

PARASHAT KEDOSHIM

by **Rav Reuven Taragin**

Kedoshim Tihyu - Rov Gufei Torah Teluim Ba

"Speak unto the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael..." (Vayikra 19,2).

"Tani R. Chiya: This parasha was spoken in congregation (be-hakhel), because the majority of the elements of the Torah are dependent on it ("rov gufei Torah teluim ba"). R. Levi said: Because the ten commandments are included in it" (Vayikra Raba 24,5).

A. Chapters 18-20

Parashat Kedoshim begins a series of parshiot relating to the concept of sanctity with the command, "You shall be holy, for I, HaShem your God, am holy." The repeated mention of the concept of holiness (kedusha) in all the remaining chapters of Sefer Vayikra underlines the fact that they are all related in some way to kedusha; however, it is unclear what is the principle underlying the order of the sections.

In regard to the two chapters of parashat Kedoshim (19, 20), there are a number of additional questions. Perek 19 presents us with a lengthy and varied list of mitzvot. It seems apparent that all of these mitzvot are meant to express the concept of kedusha, but a simple examination fails to reveal the logic on which the list is based.

Perek 20, on the other hand, is devoted to only one topic, the punishment allotted to sinners, particularly in regard to laws of prohibited sexual relations. The problem here is the relation of this perek to the preceding ones and to what follows. On the one hand, the connection between this perek and the list of mitzvot in perek 19 is baffling. On the other hand, perek 20 closely parallels perek 18; the earlier perek lists prohibited sexual acts, while the later one lists the punishments for those same acts. This only increases our perplexity when trying to understand why perek 19 separates the two.

B. The Structure of Perek 19

I believe that a proper understanding of the structure of perek 19 will clear up the difficulties I raised above, as well as explicating the relationship between parashat Kedoshim and the succeeding parshiot, Emor and Behar. Perek 19 can be divided into two parallel units, each of which is made up of three subsections. Both units begin with mitzvot bein-adam-lamakom (between man and God) and conclude with mitzvot bein-adam-lichaveiro (between man and man), followed by a general reference to the observance of "chukim." In between the types of mitzvot is a section of mitzvot which belong to both types and which serves as a bridge between the other two subsections.

Kedoshim, chapter 19

A	3-10	Bein-adam-lamakom	23-31
B	11-14	Transition	32
C	15-18	Bein-adam-lichaveiro	33-36

The subsections are parallel not only in terms of the general contents, but in the form and contents of the specific mitzvot as well. First of all, there is a difference in the name of God used in the different subsections. In subsections A, dealing with mitzvot bein-adam-lamakom, each mitzva is concluded with the phrase "I am HaShem" or "I am HaShem your God." In Subsections B, the conclusion is "your God, I am HaShem." In subsection C (bein-adam-lichaveiro) of the first unit, the conclusion "your fellow, I am HaShem" appears.

There is also a parallel in the specific contents of the two units - the ideas and phrases which appear in the first unit are repeated in the second.

3	al tira'u, tishmoru	29-30	tishmoru, tira'u
4	al tifnu (elilim)	31	al tifnu (ovot)
5-8	pigul, chilul kodesh	23-25	kodesh hilulim
9-10	pe'ah (etc.)	26-28	pe'at harosh
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14	before (lifne) the blind	32	pnai zaken (old)
15-16	lo taasu avel bamishpat, tzedek	35-6	lo taasu avel bamishpat tzedek
18	ve-ahavta lirei'akha kamokha	34	ve-ahavta (ger) kamokha

This balanced parallelism between bein-adam-lamakom and bein-adam-lichaveiro, which we find in other places in the Torah as well, such as the ten commandments (which is already noted in the midrash of R. Levi cited at the beginning of the shiur),

is of course meant to emphasize the importance of both kinds of mitzvot in the establishment of kedusha.

C. The Continuation of Sefer Vayikra

The parshiot which follow continue to cite mitzvot belonging to these two categories: bein-adam-lamakom in chapters 20-24 (Kedoshim, Emor), and bein-adam-lichaveiro in chapter 25 (Behar). These sections develop the ideas which were mentioned in the original list of mitzvot in perek 19. First, chapters 20-24 refer to the four ideas mentioned in the first two subcategories (A and B).

1. Perek 20 - This perek deals with the obligation to execute those who desecrate the sanctity of the nation through certain acts. Previously, in perek 18, the Jews were commanded to distance themselves from the behavior of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, primarily in the area of sexual relations. These actions contaminate the land, causing it to spew forth from its midst those who commit them. This was the cause of the removal of the Cannanites from the land, and their adoption by the Jews will lead to an identical fate.

Following perek 19, the next chapter explains that Jewish society must punish those who transgress these prohibitions. God can, of course, eliminate these transgressors - and will do so if society will not. The primary obligation however is on Jewish society. "Kedoshim tihiyu" has ramifications not only for the individual, but for the sanctity of the community as a whole. One expression of this is the obligation to kill those who desecrate that sanctity.

Despite the fact that sexual transgressions occupy most of the chapter, the opening and conclusion refer to prohibitions of idolatry - molekh (2-6), and ov and yidoni (27). This connects the chapter with the original list of perek 19 - "al tifnu...." (19,4; 19,31).

2. Chapters 21-22 - These two chapters begin with an address to the kohanim:

21,1: "Say ('emor') to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon...."

22,2-3: "Speak to Aharon and his sons... say to them."

The contents of the two chapters is also similar. Both deal with causes of desecration to the mikdash. The two roots, "KDSH" and "ChLL" appear 32 and 13 times, respectively. The two chapters may be divided each into two subsections, the first dealing with desecration through "tum'a," and the second with desecration through "mum" (a bodily defect):

perek 21		perek 22
1-15	tum'a	1-16
16-24	mum	17-33

The difference between the two chapters is that the first refers to the status of the kohanim, while the second refers to the status of sacrifices. This difference is emphasized by the conclusion verses within the two chapters:

Perek 21:

15 - "He shall not desecrate his seed in his people, for I AM HASHEM WHO SANCTIFIES HIM."

23 - "He shall not desecrate My temple, for I AM HASHEM WHO SANCTIFIES THEM."

Perek 22:

2 - "They shall not desecrate My holy name, IN THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY SANCTIFY TO ME, I AM HASHEM."

The common denominator of these two chapters and chapter 20 is the perceived connection of tum'a and kedusha. Just as the holy people may not suffer desecration and desecrators in their midst, so too the kohen, sanctified from amidst his fellow Jews, must not permit himself to come into contact with tum'a, or to allow the sanctified objects of God to be desecrated.

These chapters are connected as well to the ideas of perek 19:

a) Perek 21

	Perek 21		Perek 19
5	korcha berosham	27-28	p'at rosham
	p'at zakan		p'at zkanam
	seret		seret
4-15	zona and challal	29	"Al techallel et bitkha lihaznota"

The laws of kedusha which were given generally to the Jewish people in perek 19 in order to create the basis for a life of holiness are directed in perek 21, with a special emphasis, to the kohanim, who bear a greater degree of kedusha.

b) Perek 22

	Perek 22	Perek 19
3	"VENIKHRITA"	

9	"velo YISU alav chet"	8	"VE'OKHLAV AVONO YISA VENIKHRITA"
15-16	"VEHISU otam avon oshma b'OKHLAM"		
29-30	"And when you shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, of your own will shall you offer it. It shall be eaten on that same day, Do not leave any of it till the morning...."	5-6	"And when you shall offer a sacrifice of offer a sacrifice of peace- offering to God, of your own will shall you offer it. It shall be eaten on the day you offer it and on the morrow...."

The proper way to bring a sacrifice and to eat it, described summarily in perek 19, is elaborated on in perek 22. The main difference is once again the connection between tum'a and kedusha, which was explicated in chapters 20 and 21.

3. Chapter 23 - This chapter deals with Shabbat and festivals. The first part (Shabbat; 23,1-3) parallels the first item in the fourth idea of the list in perek 19 - "Et shabtotai tishmoru" (19,3;30). At first glance, it would appear that the Torah is using Shabbat as an opening link in order to discuss the other holidays. However, it would appear that there is a direct link between the holidays and the list of perek 19.

Shabbat has a special place in this chapter. On the one hand, Shabbat is the first and prime instance of "mikraei kodesh" in general - "The times of HaShem, which you shall declare mikraei kodesh, these are My times. Six days..." (23,1-2). On the other hand, the other holidays receive a separate introduction - "These are the times of HaShem, which you shall declare in their times...." (23,4). It would appear that on the one hand Shabbat is the prime example of a holy time. The laws of Shabbat, primarily the prohibition on labor, form the framework for the celebration of the other days. Both Shabbat and festivals are called mikraei kodesh, and melakha is forbidden. But on the other hand, there are a number of differences between Shabbat and the festivals.

One difference emphasized in perek 23 is the role of the special sacrifice (musaf). In all the festivals, the Torah writes, "you shall offer a fire-offering ("isheh") unto God." On Shabbat though, although we know from parashat Pinchas that there was also a musaf, here in Emor the sacrifice is not mentioned. The other festivals (particularly, but not only, the three regalim) are centered around the temple. Shabbat though is centered in your homes - "It is Shabbat to God in all your dwellings" (23,3). Accordingly, it is clear that perek 23 develops the TWO themes of the fourth element - "Observe My shabbatot and fear My mikdash, I am HaShem."

D. Conclusion

Parashat Kedoshim opens with a general heading - "kedoshim tihiyu." The heading is followed by a detailed list of mitzvot which form the basis for the way to achieve kedusha. The list divides into two units which encompass mitzvot bein-adam-lamakom and bein-adam-lichaveiro. The first subsection of the two units (bein-adam-lamakom) contains four ideas, which are expanded in the following chapters (20-24).

Tishmiru, tira'u

19, 3-10 3: Shabbat, parents

19: 23-30 30: Shabbat, mikdash

Ch. 20-24 23: Shabbat, moed

Idolatry

19, 3-10 4: Idols

19: 23-30 21: Ov, yidoni

Ch. 20-24 20: Death penalty

Desecration

19, 3-10 5-8: Pigul

19: 23-30 23-25: Neta, rivai

Ch. 20-24 22: Tum'a, mum, pigul

Pe'a, etc.

19, 3-10 9-10: Field

19: 23-30 26-28: Man (Jew)

Ch. 20-24 21: Man (Kohen)

For further study:

1. In the shemira-yir'a subsection (A), in both units of perek 19, the shemira is directed to Shabbat. The yir'a is, however, first directed to parents (19:3), but in the second unit is directed to mikdash (19:30). Why? Hint (possibly): Read 19:29. To whom is it addressed?

2. This shiur traced the expansion of perek 19 in succeeding parshiot only (for the bein-adam-lamakom part up to ch. 24). From ch. 25 on, there is a parallelism to the bein-adam lichaveiro section. Try and find the elements in parashat Behar that reflect subsection C of perek 19. (One obvious example: 19:33 and 25:14-17).

3. Chapter 24 concludes with the story of the "mekalel." Why is it there?

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