

# SHAILOS L'CHAZARA

*Review Questions*

## Likkutei Sichos Vol. 1

לקוטי שיחות · חלק א

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## Parshas Acharei & Kedoshim

פרשת אחרי · פרשת קדושים

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3 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Build a Fence! · Acharei, p. 253, §§1-4

Sicha 2: Holy, Mother & Father, Shabbos! · Kedoshim, p. 254, §§1-5

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## TEACHER'S EDITION

*Answers are printed in italics on the answer lines, with the section (§) of the sicha.*

★ easy   ★★ medium   ★★★ harder

Each sicha has questions, a true chassidishe story, and a lesson for you.

# Build a Fence!

## עשו משמרת למשמרתי

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Acharei, p. 253 (Hebrew edition pp. 240–241), sections 1–4. From the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5716 (1956).

The point: *“U’shmartem es mishmarti”*: “make a guard for My guard”. This is the source for the Rabbis’ fences and safeguards, and for the fences each Jew must make for himself even in permitted things, so as not to come to the forbidden: guard against a hundred gates of the permitted to avoid one gate of the forbidden. Some mistakenly argue: why look for new chumros? Even d’Rabbanan we shouldn’t overdo; “isn’t what the Torah forbade enough?” The Yerushalmi says a person will answer for every food he saw and didn’t eat. Too many chumros can lose the main thing and lead to leaving Torah, as with the Eitz HaDaas, where the added “don’t touch it” led to the sin. The answer: “all were given by one Shepherd”: through “lo sasur” Rabbinic decrees have the force of Torah law (the differences, like safek, are because the Torah wants it so). Fencing yourself in permitted things is also a Torah command (“kadesh atzmecha b’mutar lach”, “v’hiskadishkem”, “asu mishmeres”). As for the proofs: Adam in Gan Eden was a merkavah to G-dliness with no contact with evil, so fences weren’t needed and even were a lack: everything he did was holy and elevating (like eating kodashim or Shabbos food). But where fences are needed, they are an advantage.

### QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What do Chazal learn from “u’shmartem es mishmarti”?

“Make a guard for My guard”: the source for the Rabbis’ fences and safeguards, and for the fences every Jew must make for himself. (§1)

2. ★★ What do the mussar sefarim say about permitted things?

Guard yourself against a hundred gates of the permitted so as not to reach one gate of the forbidden. (§1)

3. ★★ What do “those who err” argue about chumros?

Why look for new stringencies? Even with d’Rabbanan we needn’t be too exacting, and new chumros certainly not: “isn’t what the Torah forbade enough for you?” (§2)

4. ★★★ What two proofs do they bring?

(1) The Yerushalmi: a person will answer for every food he saw and didn’t eat. (2) The Eitz HaDaas: the added “don’t touch it” (Hashem only said “don’t eat”) led to the sin, the root of all sins. So too many chumros can make one lose the main thing, even leave Torah. (§2)

5. ★★ How does “all were given by one Shepherd” answer them?

*Through the lav of “lo sasur”, Rabbinic decrees have the force and seriousness of Torah law. The halachic differences (safek d’Oraisa l’chumra, d’Rabbanan l’kula) exist only because that’s how the Torah wants it. (§3)*

6. ★★ Is fencing yourself in permitted things just “extra”?

*No, it too is a command of the Torah: the mitzvas aseï of “kedoshim tihyu... v’hiskadishem” (“sanctify yourself in what is permitted to you”), and it’s included in “asu mishmeres l’mishmarti”. (§3)*

7. ★★★ Why didn’t Adam HaRishon in Gan Eden need fences?

*He was a “merkavah” to G-dliness with no contact with evil (proof: Gan Eden can’t tolerate evil, so he couldn’t stay after the sin). A chariot does only the rider’s will, so there was no fear of stumbling. (§4)*

8. ★★★ Why would fences even be a lack for someone like Adam?

*Everything he did was holy; when he engaged in something he raised it, so holding back would hold back its elevation, like eating kodashim or Shabbos food. (§4)*

9. ★★ So when are fences an advantage?

*Wherever there is a need for them, for us, who can stumble, they are a real advantage. (§4)*

10. ★ In one line: why do we make extra fences?

*Because it is itself a Torah command, and it keeps us far from the forbidden. (§§1–4)*

## A CHASSIDISHE STORY

**“Swear to Me...”**

In the early 1900s life was so hard in a Ukrainian village that Berel Waxman left his wife and children to find work in America. Before he left, his father, a devout chassid, pulled him aside: “Swear to me that no matter what happens, you will never, ever work on Shabbos.” Berel was taken aback: would his father even suspect him? But he promised.

In New York he pressed shirts in a sweatshop, six long days a week. When winter came and Shabbos began early Friday afternoon, he told his boss he had to leave early. The boss threw his ironing board into the street and told him never to come back. Berel left it with a Chinese laundry and went to shul.

Motzei Shabbos he got the board back. As he walked down the street, a stranger called out: “I see you have an ironing board. I have lots of work. Will you work for me?”

At the end of the week, Berel’s pay envelope held far more than he had ever earned. It turned out his old boss, a “friend” from his own village, had been cheating him all along. His father’s oath had saved him.

Source: Menachem Posner, “Saved by Shabbat” ([chabad.org](http://chabad.org))

Think: How was the father’s oath like “asu mishmeres l’mishmarti”?

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*Berel would surely have kept Shabbos anyway, but his father added an extra “guard”, a solemn oath, so that in the hardest test he wouldn’t give in. The fence held, and it brought brachah.*

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## THE LESSON FOR YOU

Don’t say “just what’s required is enough”. Make yourself fences, even in permitted things. That’s a Torah command, and it protects you.

For example: Your phone or tablet isn’t forbidden, but make a fence: no screens in your room at night, and none before davening. That way you never get near the bad stuff.

# Holy, Mother & Father, Shabbos!

## קדושים תהיו • אמו ואביו • שבתות

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Kedoshim, p. 254 (Hebrew edition pp. 242-243), sections 1-5. From the sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5717 (1957).

The point: *The first three commands of Kedoshim come together: “kedoshim tiyu”, “ish imo v’aviv tira’u”, “es Shabsosai tishmoru”. “Kedushah” here means separation, “I separated you from the nations”. Separation is needed only where things look alike outwardly: not Torah and mitzvos (the nations have no part in them) but permitted things like eating, drinking and business. How can there be holiness in the world, in a doubly dark galus? “Ki kadosh Ani”: wherever Jews are, they are bound with Hashem. A Jew’s purpose isn’t to be holy alone but like Avraham, “that he will command his children”, so: “fear your mother and father”, the chinuch duty. Parents must instill that their children are different, a holy nation. Mother first, because she is the akera habayis and does most of the actual chinuch. How? “Keep My Shabbosos”: Shabbos is a sign of emunah in creation and constant hashgachah. The nations say Hashem left the world to the stars; Jews are bound to Hashem above nature. Creation mentions Elokim (= hateva) 32 times, but Shabbos is for Havayah. Shabbos also recalls Yetzias Mitzrayim. Through Shabbos a person makes himself and his children “kedoshim”, and “Shabbos next to Mikdash”: all his matters become a Mikdash.*

### QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

- ★ What are the first three commands of Parshas Kedoshim?

*Kedoshim tiyu; ish imo v’aviv tira’u; es Shabsosai tishmoru. (§1)*

- ★★ What does “kedushah” mean here, and where do we see it?

*Separation, as at the end of the parsha: “I separated you from the nations”, and “v’nifleinu Ani v’amcha”. (§2)*

- ★★★ Why can’t “kedoshim tiyu” be about Torah and mitzvos?

*Separation is needed only where things look alike. The nations have no hold in Torah and mitzvos (“lo asah chein l’chol goy”). It’s about permitted things (eating, drinking, business) where Jews look outwardly like everyone else. (§2)*

- ★★ How can a Jew be holy in worldly matters, even in the darkness of galus?

*“Ki kadosh Ani”: wherever Jews are, they are bound with Hashem, “Atah kadosh”, so they are a holy nation, “like Me”, kaviyachol. (§2)*

5. ★★ Why does “fear your mother and father” come right after “kedoshim tiyu”?

*A Jew’s purpose isn’t to be holy alone, but like Avraham, “that he will command his children”.*

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*Parents are the first educators and must instill that the children are different, a holy nation.*

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(§3)

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6. ★ Why does the mother come first in this pasuk?

*She is the akeres habayis, and most of the actual chinuch is in her hands. (§3)*

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7. ★★ How does Shabbos make Jews “separate”?

*Shabbos is a sign between Hashem and the Jews, of emunah that He created the world and always runs it. The nations say “Hashem left the earth to the stars”; Jews are bound to Hashem above nature.*

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(§4)

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8. ★★★ What do the 32 mentions of Elokim in creation teach about Shabbos?

*Elokim = “hateva”, nature, the six weekdays. Shabbos is “Shabbos laHavayah”, “was, is and will be” as one, above nature. So Shabbos was given only to Jews; a gentile who keeps Shabbos is liable, since they belong only to Elokim. (§4)*

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9. ★★ What does Shabbos have to do with Yetzias Mitzrayim?

*Shabbos is also a remembrance of Yetzias Mitzrayim: leaving all the limits (meitzarim) of nature.*

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(§4)

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10. ★★★ What does keeping Shabbos accomplish, and why is “Shabbos next to Mikdash”?

*It strengthens the emunah that Jews are under Hashem’s own hashgachah, and so a person makes himself and his children holy even in physical matters. “Keep My Shabbosos and fear My Mikdash”: through Shabbos all his matters become a Mishkan and Mikdash for Hashem. (§5)*

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## A CHASSIDISHE STORY

**A Candle of My Own**

In Communist Russia of the 1960s and '70s, many Jewish children grew up knowing almost nothing: "Shhh, close the blinds, come light the candles," and no explanations, so they couldn't repeat anything dangerous.

Laura came to America from Russia in 1979, friendless and speaking no English. A rabbi helped her get to Camp Emunah, where she learned to read Hebrew and grew close to her counselor, Yona. That summer she wrote an essay about lighting Shabbos candles. It was printed with essays by other young immigrant girls in a little book called *A Candle of My Own*, compiled by Mrs. Esther Sternberg at the Rebbe's request, to encourage the mitzvah of Shabbos candles.

Thirty-two years later, in 2011, her friend Yana's daughter picked up that little book at a rabbi's Shabbos table and saw a familiar name: Laura Brovender, her mother's close friend! Yana framed the essay as a gift. Later the two friends and their daughters went to spend Shabbos with Mrs. Sternberg and lit Shabbos candles together. "The shimmering lights connected them."

Source: Joannie (Henya) Tansky, "A Candle of My Own" ([chabad.org](http://chabad.org))

Think: How does this story connect "fear your mother", "keep My Shabbosos" and "kedoshim tihyu"?

*Shabbos candles, the sign of Shabbos, lit first by mothers even in secret, made the girls feel*

*they were Jews, different and holy, and the light passed on to their daughters a generation later.*

## THE LESSON FOR YOU

Be holy in permitted things too. Respect and listen to your parents, who teach you that you're different. And let Shabbos make your whole week a Mikdash.

For example: On Friday, help your mother get ready for Shabbos without being asked: set the table, polish the candlesticks. And on Shabbos, keep your talk and games Shabbosdik.

# Holy Even in What's Permitted!

## קדש עצמך במותר לך

Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, Parshas Kedoshim, p. 256 (Hebrew edition pp. 243-247), sections 6-13. Compiled from the maamar "V'Atah Im Shamo" and the sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5717 (1957).

The point: *"V'hiskadishtem": "kadesh atzmecha b'mutar lach" is not just hiddur but a mitzvas asej, as serious as any mitzvah. Chassidus explains it is what will bring the Geulah: Torah, mitzvos and avoiding the forbidden aren't enough. "In the future they will say 'kadosh' before the tzaddikim", and all future revelations depend on our avodah now. The higher the light, the more even the finest concealment blocks it (Hashem is exacting with tzaddikim "like a hair"). Avraham needed milah to reveal Shakai; Matan Torah, revealing Havayah, needed priah too. The future, higher still, needs removing even the finest "orlah" of the heart, in permitted things. The future is a dwelling for Hashem's essence, which needs avodah with one's essence. In mitzvos a person may still be a "self" who bends his will; sanctifying the permitted means having nothing of his own, so it touches the soul's essence ("you shall be Mine"). Since Matan Torah, Hashem gave Himself only in mitzvos (we stand for one doing a mitzvah, not for permitted things l'shem Shamayim); in the future G-dliness will be seen in everything. The Zohar: Hashem, Torah, Yisrael, each hidden and revealed. Hidden miracles come from the "hidden" of Hashem; to receive it we need the hidden of the soul through the hidden of Torah, Chassidus (Havayah and Elokim are one), which makes us holy even in earthly matters.*

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### QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★★ Is "kadesh atzmecha b'mutar lach" only a hiddur?

*No, it is a mitzvas asej of the Torah, and "a light mitzvah and a weighty one are equal", so it has the seriousness of any mitzvah. (§7)*

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2. ★★★ What does Chassidus say this avodah will bring?

*The Geulah. Learning Torah, keeping mitzvos and avoiding the forbidden aren't enough to draw it down; "kadesh atzmecha b'mutar lach" is also needed. ("In the future they will say 'kadosh' before the tzaddikim.") (§7)*

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3. ★★ Why does a higher light need even finer purity?

*The higher the light, the more even the finest concealment harms it, as Hashem is exacting with tzaddikim "like a hair's breadth". (§8)*

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4. ★★★ How does milah and priah show this?

*For Avraham to reveal the name Shakai, removing the coarse orlah was enough. For Matan Torah, revealing the higher name Havayah, priah (removing the fine layer) was also needed. The future, higher still, needs removing even the finest "orlah of the heart", even in permitted things. (§8)*

5. ★★ What is new about the future revelation, and what kind of avodah does it need?

*A revelation of Hashem's essence: a "dwelling below" for His very self, like a king living in his home with his whole self. So the avodah must touch the essence of the person and the essence of the work. (§9)*

6. ★★★ Regarding the person, how is sanctifying the permitted higher than keeping mitzvos?

*In mitzvos one can still be a separate "self" who bends his will, touching only his outer powers. Separating from permitted things, which are his own, means he has nothing of his own, so it touches the essence of his soul: "you shall be Mine". (§10)*

7. ★★ Why do we stand up for someone doing a mitzvah but not for someone doing a permitted thing l'shem Shamayim?

*Since Matan Torah, Hashem gave Himself ("Anochi" = "I wrote and gave Myself") only in mitzvos, so the Shechinah rests on one doing a mitzvah, not on other things. (§11)*

8. ★★ What will be different in the future?

*With the full revelation of the essence there will be no limits: G-dliness will be seen everywhere and in everything; "there is no place empty of Him" will be revealed. (§11)*

9. ★★★ What are the "hidden" and "revealed" of Hashem according to the Zohar?

*"Revealed": G-dliness connected to the worlds, from which nature (and even open miracles) come.*  
*"Hidden": what is above, from which come miracles hidden in nature, where "the one for whom the miracle happens doesn't recognize it". In the future even those will be revealed ("zeh" twice).*  
 (§12)

10. ★★★ How can a person receive the “hidden” of Hashem?

*Through the hidden of the soul, by way of the hidden of Torah: Chassidus, which explains that*

*Havayah and Elokim (nature) are one. It awakens “one nation in the land”, feeling Hashem’s oneness*

*even in earthly matters, and so “kadesh atzmecha b’mutar lach” comes from his very essence. (§13)*

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

## Too Salty?

Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin was coming to visit the Alter Rebbe, and the Rebbetzin and her daughter Freidke argued over who would cook for the honored guest. The Alter Rebbe made a compromise: the Rebbetzin would cook, and Freidke would add the salt.

But out of long habit the Rebbetzin salted the food without noticing, and Freidke added her salt too. When the dish came to the table, Rabbi Shlomo couldn’t get past the first spoonful.

Seeing his guest’s plate untouched, the Alter Rebbe thought it probably wasn’t salty enough for him, and added a third dash of salt himself!

Finally he asked why Rabbi Shlomo wasn’t eating. “The food is too salty,” he answered. Surprised, the Alter Rebbe took another spoonful, swallowed thoughtfully, and said: “You know, you’re right.” Then he explained: “From the time I journeyed to Mezritch to my Rebbe, I have not sensed the taste of food.”

Source: Yanki Tauber, “A Matter of Taste”, *Once Upon a Chassid* (Kehot / chabad.org)

Think: How does the Alter Rebbe show “kadesh atzmecha b’mutar lach” at its highest?

*Eating is permitted, yet he was so far above physical pleasure that he no longer even tasted the*

*food: nothing “of his own”, his whole being given over to Hashem.*

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Holiness isn’t only in shul. In eating, sleeping, playing and talking, take less for yourself and more for Hashem. That brings the Geulah.

For example: At a kiddush, take one plate, not three. Leave the last piece of cake for someone else. Small “no’s” to yourself are big “yeses” to Hashem.