

Parashat *Kedoshim* is named for a word in the second verse:

*Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe lemor:
Daber el-kol-adat b'nei-Yisrael v'amarta alehem kedoshim
tihyu ki kadosh ani Adonai elokeichem:*

CJB

Leviticus 19:1-2

Adonai said to Moshe, 2 "Speak to the entire community of Isra'el; tell them, 'You people are to be holy because I, Adonai your God, am holy.

TLV

Leviticus 19:1-2

Adonai spoke to Moses saying: 2 "Speak to all the congregation of Bnei-Yisrael and tell them: You shall be kedoshim, for I, Adonai your God, am holy.

Orthodox

Vayikra 19:1-2

And HaShem spoke to Moses, 2 saying, "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be Holy [ones], for I, HaShem your G-d am Holy.'"

Leviticus 19:1-2

Let's look at that stunning command again:

...You shall be holy [ones], for I Adonai your G-d am holy.

There is a profound misunderstanding of the biblical word "holy" among some believers. Because G-d Himself is holy, we often equate holiness with sinlessness. Although G-d is most certainly sinless, "holy" does not mean to be just sinless in and of itself. You shall be holy: for I ... am holy--Separated from the world, the people of God were required to be Holy, for His character, His laws (Torah, and service were Holy).

Marriam Webster defines Holy as : exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness.

Much of the Torah contains instructions for determining *k'dosh* from *chol* [holy from common]. These instructions were designed to teach us to be able to tell the difference. It is no wonder then, that a people who, either out of tradition or denomination, dismiss a huge part of G-d's Holy Word, do not understand what the word "holy" means.

G-d is distinct and separate from man, and He wants His people to resemble Him in what we *do*. It is interesting that Peter quotes this command in 1Peter 1:15-16:

...He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'

1Peter 1:15-16

Where is the "it is written" reference that Peter is quoting from? There are three places where G-d tells His people that He wants them to *act* holy. The three passages are all in the book of Leviticus:

- Leviticus 11:44 For I am Adonai your God; therefore, consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy; and do not defile yourselves with any kind of swarming creature that moves along the ground. (Maftir)
- Leviticus 19:2-3 "Speak to the entire community of Isra'el; tell them, 'You people are to be holy because I, Adonai your God, am holy. 3 "'Every one of you is to revere his father and mother, and you are to keep my Shabbats; I am Adonai your God.
- Leviticus 20:7 Therefore consecrate yourselves — you people must be holy, because I am Adonai your God.

Notice the context:

- Leviticus 11:44 (your diet)
- Leviticus 19:3 (revere mother/father and keep G-d's Sabbaths)
- Leviticus 20:7 to "consecrate," to "set apart" from a common to a sacred use.

What do all of these three places of Scripture have in common?

The word *kadosh* [holy] is a word that denotes someone or something not looking or acting "the same." G-d is *other-than* mankind. He is separate and distinct. This is what theologians like to call G-d's transcendence. In our study of Scripture we discover that the reason for the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] was so that G-d could dwell with man. This *dwelling* with man theologians refer to this as G-d's immanence. There is a very real problem that the *Mish'kan* illustrates: How can a Holy G-d dwell among common men? The answer is repeated throughout the Torah: to approach G-d (in His Holiness), men and women must leave the common behind.

When G-d commands us to be Holy, He is telling us to *act like He does*. This week's parasha is a primary source for the Master's "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7. G-d's people are to look and act differently from the rest of the world. Now, for some of us that is not too difficult (I am often seen as "odd"), but it is not enough to merely be different from the world - it is to be different *in the way that G-d Himself has defined*. G-d declared that He is Holy - He wants His people not only to be different than those around them - He wants them to *resemble Him*.

In the Sephardic portion of the Haftarah K'doshim: Yechezk'el (Ezekiel) 20:2-20

Verse 8 "But they rebelled against me and wouldn't listen to me; they did not, each of them, throw away the detestable things that drew their eyes; and they did not abandon the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them and spend my anger on them there in the land of Egypt. 9 But concern for my own reputation kept me from letting it be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they were living, in the sight of whom I had made myself known to them, in order to bring them out of the land of Egypt. 10 So I had them leave the land of Egypt and brought them into the desert. 11 I gave them my laws and showed them my rulings; if a person obeys them, he will have life through them.

12 I gave them my Shabbats as a sign between me and them, so that they would know that I, Adonai, am the one who makes them Holy.

13 "But the house of Isra'el rebelled against me in the desert. They did not live by my laws; and they rejected my rulings, which, if a person does, he will have life through them; moreover, they greatly profaned my Shabbats. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them in the desert, in order to destroy them. 14 But concern for my own reputation kept me from letting it be profaned in the sight of the nations who had seen when I brought them out. 15 Yet I also raised my hand and swore to them in the desert that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands; 16 because they had rejected my rulings, did not live by my laws and profaned my shabbats; since their hearts went after their idols. 17 However, I spared them from complete destruction; I did not completely finish them off in the desert.

18 "I said to their children in the desert, "Don't live by the laws of your fathers, observe their rulings or defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I am Adonai your God; live by my laws, observe my rulings, and obey them, 20 and keep my Shabbats Holy; and they will be a sign between me and you, so that you will know that I am Adonai your God."

21 "But the children too rebelled against me. They did not live by my laws or observe my rulings, to obey them, which, if a person does, he will have life by them; and they profaned my shabbats. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them and spend my anger on them in the desert. 22 Nevertheless, I withdrew my hand and allowed concern for my own reputation to keep me from letting it be profaned in the sight of the nations who had seen when I brought them out.

In the B'rit Hadashah suggestive readings lets look at Galatians 5:13-26

13 For, brothers, you were called to be free. Only do not let that freedom become an excuse for allowing your old nature to have its way. Instead, serve one another in love. 14 For the whole of the Torah is summed up in this one sentence: "Love your neighbor as yourself"; 15 but if you go on snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other!

16 What I am saying is this: run your lives by the Spirit. Then you will not do what your old nature wants. 17 For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other, so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, then you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting the Torah into legalism.

19 And it is perfectly evident what the old nature does. It expresses itself in sexual immorality, impurity and indecency; 20 involvement with the occult and with drugs; in feuding, fighting, becoming jealous and getting angry; in selfish ambition, factionalism, intrigue 21 and envy; in drunkenness, orgies and things like these. I warn you now as I have warned you before: those who do such things will have no share in the Kingdom of God!

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 humility, self control. Nothing in the Torah stands against such things.

24 Moreover, those who belong to the Messiah Yeshua have put their old nature to death on the stake, along with its passions and desires. 25 Since it is through the Spirit that we have Life, let it also be through the Spirit that we order our lives day by day.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.