

# WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

by Rabbi Label Lam

You shall make two cherubim of gold- beaten shall you make them-from both ends of the lid. You shall make one cherub from this end and one cherub from this end; from the lid you shall make the cherubim at its two ends. (Shemos 25:18-19)

**Cherubim:** They each had the image of a child's face. (Rashi)

**Cherubim:** The two are to face each other like friends exchanging words of Torah. (Baal HaTurim)

What is the significance of these two angelic faces fixed in the Holy of Holies? Are they like children or are they like friends learning Torah with each other or both? What might be the connection between these two images? What is the value of such a place, the Holy of Holies, where no man may go, except the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur? What do we get from the Holy of Holies now that the Temple/Tabernacle is no more and we find ourselves in the depth of a protracted exile?

Rabbi Klonymos Kalman Shapiro ztl., the Rebbe of Piacezna buried in a metal canister a written record of the lectures he gave in the Warsaw Ghetto during the hellish war years between 1939 and 1942. His fiery words were later uncovered and published posthumously in a Sefer entitled, Aish Kodosh- Holy Fire. The following is a tiny ember of that fire from a talk given in June of 1942 not long before the demise of the Rebbe: *Every Jew has faith that there exists nothing else but G-d. As explained in sacred literature, when the Torah says, "There is none but Him..." (Devarim 4:35) It does simply mean that there is no G-d but G-d. It means that nothing exists but G-d. The universe and everything in it is the light of G-d. Therefore we must grasp everything in the world, not as something individual unto itself, but as a revelation of G-d's light. Even our Jewish children must not be seen as just another category of persons. Just our children; Jewish children in addition to being the permanence and existence of the Jewish People, are creations and Renewal, the revelation of G-d.*

Likewise, the Torah that we teach to school children or that one person teaches his friend, even if he merely gives him a word of caution or guidance, should not be seen as events unto themselves but as tremendous revelations of G-d. Each instant is a renewal and a birth, for each learning event is a creation and a renewal. Before studying and learning, the person may not have been a Torah student or a principled person, and now, through learning, he has undergone a renewal and birth. As we said above, any person who teaches Torah to another is considered by the Torah to have given birth to him, and every birth and renewal is a revelation of G-d, because there is nothing else, and nothing else but G-d exists in the world.

It follows then everything a Jew does or says is actually an expression of his inner soul, which is always acting for and talking to G-d, because the soul knows that there is nothing but G-d. The soul knows that everything is G-dly and every action or word is directed toward G-d. We ourselves may be unconscious of this because the physical body, besides blocking our awareness of the sanctity of our soul and its yearning for G-d, also blocks our awareness that whatever we are doing is actually for G-d. Though a person may think that he is acting or speaking on his own behalf, as for example when a Jew asks his friend for a favor, in reality his soul knows that his friend cannot grant the favor, the favors come from G-d. His soul knows that the one from whom the favor is being asked has merely been designated as the agent of G-d in the granting of the favor. So, while a person may think that he is begging a favor from another, his inner self is begging G-d all the time for help because G-d is omnipotent, He is a Merciful Father and He will show mercy and save us.

Somehow the Piacezna Rebbe spoke and wrote, while in the midst of those terrible flames, with the perspective of one who treads on the most sacred of soil. I wonder if it is entirely necessary to be surrounded by suffering and the smell of death to gain such a concentrated appreciation of **what life is like in the Holy of Holies?!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).