

WORTHY OF THE TITLE "HOLY"

by Rabbi Label Lam

And you should sanctify Me in the midst of the Children of Israel... (Vayikra 22:32)

What is meant by *"in the midst of the Children of Israel"*? Rav Adda the son of Ahava said: "How do you know that an individual cannot say Kedusha? It is written, *"And you should sanctify Me in the midst of the Children of Israel"* Any matter of holiness should not be with less than ten....It is implied by a shared word "toch" -"the midst". And you should sanctify Me in the midst of the Children of Israel." It is also written: *"Seaprate from the midst of this evil congregation."* (Bamidbar 16:21) We also learn from "Eda"-congregation. *"Until when for this evil congregation"* (Bamidbar 14:27) Just as with the twelve spies, minus Calev and Yehushua (who were good) there is ten, so with regard to the congregation of Korach there was ten and here also with matters of Kedusha there needs to be ten." (Brochos 21B)

Our sages state that we need ten for matters of "Kedusha" because the Divine Presence rests with that critical mass. How is this accomplished? The Sefas Emes explains the dynamic, "That is only with ten, when they are made truly one with one heart, as it is written, *"in the midst of the Children of Israel"*, which is the hearts of the soul of the close ones. Only the material shell holds back this holiness. However when one is ready to gives himself up and forfeit this physical form then they become a true unit of Israel and "sanctify Me."

From the outer realm we all seems to have separate and distinct lives. Every single person has his own bank account and body to maintain. At the core, however, we are connected and profoundly unified in the highest common denominator. Similarly, every cell phone is apart from the other, yet through a satellite hookup or a server those pieces of plastic on everyone's individual hip are really one.

It was years ago. The kids were quite young. We were galloping through the Pesach Seder. We singing enthusiastically "Dayaynu"- "Enough for us- which I appreciate now as a wonderful rhetorical device to offer praise for all the great good HASHEM has done for us all. However, the intoxicating smells wafting from the kitchen I'm afraid, had some thinking, "It's enough with Seder, let's get on with the food!" In the middle of that closing stretch of the first part of the Seder, one of my boys had the audacity to do what we all hope a Jewish child would do on Pesach night, he halted the proceedings with a question. "Abba, how could it be "dayaynu" -enough for us- if we would have come to Mount Sinai and not received the Torah? What would that have accomplished?" I have to admit that I was stricken dumb. I had no answer on the spot but I promised two things. 1) I'll search

for an answer. 2) I'll reward handsomely such a great question.

Days later, because he had asked the question, my mind was alerted to a conversation between two young scholars discussing this same topic. One had asked the same question as my son. The other answered that by Mount Sinai it is written that "Israel camped there next to the Mountain" and the word "camped" curiously is said in a singular fashion, as opposed to preceding plural expressions. Rashi is alert to this point and comments that at that special moment the Jewish People were "like one person with one heart". It would have been enough to have everyone congregated and aiming together for the highest known goal. Even if the Torah would not have been given, the Kiddush HASHEM created in the midst of such a gathering is by itself worthwhile.

So too, showing up for the Minyan and attending the class with the hope of joining hearts may already be a step forward worthy of the title "holy". DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.