



# Business with *Honor*

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*Creating a Kiddush Hashem  
in the Workplace*

01.01.26



**Business**  
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לעילוי נשמת  
ר' יוסף בן ר' נחום יואל ז"ל  
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## Foreword

BY RAV MATTISYAHU SALOMON, ZT"l

**T**he standard *Kedushah* begins with the words, “We will sanctify Your Name in this world as they sanctify it in the heavens above.” These words are not meant as an expression of praise for Hashem; rather, they are a supplication, a plea that emerges from the depths of every Jew’s heart. Twice daily, we beseech Hashem to give us the opportunity to sanctify His Name in this world just as the *malachim* sanctify His Name before the *Kisei Hakavod*.

The theme of kiddush Hashem continues through the other versions of *Kedushah*, as well. In *Mussaf* (nusach Ashkenaz) on Shabbos morning, *Kedushah* begins with the words, “We will revere You and we will sanctify You, like the secret of the speech of the holy fiery angels.” The Vilna Gaon explains that the word *naaritzcha*, “we will revere You,” indicates that we are prepared to give up our lives for the sake of *kiddush shem Shamayim*. Similarly, the version of *Kedushah* recited in *nusach Sefard* states, “They will give You a crown — the *malachim*, the masses Above, with Your nation Yisrael, those who are gathered together below.” Just as the *malachim* in Heaven sanctify Hashem’s Name and create a “crown” for Him, the Jewish people togeth-

er do the same. In what way do we give a “crown” to Hashem? The *navi* states, “He said, ‘You are My servant, Yisrael in whom I take glory. (*Yeshayah* 49:3)’” Hashem prides Himself, so to speak, on the fact that He can call the Jewish people His “servants.” When a Jew can be recognized as a servant of Hashem, when all of his actions and words revolve around the fulfillment of Hashem’s Will, he effectively creates Hashem’s “crown”; he becomes a living symbol of Hashem’s royalty.

When a Jewish person leaves this world and his children wish to accumulate additional merits for him, they say *Kaddish* on his behalf. What is the significance of saying *Kaddish* for a person who has passed on? Why is it so important?

*Kaddish* begins with the words “*yisgadel v’yiskadesh shmei rabbah* — may His great Name be exalted and sanctified.” Our mission in life is to increase Hashem’s honor in the world; that is what Hashem desires of His creations, and that is the purpose for which He fashioned the entire world. If we pay attention to the meaning of this *tefillah*, then we will recognize that each of us bears a weighty responsibility to bring about kiddush Hashem in the course of our lives ev-

ery day. This is a wonderful way to continue the *avodah* of a *niftar* in bringing honor to Hashem, and will certainly provide the *niftar* with many merits.

The *navi* tells us that in the times of Mashiach, “I will be exalted and I will be sanctified, and I will be recognized before the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I am Hashem” (*Yechezkel* 38:23). When Mashiach comes, the entire world will perceive the honor of Hashem with the greatest possible clarity. Which members of the Jewish people will live to experience that revelation of *kavod Shamayim*?

The answer is revealed by the *navi* (*Tzefaniah* 3:9-13): “The remnant of Yisrael will not commit injustice and will not speak falsehood, and deceptive speech will not be found in their mouths.” When Mashiach comes, the only Jewish people who survive will be those who are not blemished by corruption, who always conduct their affairs with the fullest honesty and integrity. Why is this the deciding factor?

The *Smag* explains that the non-Jewish nations are not capable of perceiving the true value of the Torah and mitzvos of the Jewish people. They can discern the greatness of Klal Yisrael only by virtue of our external conduct, by the way we deal with other human beings. If Mashiach were to come for a nation that is not honest and upright in its business dealings, the nations of the world would be shocked; it would seem that the

people who are beloved to Hashem are corrupt and disreputable individuals, and this would lead to a massive chillul Hashem. Mashiach’s arrival, with all of the wonders and miracles that will accompany it, must therefore be delayed until the Jewish people conduct themselves in a way that will cause this momentous occasion to lead to a proper kiddush Hashem.

We must all resolve to be more cautious about upholding Hashem’s honor and to remain constantly focused on the question of whether our actions will result in a kiddush Hashem or, *chalilah*, the opposite. It is important for every individual to resolve to perform an act of kiddush Hashem at least once a day. If a person lives a life that is filled with chillul Hashem, of what value will it be for his children to recite *Kaddish* after his death? Our responsibility is therefore to see to it that our very lives become a form of “*Kaddish*,” that we live to sanctify Hashem’s Name.

This book is filled with valuable insights and guidance on the topic of kiddush Hashem, which is of extraordinarily great importance in this generation in particular. Nowadays, it is vital for every Jew to be committed to increasing the degree of kiddush Hashem in the world and avoiding the desecration of Hashem’s Name at all costs; that is Klal Yisrael’s mission at this juncture in history. If a person makes a point of studying this subject regularly, he will certainly develop a greater sensitivity to the issue, and he will succeed in creating a kiddush Hashem in everything that he does. May we all be part of the “remnant” of the Jewish people who will witness the awesome revelation of Hashem’s greatness and sanctity before the eyes of the entire world. ■



## Introduction

### Defining Kiddush Hashem: An All-Encompassing Mitzvah

The mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem is far more than a simple imperative to behave nicely in public; it is a precept with many facets and with far-reaching implications. It is the mission of the Jewish people and the purpose of all of our mitzvos. It has bearing on our *middos*, and on our conduct in private and in public alike. It can require a person to give up his life to avoid a sin, but it can have almost innumerable applications in the course of life itself as well. What is the unifying theme that connects all the aspects of this *mitzvah*? How can we understand the basic definition of *kiddush Hashem*?

Rav Chaim Friedlander (*Sifsei Chaim al HaTorah, Parshas Emor*) explains that the act of being “*mekadesh*” something, means attributing great value to that thing. For example, there is a *mitzvah* to be “*mekadesh*” the *kohanim*, which we observe by inviting them to lead a *zimun*, giving them the first *aliyah* when the Torah is read, and so forth. Through these actions, we demonstrate that the *kohanim* possess a high standing in our society; we treat them as people of great value

because they are the servants of Hashem.

In a similar vein, *kiddush Hashem* means attaching superlative importance to Hashem and His Will. Being *mekadesh shem shomayim* means expressing through our words or deeds the notion that Hashem’s Will supersedes everything else, that it is of more importance and value than anything else in our lives. When a person demonstrates this, whether it is through an action performed in private or a public act, he fulfills the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*.

An act performed in private can create a *kiddush Hashem* by expressing the pure desire to do Hashem’s Will. When a person performs a *mitzvah* solely because Hashem has commanded it – rather than for the sake of personal gain of any sort – he demonstrates that the Divine Will takes precedence over any other considerations. When a person resists the temptation to sin because of the Will of Hashem, he demonstrates that the *ratzon Hashem* is of greater importance than his own desires. And when a person gives up his very life for the sake of Hashem’s Will, he demonstrates that he values the Divine Will even more than his own existence. Even if these

actions are not witnessed by other human beings, a *kiddush Hashem* is effected because of this demonstration of priorities.

At the same time, when a person's actions are witnessed by others, he can create a *kiddush Hashem* even if his personal motivations are not pure. When a religious Jew speaks pleasantly or demonstrates some other

**If a person who is visibly religious does not adhere to the higher standard that is expected of him, it will lower his observers' respect for Hashem and the Torah.**

form of refinement, he may cause others to have greater regard for Jews who observe the Torah, even if his behavior was not driven by the purest intentions. Likewise, a person who speaks highly of

*talמידים* or of others who exhibit *yiras shamayim* may increase his listeners' respect for such people. A person may also increase others' appreciation for Hashem Himself by speaking about Divine *hashgachah*, and giving thanks to Hashem, or through various other means. Even if he did not have the specific intent to demonstrate the importance of Hashem and His Will, the impact of his words and actions on others will nonetheless constitute a *kiddush Hashem*.

As a corollary to this definition of *kiddush Hashem*, a *chillul Hashem* is the exact opposite: Whenever a person's words or actions

appear to detract from the value or importance of Hashem's Will, a *chillul Hashem* has been created. For this reason, whenever a person performs an *aveirah*, his actions contain an element of *chillul Hashem*. Even if the sin is committed in private, the *chillul Hashem* stems from the mere fact that the transgressor has given in to his own desires in violation of Hashem's Will. In public, the danger is even greater: If a person commits an act in public that merely *appears* to be an *aveirah*, even if it is not technically sinful, it will still constitute a *chillul Hashem*, since it will cause others to lose their respect for the Divine Will. This applies to behaviors that others consider loathsome or repulsive, or even to a simple lack of etiquette. If a person who is visibly religious does not adhere to the higher standard that is expected of him, it will lower his observers' respect for Hashem and the Torah.

According to the *Nefesh Hachaim* (*shaar* 1 ch. 11), this is the message of the custom of lifting ourselves up on our toes at the words "*kadosh kadosh kadosh*" in *Kedushah*; this practice alludes to the idea that our mission is to raise ourselves, along with everything else in the world, to attain a state of *kedushah*. The definition of true *kiddush Hashem* is precisely that: attributing great value to Hashem by elevating everything in the world to serve the Divine Will. The failure to do that, by definition, means that a person has placed his own desires above the dictates of the *ratzon Hashem* – and that, as we have seen, is precisely the meaning of *chillul Hashem*. That is why our mandate of *kiddush Hashem* is so incredibly vast and all-encompassing.

While *kiddush Hashem* is a mitzvah of overarching importance, it is also a mitzvah that is frequently misunderstood.

It requires us to achieve a delicate balance

## The Kiddush Hashem Imperative: Benefits and Misconceptions

that we must be certain we understand as we embark on our mission of promoting *kavod Shamayim*. While the **goal** of *kiddush Hashem* may relate to the impressions we create in the minds of others, the **methods** by which we create *kiddush Hashem* have much more to do with our own observance of the Torah than with the impression we project.

First of all, *kiddush Hashem* does not mean that we must proselytize or preach to the nations of the world in any way about the truth of Yiddishkeit. Our task is simply to live as proper reflections of the Will of Hashem, and Hashem Himself will see to it that the truth becomes known.

Secondly, our efforts to be *mekadeish shem Shamayim* should never be driven by a desire for honor for ourselves or to be accepted by society. Rather, our sole motivation should be to increase the honor of Hashem. And while we must be careful to be polite and respectful in our interactions with all human beings, we can never sacrifice the precious boundaries of *kedushah* that distinguish us from the nations. We can *make* a difference only if we are different, and that means adhering rigorously to all of the rules that set us apart and make us holy.

Another important principle to keep in mind is that before we can create an outward *kiddush Hashem*, we must make certain that we ourselves *inwardly* bring honor to Hashem. It is not sufficient merely to work on ourselves so that we reflect the Torah's ideals in the public domain. The *tzelem Elokim* must be an intrinsic part of us, shaping our actions both in private and in front of others. In fact, the mitzvos we perform in private are even

more important than those we do in public. Authenticity is a key to exerting an impact on others. If a person's private observance of the Torah and mitzvos is not in keeping with his outward display of piety, his hypocrisy will taint his external actions to the point that others will eventually realize that he is not what he pretends to be.

It is only logical, then, that we should not gauge the correctness of our actions by the degree to which they gain the acceptance and approval of others. Our goal is not to impress others but rather to reflect the truth, and the truth can sometimes be unpopular. True *kiddush Hashem* means following the Will of Hashem regardless of what others think and withstanding any external pressures to deviate from it.

All of this, however, seems to give rise to a fundamental question: Why is there a need for us to focus on *kiddush Hashem* at all? If the *results* of our actions are entirely a product of *siyata d'shmaya*, and our job is simply to observe the Torah and mitzvos to the best of our abilities without concern for the repercussions, then why do we even need to give

**Our goal is not to impress others but rather to reflect the truth, and the truth can sometimes be unpopular.**

thought to the particulars of this mitzvah?

To answer this question, we will share a number of the great benefits of a focus on kiddush Hashem, which clearly illustrate the importance of keeping it at the forefront of our minds. A review of these points will demonstrate that such a focus makes a significant contribution to the development of *sheleimus*.

**When a person feels that he has a unique purpose and mission in this world, this sense can propel him to accomplish things he might not otherwise have achieved.**

**1.** One clear benefit of keeping focused on kiddush Hashem is that it leads to increased caution to avoid the grave sin of chillul Hashem, a sin for which the transgressor is culpable even when it is inadvertent. Often, chillul Hashem can be the tragic result of a minor error or simple carelessness, which a constant focus on kiddush Hashem can help avoid. In many situations, there can

be a danger of chillul Hashem even if one is not doing anything technically wrong. A Jew must be careful to avoid creating even unfounded suspicions of wrongdoing, and he must refrain from behavior that is considered a violation of local etiquette even if it is not intrinsically wrong (provided, of course, that the norms of society do not clash with the *ratzon Hashem*).

**2.** It can also help us attain the highest level of *avodas Hashem*: serving Hashem *lishmah*. According to *Mesillas Yescharim* (ch. 19), the definition of *lishmah* is the intent to serve Hashem in order to bring more honor to Him. Hashem's Will is for every human being to serve and honor Him, and when we serve Hashem with this in mind, we unite our own *ratzon* with His, thereby achieving the ideal of *lishmah*.

**3.** It can create many more avenues of *avodas Hashem* and thereby imbue a person with a sense of mission to bring honor to Hashem regardless of his profession or what he does with his life. A focus on kiddush Hashem gives meaning to seemingly mundane activities — shopping, driving a car, cleaning one's home, and even maintaining good hygiene — by placing them in the context of the broader picture of kiddush Hashem. This can be a powerful source of motivation. When a person feels that he has a unique purpose and mission in this world, this sense can propel him to accomplish things he might not otherwise have achieved. When suffering befalls a person, *rachmana l'vzlan*, he can find meaning within his suffering by recognizing the tremendous kiddush Hashem that results from his *emunah* and acceptance of Hashem's *gezeiros*.

**4.** It creates a sense of longing for the final Geulah, which will be the ultimate manifestation of kiddush Hashem. Yearning for the Geulah is one of the thirteen principles of our faith and a vital mindset for every Jew. If a person is not careful to avoid chillul Hashem, and if kiddush Hashem is not on the forefront of his consciousness, can he truly claim that he is awaiting the Geulah, which is the time when the entire world will accept Hashem's sovereignty?

**5.** It can serve as an antidote to narcissism. A person who lives to be *mekadesh shem Sha-*

*mayim* recognizes that his task in this world is not merely to better himself but also to benefit others. This awareness can engender sensitivity to the needs of others and prevent a person from becoming absorbed in his own personal growth. It can contribute to a feeling of responsibility to the *klal* and a recognition that one's own sins can have a deleterious effect on others as well. A sense of responsibility to others is so important that Rav Chaim Volozhiner used to constantly remind his son that man was created not for himself but rather to benefit others in any way that he is capable of doing so (introduction to *Nefesh Hachaim*).

**6.** The sense of pride of a Jew who lives for kiddush Hashem will also be a much healthier, more balanced sense of pride. When a Jew is aware that he is among those who were chosen to be *mekadesh shem Shamayim* and who were given the Torah and mitzvos as tools to achieve that result, his pride in his role will not lead him to denigrate others who do not live in accordance with the Torah. Degrading others would be the opposite of what he was meant to do, and a proper sense of pride in the mission of kiddush Hashem should preclude a person from doing such a thing.

**7.** We will be able to attain true respect for all human beings by seeing their potential. Rather than viewing non-Jews as people who were created simply to challenge us and harass us, a person who understands the principle of kiddush Hashem will recognize that they, too, were created to serve and recognize the Master of the Universe — and that a Jew's job is to facilitate that.

**8.** The imperative of kiddush Hashem also goes along with the principle of *derech erez kadmah laTorah*, a concept that is often forgotten due to the significant emphasis that we tend to place on *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*. Overlooking *derech erez* is a grave

mistake, for when a person excels in his Torah scholarship but fails to treat others properly, not only does his Torah study itself lose its value, but he is considered even worse off for the fact that he is a *talmid chacham* and therefore creates an even greater chillul Hashem. The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Vayikra 429*) states, in fact, that even an animal carcass is considered better than a *talmid chacham* who lacks *derech erez*. If we keep in mind our obligation to create kiddush Hashem, we will certainly remember that Torah study cannot be divorced from *derech erez*; they are two parts of our mission to bring honor to Hashem, and it is imperative that we remain faithful to both.

**9.** It can help us see the deeper meaning and tap into the power of *tefillos* such as *Aleinu Le-shabeiach*, *Aseh Lemaan Shemecha*, and the *Yehei Shemei Rabbah* of Kaddish, all of which are strongly related to the theme of kiddush Hashem. It can also enable us to achieve a much deeper understanding of many of the Torah's commandments, including the *Yamim Tovim*, of which kiddush Hashem is such a fundamental component.

It should now be clear that a focus on kiddush Hashem can play a vital role in our

**A sense of responsibility to others is so important that Rav Chaim Volozhiner used to constantly remind his son that man was created not for himself but rather to benefit others.**

achievement of the Torah's ideals in many areas. How do we act on what we have learned, develop these sensitivities, and ingrain them in our emotions? The following are a few basic tips.

First of all, the *Chinuch* teaches us that our inner selves are shaped by our behavior; our actions mold our minds and hearts. If we *act* with care to avoid chillul Hashem, then our actions may influence our emotions and we will succeed in internalizing these sensitivities.

Secondly, we must study the way kiddush Hashem works so that we understand how the Jewish people bring honor to Hashem. If we are not fully cognizant of the way our actions have an effect, then it will be difficult

for us to become emotionally committed to the idea of kiddush Hashem. But if we reach the point where we do comprehend this, then it will penetrate to our emotions and we will be more profoundly committed to bringing honor to Hashem.

**The *Chinuch* teaches us that our inner selves are shaped by our behavior; our actions mold our minds and hearts.**

Let us take the lessons we have learned and not allow any of our efforts to generate *kedushah* and serve Hashem to be wasted with avoidable situations of chillul Hashem. Then we will merit experiencing the ultimate kiddush Hashem of the final Geulah, *bimheirah b'ya-meinu*. ■

## The Businessman's Mission

The imperative of kiddush Hashem creates many ways to bring meaning into one's life. We understand intuitively how a person steeped in learning can lead a meaningful life through his spiritual pursuits, but it can be much more difficult to perceive how the life of an "average" working man can have such resounding significance. A closer examination, however, will reveal that the world of *parnassah* can yield countless opportunities for kiddush Hashem, giving every working Jew an opportunity to make a very meaningful impact.

Every army has troops who fight on the front lines of battle, engaging the enemy directly, while other personnel handle operations behind the lines. In the battle for kiddush Hashem, who are the people manning the front lines, who come in direct contact with other nations and personally demonstrate to them what it means to be Hashem's people? In today's world, the answer is clear — the working men and women

In his introduction to *Halachos of Other Peoples Money*, by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner, Rav Mattisyahu Salomon writes that the *mitzvos*



# Chapter 1

these people for the rest of their lives.

In *Parashas Vezos Habrachah* (*Devarim* 33:19), Moshe Rabbeinu's blessing to Zevulun includes the words "Amim bar yikra'u — Nations will gather at the mountain." What does this statement mean? Rashi explains that Zevulun's business dealings with other nations caused merchants from abroad to visit Eretz Yisrael for commercial purposes. Once they arrived in Eretz Yisrael, they would decide to visit Yerushalayim and

learn a little bit more about the Jewish people. They would then be so impressed with what they saw that they would abandon their pagan religions and convert. Thus, Zevulun's business endeavors were a catalyst for massive amounts of kiddush Hashem.

If a person lives with the sense that he has a mission to accomplish even in the context of his (seemingly) mundane business dealings, he can be capable of performing earth-shatter-

ing acts of kiddush Hashem.

That is exactly what took place at the closing of one extraordinarily lucrative business deal on the west coast of the United States, after years of intense negotiations. The parties were about to conclude the deal, and the buyers and sellers had gathered in a conference room to work out the final details. One of the major investors was a Mr. Gershon Kamin (name changed) of New York, a man whose participation was critical to the deal

and who stood to earn a fortune from its successful conclusion.

During the course of the final discussions, Gershon became very disturbed by one of the attorneys working for the other side. The man was simply unable to refrain from using vulgar language. Every other word he uttered was an expletive of some sort. Gershon politely asked the lawyer to refrain from using profanities, and the man promised to do his best. But the use of such language was apparently deeply ingrained in his personality, and the lawyer continued to slip. Finally, Gershon grew incensed and warned the lawyer, "If you utter even one more profanity, the deal is off!" It did not take long before the lawyer inadvertently let slip an offensive word again, and Gershon simply walked out of the room, scuttling the entire, unimaginably lucrative, deal.

Larry Fisher (name changed), another religious Jew who was present at the proceedings, was shocked by Gershon's abrupt departure. Larry was aware of the years of hard work that had gone into the deal. Where had Gershon derived the inner strength to make such a sacrifice? Larry lived with this question for several years, until he happened to hear a lecture from a noted *rav* that delivered the answer.

The *rav* told a story about a man named Gershon who had been learning at the Telshe Yeshivah in Cleveland, Ohio, decades earlier. As a *bachur*, he had demonstrated great promise, and he seemed to have a stellar future in the *beis medrash*. But Gershon's parents wanted him to pursue a career, and with great reluctance, he agreed to leave the yeshivah to obtain a secular degree.

On his last day in the yeshivah, Gershon was learning diligently in the *beis medrash* when he was summoned to the office of the

*rosh yeshivah*, Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, for a last farewell conversation. Gershon was certain that the *rosh yeshivah* would admonish him to maintain his learning *sedarim* or to continue to daven with a *minyán* when he entered the business world. But Rav Katz had something else in mind. "Gershon," he said, "you are about to leave the shelter of the yeshiva's walls and venture into the outside world, where every step you take will be a test. You must always have one ambition, one concern above all else: to sanctify Hashem's Name. Remember that everything you do will be either a kiddush Hashem or a chillul Hashem, and choose accordingly!" Gershon took the *rosh yeshivah's* words to heart, and that principle became the guiding light of his career.

After the lecture, Larry approached the *rav* and asked, "By any chance, was the boy in your story Gershon Kamin?"

Shocked the *rav* exclaimed, "How did you know that?"

"Because I saw with my own eyes just how deep an impact the *rosh yeshivah's* message left on him," Larry replied with feeling (as told by Rav Avraham Chaim Feuer).

Years after that fateful encounter, Gershon was able to sacrifice the deal of a lifetime because the *rosh yeshivah's* words had infused him with a sense of mission even within the context of his career. He lived to serve Hashem and to sanctify His name, with no other considerations, and that determination is what gave him the power to make the choices he did.

In any profession or field, every Jew can do the same. If a person maintains a single-minded focus on serving Hashem and sanctifying His Name, all of his endeavors will be filled with meaning, and his life will

become an unending sacred mission.

## » IN REVIEW

For those of us who earn a living by working in the secular world, our daily lives provide us with countless opportunities to create a kiddush Hashem. Naturally, these opportunities also come with the constant peril of chillul Hashem. Although our purpose in working is to support our families, kiddush Hashem must be one of our top priorities. We must recognize that our offices, conference rooms, and stores are all on the front lines of an epic war — the war for kiddush Hashem. ■

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## Chapter 2

### Bnei Torah and Derech Eretz

**R**abbi Shapiro was once shopping in a department store when an elderly non-Jewish man approached him and exclaimed, “*L’chaim!*” When Rabbi Shapiro did not respond, the man told him, “Do you know where I learned that word? Fifteen years ago, I had a friend who was a religious Jew, and he taught me the word. He was an incredible person!”

At this point, Rabbi Shapiro’s interest was piqued. “What was so incredible about your friend?” he asked.

“We worked together in a factory,” the old man related. “One day, our boss told him that he had to lie to a customer in order for a sale to go through.” The old man’s eyes filled with tears and he began to shake with emotion. “Do you know what my friend did? He quit his job right then, that very day, to avoid dishonesty. What a man!”

That *frum* Jew made such a deep impression on his coworker that the man still remembered it fifteen years later. He shared the story with Rabbi Shapiro simply because he associated that virtuous act with the Jew-

ish religion.

The Gemara in Yoma (86a) states that the mitzvah to love Hashem requires us to make Hashem beloved to other people. The Gemara explains that when a ben Torah acts in a pleasant way, it causes people to admire those who study Torah. On the other hand, if such a person is unpleasant to others, it evokes ridicule toward those who study Torah. In short, when a person is outwardly identified by his Jewish appearance, his behavior reflects on the Jewish people and, as a result, on Hashem. If he acts appropriately, he brings honor to the Jewish people and to Hashem, but if he acts inappropriately, the opposite takes place, Heaven forbid.

But this enormous potential is mirrored by the equally grave danger of bringing disgrace, *chas v’shalom*, to Hashem and His people. When I was learning in Lakewood, Rav Matisyahu Salomon used to remind us regularly, “As you rush to *seider* every day, keep in mind the ultimate purpose of your Torah learning. You are coming to the beis medrash to spend four hours immersed in learning, in order to create a kiddush Hashem. If you spend the five-minute drive to the

yeshivah acting in a way that is not befitting a *ben Torah* — if you honk your horn rudely, cut off other drivers, tailgate, and act in other disrespectful or impolite ways — you will be doing the exact opposite of kiddush Hashem. Those five minutes could negate the effect of the next four hours of learning!”

Rav Matisyahu adds that often when *bnei Torah* incur the animosity of our non-Jewish neighbors, it is because we have failed to act with *derech erez*. If we do not take care to be respectful and courteous in our interactions with the world — when we drive, when we park, when we shop, when we work, and whenever we come in contact with other people — our actions become inextricably intertwined with their perception of religious Jews. The potential for chillul Hashem is truly frightening!

The *Mesillas Yeshtarim* (ch. 11) states that the more learned a person is, the greater responsibility he has to conduct himself in a way that is beyond reproach. Part of honoring the Torah, he explains, is for a person who studies it to excel in behaving in an upright, refined way. A person who fails to behave appropriately brings disgrace to Torah study and creates a *chilul Hashem*, for Hashem gave us the Torah as a vehicle for the attainment of perfection.

This is also how we can understand the concept of *derech erez kadmah l’Torah*. How is it possible for *anything* to take precedence

over Torah? The answer is that the purpose of Torah study is to bring about *kiddush shem Shamayim*. A person who lacks *derech erez* cannot create a kiddush Hashem. His Torah study would be for naught if its ultimate purpose is not realized.

Nowadays, our educational system focuses heavily on the observance of *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*, on learning diligently and amassing knowledge, but we often overlook the fundamental importance of cultivating proper *middos*. How do we avoid losing sight of the importance of *derech erez*? If we remember that the ultimate purpose even of *mitzvos bein adam lamakom* is

kiddush Hashem, we will certainly recall the need to focus on *bein adam l’chaveiro* as well. Both aspects of our service of Hashem are part of one unified package, and neither can survive without the other.

As we pursue our Torah study and mitzvah observance to the best of our abilities, let us take extra care to preserve our *derech erez* in our interactions with the outside world, so that we will never lose sight of our true ultimate goal of being *mekadesh shem Shamayim*. ■

**Do you know what my friend did? He quit his job right then, that very day, to avoid dishonesty. What a man!**



## Chapter 3

### Chillul Hashem and Responsibility to the *Klal*

Sometimes, a religious Jew makes every effort to create a kiddush Hashem but finds that his efforts are of no avail. Moreover, a Jew may sometimes find himself the subject of a non-Jew's bitter hatred even if he has done nothing to elicit the non-Jew's wrath. There can be any number of explanations for this phenomenon, but one common — and highly unfortunate — cause of such occurrences is the chillul Hashem of another Jew.

We have learned that *achdus*, unity, is an important factor in the creation of kiddush Hashem for many reasons — because true kiddush Hashem is created only by a conglomerate of individuals working together to bring honor to Hashem, and because large groups of people have a powerful impact by virtue of their sheer numbers. But there is another reason: A *chillul Hashem* created even by one individual Jew can have potentially disastrous consequences for many other Jewish people. Consequently, it is vital to ensure that the entire Jewish people remain united in the quest to bring honor to Hashem, in order to ensure that no individual

fails in his observance of the Torah's precepts and creates a chillul Hashem.

In 1993, Rav Elya Svei *zt"l* addressed the annual convention of Agudath Israel in America in response to allegations that certain Jewish institutions had improperly obtained government funds. “[W]e cannot shrug off the smear against us by saying, ‘It was *that* institution . . . *their* actions,’” he proclaimed. “The *chillul Hashem* must be borne by all of us, for the status of Torah students has fallen. This affects us all . . . It is . . . the responsibility of the entire Klal Yisrael that there be no thieves among us” (*Jewish Observer*, January 1994).

But just as the *klal* bears the responsibility for every Jew, every individual Jew also carries a weighty responsibility on his own shoulders. A chillul Hashem created by a single Jew can have negative consequences for thousands of others. Every Jew should gauge the effects of his actions with the knowledge that they may have an impact on the entire nation.

We are all familiar with the halachic concept of *arvus*: a person who has already ful-

filled his own obligation to perform a certain mitzvah — such as reciting *Kiddush* or *Bircas Hamazon* — may perform the mitzvah again in order to help another Jew fulfill *his* obligation. In essence, the first Jew's performance of the mitzvah is considered to be lacking as long as his fellow has not also fulfilled it. In light of what we have learned, we can explain why this is so. The ultimate purpose of Klal Yisrael's existence and observance of the mitzvos is to bring honor to Hashem. The failure of any one Jew to do his share in this respect can detract from Hashem's honor, thus causing the entire *klal* to fail to achieve its purpose. Thus, every Jew's lapse can essentially have an effect on the entire nation.

As Rabbi Shimon Schwab *zt"l* once wrote about Jews who create horrendous desecrations of Hashem's Name through wrongdoing, “Those who make the headlines through deceit and swindle and smuggling and forging and defrauding the government and the public, no matter how devout they are in their outward appearance, have the blood of Klal Yisrael on their hands” (*Selected Writings*). Beyond the gravity of the misdeed itself, a person who engages in such forms of deceit and thievery is guilty of causing damage to the entire Jewish nation.

One crucial key to the prevention of chillul Hashem is the preservation of *shalom*, peaceful relations with our fellow Jews. We are all

aware that the Torah views *machlokes*, discord, as a grave transgression. But in addition to the inherent evil of strife, it is devastating for another reason as well: It results in the profanation of Hashem's Name.

**“Wait a minute,”  
the policeman  
interjected. “You  
don’t even know  
this man, and  
you’re going to  
entrust your kids to  
him?”**

In a *teshuvah*, the Noda B'Yehudah (second edition, *Yoreh Deah*, ch. 29) responds to a questioner who wished to protest against those who permitted the consumption of fish whose scales come off in boiling water: “If you listen to my advice, you will not make an issue . . . for they have what to rely on. As for your contention that there is a chillul Hashem, it would be a much greater chillul Hashem if the people see

that dissension is increasing . . . especially in this era, when the honor of Torah is diminishing and the lawless ones of the generation rejoice whenever they see two Jews embroiled in a dispute.” Clearly, when a halachic basis existed for a leniency, the Noda B'Yehudah recoiled from the possibility of dispute even more than he feared allowing the lenient practice to continue.

On the other side of the coin, some of the greatest instances of kiddush Hashem emerge from displays of Jewish unity, even on a small level.

A friend of mine, Rabbi Naftoli Steinfeld (name changed), was once driving near the Verrazano Bridge on a Friday afternoon when he spotted a disabled minivan at the side of the road, with a Jewish family standing beside it. The police had already come to the family's aid, but Rabbi Steinfeld decided to pull

over and see if he could be of any assistance. Since there was only a short time remaining until Shabbos, he offered to drive the other man's children to their destination while he finished dealing with the police. The other motorist gratefully accepted the offer.

"Wait a minute," the policeman interjected. "You don't even know this man, and you're going to entrust your kids to him?"

"Why not?" the other Jew grinned, to the policeman's amazement. "After all, we are all one family!"

## » IN REVIEW

While it may be tempting to ignore our own individual shortcomings, we must recognize that when these failings result in a chillul Hashem, we have a responsibility to the *klal* to improve ourselves. Especially today, when the actions of an individual can be quickly catapulted into the public eye, we must recognize that we each bear responsibility for how the world perceives the Jewish nation as a whole. This is similar to the halachic concept of *arvus*: when one person is lacking in his fulfillment of a mitzvah, the observance of the entire nation is not complete. ■



# Chapter 4

## Goal Oriented Yiddishkeit

It has been observed that human beings thrive when they feel they are living for a goal; people who lack a sense of purpose tend to feel worthless and aimless. Many people die shortly after retiring — possibly because without a sense of purpose, they lose their feelings of vitality. Moreover, having a goal is a vital ingredient for success in any endeavor; in fact, it is the *key* component. A study done in Yale University in 1953 found that only three percent of the graduates had a clear set of goals and had formulated a plan for achieving those goals. Twenty years later, in 1973, the researchers discovered that the financial worth of that three percent exceeded the combined worth of the other 97 percent.

In the secular world, the same advice is given to athletes, businessmen, students, and anyone else attempting to succeed in any endeavor: Envision your goal as clearly as possible, and you will have a much better chance of reaching your goal. When a person remains focused on a goal, it will be much more difficult for outside forces to distract him from it or prevent him from attaining it.

The same is true, *l'havdil*, of the spiritual mission of the Jewish people.

What is the ultimate goal of the Jewish people? As we have learned, it is to bring honor to Hashem, to sanctify His Name *completely* in this world. And *Chazal* have given us a program, a constant kiddush Hashem awareness campaign, to help us keep this objective steadfastly at the forefront of our minds. This program is our continual yearning for the Geulah, expressed by the words *Achakeh lo b'chol yom she'yavo*. If we spend every day truly waiting for Mashiach, and for the tremendous revelation of *kavod Shamayim* that will take place when he comes, then we can be sure that our energies will be used effectively in a way that is in line with that goal, and we will succeed much more quickly in generating kiddush Hashem.

Every successful business and organization needs to have a mission statement. Without a clear focus on that mission statement, they run the risk of failing in their mission. And every employee of the business must be aware of that mission statement. Imagine a hotel whose mission statement is to provide exemplary comfort and satisfaction to their

guests. If the chambermaids are unaware of that mission statement and think that their ultimate goal is to maintain the cleanliness of the rooms, they might disturb the guests in order to do so, thereby sabotaging the company's mission.

For the Jewish people, the same is true. If we are not constantly aware of our mission statement — the goal of kiddush Hashem — we run the risk of being caught up in the details and losing sight of the overall objective. Imagine this scenario. A *frum* woman receives a parking ticket, and two men approach her and offer to lie in court, claiming that the parking meter was broken, if she would give the money she saved to *tzedakah*. These men are deeply dedicated to some of the details of Yiddishkeit, but they have lost sight of the ultimate goal.

On the other hand, a person who succeeds in remaining focused on kiddush Hashem can achieve amazing results.

Who could imagine that the next-door neighbor of a yeshivah high school dormitory would be impressed and inspired by the boys who live there? Recently, the boys in a yeshivah high school dormitory were approached by their non-Jewish neighbor, who wanted, to their surprise, to present them with a gift of several basketballs and softballs. “I really appreciate having you guys as neighbors,” the man said fervently. “The boys are polite and respectful. They greet me every morning and are quiet and sensitive to the neighbors at night.”

One of the boys mentioned to the neighbor that the yeshivah was considering mov-

ing to another part of town, and the man was horrified. “If you guys move, I’m going with you. You guys make the neighborhood!” “Not only that, but if any of you ever needs a job, you can come to me. I am the manager of a hotel, and I don’t need any additional staff, but I would hire you guys anytime. I know that if I take care of you, your G-d will take care of me.” He paused, then added, “I used to be a sinful person, but I changed — because of you guys. When I see you boys walk-

ing to your school or even playing ball, I feel guilty about my way of life. Seeing you reminds me that G-d is watching everything I do.” Because these boys were so focused on the goal of kiddush Hashem, their actions inspired and uplifted others.

We must make kiddush Hashem our goal and dream in life — and only then will it become a reality.

## »» IN REVIEW

In Yiddishkeit, the spirit of the law — of the Torah — is defined by kiddush Hashem. The mission of the Jewish people is to be *mekadesh shem Shamayim*. It is vital for us to keep this in mind, for without this awareness, we may end up squandering our time and energies pursuing goals that are not truly ours. ■

**I am the manager of a hotel, and I don’t need any additional staff, but I would hire you guys anytime.**

I would hire you guys anytime. I know that if I take care of you, your G-d will take care of me.” He paused, then added, “I used to be a sinful person, but I changed — because of you guys. When I see you boys walk-



# Chapter 5

## The Magnetic Pull of Honesty

One of the things that are most detrimental to *kovod shamayim* is dishonesty. The *Sefer Hachinuch* states that there is nothing in the world that people find as repulsive as *sheker*, falsehood. This is an aversion that is built into the human psyche. For this reason, the Torah warns us to stay “far away” from falsehood (“*midvar sheker tirchak*”); this is an expression that is not used about any other prohibition. Even more than that, *Chazal* admonish us to “stay far away” from anything that even resembles falsehood. It should come as no surprise, then, that Rabbeinu Yonah states (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 1:47) that one of the few ways to rectify a *chillul Hashem* is to be honest and promote truthfulness and integrity. Even if a lie seems justified or beneficial, a person who cares about Hashem’s honor will steer clear of anything that smacks of dishonesty.

When we demonstrate honesty and integrity, we can have an enormous impact on other people. The following incident illustrates this: Shmuel Goldberg (name changed) once needed to have an important package shipped

from his home in Flatbush, and he failed to make it to the post office before it closed on Friday. On Sunday, when the post office is normally closed, he happened to drive past and noticed that the gates outside were open and a worker was loading packages onto a truck. Shmuel pulled up and asked the man if the office was open, but the worker told him that it wasn’t. “This is only for Amazon; they have a special arrangement for Sunday deliveries,” he explained.

“Would it be possible for you to do me a favor and accept this package anyway?” Shmuel asked politely. “It’s very important.” The worker looked at Shmuel, his gaze coming to rest on his *yarmulke*. To Shmuel’s surprise, the worker asked if he knew Reb Abish Brodt. “Of course,” Shmuel replied. “Everyone knows him!”

“In that case, I will do you the favor,” the worker said. “I worked for Abish and his family for 17 years, and it was an incredible experience that I will never forget. They were the most honest and kind employers I ever had.” After praising Reb Abish effusively, the non-Jewish postal worker suddenly launched into a rendition of Reb Abish’s famous *nig-*

gun for *Modeh Ani*, singing it with profound feeling.

If we commit ourselves to upholding the truth, then we will have a powerful influence not only on the non-Jews with whom we interact, but also on other Jews who are far removed from the To-

rah. If we lead lives of integrity, decency, and honesty, then we will certainly cause other Jews to take pride in being part of such a wonderful nation – for no matter how far they have strayed from the path of Torah, they will still have a natural appreciation for ethical values.

**Aharon relates that the rov was opposed to him taking any actions that could even be perceived as dishonest.**

#### » TAKEAWAYS

*The appreciation for honesty – and distaste for dishonesty – is built into the nature of every human being. When we deal honestly with others, we will gain a tremendous amount of respect. On the other hand, when we are dishonest, any other virtues we possess may lose their luster.*

### Avoiding Ill-Gotten Gains

Aharon Margalit, the author of the autobiographical work *As Long as I Live*, was once offered a position representing the public on the judicial panel of the Beer Sheva Labor Court. In order to decide whether to accept the position, he went with a friend to consult with Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner

*zt”l*. Aharon’s friend presented the various sides of the question to the renowned *posek*, pointing out that if he took the position, Aharon would be able to help other people who appealed rulings concerning benefits from the National Insurance Institute and other issues.

As soon as he heard this, Rav Wosner recoiled. He understood this to mean that Aharon would take advantage of loopholes in the law, a possibility that he could not tolerate. In his book, Aharon relates that the *rov* was opposed to him taking any actions that could even be perceived as dishonest. Rav Wosner warned him in the strongest terms to be careful never to cause a *chillul Hashem* and never to bend the law, even slightly. “Your mission will be to make a *kiddush Hashem*,” Rav Wosner told him. “Always try to reach a compromise” (*As Long as I Live*, pages 224-225).

The Gemara relates that the first question asked of a person in the *Beis Din shel Maa-lah* is, “Were you honest in your business dealings?” The *Pri Megadim* (*Orach Chaim* 156:3) questions this statement: We are taught that *talmud Torah* is equivalent to all the other *mitzvos*. Shouldn’t the first question asked of a person be whether he has set aside time to learn Torah? The *Pri Megadim* answers that if a person does not act with integrity in his financial dealings, then if he is a *talmid chacham* who has amassed much Torah knowledge, it will actually make his sin worse. A learned person who is dishonest would be guilty of an even greater *chillul Hashem* than that created by a person who is not as well-versed in the Torah. Therefore, even before a person is judged on his learning, he must be judged on his integrity.

People often rationalize their acts of dishonesty or exploiting legal loopholes with justifications that seem excellent, even com-

mendable. Some might feel the need to make extra money to support their families and pay tuition; others might wish to earn extra airline miles to visit Eretz Yisrael. But to Rav Avrohom Pam *zt”l*, there was no greater contradiction than trying to advance a worthy cause through dishonest gain. In the *sefer Moreh Tzedek*, Rav Pam railed against the practice of using deceit for the sake of financial gain. Misleading others in any way, he stressed, is absolutely prohibited. He condemned even those institutions that sought to cut corners or misrepresent some aspects of their programming for the sake of funding. Despite the fact that their intentions were certainly *l’shem shamayim* – so that they would be able to continue to teach Torah – that did not justify their actions. “Is there any obligation to spread Torah through behavior that is the antithesis of the Torah?” Rav Pam asked rhetorically, emphasizing that this actually brings disgrace to the Torah.

Moshe Rothschild was an affluent businessman who was known for his honesty. Bankers and investors alike knew that when Moshe gave his word, there was no need for them even to have him sign any papers; whatever he promised or assured them was always carried out. Moshe once shared the following incredible story, which demonstrates the lengths to which a person must go in order to avoid *chillul Hashem*: At one point, he was facing the threat of bankruptcy, when he realized that he had a way to put aside no less than one billion dollars, in such a way that the banks would be unable to take the money from him. His idea was completely legal, but it involved taking advantage of a loophole. Moshe consulted a *rov* in Eretz Yisroel to determine whether it was permissible to do it.

The *rov* asked if his actions might ever become public knowledge and be viewed as dishonest or distasteful. Moshe replied that

it was indeed possible, and the *rov* ruled that he should not do it. Even the possibility of a *chillul Hashem*, he stressed, must be avoided at all costs. Even though such a large sum, in the hands of a generous philanthropist like Moshe, could have been put to excellent use for the Jewish people, there is never an excuse to take the risk of causing a *chillul Hashem*, even for reasons that are purely *l’sheim shamayim* – because Hashem’s honor is far more precious than all the money in the world.

#### » TAKEAWAYS

*Bnei torah have a special obligation to act lifnim meshuras badin, displaying integrity even beyond the letter of the law; if they fail to do this, the benefits of their Torah itself may be endangered. One should never risk a chillul Hashem even for the sake of a very important cause. ■*

**His idea was completely legal, but it involved taking advantage of a loophole.**



## Chapter 6

### A RAV SPEAKS: Practical Guidance for Navigating the Workplace

For many men, going from full-time learning to working at a job is one of the most wrenching transitions of their lives. It is a move from a life steeped in Torah learning, a life filled with clear meaning and purpose, to a very different lifestyle, one in which the goal is still a worthy one, but the means of achieving it can be dry and depressing. Even if the typical working man has set times for learning, and even if he understands that he is working toward the important goal of supporting his family, many men feel that a void has opened in their lives when they make this transition. Instead of spending most of their waking hours in the *bais medrash*, they are now involved in very different pursuits for most of the day. Suddenly, the deep satisfaction they enjoyed during their years of learning is no longer available to them. How can a person fill this emotional void?

Many *rabbonim* struggle to help the members of their communities with this issue. I turned to a certain *rov* with extensive experience in this area to learn about his approach to the subject. The *rov*, who asked to remain

anonymous, had the following to say:

“First of all, I don’t like to use the term ‘*baalebatim*.’ It doesn’t do justice to the *avodah* of a *frum* Jew in the workplace, and it has a derogatory connotation. Our working men are tremendous *ovdei Hashem*; they struggle with constant *nisyonos*, and they are always under scrutiny from the outside world. As a result, I prefer to call them ‘*mekadshei Hashem*’; they are men who are on a constant mission to promote *kiddush shem shomayim*.”

#### How do you communicate this idea to your *shul* members?

“I speak about it often, and I explain that even after a person enters the working world, he should view it as simply continuing the same mission that he had during his years in the *bais medrash*, albeit in a different setting and in an entirely different way. Despite the differences, he still plays a crucial role in creating *kiddush Hashem*. I also urge the men to celebrate their successes in being *mekadesh shem shomayim* at work or in their dealings with the secular world. Just as we celebrate a

*kiddush Hashem* in learning by holding a festive *siyum*, we should also celebrate a *kiddush Hashem* at the workplace with a celebration.

“One of my *mispallelim* once found a woman’s purse in the middle of the street. When he picked it up, he saw that it contained 5000 dollars in cash, along with some documents indicating that it belonged to a non-Jewish woman who lived nearby. The man called a *rov* to ask what to do, and the *rov* told him that while he was technically permitted to keep the purse, it would create a major *kiddush Hashem* if he returned it. ‘Also, keep in mind that your *parnassah* is decreed on *Rosh Hashanah*,’ the *rov* reminded him. ‘Regardless of whether you keep this money or return it, your bank balance will end up exactly the same.’

“After a difficult internal struggle, the man decided to return the money. The woman was deeply moved when she saw that there wasn’t a single dollar missing from her purse; she told him that her father had just passed away, and she had been planning to use the cash for his burial expenses. She graciously offered the finder 1000 dollars as a reward, and showered him with blessings.

“The very next week, the man received a phone call from his health insurance company, informing him that the company had decided to pay a 4000-dollar bill that they had been refusing to cover. The *hashgachah pratis* was unmistakable; he had received exactly the amount of money that he had chosen to return, and he had gained the merit of a major *kiddush Hashem* as well. I shared this story with my congregation, and I made it clear that this *kiddush Hashem* was a reason for celebration, and an example that everyone can emulate.”

**That is certainly a wonderful sto-**

**ry, but how often does the average person have an opportunity to make a *kiddush Hashem* of that nature? Most people spend hours every day working at jobs that offer little to no opportunity for an achievement of that nature. How can they carry out their mission of *kiddush Hashem*?**

“Actually, a working person’s interactions with the outside world offer many opportunities for *kiddush Hashem*. Even small, seemingly insignificant things can make a major difference. There is a doctor in my *shul* who told me that his staff is heavily influenced by his personal refinement. He has several dozen employees, and he was once surprised when one of his staff members informed him that another woman was using inappropriate language at the workplace. ‘I have never heard that,’ he told her. Her response was: ‘That’s because no one would ever speak that way in your presence. They respect you; they know that you are genuine, and they appreciate your standards.’ That was enough for these women to keep their tongues in check. In fact, one of his employees related to him that when she was tempted to use inappropriate language at home, she would repeat his name to herself in order to remind herself to speak properly.”

**But what about the people who do not have much interaction with others at work? What about the people who spend their days sitting at a computer and working in solitude? How can they consider themselves to be involved in a mission of *kiddush Hashem*?**

“Those people are the modern-day manifestations of the *kiddush Hashem* of Yosef

*Hatzaddik*. Yosef resisted his temptations and refused to commit an *aveirah* even though he was far away from his family and support system. The *Rambam* teaches that when a person performs a *mitzvah* or desists from an *aveirah* solely for the purpose of serving Hashem – not because he is being watched by others – it creates an immensely powerful *kiddush Hashem*. That is precisely what these individuals accomplish in the privacy of their offices, at their own desks and on their own computers, where no one will ever know if they have given in to temptation.”

### **What are some of the traits that a person should develop in order to create a *kiddush Hashem* at his workplace?**

“There are a number of attributes that are very important for this purpose. First and foremost, there is integrity; that is the most important quality to master. A person must also have a good work ethic and should be friendly to his coworkers in a professional way. It is also important to be forgiving rather than being rigid, to always speak in a pure and refined fashion, to avoid belittling or denigrating others, and to have a positive attitude at all times. Of course, a person must also be consistent in following the laws of *bein adam laMakom*, and he must abide by the guidelines of proper interactions between the genders. All of these things will earn the respect and admiration of one’s coworkers and employers.”

For those of us in the workplace, whatever our professions may be, there is always a way to turn our jobs into a quest for *kiddush Hashem*. If we keep this lesson in mind, we will surely excel at transforming our workaday pursuits into the greatest accomplishment possible – serving Hashem by bringing honor to His Name.

### **» TAKEAWAYS**

*A person in the workplace can serve Hashem in an immensely powerful way. Every day presents an opportunity to turn a mundane job into incredible an enhancement of kavod shamayim. Working Jews are not merely “baalebatim”; they are part of the army of mekadshei Hashem.*

**I understand that you stress the importance of maintaining proper middos and derech erez in the workplace as part of the mission to promote *kiddush Hashem*. But how do you inspire your congregants to maintain their commitment to the *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*? How**



### **Making It Practical**

- Strive to be the most pleasant person at your workplace, and avoid an aggressive approach to your business dealings.
- Regardless of the circumstances, try to keep a positive attitude at all times, and greet your coworkers with a smile.

### **does their sense of mission extend to those *mitzvos* as well?**

The *rov* has a surprising answer to this question: The *mitzvos bein adam laMakom* are an integral part of the same sense of mission. “I conducted a survey among my *mispallelim*,” he relates, “and I asked them what areas of *avodas Hashem* they have found make a difference to the people around them. Surprisingly, many of the answers had to do with *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*. Those are the practices that show the outside world that the Jews are unique, and that we are servants of Hashem.

“For example, one of my *mispallelim* said that when he returned to work after a three-day *Yom Tov*, one of his coworkers turned to him and demanded, ‘How could you do that?’ He didn’t understand the question, and the man said, ‘We were in the middle of preparing for a very important presentation to an executive, which is due tomorrow, and you disappeared and were unavailable for three days. I understand that it was your holiday, but don’t you even check your email?’ The *frum* employee explained a little bit about the *halachos* of *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, adding that he reports to a higher ‘Executive’ than any of his superiors at work, and that the Torah’s laws take priority over any workaday concerns.

“With that, his coworker’s anger immediately gave way to admiration. ‘I wish I could disconnect and recharge like that,’ he said. ‘You are truly blessed to have this in your life.’”

**Many of our *mitzvos bein adam laMakom* seem bizarre or old-fashioned to people in the secular world. Aren’t your *mispallelim* afraid to stand out or to be seen as strange?**

“Actually, the opposite is true: Many of them have found that their observance of these *mitzvos* has a profound impact on their coworkers, and that it often protects them from the pitfalls of being in a secular environment. One man told me, for instance, that he always feared that wearing a *yarmulke* at work would put him at a disadvantage, and that in his first two jobs in the corporate world, he did not wear one. In retrospect, he feels that he did not progress in his career at that time as much as he could have. Fifteen years ago, he began wearing a *yarmulke* at work, and the effects have been incredibly positive, as he has become highly respected by his peers. The *yarmulke* also protects a person from falling prey to the corporate shenanigans that are so tempting in the work world; it reminds a person that he represents Orthodox Jewry, and that makes him much more careful about his behavior. Another man told me that he was once approached by a religious Catholic, who related that he had worn ashes on his forehead to work on a Christian holiday after being ‘inspired’ by the man’s example. ‘I see you walking around with your *yarmulke* all the time,’ his Christian coworker told him, ‘and I realized that I had no need to be ashamed of my own religious observances.’ It isn’t clear, though, if that fits exactly into the category of *kiddush Hashem*,” the *rov* says.

“Another man once went to a meeting in the south, in an area where he generally removes his *yarmulke* before meeting with prospective clients. After giving a lengthy presentation with a financial plan for a firm, he asked if there were any questions. No one had anything to ask, which was very unusual for his line of work. When he returned to his car and went to retrieve his *yarmulke* from the glove compartment, he realized that he had never removed it from his head! At that point, he realized that there had been no questions because they had seen that he was

a religious Jew, and he assumed that the deal would not materialize. A few weeks later, he was surprised when he received a call informing him that they wished to proceed with the plan. He commented that it was unusual for a client to commit to a plan without asking any questions, and they replied, ‘We could see that you are a man of G-d, so we trust everything you said!’

“One final story actually happened in a private home,” the *rov* concludes. “A *frum* family was remodeling their home, and as they were planning the renovation, the contractor repeatedly discussed arranging the electric system to accommodate televisions. Each time, the couple told him that they weren’t interested in that. When they reached the master bedroom, the contractor raised the same issue and they repeated that they had no need of a television. The contractor said, ‘I can understand that you don’t want it for your children, but don’t you want it at least for yourselves?’ They explained that they were not interested in having a television at all, and he grabbed the man’s hand and gave him a hearty handshake. ‘That is really impressive!’ he exclaimed.

### **What are some of the greatest challenges your congregants encounter in this regard?**

“One of the main challenges is the casual atmosphere in today’s corporate world, which makes it very difficult to maintain proper *gedarim* between genders. A working person has to find ways to be cordial to his coworkers, colleagues, and customers while still maintaining his *kedusha*. Business contacts often engage in small talk, asking about a person’s family, personal background, and so forth, and that atmosphere can make it much more difficult to maintain the appropriate boundaries. One businessman tells me that he has his wife run his office and deal

directly with the female customers who tend to be overly casual.

“Another major challenge, which is really a general issue in every area of life, is to make sure that one follows the *halacha* in every circumstance. There is a tremendous amount of *halacha* that a person needs to know and follow in the course of his business dealings; often, people don’t even realize the *shailos* that they should be asking.”

### **Do you have any suggestions to help make the transition to the workplace easier for people who are accustomed to being in *yeshivos* and *kollelim*?**

“One thing is for certain: It doesn’t help when they hear only that the outside world is totally devoid of morals and decency. It’s true that there is plenty of immorality and unpleasantness out there, but many people work in places where the standards of behavior and moral values are much higher. They meet people from the secular world who are very decent and honest, often with fulfilling family lives and moral principles of their own, and they begin to wonder what makes the Torah lifestyle better.”

### **How do you respond to that type of question?**

“We need to recognize the importance of *mitzvos* and learning Torah for our *neshamos*. We have to recognize that our uniqueness lies in our relationship with Hashem and the connection we achieve through serving Him. We can’t deny that a non-Jew can be more personable, wittier, and even happier and more well-mannered than a Jew. The difference is that a Jew achieves a connection to eternity by serving Hashem and performing

His *mitzvos*. Every thought and action of a Jew is connected to *shomayim* and influences all of creation; that is a connection that is unique to us. I encourage my congregants to think about this connection and to work on developing it. I advised one man, for instance, to start writing a *sefer*.

“This is a message that every *rov* can impart to his *mispallelim*. A person can transform himself from a ‘simple’ working man into a *mekadesh shem shomayim* through all the *mitzvos* of the Torah – both those that are *bein adam l’chaveiro* and those that are *bein adam laMakom*. When people recognize this tremendous power that they possess, it can fill them with a profound sense of meaning, and they will recognize the major difference that they can make in the world.”

## **» TAKEAWAYS**

*In today’s workplace, it is a major challenge to remain properly sheltered and observe the boundaries required of us by the Torah. In order to achieve this, we must remember that being unique and standing out is an integral part of our role as mekadshei Hashem. A working man must remember that the Jewish people need him to succeed in his mission! ■*



### **Making It Practical**

- ▶ Make sure that the way you dress and act in your workplace marks you as a religious Jew. That in itself will protect you from the spiritual pitfalls of the working world. Your coworkers will act differently in your presence, and they may even treat you with more respect and dignity.
- ▶ Recite brachos out loud and use your free time to learn Torah, even in your office. When you do that, you will mark yourself as an eved Hashem, and you will feel more responsibility to live up to the standards of the Torah.



# Voyage for *Eternity*

*The King's Journey:  
Lessons of Kiddush Hashem*

**N**ow that we have explored many of the underlying principles and applications of the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem, we will turn our attention to a historical overview of how the Jewish people became the nation charged with the mission of kiddush Hashem, and how that mission will ultimately be fulfilled. This discussion will have the added benefit of providing a review of many of the basic principles that we have learned. We will present this historical perspective in the form of an allegory based on a much shorter *mashal* taught by Rav Elchonon Wasserman.

## **The Destination**

There was once a king of a far-away land who wanted to open his kingdom to many new immigrants. He was a benevolent, even magnanimous, ruler, and anyone who accepted the offer to live in his kingdom would be guaranteed a life of unending contentment and prosperity. In his great kind-

ness, the king wanted to make this ideal existence available to as many people as possible. The problem, however, was that the kingdom was very far away from the rest of civilization and could be reached only by a grueling ocean voyage of many years that would be fraught with perils and difficulties. The king made the trip from his land



# Voyage for Eternity

to try to convince people that the destination would be well worth the effort involved in traveling there, but his words fell largely on deaf ears. Many people refused to believe that such a utopian kingdom existed, and many others were not willing to undertake the difficult voyage or sacrifice the pleasures of their regular lives long enough to travel there.

*Ramchal teaches us that Hashem created the entire world and its millions of inhabitants in order to enable everyone to bask in His goodness (represented here by the utopian destination). That goodness can be attained only by believing in Hashem and by serving Him and connecting with Him by exercising our free will properly (the difficult journey). According to the Netziv, until the generation of the Mabul, the entire human race had the ability to achieve recognition of Hashem. As the world began its descent into immorality and sin, Hashem tried to guide them back onto the proper path by creating a drought in response to their sins. This was a manifestation of hashgachah pratis of the sort that only Klal Yisrael experiences today. But the people of that era refused to heed the warning signs and persisted in their evil ways in fact, their spiritual state declined further as*

*they began stealing from one another in addition to their other sins. This period ended with the Mabul, when Hashem removed that level of hashgachah from the world.*

## A Few Agree to Sail

A few people were swayed by the king's promises and expressed their willingness to undertake the long, difficult journey. But the benevolent king was not satisfied; he wanted to share the riches of his land with a much larger group of people. Finally, he devised a plan. He arranged for the construction of a fleet of massive cruise ships that would be equipped with every imaginable amenity. The cruise ships would be large enough to accommodate vast numbers of passengers, who would travel in such luxury that they would be spared the difficulties of the trip. This would encourage far greater numbers of people to undertake the journey. But the ships would also have to

be manned by competent sailors who could navigate the vessels and contend with the rigors of an ocean voyage. This task was naturally given to the people who had been interested in the journey all along.

*After most of the world failed to recognize Hashem and perceive His guiding hashgachah, Hashem removed His special hashgachah from the rest of the world and chose to bestow it upon the one nation that would be interested in be-*

*ing the purveyors of kiddush Hashem in the world. That nation (the sailors in the parable) would be Hashem's chosen nation and would be responsible for causing the rest of the world (the passengers) to recognize the truth, thereby allowing the entire human race to become worthy of basking in Hashem's goodness (based on Ramban in Parashas Haazinu, 32:26).*

## Testing the Sailors

In order to be a member of the crew of one of these ships, every individual had to undergo rigorous testing to make certain that he was capable of executing that role properly. Every sailor had to possess certain basic attributes: a powerful sense of mission and purpose, the resilience to withstand pressure from the passengers, the ability to handle adversity, the commitment to follow all instructions to the letter, and unflinching dedication to his responsibilities. The crew members were promised that they would be housed in a special section of the kingdom when they arrived at their destination, but at the same time, they were warned that if they failed to abide by the requirements of their jobs, the consequences could be devastating. While a passenger who flouted the rules of the ship might cause a minor disturbance, if a crew member failed to perform his duties properly, the entire journey

might be jeopardized.

*The Avos were put through many trials both their emunah and their resilience were tested to ensure that they would be steadfast enough to take on this mission. When Klal Yisrael was born as a nation, they were also subjected to a rigorous purification process, and their allegiance to Hashem was tested. At Har Sinai, they were given their role as the nation of Hashem. They were promised tremendous reward for being the bearers of kiddush Hashem, but they were also warned (in the tochachah) of the devastating consequences if they were to go astray. The world can no longer afford to lose the Jewish people; they have an awesome responsibility to help the world in its entirety fulfill the purpose of its existence.*

**Their purpose on the ship was not merely to enjoy the ride but to see to it that the ship and all its passengers arrived at their destination.**

## Life on the Ship

The long journey was, of necessity, a very different experience for the crew than it was for the passengers. For the passengers, the journey was relaxing and enjoyable. There was little for them to do other than to abide by the few rules that were designed to maintain order on the ship. As long as they did not quarrel with one another or with the crew or endanger the ship, they could occupy themselves exclusively with pleasure and re-



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laxation. For the crewmembers, however, the opposite was true. Their purpose on the ship was not merely to enjoy the ride but to see to it that the ship and all its passengers arrived at their destination. They wore uniforms to remind themselves of their roles and responsibilities. Their diet was carefully designed so that the foods they ate would not detract from their alertness and attentiveness to their duties. Their living quarters were separate from those of the passengers, in order to prevent them from being drawn into the passengers' activities and neglecting their responsibilities. They were even provided with their own private facilities for recreation, to prevent them from mingling excessively with the passengers. But because of the crucial role they played, they were also given greater protection from dangers. Their quarters were in a wellprotected part of the ship, and the king (who accompanied the ships on their journey) made sure that they were protected from any passengers who might become hostile or mutinous.

*The nations of the world are charged with keeping only seven mitzvos, which are designed to preserve order in the world and keep society*

*functioning smoothly. The Jewish people, on the other hand, are given many more mitzvos to follow, a responsibility that distinguishes them from the nations of the world. The many re-*

*strictions on their regular activities, such as the prohibition of consuming certain foods, serve to safeguard and boost their kedushah, making them a more perfect reflection of Hashem and more capable of bringing honor to Him. It is imperative for Klal Yisrael to keep in mind that this world is a gateway to the next world, not an end in itself. As such, they should not become involved in the trivial pastimes of the nonJewish nations. Hashem also endows Klal Yisrael with special protection in order to make sure that they will always survive.*

## In the Service of the King

Not only was the king a benevolent ruler; he was also a master engineer. He personally designed and built the ships and taught the sailors how to operate them. The sailors did not need to understand the complicated inner workings of the ship and its engines all they had to do was follow the king's instructions to the letter when operating the controls, and they would succeed in sailing to their destination.

The king gave the crew very clear instruc-

tions regarding how they should treat their passengers. The passengers had to be treated with respect, but they also could not be allowed to dictate how the ship was run or where it would go. The crew had been hired by the king, not by the passengers, and even if the passengers demanded that the ship change course, the crew needed to ignore them and adhere steadfastly to their mission. If they listened to the passengers instead of their employer, they would fail in their jobs.

*Hashem has given us a broad array of mitzvos that are guaranteed to bring about a kiddush Hashem when we perform them properly. It is not necessary for us to preach to the world and convince them to believe in Hashem. Our responsibility is simply to keep the Torah and mitzvos to the fullest, making ourselves proper reflections of Hashem, and then Hashem Himself will bring about the ultimate kiddush Hashem by exercising His hashgachah over us, His chosen nation. Even if we do not understand how we will create kiddush Hashem by following Hashem's instructions, we must do so. We also cannot give in to pressure from others to deviate from the mitzvos set forth in the Torah; if we were to do so, we would be steering the world in the wrong direction. Whenever there is a conflict between what Hashem wants from us and what others expect of us, we must realize that we answer to*

*Hashem, not to other human beings.*

## The Crew Falters

After a few long years at sea, the crew members began to envy the relaxed, enjoyable lifestyle of their passengers. They began to leave their stations for a few days at a time, shedding their uniforms and mingling with the passengers to enjoy the ship's facilities. Without proper navigation, the ship gradually veered off its course; now the trip would take much longer than originally planned.

The king decided to create a situation that would cause the crew to remember their responsibilities. While he could simply force the sailors to attend to their duties, he did not wish to take that approach, since they would then be unable to earn the special reward reserved for them at their destination. Instead, he decided to make it uncomfortable for the sailors to mingle with the ship's regular passengers, in the hope that they would then remember their true roles on board the ship. The king even arranged for rumors to spread among the passengers that caused them to be hostile to the ship's crew. As a result, the passengers

**Their diet was carefully designed so that the foods they ate would not detract from their alertness and attentiveness to their duties.**

**Without proper navigation, the ship gradually veered off its course; now the trip would take much longer than originally planned.**



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themselves chased the sailors back to their section of the ship, admonishing them, “You are not supposed to be like us; you are supposed to be steering this vessel.”

*Throughout our history, we have often forgotten our role and have been influenced by the nations around us we have even attempted to assimilate with them. When this happens, a chillul Hashem is created and the journey to the perfection of the era of Mashiach becomes that much longer.*

*In order to awaken the Jewish people to return to the proper path, Hashem sends them signs that they must do teshuvah and improve their ways. He may create difficult conditions in galus in order to remind us to serve Him, and He may even stir up anti-Semitism in order to prevent us from being influenced and associating heavily with the other nations. The purpose of all this is to maintain our image of a tzelem Elokim, so that we will be able to create a proper kiddush Hashem.*

## Communicating With the King

The king encouraged the sailors to speak

**The king even arranged for rumors to spread among the passengers that caused them to be hostile to the ship’s crew.**

with him regularly three times a day in order to keep them focused on the purpose of the journey, which would ensure that the ship remained on course to its destination. It was important for the crew to constantly keep their goal in mind and remain in eager anticipation of that special place.

*Davening three times a day helps us retain our emunah and remain focused on serving Hashem all day long it helps us keep our goals in mind and maintain a strong relationship with Hashem. We must constantly await the time when Hashem’s Kingship will be complete and kiddush Hashem will prevail in the world. If we live with that anticipation, then we will conduct our lives in a way that will advance that goal.*

## The Ship Will Reach Its Destination One Way or Another

As of now, the long ocean journey still has not ended, but the king is determined to see the ships reach their destination, and he will see to it that they get there regardless of what takes place along the way. But the journey may be a long one or a short one, depending on the crew. If the sailors remain focused

and attentive to their duties, they will arrive in the shortest possible span of time, and the crew will be richly rewarded for their dedication. This, of course, is what the king prefers, so even if the sailors sometimes become lax and the ship briefly veers off course, the king will allow things to continue that way for a while in the hope that they will improve and return to their responsibilities. Eventually, however, if the sailors remain derelict in their duties, the king will simply take over in order to force them to arrive at their destination, but he will still use them to operate the ship until it finally reaches land.

*Mashiach can come in one of two ways. If we fulfill our responsibilities as Hashem’s chosen people, the era of Mashiach will dawn very soon. If we fail to carry out our mission, on the other hand, Hashem will ultimately bring Mashiach even without our free choice but Klal Yisrael will still be the instruments for the revelation of Hashem’s honor in the world.*

The sailors in this *meshal* are a parable for the Jewish people as a whole and the years that they spend on the ship are a *meshal* for the entire span of Klal Yisrael’s history. Obviously, there have been generations of Jews who did not live to see the coming of Mashiach. But as long as each of us contributes to

advancing the world a bit closer to the era of Mashiach, then we will have done our part and brought great joy to Hashem, and we will be richly rewarded. ■

**If the sailors remain focused and attentive to their duties, they will arrive in the shortest possible span of time, and the crew will be richly rewarded for their dedication.**

# Key Takeaways

*A Summary of the  
Mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem*



- Kiddush Hashem is our overarching mission.
- Kiddush Hashem is the purpose of all of Torah and mitzvos
- All of Torah and mitzvos are tools for bringing more kiddush Hashem into the world
- Talmud Torah kneged kulam Learning Torah is the most powerful tool for creating kiddush Hashem.
- Hashem wants all human beings to recognize Him and to serve Him.
- The purpose of having good middos is to reflect Hashem's attributes and model them to the world.
- The purpose of being a kadosh is to reflect and model Hashem's kedushah.
- We make a kiddush Hashem by being the best reflections of Hashem (tzelem Elokim) that we are able to become.
- Rav Shimon Schwab often commented Where menshlichkeit ends its achievements at that place Yiddishkeit begins.
- We don't need non-Jews to be impressed with us. Instead we need to impress upon them the Will of Hashem, which we achieve by shaping ourselves in His image.
- We don't need to advertise, missionize, or preach the truth to the world.
- When we emulate Hashem properly and reflect His attributes, Hashem will use His hashgachah pratis to publicize our actions.
- Hashem sanctifies His name in the world through kedoshim.
- Our job is to be the reflection; Hashem will create the demonstration.
- What you do speaks so loudly that what you say I cannot hear.
- When we do what we are supposed to be doing, even if others don't approve, it can still be a kiddush Hashem.
- The more we grow in Torah, the more we need to refine our middos.
- If our middos or our bein adam lchaveiro do not match with our Torah and our bein adam laMakom, we might create a chillul Hashem.
- Without derech erez, our Torah can become a chillul Hashem, and its power can be lost.
- Derech erez (the way of the land) includes following the proper etiquette of your society.
- The prescription for kiddush Hashem is to grow in both areas: bein adam chaveiro and bein adam laMakom.
- We are different to make a difference, not to be indifferent.
- We can make a difference only if we remain different, without being influenced by others.
- We are likened to fire, and the rest of the world is likened to water. Fire can purify and affect water only if they are separated from each other (e.g., by a pot).
- If we water down our fire, then it won't be hot enough to heat and make a difference in the "water."

# Key Takeaways

- If we are influenced by non-Jews, we won't be able to serve as role models and influence them.
- When we talk about the immorality of society and contrast it with the Torah way of life, we must keep in mind that if we were doing our job then the rest of society would learn from us and change their ways.
- We can make a difference. We are responsible.
- Anti-Semitism is not inevitable and out of our control.
- The more we reflect the Will of Hashem, the more the world will be drawn toward us. There is a natural pull toward the truth of Torah.
- Anti-Semitism is a means with which Hashem reminds us to separate ourselves from the world and to perfect our tzelem Elokim.
- Non-Jews also have a purpose in life.
- They also have the potential to believe in and serve Hashem. They were created for that purpose as well.
- We respect all human beings. No matter how they behave, we understand that all people have potential.
- Converts and baalei teshuvah are very beloved to Hashem.
- We wait excitedly for Mashiach because we can't wait for an increase in kiddush Hashem in the world.
- Being honest with all human beings is a top priority.
- Every one of us must be a tzelem Elokim through and through, in public and in private.
- The more we truly believe in Hashem, the greater will be the world's recognition of Him.
- The more we ourselves recognize that Hashem is One, the more He will become One in the world as a whole.
- Kiddush Hashem must take place among our family and friends as well.
- Chillul Hashem is related to the word chlal, an empty space. When a person commits an aveirah, he essentially broadcasts the message that the world, Heaven forbid, is empty, devoid of a Higher Authority.
- Identity theft: Hashem has entrusted us with representing His identity to the world, and we must make certain that our actions do not tarnish His image, so to speak.
- No single drop of rain believes it is to blame for the flood.

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Organizations providing financial coaching and assistance



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