

קְדוּשִׁים

KEDOSHIM/BE HOLY

Vayikra/Leviticus 19:1-20:27

When we began the book of **Vayikra** we mentioned that we were in the “**book of holiness**,” and now we zero in on **Parashat Kedoshim**, the “**parasha of holiness**.” The first chapter begins with what could be seen as a startling command to “**all the congregation of the children of Israel**” that they should try to be “**holy**” as their Elohim is “**holy**”:

Vayikra/Leviticus 19:1 And יהוה¹ spoke to Moshe, saying, ² "Speak to **all the congregation of the children of Israel**, and say to them: **'You shall be holy, for I יהוה¹ your Elohim am holy.**

Our “**holy**” Creator Elohim, the One who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth, the One who is clothed with splendor and majesty, who covers Himself with light as with a cloak, the One full of mercy and good fruit, unwavering, without hypocrisy. The One we worship because He alone is “**holy**.” That One who is unlike any other, now commands His chosen ones to also “**be holy**.” How? How can we be faithful to the commandment to “**be holy**” when we understand the chasm between His awesome perfection and our earthly limitations?

How can we define “**holiness**?” As we continue on in **Vayikra**, we read a large number of commandments including honoring your parents, keeping His Sabbaths, avoiding idolatry, making various offerings, leaving the corners of your harvest for the poor, not stealing, paying your hired hand on time, judging fairly, not being a talebearer, not hating your brother in your heart, not holding onto grudges.... All of these commands actually point to attributes of יהוה¹, the “**Holy One**” to whom we belong. “**Holiness**” is defined by motives and acts of obedience to the one you are set-apart to.

I’ve heard the command to “**be holy**” said in another way –

“I (יהוה¹) am totally different, unique, and you shall be unique because you belong to Me.”

When יהוה¹ says we are to be “**holy**” (קְדוּשָׁה – **kadosh**) we are to be “**set apart**” to Him, because we have become His property. We have become part of His family. He is our Father and we are His sons and daughters. And because we belong to Him, we follow the way of life He lays before us. Our Heavenly Father is our standard for “**holiness**.”

Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, An El of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

יהוה¹’s “**holiness**” is about distinction. There is no one like our Elohim.

1 Chronicles 17:20 "O יהוה¹, *there is none like You, nor is there any Elohim besides You*

He is “**echad** - אֶחָד,” (one) with absolutely no mixture in any of His attributes. He is pure and undeniably “**holy**.” Adam was created in the likeness of אֱלֹהִים ... also with no mixture. But what did he do? He ate from a tree of mixture – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Immediately he was in trouble as his soul entered into confusion. Now everything was a battle as Adam’s emotions, Adam’s appetites, and Adam’s own will began to play a part in his decisions. Adam and Chava/Eve were in need of a “**restoration of their souls**.”

Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Sadly, Adam’s children would not bear the perfect “**likeness of Elohim**” but instead be in the “**likeness of Adam**”:

Bereshith/Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that **Elohim** created man, **He made him in the likeness of Elohim**.² He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.³ And **Adam** lived one hundred and thirty years, and **begot a son in his own likeness, after his image**, and named him Seth.

And so, sadly, all of us inherited a mixture of “**good and evil**” from our father, Adam. But the Creator already knew that man would fall short, and He had a plan for reintroducing “**holiness**.” Man fell in the Garden of Eden by not guarding the Almighty’s commandments. He will be restored by learning to obey those very same commandments. Torah instructions will become the door through which Israel will regain access to His “**holiness**.” Torah was a gift of grace, the Tree of Life.

The instructions to “**be holy**” in **Vayikra** are more than a command. They are also a promise! Remember when Moshe went up on Mt. Sinai and אֱלֹהִים told him to tell this to the “**children of Israel**?”

Shemot/Exodus 19:3 And Moshe went up to Elohim, and אֱלֹהִים called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Ya'acov, and **tell the children of Israel**: ...⁵ 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine.⁶ 'And **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**.' These *are* the words which you shall **speak to the children of Israel**."

אֱלֹהִים’s intention WAS and IS for ALL of Israel to “**be holy**,” i.e., a “**holy nation**.” A nation of unity and oneness, as He is. But once again, like in the Garden, another fall occurred with the golden calf. The plan that moves toward the goal of restored “**holiness**” will include Levitical priests who would teach the nation of their divine calling and their mission. But remember originally, all of Israel was called to be “**priests**.” Becoming a “**kingdom of priests and a holy nation**” is still a promise and the ultimate goal. However, it will just take more time.

The commandments given in **Parashat Kedoshim** apply to all aspects of our lives – thoughts, words, and deeds. These commandments, if they can be purely implemented in spirit and in truth, point to the future promise – that Israel will once again become a “**nation of priests and a holy nation**”:

1 Peter 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood, a holy nation,** His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you **out of darkness into His marvelous light**



Revelation 1:6 and has made us **kings and priests** to His Elohim and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

How does Yeshua fit into this restoration of “holiness?” Mr. Joe Snipes (<http://gatestozion.net/torah>) writes (slight editing):

The word “**commandment**” in Hebrew is, “**mitzvah (מִצְוָה)**,” but it comes from the root word “**tzava (צַוָּה)**” which means “**to command.**” However, according to the “**Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language**” by Ernest Klein, the ancient meaning of “**tzava**” means “**to connect/join.**” Thus, when a person does a “**mitzvah (commandment),**” their heart is being “**connected/joined**” to יהוה through their obedience. The Torah at this point in Yisrael’s history was יהוה’s means of entrance into the heart of His people.

...but the Torah had a “**weakness.**” What was it? Its weakness was that it was PERFECT! It therein demanded “**perfect obedience**” from those who sought to obey יהוה’s commands. BUT...those who sought to follow יהוה’s instructions WERE NOT PERFECT! ...The Torah could “**demand**” perfect obedience, BUT IT COULD NOT provide it! ...It could not “**give**” the ability to DO what was instructed. It could only point out the infraction, and the result was condemnation.

Let me make this statement here. It wasn’t that the Torah.... could not be kept:

Devarim 30:11 " For this **commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you,** nor *is* it far off. ¹² "It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ "Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ "**But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**

The problem was one of continuity. The obedience יהוה desired was continuous. But the heart of man, which had been infected by sin, could not reach that level. When there was a breakdown, then the Torah prescribed the proper offering to be offered at the Tabernacle/Temple. The combination of a “**broken and a contrite heart and spirit,**” along with the proper korban/offering provided atonement/covering, and forgiveness for the guilty party. But, the problem of the heart remained an issue.

This is where the final ReNewed Covenant comes in. יהוה, through His Son, Yeshua HaMashiach, has cut a New Covenant with better promises. This covenant is a once and for all answer to the sin problem, and to the problem of man’s heart. ... It was no longer necessary to

offer over and over again the korban of animals, and their blood to merely cover/atone for sins. The Korban of Yeshua's body was perfect...His blood not only atoned/covered sins, it TOOK THEM AWAY! It also went deep into the recesses of the human heart, into the spirit, and cleansed, wiped away, blotted out the condemnation on the conscience from the memory of the sins that had been committed.

Colossians 2:14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

...Also, the issue of “**obedience**” was answered by this final ReNewed Covenant. Under this covenant, יהוה not only STILL requires obedience.... HE PROVIDES THE POWER TO DO WHAT HE HAS ASKED!

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for **it is Elohim who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.** ¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing

Rav Sha'ul states emphatically that it is יהוה who not only gives the WILL to obey, He also provides the impetus to DO what he has asked. My part is simply to believe, yield (choose) and let His power carry me through to full obedience. If that is true, then who gets the glory? Not me. All I did was yield to His power at work in me. All the glory is יהוה's! He provides the impetus when I choose His will. ...He provides the ability to work. He does it all. ALL THE GLORY IS HIS! ...We just simply CHOOSE, BELIEVE, and YIELD to the impetus of יהוה's Holy Spirit. He will do IN us, and THROUGH us ALL He has promised in Mashiach! (end of quote)

Yeshua was the perfect example of how to keep the commandments from the heart. He is the door. Note His prayer to the Father as He drew near to the execution stake. He prays for the “**unity**” and “**oneness**” (no mixture) that will transform His people into a “**holiness**” not seen since the Garden of Eden:

John 17:21 **“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us,** that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one:** ²³ “I in them, and You in Me; **that they may be made perfect in one,** and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

The Torah commands were never meant to be by themselves, the way of salvation. Rather, they were the path of the saved. They were the shoe in which our “**love**” walks and expresses itself in “**holiness.**” That is why Yeshua said that when “**Torahlessness increases, the love of many will grow cold.**” “**Love**” diminishes when the Torah is not appreciated.

Matthew 24:12 “And because **Torahlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold.**”

Yeshua was a loving, Torah-keeper. He kept the Spirit of the Torah and the Letter of the Torah. He was faithful and loving in His obedience. He did not “abolish” the Torah, but He came to “fulfill” it through proper interpretation:

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. ¹⁷ " Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.**

As we look for the way of “holiness” in this week’s **Parashat Kedoshim**, we need to look for the principle that “fulfills” the literal command. For example:

Vayikra 19:14 'You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your Elohim: I am יהוה'.

Literally speaking, it seems quite easy to keep this command. “Do not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind.” I can do that. However, let’s search for how to “fulfill” this command. Concerning the “deaf” person, the idea is that because the person is unable to hear you, you can say whatever you want to them. You can be smiling while saying horrible things which they do not understand. The same goes for a blind person. You can be the one putting a “stumbling block” before them, and never be blamed because they cannot see you. Proper “fulfillment” of this command is about never taking advantage of someone who is weaker. A parent can take advantage of his child; a boss, his worker; or a teacher, his student. Negative behaviors towards a person can be done without the victim being aware. But notice how the command ends... “you shall fear your Elohim: I am יהוה.” In other words, “be holy as is יהוה.” Taking advantage of the weaker one is not something our Elohim would ever do.

Let’s look how to “fulfill” another of the commandments:

Vayikra 19:17 ' You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

According to the Sages, one of the most powerful ways to express “hatred” is to refuse to speak to someone, or to just plain ignore them. Hmm...how many of us are guilty of that? The disciple, **Yochanan/John** also spoke of this:

1 John 2:11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

In **Vayikra 19:17**, it follows up with “you shall surely rebuke your neighbor.” So, it appears that the one who “hates his brother” must truly believe that his “brother” has done something wrong. If he is

to ever have any hope of moving on to what is commanded in the next verse, he must speak with the one whom he “**hates.**” And he must do it graciously with an attitude of “**love.**” Not an easy task, but if we put as much effort into “**fulfilling the command**” as we do in keeping the “**letter of the command,**” we’d be more effective in the command to “**be holy.**”

Vayikra 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself:** I am יהוה.

Our Messiah Yeshua is the answer. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He enables us to “**fulfill**” the Torah. To be “**holy**” in our conduct as we reflect the light of the Holy One through the obedience of our “**good works**”:

Matthew 5:16 "**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works** and glorify your Father in heaven.

Ephesians 4:20 ...**Messiah**²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the **truth is in Yeshua:**²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and that you **put on the new man which was created according to Elohim, in true righteousness and holiness.**

A future prophecy following the war against Gog and Magog, connects the world’s recognition of the Almighty’s “**holy Name**” with His “**set-apart/holy**” people, “**Israel.**”

Ezekiel 39:7 "So **I will make My holy Name known in the midst of My people Israel,** and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am יהוה, **the Holy One in Israel.**

2 Corinthians 1:20 For **all the promises of Elohim in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen,** to the glory of Elohim through us.

Shabbat Shalom!

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