



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 88, Kodesh L'Adonai

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An approach to understanding the meaning of Kodesh L'Adonai

To start, a few thoughts to help with understanding the passages and words contained in the Rituals of the Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine.

The way in which a text is written, its form, is inseparable from what it says, its content, and together, they create meaning. In order to understand what has been written, the third very important element is context.

An important distinction is to be made between translation and transliteration. Transliteration is the attempt to write a letter (or a word) using the closest corresponding letters of a different alphabet, (from Latin "to carry across a letter"). Translation is the attempt to express the sense of words (or text) in another language, (from Latin "to carry across").

Let's break down the Hebrew words "Kodesh" and "L'Adonai" separately first, and then put them together.

Kodesh

The Hebrew word kodesh "קֹדֶשׁ", transliterated as *qodesh*, is used in the Torah to describe "separateness", that which is set apart, as well as "holiness", which is a state that separates or distinguishes from that which is not holy.

How then, should we translate *qodesh* or *kodesh*? What does the word mean? Holiness is not a single state but contains a broad spectrum of attitudes and behaviours. The Rabbinic works which formally recorded the Jewish oral tradition calls the Aaronite and Levite priests holy, as they were selected (by God) to perform the Temple services. In addition, this tradition describes concentric circles of increasing holiness surrounding the Temple in Jerusalem. It calls all the following holy: the Holy of Holies, the Temple Sanctuary, the Temple Vestibule, the Temple Mount, and the walled city of Jerusalem.

Likewise, the Jewish holidays and the Shabbat are considered to be holy in time; the Torah calls them "holy days of gathering", when work is not allowed.

Beyond the intrinsically holy, objects can become holy through consecration. Any personal possession may be dedicated to the Temple of God, after which its misappropriation is considered among the gravest of sins.

The encounter with the holy is seen as eminently desirable, and at the same time awesome and fearful. The strongest penalties are applied to one who transgresses in this area – one could in theory receive either the death penalty or worse, the heavenly punishment of spiritual excision, (spiritual cutting-out), for misstepping in one's approach to God.

Jewish tradition expresses holiness as the perception of the soul united to the body, the incorporeal essence of a living, breathing being. (From Hebrew to English through Greek for soul or psyche, "ψυχή psyché", and through Latin for soul or mind, "anima"). The Greek and the Latin imply the understanding that the soul must have a logical faculty, the exercise of which is the most divine of human actions.

This logical faculty comprises the mental abilities of a living being: reason, character, feeling, consciousness, memory - a connection between the incorporeal, supernal world (above) and the material world. "*Sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am God your Lord*" reads the injunction in the Talmud. "Sanctify yourselves" means to take the initiative and work to become holy. Then, "be holy" means to strengthen yourself to maintain your level of holiness. So, holiness is about man's encounter with God.

L'Adonai

The Hebrew word Adonai (literally "My Lords") is the plural form of Adon ("Lord"). As with Elohim, Adonai's grammatical form is usually explained as a plural form of majesty, plural for respect, and to indicate power and authority. In the Hebrew Bible, it is often used to refer to God.

Adonai is the word for Lord in English, (Dominus in Latin). Lord may be understood to mean someone who has power, authority and influence, someone of noble birth, or holding high office. In the first book of Samuel, David uses the word Adonai to refer to Saul. Throughout the second book of Samuel, Adonai is used as a reference to both David and Elisha. Adonai is a term of respect, as evidenced by its usage throughout the Old Testament.

Adonai is used as a description of God or as a title of respect in the Old Testament, rather than as an actual name in the proper sense - it is not a name. David used Adonai to address God and also to address Saul, without confusion.

(For clarity, both Adonai and Elohim are usually translated as Lord in English).

Kodesh L'Adonai

To put the words together, Kodesh L'Adonai may be translated as "Holiness unto the Lord" in archaic English, or "Holiness to the Lord" in more modern English.

This is a command, an order, an injunction (authoritative warning), insisting on immediate attention and obedience, to behave in a holy manner. What is a holy manner of behaviour? It is an ongoing commitment to attempt to encounter God, through the iterative process of study, review, and refinement or modification of one's thinking and behaviour. An exercise which an individual must initiate, and which is to be deemed the highest endeavour to which one can commit oneself.

For Interest

For interest, Kodesh L'Adonai can be found in the Jewish Kedushah prayers, which are a recitation of two Biblical verses - Isaiah 6:3 and Ezekiel 3:12, both very well-known verses in Judaism and Christianity. These verses contain prophetic visions in which angels sing praise to God.

(Please bear in mind that Aramaic and Hebrew were not written with vowels, so the transliteration has varied over the last several thousand years).

- **Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh Adonai** Tz'vaot M'lo Khol Ha'aretz K'vodo
Baruch K'vod **Adonai** Mim'komo
Yimloch **Adonai** L'Olam, Elohayich Tziyon L'dor Vador Hall'luyah.
- Holy, Holy, Holy The Lord of Hosts, The entire world is filled with His Glory.
(Isaiah 6 :3).
Blessed is the Glory of the Lord in Its Place. (Ezekiel 3:12).
- The Lord shall reign forever, Your God, O Zion, from generation to generation,
Hallelujah. (Exodus 15 :18 and Psalms 146 :10).
- Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.
- Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts
Heaven and earth are filled with Your glory.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

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