

קְדוּשִׁים
Kedoshim/Be Holy
Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:1-20:27

This week's parshah, Kedoshim, focuses on what may be the most **important attribute** of יהוה (Yahwey)...**His Holiness**. Not only is He **holy**, but as **His people**, we also are given the command to “**be holy**”:

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

In the Apostolic Scriptures, Peter reiterated these words as he spoke to believers in Messiah:

1 Peter 1:14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but **as He who called you is holy, you also be holy** in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because **it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."**

I think it's pretty clear that this is definitely a **commandment for us!** But what does it mean exactly...**to be holy?**

Webster's Dictionary gives this definition: **belonging to or derived from or associated with a divine power**. Jeff Benner, author of Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible defines **holy** as “**set apart from the rest for a special function.**” This **separateness**...this “**otherness**” can be expressed in either a positive or a negative way. We will focus on the positive – being **set apart** for יהוה, but in the negative, the word can also be used of **pagan temple prostitutes** who were also “**set apart for a special function.**”

When יהוה commands us to “**be holy**”, He is asking us to **separate ourselves from anything that is NOT holy**. **Holiness** is manifested through our **behavior** (1 Peter 1:15). It is **not simply something that we ARE** as a result of **receiving Messiah**. Accepting Yeshua as our **Adonai** means that we are now ready to begin to **follow Him in holiness**.

In 1 Peter 1:16 above, Peter writes that “**it is written**”. Following are the Scriptures that Peter would have been referencing. The **context** of these verses is given in parenthesis:

Vayikra 11:44 'For I *am* יהוה your Elohim. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and **you shall be holy; for I *am* holy**. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (**your diet**)

Vayikra 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: '**You shall be holy, for I יהוה your Elohim *am* holy**. (**honoring your parents and Shabbat**)

Vayikra 20:7 'Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy, for I *am* יהוה your Elohim**. (**sexual purity**)

So...in other words, Peter is taking believers **back** to the **Torah foundation** for the **definition of holiness**. What makes **Israel**, including anyone who is grafted in to Israel through faith in Messiah Yeshua, **HOLY** is **keeping the commandments of Torah**. **Obedience to Torah** is what would (and what does) **keep Israel distinct** from the other **nations**. If you have pursued this **holy lifestyle** by changing your **diet** or by keeping **Sabbath**, then you know that people definitely consider you to be “**distinct**”!

In Exodus 19:6, **יְהוָה** declared **Israel** to be **His holy people**:

Exodus 19:6 '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."

Again, we can parallel this with what is in the Apostolic Scriptures:

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;

Declarations alone do not mean you are **living** a **holy lifestyle**. In order to achieve the **holiness defined by יְהוָה**, Israel would have to **observe His Torah and His commandments**. We know that **Yeshua is the Word of Elohim made flesh**. Yeshua **obeyed the Torah** flawlessly and is our **example**. He was **holy**.

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and **they follow Me**."

When we **follow Yeshua** by **keeping His commandments**, we become an **imitator** of Him and the result of this is that **we reflect His character and His holiness**. This is how we become a “**light to the world**” as He is a “**light**”. When we can accomplish this in **unity with other believers**, then we truly are “**the body of Messiah**”. We will become in **practice** what we have been **declared to be** (Ephesians 4:11-16).

It is often pointed out that chapter 19 in Vayikra **echoes the 10 commandments**. The chapter in fact opens the commandments up to **deeper meanings**. For example, the **8th commandment** is: **Do not steal**. Vayikra 19:13 **expounds** on this commandment by pointing out that we should **pay our debts** in a **timely manner** and **not delay wages** to a hired worker. Vayikra 19:35-36 tells us to **be honest in our trade**:

Vayikra 19:13 ' You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

Vayikra 19:35 ' You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.³⁶ 'You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin:

See if you can find the other commandments **embedded** and **expounded upon** within Vayikra 19.

So what we have is the requirement to **keep the standard of holiness** that **יְהוָה** has set for us in the **commandments** expounded upon and laid out for us in **Torah**. If we do this, then we become a **people set apart for holiness** and we will **reflect our Holy Elohim**. Why is this so important to Him? I believe the answer is in His desire to **dwell** among us:

Exodus 25:8 "And let them make Me a **sanctuary, that I may dwell** among them."

The root word for **sanctuary** (מִקְדָּשׁ) is **kadesh** (קָדַשׁ) which means “**to be holy**”. Upon this physical earth, יהוה could only **dwell** in the midst of **holiness**. Of course this is why the tabernacle had to be built exactly according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mountain. **The Garden of Eden** was the original place where יהוה **dwelt with man**. As long as Adam and Eve **kept the commandment** of יהוה and **did not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, יהוה was able to be **in their midst**. So what happened?

What actually happened is something that is being addressed over and over in Chapter 19 of Vayikra... **mixtures**. **Mixtures profane יהוה's holiness**. This was the instruction of יהוה to Adam and Eve:

Genesis 2:16 And יהוה Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;¹⁷ "but **of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely **die**."

This tree was the only tree in the garden with a “**mixture**” of fruit. In other words, **the fruit was not pure and holy**. When Adam and Eve **chose** to eat of the fruit, they **lost their holiness** and could no longer **dwell** in the presence of **Yah**. In eating of the fruit, they chose **death** instead of **life**. Thus began the process of **progressive revelation** as יהוה would slowly reveal His requirements that would allow us to once again **dwell** in His presence.

Today because of the **cleansing blood of Yeshua**, the **Spirit dwells within us**. We have been “**declared**” **holy**, but we must still **work out our holiness** so that we can be a **light** to those who do not know Him and so that we do not “**grieve**” the **Spirit within us**:

Ephesians 4:29 Let **no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth**, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.³⁰ And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The Scriptures define for us what is a **mixture**. **Improper mixing** of things results in **confusion**.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be **unequally yoked together with unbelievers**. For what fellowship has **righteousness** with **Torahlessness**? And what communion has **light** with **darkness**?

Let's take a look at some of the **mixtures** in Vayikra 19:

Vayikra 19:19 ' You shall keep My statutes. You shall **not let your livestock breed with another kind**. You shall **not sow your field with mixed seed**. Nor shall a garment of **mixed linen and wool** come upon you.

I have read that when **two species of plants** are planted in very close proximity to one another, the result is that the **roots become enmeshed**; each derives its source of nourishment from the other. The outward physical characteristics don't necessarily change, but several of the **internal attributes** of the plants **change**. **Taste, texture, aroma**, etc., can occur as a result.

Linen comes from the **earth**, and **wool** comes from **an animal whose blood can picture redemption** (a **heavenly** concept). This **blend** was only found in some of the **priestly garments** (Exodus 28:6) and was not

worn by the **ordinary lay person** (with the exception of the **tzit-tzit**). I find it interesting that some of the garments found in the Dead Sea caves had white tassels of **linen** and blue tassels of **wool** woven together (tzit-tzit). It's as if any Israelite was able to **share in a bit of the priesthood** by wearing tzit-tziot, symbolizing that **ultimately** they would be a "**kingdom of priests**".

The following verse speaks to **holiness in justice**. We must operate on the **facts** and not allow our **judgment** to be clouded by our **biases**:

Vayikra 19:15 ' You shall **do no injustice in judgment**. You shall **not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty**. In **righteousness** you shall **judge your neighbor**.

Next we see that **we must not gossip** about others. This becomes the **mixing** that James refers to when we use our mouth to **both bless the Father and curse others**:

Vayikra 19:16 'You shall not **go about as a talebearer among your people**; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am יהוה.

James 3:8 But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.⁹ **With it we bless our Elohim and Father, and with it we curse men**, who have been made in the similitude of Elohim.

We can also be guilty of **mixing** when we **outwardly attempt to keep the commandments, but we continue to harbor bitterness or hatred in our hearts**. Instead we should **care enough about our brother to rebuke him if necessary and appropriate**:

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.

Matthew 18:15 "Moreover **if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone**. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

1 John 2:9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

These verses in Vayikra command the Israelites to be **separate** in their **appearance and practices** from the **pagans**:

Leviticus 19:26 ' You shall **not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying**.²⁷ 'You shall **not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard**.²⁸ 'You shall **not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you**: I am יהוה.

There is one phrase repeated **16 times** in Chapter 19:

I am יהוה
אני יהוה

This **repeated declaration** is the **reason for every command to be set apart....to not stoop to mixing....to be holy**. He is יהוה and when as His people we **pollute His holiness through mixing**, we **distort the picture of who He is**. In other words, we **profane His Name** by making **ourselves (or our name)** more **important**. There is a very dramatic example of this in Scripture:

Genesis 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.³ And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; **let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."⁵ But יהוה came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.⁶ And יהוה said, "Indeed **the people *are* one** and they all have one language, and **this is what they begin to do**; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there **confuse their language**, that they may not understand one another's speech."⁸ So יהוה scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.⁹ Therefore its name is called **Babel**, because there יהוה **confused the language of all the earth**

Confusion is the result of **mixing**. **Confusion** is the opposite of **order**. יהוה's **order** brings about **holiness**.

James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, **confusion** and every evil thing *are* there.

1 Corinthians 14:33 For Elohim is not *the author* of **confusion** but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the **saints (holy ones)**.

Now look who got themselves into some trouble with **mixing** and **disorder**:

Hosea 7:8 "**Ephraim** has **mixed** himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned.

We see that we have strayed far from the goals of יהוה for our lives. **Israel** did not remain **separate** from the **nations**. The **exiled people** of **Ephraim** disseminated into the nations and totally lost their identity as a set apart people. The **Levitical priesthood** was completely corrupted by the time of **Yeshua**. **John the Baptist**, the son of a **Levite**, **separated** himself from this **corrupt system** and went into the wilderness where he lived in **seclusion**. This was his **message**:

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,² and saying, "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

John was **warning** the **religious systems** of that day to **return to the ways of Torah**. His mission prepared the way for the 1st coming of the Messiah. As **priests of the order of Melchizedek**, those of us whose eyes have been **opened to the truth of Torah** must also call out with the same message:

Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!
Return to Torah!

Our role as priests through this superior, heavenly order is illustrated **by the ways of the sons of Tzadok** (sons of Righteousness) in Ezekiel 44:

Ezekiel 44:23 "And they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.²⁴ "In controversy they shall stand as judges, *and judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.*

Our objective is **to keep and to teach the commandments** of יהוה as Yeshua taught:

Matthew 5:19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but **whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

We're not done discussing the concept of **holiness**. The **holiness** of the Almighty is **limitless**. Let's look at several things declared **holy** throughout Scripture:

- יהוה is **holy**:

Vayikra 20:26 'And you shall be holy to Me, for **I יהוה am holy**, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

- יהוה's Name is **holy**:

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose **name is Holy**: "I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

- The first thing יהוה declared **holy** was the **Sabbath**. We also are to keep it **holy and set apart from the other 6 days**:

Genesis 2:3 And Elohim blessed **the seventh day** and made it **holy**, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it **holy**.

- יהוה is the **Holy One of Israel**:

Isaiah 48:17 Thus says יהוה, your Redeemer, **The Holy One of Israel**: "I *am יהוה* your Elohim, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

- His **feasts** are declared to be **holy**:

Vayikra 23:4 ' These *are the feasts of יהוה*, **holy** convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

- His **earthly tabernacle** was declared to be **holy**:

Vayikra 16:33 "then he shall make atonement for the **Holy Sanctuary**...

- He is declared to be **holy in His throne room**:

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw Adonai sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple.² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.³ And one cried to another and said: "**Holy, holy, holy is יהוה** of hosts; the whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

Revelation 4:6 Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.... And they do not rest day or night, saying: "**Holy, holy, holy, יהוה** Elohim Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!

- **Jerusalem** is declared to be **the holy city**:

Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, **O Jerusalem, the holy city**. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again.

- **The New Jerusalem (the bride)** will come down from heaven as a **holy city**:

Revelation 21:2 I saw **the Holy City, the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from Yah, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Okay, so יהוה is **holy** and **everything intimately associated with Him is holy**. Scripture says that it is the **holy ones who will live and reign with Him for a thousand years** during the millennial period:

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will **be priests of Yah and of Messiah and will reign with him for a thousand years**.

I think I want to know who these **holy ones** are who will **resurrect and reign with Messiah**. The English translation for "**holy ones**" is often "**saints**" (קְדוֹשִׁים).

Daniel 7:18 'But the **saints** (קְדוֹשִׁים) of the Most High **shall receive the kingdom**, and possess the kingdom **forever, even forever and ever**.'

Hmmm...do you think He means they'll reign "**forever**"? Here's another interesting **end times verse**:

Zechariah 14:5 Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus יהוה **my Elohim will come, and all the saints (קְדוּשִׁים) with You.**

Now in the Renewed Covenant Scriptures, there is more information about who the **saints** are:

Colossians 1:26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His **saints**.²⁷ To them Elohim willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory.²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and **teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Messiah Yeshua.**

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the **saints**; here *are* those who keep the **commandments of Yah and the faith of Yeshua.**

1 Thessalonians 3:13 so that He may establish your hearts **blameless in holiness** before our Elohim and Father **at the coming of our Adonai Messiah Yeshua with all His saints.**

Now we shall address “one more thing” since **Yeshua made mention** of it as **one of the two most important commandments**:

Vayikra 19:18..... you shall **love your neighbor** as yourself: I *am* יהוה.

Mark 12:28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"²⁹ Yeshua answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is*: 'Hear, O Israel, יהוה our Elohim, יהוה is one.'³⁰ 'And you shall love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is* the first commandment.³¹ "And the second, like *it, is* this: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' There is no other commandment greater than these."

In the book of Luke, Yeshua is asked the question, “**Who is my neighbor?**” This was His reply:

Luke 10:30 Then Yeshua answered and said: "**A certain man** went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who **stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.**³¹ "Now by chance **a certain priest** came down that road. And when he saw him, he **passed by on the other side.**³² "Likewise a **Levite**, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and **passed by on the other side.**³³ "But a certain **Samaritan**, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, **he had compassion.**³⁴ "So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and **took care of him.**³⁵ "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'³⁶ "So **which of these three do you think was neighbor** to him who fell among the thieves?"³⁷ And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Yeshua said to him, "**Go and do likewise.**"

Often the Hebrew word for “neighbor” is interpreted as “friend”. A **neighbor** is never an **enemy**, but someone who a person has some kind of a **connection with**. In the story that Yeshua told, there were two people who passed by the injured man. Both were from the **tribe of Levi**...one was in fact a **priest**. In their minds, if they had gone near this **bloodied** or perhaps **dead man**, it would have rendered them **unclean**...then they would not be “**holy**” and **able to perform their functions in the temple**. However, **loving your neighbor IS Torah** and Yeshua was making the point that **love TRUMPS holiness in certain instances concerning life**. I recognize that this is hard to understand and reconcile with **what is written in Torah**. Next week we will read this in our reading:

Vayikra 21:1 And יהוה said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people,

Perhaps now you can understand why the **Levites**, especially the **priest**, may have felt justified in **passing by the man** in Yeshua's story. Some **rabbis** have written that “**among his people**” is the key to this verse in **Vayikra 21:1**. This phrase reveals that **the sons of Aaron should not defile themselves when there are others “among his people” who could attend to the injured man**. In Yeshua's story, the injured/perhaps dead man is all **alone**. The rabbis have said that **there is no greater act of love than to bury a poor man**. So, therefore **love trumps holiness in certain situations**. Yeshua **agreed with Torah** and **properly interpreted it (this is the meaning of “to fulfill”)** for the people. Not only that, but Yeshua's story is a picture of Himself **laying aside His holiness** and taking on the **uncleanness of mankind**.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (neighbor).

It is because of **Yeshua's love for us** that we are able to have a **future** with Him. Once we know Him, **His desire** is that **we resemble Him in His holiness achieved through our obedience to His commandments**. We do that by **what we eat, what we wear, what days we celebrate and worship, by what we speak, and by how we love**. The **commandments** are His **standard** and if we **love Him, this becomes a joy!**

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of Elohim, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

Oh, my. I do have “**one more thing**” that has just occurred to me. In Yeshua's story it was a **Samaritan** who showed **love** for the **injured man**. The **Samaritans** were a people of **mixed origin** (some Israelite blood) who worshiped the Elohim of Israel **mixing in their own traditions with the ways of Elohim**. I cannot help but see this **Samaritan**...this worshipper of יהוה, albeit it with a **mixture of pagan ways**, as a picture of **traditional Christianity**. This man reached out in “**love**” to the **injured and the needy**. And **Yeshua commends Him**. In my humble opinion, if the Hebrew Roots Movement has fallen **short** in any area, it is that we have focused so much on **learning to be holy by keeping the commandments**, that **we sometimes forget the hurting and the needy that are right in our path**. Often it is the **church** (like the Samaritan) who **attends to and loves the one we overlooked**. We have **criticized** the church for its **emphasis on “love”** at the **expense of “holiness”**. But in His story, Yeshua reminds us of **love's importance**. It is true that in certain instances, **love trumps holiness**, still in the end...**holiness prevails!** Friends...neighbors.... **let us continue to pursue holiness, but not at the expense of love!**

Shabbat Shalom,
Ardelle