growth have been invaluable.

We wish you and your family our warmest blessings as you fulfill your dream and make Aliyah this summer.

With Love and Gratitude,  
**Your SCY High Family**



**THANK YOU TO RABBI ADAM  
AND CHAVA SIMON FOR ALL  
THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR  
THE YOUTH OF SAN DIEGO.**

Your energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the work that you do for our teens will be sorely missed. Wishing you and your beautiful family much hatzlacha as you embark on this next wonderful phase of your lives.

May you merit to truly build a bayit ne'eman b'yisrael.

We are sure it will be a place of refuge for many San Diego alumni.

Our best wishes,  
**Mike, Karen, Liam, Joey,  
Elie, and Nadav Aron**



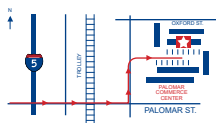
Thank you to NCSY for another great  
year of inspiring our teens!  
May you continue to go from strength to strength.

Yasher Koach to Rabbi Adam and Chava Simon  
We wish them Hatzlacha Rabbah, Bracha and  
Kol Tuv on their Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael.  
We'll Miss You Guys!

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Adam & Chava,  
Thank you for all you have  
done in San Diego through  
NCSY. Wishing you the best in  
your new adventure in Israel.

**Jorge, Judith, Dania & Bernardo**

Thank you Adam and Chava  
for all your hard work!

**Esther and Larry Kaplan**



I assume when you say Kedusha, you are referring to the sense as in perush Rashi, at the beginning of Kedoshim: גדר עריות... This matter is one of the foundations of my artwork, to separate from the tendency of art to descend into the depths of tumah...to produce art that is the quintessence of Kedusha, pure and directed entirely toward the spiritual; this ambition being at it's source: davka this, separating one's thoughts from ta'avot....

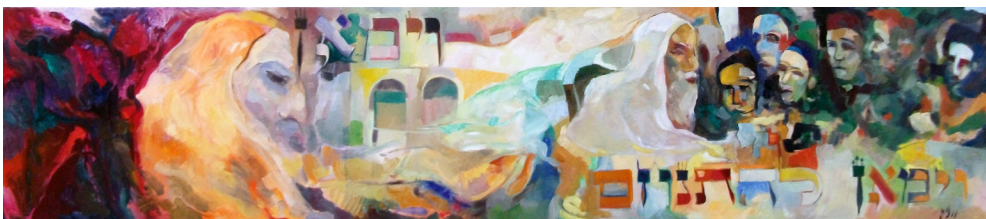
It is important for us to attach ourselves to the Torah, at whatever level that I can. If I do a painting of a 'simple' statement of our sages such as, for example, : Hillel said: "If I am not for myself who will be for me.."; can I say that I really understand this? I understand what I understand, but the greater depth of the Torah is always beyond me. Thus, I permit myself, even encourage myself to grapple with the deeper aspects of the Torah; even if all that I understood of them was how the shapes of the letters appear to my eyes, it would be could to paint these subjects, for I am attaching myself to Kedushah.

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