

# EMULATING ANGELS

by Ben Goldberg

Last class, we finalized our review of the second bracha of Shemoneh Esrai, recapping everything we had learned while focusing on resurrection and G-d's might. Before moving on to the third blessing, I wanted to spend one class focusing on the portion that separates the two blessings – Kedusha.

Placed right after the second blessing, Kedusha discusses G-d's exalted status and is recited only during the repetition of the Shemoneh Esrai. As with all of the previous classes, let's first take a look at the actual text of the Kedusha.

*"We shall sanctify Your Name in this world, just as they sanctify it in heaven above, as it is written by your prophet, 'And one [angel] will call another and say:*

*[Congregation]: Holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory.'*

*[Chazzan]: Those facing them say 'Blessed':*

*[Congregation]: Blessed is the glory of Hashem from His place*

*[Chazzan]: And in Your holy Writings the following is written:*

*[Congregation]: Hashem shall reign forever – your G-d, O Zion – from generation to generation, Halleluyah.*

*[The Chazzan then concludes with]: From generation to generation we shall relate Your greatness and for infinite eternities we shall proclaim Your holiness. Your praise, our G-d, shall not leave our mouth forever and ever, for You O G-d, are a great and holy King. Blessed are You Hashem, the holy G-d."*

Let's first tackle the obvious question – what is this portion of the prayer service doing here and why do we say it? And why do we only say it during the repetition of the Shemoneh Esrai?

This prayer, as one can see from the text above, allows all those present to emulate and echo the angels who sing G-d's praise. While an individual praying alone may be able to pray with great intensity and reach great spiritual heights, it is only when we can come together and pray as a nation that we are able to truly emulate the angels in praising G-d. Therefore, Kedusha is recited only during the repetition, when we are sure a minyan is present.

Isn't a bit presumptuous, however, to compare ourselves to angels? Angels, after all, have no evil inclination. Angels certainly aren't spending half of davening trying to concentrate on the words of

the Siddur instead of the score of last night's baseball game. In fact, angels are spiritually perfect! How can we, even gathered as a group, have the audacity to mimic the angels?

Talelei Oros on Tefilah cites to Rav Eliyahu Lopian in providing a beautiful answer, pointing out that we as a congregation first note that we shall sanctify G-d's name just as it is sanctified in heaven above. We are not, Rav Lopian notes, comparing ourselves to the spiritual level of the angels. We are instead expressing our desire to reach a level where we are able to sanctify G-d's name as it is sanctified in heaven. As we recite the Kedusha, we first attempt to motivate ourselves to strive to reach greater spiritual heights.

This is a wonderful thought to keep in mind as we recite Kedusha but it is an even more powerful thought to keep in mind throughout the day. The few minutes when we recite the words above do not represent an exclusive time frame where we are able to strive to sanctify G-d's name. We have the ability to do that throughout the day!

As we go about our daily lives, we will no doubt encounter frustrating situations. There will be times when we want to erupt in anger, or lash out at others. There may be other instances where we feel too lazy to offer a helping hand or feel too rushed to offer an encouraging word to a friend. In those instances, we should strive to remember the words we spoke that very morning, when we proudly stated we would mimic the angels.

If we can start to work toward sanctifying G-d's name throughout the day, just think how meaningful those words of Kedusha will truly become.