Spirituality vs. Law

Reconciling the Mystical and the Legal Traditions within Judaism

By Israel Sandman

1. (Leviticus 22:32) *Do not profane My Holy Name, and I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctifies you*.

2. (Isaiah 6:3) *One called to the other, saying: Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord of Hosts; the entire Earth is filled with His glory!*

3. *Zohar*, *Faithful Shepherd*, Leviticus, Pericope Emor, folio 93a
Do not profane My Holy Name, and I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel (Leviticus 22:32).
This commandment is to sanctify Him every day, to raise His holiness from below upon high, as He is holy upon high, until His holiness ascends to the fathers and sons. This is the esoteric meaning of *I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel*, above and below: above in three stages; and below in three stages.[1]

As for 'holiness', we have already made it clear in a number of places.

However, just as there is holiness beyond everything, so, too, there is holiness in the middle, and holiness at the bottom; and all are in the mystery of the bottom. The holiness of the highest heights is in a mysterious state of one, while the holiness in the middle and the bottom consists of three stages which are one.

'Holy!'[2] (Heb. *QaDOSh* קדוש) is the upper side, which is first of all the levels. Although it is the hidden side, and is called 'holiness' (Heb. *QoDeSh* קדש), nevertheless, from there a ray spreads forth, which shines in a single, hidden, thin path into the middle. When it shines into the middle, then a letter 'vav' / ו is drawn, which shines within that 'holiness' (*QoDeSh* קדש), and it is called 'Holy' (*QaDOSh* קדוש). From that shine, a ray spreads to the bottom, the last of all levels. When it shines into the la'st level, then a letter 'he' / ה is drawn in the ray, and it is called 'sanctification' (Heb. QeDUShA קדושה); and here we stand.

Why is 'Holy! Holy! Holy!' (*QaDOSh* קדוש) proclaimed,[3] although 'holiness' (*QoDeSh* קדש) is what it should have been, as the mystery of the beginning of everything, since {all} is from there? Thus, upon high, why is (*QaDOSh* קדוש) proclaimed, it being the case that the letter *vav* / ו is not to be found there? However, the mystery certainly is as follows. The People of Israel proclaim the sanctification below just as the upper angels proclaim the sanctification upon high. About them[4] it is written *One called to the other, saying: Holy!* … (Isaiah 6:3). When the People of Israel proclaim the sanctification, the upper glory ascends upward, to the point that the letter *vav* / ו, which, esoterically, refers to the upper heavens, ascends upon high. When those heavens ascend upon high, then that 'holiness' (*QoDeSh* קדש) shines into them. It is then that that which is upon high is called 'holy' (*QaDOSh* קדוש). Subsequently, that upper light shines upon the throne, which is the heavens. Those heavens return to their palace, integrating themselves into that light. Then, they are called 'holy'. Subsequently, that light descends, to the point that each individual receives the 'upper righteous one', the precious level for sanctifying all that is below. When it receives everything, then it is called 'holy'. This is the esoteric meaning of it all.

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[1] As will become clear from the subsequent discussion, this is a reference to the 'trisagion' (declaration of 'Holy!' three times) from Isaiah 6:3, 'Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord of Hosts; the entire Earth is filled with His glory!'.

[2] I.e. the first of the three declarations from Isaiah 6:3.

[3] Or: Why is He / it called 'Holy! Holy! Holy!' (*QaDOSh* קדוש) …

[4] The surface meaning is that one angel calls to the other; but in this context the meaning may be that the humans and angels coordinate their proclamations of 'Holy!'.

One who sets his will towards this does well. As for one who sets his will, in the three stages of the fathers, towards an all-encompassing singularity, unifying them within this sanctification – if he cannot set his will any further, then he does well. All of this is for the purpose of drawing down from within the upper holiness, so that each individual sanctifies himself by means of this sanctification, holding it safe and spreading a layer of its holiness upon himself. This is the esoteric meaning of *I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel* first, and then *I am the Lord who sanctifies you* (Leviticus 22:32).

At what place is one to sanctify himself within this sanctity, to integrate himself into it? When the person reaches the holy name *The Lord of Hosts*. This is the esoteric meaning of *I am the Lord who sanctifies you*. This is what I found concerning the esoteric meaning in books of the ancients. We, however, do not do thus. Rather, it is only after *The Lord of Hosts*; afterwards, when the person reaches *the entire Earth is filled with His glory*, he then integrates himself into that sanctity, becoming sanctified below within that glory which is below. This is the esoteric meaning of *becoming sanctified by My glory* (Exodus 29:43). Subsequently one should, in particular detail, sanctify himself totally, just as we do parallel to the upper angels, who say *Blessed is the glory of the Lord from its place* (Ezekiel 3:12), referring to the upper glory, and afterwards *The Lord will reign for all time* etc. (Psalm 146:10), referring to the lower glory.

In the book of Rabbi Yesa the elder: *Holy! Holy! Holy!* etc. – this is the sanctification by means of which to sanctify the Written Torah into an all-encompassing singularity; subsequently, 'parallel to them', *Blessed is the glory*, etc. – these being the Prophets; and subsequently, *The Lord will reign for all time* etc. This esoteric matter is that in this sanctification, we need there to be 'sanctification', 'blessing', and 'majesty', that all be present as one: 'sanctification', as is stated, *Holy!*; 'blessing', as is stated, *Blessed is the glory of the Lord from its place*; and 'majesty' – *The Lord will reign for all time*. We must complete all of this. And a person must focus himself upon this and set his will upon this each day.

4. R. Hayyim Vital, recording the teachings of R. Isaac Luria, *Fruit of the Tree of Life*, Section of the Recitation of the Shema', Chapter 2.

On the esoteric meaning of that 'sanctification' (Heb. QeDUShA קדושה) which occurs in the blessing 'He Who forms light',[5] it is on the level of 'Creation'. You intend that the first *Holy!* is Tipheret that ascends to receive a ray from Wisdom; the second *Holy!* is Tipheret that returns, with the ray, to its place. And the third *Holy!* is to draw down this ray, which descended with Tipheret, bringing it down to its (or: his) Netzah, Hod, and Yesod. This is the esoteric meaning of *The Lord of Hosts*: Netzah, Hod, and Yesod. Subsequently they fill the upper *Earth*, Malekhut, with this flux, which is called '*glory*'. The is the *glory* of the letter *vav* / ו. Afterwards there is the sanctification during the *'amida* (= standing prayer). It is literally identical to this one, except one focuses himself in the World of Emanation.

[5] Recitation of Isaiah 6:3 (with Ezekiel 3:12) in the text of the first of two blessings leading up to the *shema'*.