Holy Land Holy People.

A Jew is made holy by observing the laws of Torah.

With all the laws which Judaism requires the Jew to observe it's obvious that they play some sort of role in the life of a Jew. Some say there are 613 laws, others say 212 and yet others say there are less. At any rate most people would agree that there are many laws for a Jew to observe. Some people, such as orthodox Jews try to observe all the laws, others observe less.

### The purpose of the laws in the Torah.

Considering this, I suggest that they must have an important purpose in the life of a Jew. Actually the purpose is stated in the Torah;

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."Ex 19:5,6

In other words their function is to make the Jew holy. As long as a Jew keeps these laws he is holy. A Jew who does not keep the laws can’t be called holy.

### Holiness is not a permanent situation.

This contradicts the opinion held, I think, by most people that holiness is a permanent characteristic of a thing, an object or a person.

### Nothing is holy, besides God.

I am of the contrary opinion; nothing is holy, except God, of course. For example, I think that worshipping any object, like an idol is a serious offence in Judaism because, by so doing one is misplacing the holiness which belongs to God, transferring it to an object.

The 2nd commandment reads as follows:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.” Ex 20:2,3

I think this means that considering any inanimate object to be holy and or a god is idolatry.

### A revolutionary idea.

I think that this prohibition must have been a very revolutionary idea, certainly at the time when the law was given, about 3000 years ago and even today.

Man has been sanctifying objects since the beginning of time; even father Jacob sanctifies Bethel, the place where he had the dream of the angels on the ladder (Gen 28:16).

We have many other examples in the Bible of people mistakenly sanctifying places and objects. This isn’t a contradiction in Biblical law; it simply shows that the law was so revolutionary that it wasn’t even understood by our ancestor Jacob and others who should have known better.

Even today most people will argue against the idea that Mt. Moriah (the place where the temple stood and the place where the Dome of the Rock stands today) is not permanently holy and considering it to be holy is a contravention of the 2nd commandment.

The Temple Mount is only holy as long as the temple stands there and Jews worship in it and carry out the laws of Torah.

Considering then that holiness is a temporary state, a Jew is only holy as long as he observes the laws of Torah.

Even the Land of Israel is only holy as long as there are Jews observing Torah in it.

It is important for a Jew to be holy, because possession of the holy land is dependent on the people possessing it being holy, namely by observance of Torah. This is according to the chapter on blessings and the curses:

"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart soul according that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.”Deu 20:1-3

### The choice of Mt. Gerizim as the place for the blessing.

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Joshua chooses Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim as the place where the blessings and the curse are recited because this is exactly the place where the Canaanites worshipped mountains, stones and other objects, turning them into holy objects. This is the place where the Israelites are most likely to be tempted to follow the Canaanite customs of sanctifying objects, the most serious infraction of Judaism. In fact the eradication of this custom is probably the reason for the existence of Judaism.