

THE THREE CROWNS

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week we read the double parsha of Acharei Mos-Kedoshim. Kedoshim begins: *"And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: Speak to the entire congregation of Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel] and say to them: You shall be holy, because I, Hashem your G-d, am holy."* [19:1-2]

This concept is reiterated again later in the parsha: *"Sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy because I am Hashem your G-d."* [20:7]

The Medrash [Rabbah 24:8] compares this to a king's subjects who presented three crowns to their king. The king placed one crown on his head and placed the other two onto the heads of his sons. So too, in the heavenly kingdom, the angels cry out *"Holy, Holy, Holy,"* [Yishayahu 6:3] and thus crown Hashem with three crowns. Hashem places one on His head and the other two are placed onto the heads of Bnei Yisroel as it says: *"You shall be holy,"* [19:2] and *"you shall be holy."* [20:7]

The Targum Yonasan explains the nature of these three 'Holies' that Hashem is crowned with. (This is included in the Uva L'Zion portion of the morning prayers.) Hashem is holy in the heights of the heavens above, He is holy on the earth where He displays his power and He is holy for all eternity.

The Ohr Gedalyahu elucidates each of these 'Holies' further and shows which two the King, Hashem, gave to His children, Bnei Yisroel.

"Hashem is holy in the heights of the heavens above." He is totally above and beyond our comprehension. Our only inkling of Hashem is through His Middos--the way that He interacts with this world. But knowledge of Hashem Himself, what is called Atzmuso Yisborach, of that we have absolutely no idea.

"He is holy on the earth where He displays his power." Hashem's power here on earth is abundantly clear. The miracles of life that are all around us, the majestic beauty of nature and the individual providence that guides each individual all testify to the awesome power of Hashem. Yet, with all of these myriad differences that course their way in and around each person, Hashem Himself remains separate, removed and unchanged.

"He is holy for all eternity." He was, is and will be. Totally beyond that parameter of time that has such a strong hold on us that we can't even imagine existence beyond it.

Two of these crowns were given to Hashem's children, enabling us to share His holiness.

We too have the capacity to be holy here on earth. While involving ourselves in this world we must

retain our focus that our primary accomplishments take place in a world that is totally separate and removed from our daily grind and grime. We must act in an honest and uplifted manner, thereby bringing holiness and Kiddush Hashem [Sanctification of Hashem's name] wherever we go.

By living in such a manner we can access that third crown and also attain eternity. When the Torah's eternal light illuminates the person who lives according to its teachings, that person becomes a part of that eternity.

We here in Israel and Jews all over the world are living through an amazing time. The anti-Semitism in the world has reached levels that I believe haven't been seen since the pre-Holocaust days. At the same time, this situation has caused an unprecedented level of achdus [unity] in Yisroel. I imagine that the heavenly goal in all that we're experiencing is this achdus. The Temple was destroyed because of sinas chinam [baseless animosity] and it will be achdus that will ultimately bring about the redemption.

This places an incredible responsibility upon us to be holy here on earth. On one level, in order to not give grounds for any accusations against us. On another level, to help promote this achdus amongst us. And most importantly, in order to rouse Hashem's powerful protection and deliverance.

This will enable the world to reach its ultimate state of full redemption, becoming one with that third crown, the crown of eternity.

Good Shabbos,
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