

KEDOSHIM

ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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Parshat Kedoshim is one of the best parshiot in the Torah. Or at least Rashi says so on the first verse: most of the topics of the Torah are contained in Parshat Kedoshim. Meaning – in learning this one parsha we touch on almost all the main themes of the mitzvot of the Torah.

There are 51 mitzvot in 64 verses. These include some of the most beloved ethical mitzvot: love your neighbor as yourself, help the poor with dignity by leaving parts of your harvest for them, honesty, care for employees, concern for the vulnerable; the deaf, blind and ger. As well as warnings to not follow all types of sorcery. And to administer justice with vigilance. And forbidden sexual relationships and idolatry.

But besides simply enjoying the content of all these rich mitzvot, their context provides an important principle.

The last 11 parshiot, reaching back to Teruma, have revolved around one main theme: G-d's invitation to us to rendezvous with Him in the Mikdash. This holy encounter demands purity from us. These 11 parshiot have dealt with the many rules to ensure our encounter with Him is one of Kedusha. In these 11 parshiot we have also

been instructed in Kedusha in 2 particular human activities: food (the laws of kashrut), and sexual relations. Both of these are also framed as being areas of holiness. And next week we will have the holy days outlined.

We could easily assume: our task as Jews is to be holy. Holiness means to encounter G-d on His terms in His place. And during holy times; Shabbat and holy days. And also to be holy in those things we most closely share with the animal world: food and procreation. We are not animals. We are in His Image. And so in those very things that are earthy, we limit ourselves, expressing our noble station. Food and sexual relations.

But then we have Parshat Kedoshim. Be holy. How? Honesty. Care for others. No sorcery. Caring for employees. No idol worship. A court system that is just. Forbidden relationships. Concern for the vulnerable.

You know, it looks like every way you turn there is another mitzvah. I thought holiness is, well, I thought it was in things that are holy. Mikdash. Shabbat. Not your employees. Or your court. Or your generosity. Or honesty.

The Torah has introduced a dramatic and revolutionary idea. Holiness is everywhere. The Torah has transformed our lives into the stage for holiness. How we treat each other, how we speak, our food, our relationships, our time. Our every moment becomes a moment of holiness: to be truthful, to be generous, to think, love and fear Him.

And one beautiful stylistic tool emphasizes this. The commentaries struggle to identify the thematic flow of the 51 mitzvot of this parsha. It certainly looks like there is no particular pattern. We all could rearrange the list of mitzvot into neater cate-

gories: those between man and G-d, those between man and man, societal mitzvot, encounters with idol worship. That would make a neater flow to the parsha.

It could be that the Torah is using a stylistic tool: a flow of consciousness. You know how our minds fly all over the place: we think about where we are going, then last night's dinner, then how our neighbor is feeling, then what the kids are up to... Perhaps, the Torah is employing that style in our parsha. As if to say, whatever you think of, wherever you turn, that internal process of yours that travels the world in 60 seconds, moving from one topic to another – that is where Kedusha can be found. In everything we do. Respect parents, keep Shabbat, don't swear falsely, leave some harvest for the poor, be fair in your courts... Whatever you think of – there's a holiness moment. Our lives are full of moments that can be holy. Everything we do. What a gift: our trite and mundane everyday life has been transformed to the stage for holiness. And that is our Parsha.



1st aliya (Vayikra 19:1-14) Be Holy, as I, G-d, your G-d am holy. Revere parents, keep Shabbat. Do not turn to idols or make grav-

May the Torah learned in this Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמת החבר אשר בן החבר נפתלי ומטלה הירש ז"ל נלב"ע ג' אייר - יום הזכרון
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en gods. A shlamim offering may only be eaten for 2 days. Help the poor and stranger when harvesting a field by leaving dropped or forgotten produce or grapes. Don't steal, lie or swear falsely. Don't cheat; or tarry paying wages 'til the morning. Don't curse the deaf, trip up the blind.

There is a definite repetition or perhaps development of the 10 commandments in these mitzvot. Though not in the exact order they appear in the 10 commandments, but thematically connected.



2nd aliya (19:15-22) Do not pervert justice by favoring either poor or powerful. Don't spread gossip, nor stand by your brother's blood. Don't hate. Don't take revenge; love your neighbor as yourself. Do not interbreed animals or seeds, or wear wool and linen.

Each of these mitzvot is rich. But to not spread gossip. That is a great one. Oh how the information age has truly perfected the spreading of gossip. I was in someone's home and on the back of the door, for you to see as you left home, was a dvar torah on not spreading gossip. That is a holy reminder.

And one of the best verses of the Torah: love your neighbor as yourself. As Rabbi Sacks says: it is easy to love mankind, quite a bit harder to love the person next door. We see the warts, as they see ours. But rise above it. All people have goodness.



3rd aliya (19:23-32) In the Land, fruit is forbidden for the first 3 years of growth, 4th year holy, 5th year permissible. Do not use divination.

Nor round the corners of your face or use a straight razor on your beard. Nor tattoo. Nor seek sorcery. Rise before the aged, glorify the wizened.

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4th aliya (19:33-37) Love the convert. Employ accurate weights and measures. The convert may feel out of place, different, self conscious, without family, not part of the crowd. Be extra sensitive to those feeling left out.

I could leave it at that. But I can't. I have the good fortune to be the Director of Machon Milton, the RCA course of study for converts here in Jerusalem, run in partnership with Shavei Yisrael. We need to be sensitive when inviting converts of those in the process of converting to our homes – we need to be sensitive to their feelings. Perhaps they don't want to tell their story again, for the 50th time. Or 100th. Maybe they just want to enjoy Shabbat dinner and speak of the parsha, sing zemirot, and participate like everyone else. So. Don't ask them their story. And we need to go out of our way to bring the one who is clearly uncomfortable a siddur and chumash and invite them to sit beside us. After all, love the convert.

Accurate weights and measures? Seems obvious. But the Torah is emphasizing that even when you can get away with it, don't. Like cursing the deaf. Who will ever know?



5th aliya (20:1-7) One who gives their child to Molech shall be put to death. And if you don't

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do it, I will. The one who turns and follows sorcery, I will deal with them. Be holy; for I am Holy.

There are things done in the name of great piety that are not pious at all. Child sacrifice has a rationale to it: I am willing to give my most precious to G-d. Just that it is a perverted rationale. While we should always strive to understand those who behave unlike us, we should not tolerate behavior that is perverse in the name of piety.



6th aliya (20:8-22) The following receive the death penalty: cursing parents, the long list of forbidden sexual relationships listed above. Observing these laws and not those of the nations will prevent the Land from spitting you out, as it has done to those nations. Since I have distinguished you, it is you who shall possess the Land, the land flowing with milk and honey

The Jewish idea of ethical monotheism is on full display in Kedoshim. Holiness wanders seamlessly in the parsha from taking care of the poor, to laws of sacrifices, to honesty, to sexual prohibitions, to loving your neighbor, not hating; all under

the rubric of holiness. We are to be holy so that the Land does not spit us out. Certainly something to give us pause, those of us walking the streets of our Land. We need to be extra vigilant in all these holy things, ritual, interpersonal, speech, care, love; for our success in this land rests upon it.



7th aliya (20:23-27) And you shall distinguish between animals to be eaten and those not.

Be holy to Me and I will distinguish you to be My people.

The wide range of holy things outlined in the parsha is our expression of being holy to Him. And He, in turn, will make us distinct.

HAFTORAH

1 SAMUEL 20:18-42 MACHAR CHODESH

Today's *haftarah* is read on a Shabbat that is immediately followed by Rosh Chodesh. Indeed, the reading opens with the words, "Yonatan said, "Tomorrow is the [first of the] new month."

The story is one of loyalty and devotion. David and Yonatan are dear friends.

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם קדשים תהיו

"Speak unto all of the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them You shall be holy" (19:2)

Rabbi Yechezkel Halberstam (son of Sanzer Rebbe 1813-1898, Poland) asks a simple question. Would it not be more appropriate to be stated in the command form "Kedoshim Heyu...Be Holy"? Why does the pasuk use the future tense. You shall be?

Perhaps, he answers, this is the commitment, the future promise by G-d that the Children of Israel will become sacred and pure, thereby, meriting the future redemption. As Maimonides states in his Laws of Repentance (7:5) The Torah ensures that eventually Israel will repent their ways, end their exile and merit immediate redemption. As stated in Deuteronomy (30:1-3) "And it shall come to pass...and you shall return unto G-d...and then G-d will turn thy captivity...and will return and gather thee from all the peoples.

Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut this week, who would have thought that over 150 years ago Rabbi Halberstam would see fit to find words of prophecy and hope in Parshat Kedoshim that we are watching unfold before our very own eyes. Shabbat Shalom and Chag Ha'atzmaut Sameach

Yonatan's father, King Shaul, despises David, fearing that he will depose him from the throne. Sensing danger, Yonatan told David to hide in the field rather than attend Shaul's Rosh Chodesh feast. Yonatan then attended the feast and gauged the king's mood. Realizing that Shaul was determined to kill David, Yonatan went out to the field, shot three arrows and called to his assistant, "The arrow is beyond you," a predetermined signal to his friend that it was not safe to return to the king's palace.

Before parting, the two friends kissed and wept, and swore to maintain their mutual affection for generations to come. ■

STATS

	KEDOSHIM
of 54 sedras in Torah	30th
of 10 in Vayikra	7th
Lines	109
Rank (Among The 54)	49th
Parshiyot	4
P'tuchot	3
S'tumot	1
P'sukim	64
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9
Words	868
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9
Letters	3229
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9

MITZVOT

	KEDOSHIM
Mitzvot (pos/prohib)	13+38

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