



אחרי מות-קדשים  
 Acharei Mot  
 Kedoshim



# אשרינו | Ashreinu

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

## HOLINESS AS A WHOLE

RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER

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NETANYA MEYEROWITZ ('17)

SARA DEICHMAN ('19)

ETAN WINOGRAD ('18)

MICHAEL ROSEN ('20)

**T**he opening pasuk of Parshat Kedoshim states, דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדוּת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם--קְדוֹשִׁים תְּהִיוּ. --"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to

them: You shall be holy..." (Vayikra 19:2).

Rashi notes that the commandment for every Jew to be holy is unique in that it is taught by Moshe to the entire Jewish people at one time, while the norm is for Moshe to teach the mitzvot to smaller groups. Why is the commandment, "You shall be holy," singled out as one that was taught to the entire Jewish people?

Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer, known as the Ktav Sofer, explains that one would think that in order to attain

holiness one would need to isolate and seclude oneself from the community; that a person striving to be holy would need time away from the chaos and immorality inherent in society.

However, explains the Ktav Sofer, ultimate holiness must come from within our communities. Therefore, the Torah specifically teaches us the law of "קְדוֹשִׁים תְּהִיוּ"--"You shall be holy"--while we are gathered amongst the entire congregation. The whole society must internalize the message that true holiness comes from working within our surroundings, and not despite them.

While you might seek temporary isolation in order to help focus or concentrate on personal goals, it is essential for all of us to know that our spirituality and strengths are ultimately meant to be incorporated into our families and communities.



# LOOKING OUT FOR OTHERS

NETANYA MEYEROWITZ ('17)

IN PARSHAT KEDOSHIM, WE ARE TOLD “הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ” -- “rebuke your fellow neighbor” (Vayikra 19:17). When someone is sinning or performing an action that one does not think is appropriate, we often think that it is their issue and that we must not involve ourselves in it. Although we must not involve ourselves to the point where it seems as if our involvement is coming out of personal anger, the Torah tells us of the importance of looking out for others. Why is it so important to involve ourselves in other people’s issues?

Looking out for others and warning them of their actions and the lasting effects they may create through their actions helps us understand the importance of a community. We are always judged as a community, whether fair or unfair, and we must, therefore, think as a community and protect each other. When a Jew commits a terrible crime, often other people judge the entire Jewish population for that one Jew. Although this may seem unfair, it teaches us the importance of kindly rebuking each other’s actions and living as a united community; after all, we are all one big Jewish family.

By telling us to rebuke one another, the Torah does not want us to call each other out on petty things that have no importance; rather, the Torah wants us to care about people’s personalities and things that affect their character and are, therefore, important. For example, one should not call someone out for his or her little habits that are “annoying”. Instead, we should focus our attention on things that have importance; for instance, one should call someone out in a proper way for stealing or saying lashon hara, rather than focusing on small unimportant matters. By looking out for each other and by focusing on our characteristics as a society, we can create a tighter-knit community that we can be proud to call our family.



# CONNECTION AND INTENTION

SARA DEICHMAN ('19)

AT THE INCEPTION OF PARSHAT KEDOSHIM, the commandment “קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ” -- “you shall be holy” (Vayikra 19:2) is stated. The Rambam has an interesting commentary on this phrase that revolves around a commonly-overlooked aspect of mitzvot. The idea is that one can follow a mitzvah well, but underneath, if there is no spiritual connection, the deed is not complete. For example, as strict as one may be in terms of following the rules of lashon hara, if he lacks spiritual connection and intention, the mitzvah is incomplete.

Connection and intention are key in the performance of a complete mitzvah. To be holy is not only to rightfully perform a task, but it is also having the proper connection and intention towards the proper spirit of the mitzvah. God delivered several commandments to the Jewish people throughout the Torah, and one may seem like just another. But each individual mitzvah correlates to every other mitzvah, as it is a directive for how to perform each one. From here we can understand that the statement “you shall be holy” is an instruction not only for our action, but also for our mindset. It is important for each of us to recognize the greatness and purpose behind each action we perform. Not only should we follow the mitzvot with our hands, but also with our hearts.

# HASHEM, THE SUPREME PARENT

ETAN WINOGRAD ('18)

THE SECOND PARSHA WE READ THIS SHABBAT, Parshat Kedoshim, contains the pasuk:

אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֵת שַׁבְּתוֹתַי  
תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

“Every man: your mother and father you shall revere and my Shabbatot shall you observe -- I am Hashem, your God” (Vayikra 19:3)

The pasuk contains two topics that seemingly have no connection: honoring your parents and observing Shabbat. Additionally, these two commandments are also found adjacent to one another in the 10 commandments. Rashi comments on this seemingly strange pasuk. He suggests that the Torah put these two commandments together to teach us an important lesson. One may not violate Shabbat even if his parents tell him to do so. Why did the Torah feel the need to make sure we knew this? Isn't it obvious that we should always follow Hashem over anyone else?

I think that one might have thought that the commandment of keeping Shabbat and the commandment of honoring your parents are equal because they are placed together. Furthermore, one may have even thought that honoring your parents is more important than observing Shabbat. As the Gemara in Kiddushin (30a) teaches, parents and God form a partnership in creating a child.

Therefore, Rashi teaches us that this is not the case. Since the parents were created on the sixth day of creation, they are part of a larger picture. Shabbat reminds parents that even they must be obedient to Hashem's laws just as children are. We learn from this seemingly strange juxtaposition in the pasuk that Hashem's word overrides the word of parents.

## WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

MICHAEL ROSEN ('20)

IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA, WE FIND THE JEWS journeying in the desert. They have not yet developed a national character, nor do they have a country. For now they are traveling from one country to another and being warned severely against emulating the national character of either. The Jews are expected to develop a national character from the Torah, and then live by it in their own country, Eretz Yisrael.

כַּמְעֵשָׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבֹּתֶם-בָּהּ, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ;  
וְכַמְעֵשָׂה אֶרֶץ-כְּנַעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה, לֹא  
תַעֲשׂוּ, וּבַחֲקֵיתֶהֶם, לֹא תִלְכוּ

*“The lifestyle of the land of Egypt, where you lived, you shall not emulate, and the lifestyle of the land of Canaan, where am I bringing you, you shall not follow” (Vayikra 18:3)*

Why is it necessary to mention Egypt? Why not just say: “Don't do such-and-such misdeeds?”

Rashi gives us an answer: “Because Egypt was the most immoral and depraved country among the nations.” Similarly, we may ask: “Why mention Canaan?” Again Rashi provides the answer: Because the seven nations inhabiting Canaan were even more immoral and depraved than the Egyptians.”

So the Jews had a tremendous job on their hands. Not only were they supposed to rise above the moral level of the Egyptians and the Canaanite nations (which might not be too difficult), but they were supposed to rise above the moral level of every nation on earth, “to be a light unto the nations.”

It seems they were starting off with quite a handicap, considering where they were coming from and where they were going. If God wanted them to become so great, why didn't He supply them with a more conducive atmosphere to holiness instead of taking them from the bad to the worse?

The answer to this problem lies in the very way Jewish history unfolds. The Jews are compared to a rose among the thorns. Since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the people of Israel have been flung to some of the most morally-depraved areas of the world. It was there that we were truly challenged to demonstrate the depth of commitment we made at Har Sinai. It was there that we had to search deep within ourselves to find the essence of our souls and, in fact, it was that exercise that made us grow to become the light unto the nations for which we were destined.

Often, our growth takes place, not in spite of a diverse situation, but because of it. In the face of diversity, our souls must become strong. Maybe that's why, right from the start, we were surrounded with challenge, so that we can rise like a rose amongst the moral thorns of the society in which we live.

# KRIAH CONUNDRUMS

**1. Which three parts of the Mishkan are listed in this parsha, and in what context are they mentioned?**

**2. In what context is dirt mentioned in this parsha? What other Torah command involves taking some dirt? In what context does dirt (afar) first appear in the Torah?**

**3. In this parsha, part of the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur involves two goats (seir izim). In what context does a goat (seir izim - not gadi izim) first appear in the Torah?**

**4. In what context is a lottery performed in this parsha? Where else in the Torah is a lottery performed?**

**5. As part of the Yom Kippur service, the Kohen Gadol takes a handful of incense and brings it into the Holy of Holies (Vayikra 16:12). Where else in the Torah is a command to "take a handful"?**

**6. The name of our parsha means "holy." Where is the first place in the Torah that holiness is mentioned? Where is the second time that holiness is mentioned?**

**7. Which commandment in this parsha refers to the morning?**

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(1) These three parts of the Mishkan appear several times: The parochet, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies, the kaporet, the cover of the Holy Ark; and the Incense Altar (Vayikra 16:2, 12). They appear in connection with the service of the Kohen Gadol on the Yom Kippur (2) In this parsha, when a bird or wild animal is slaughtered, its blood must be covered with dirt (Vayikra 17:13). In Parshat Naso, the Kohen is required to take some dirt from the floor of the Mishkan and mix it with water as part of the waters given to a suspected adulteress (Bamidbar 5:17). Dirt is first mentioned when Hashem takes "dirt from the ground" and forms Man from it (Bereishit 2:7). (3) In Parshat Vayeshveh, Yosef's brothers slaughter a goat (seir izim) and dip Yosef's coat into its blood (Bereishit 37:31). (4) In this parsha, a lottery is performed to determine which goat will be brought as an offering on Yom Kippur, and which goat is designated as the scapegoat (Vayikra 16:8). In Parshat Pinchas, Hashem commands that Eretz Yisrael to be divided among the Shvatim through a lottery (Bamidbar 26:55). (5) In Parshat Bo, Moshe and Aharon are commanded to each take a handful of ashes to initiate the plague of boils (Shemot 9:8). (6) The first mention of holiness is mentioned in Parshat Bereishit in connection to the Shabbat (Bereishit 2:3). The next mention of holiness is in Parshat Shemot when Hashem appears to Moshe at the Burning Bush. Hashem commands Moshe to take off his shoes, since the place where he is standing is "holy ground" (Shemot 3:5). (7) The law regarding paying a daytime worker states that a person must not delay payment past the morning following the work (Vayikra 19:13).