

Kedoshim

קדשים

דבר אל-כל-עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם
קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אליכם

"Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy, Hashem, your Elokim'." (19:2) R' Meir Halevi Rotenberg z"l

(1760-1831; rabbi and Chassidic Rebbe in Opatów, Poland) writes:

Our verse commands us to emulate G-d's holiness. By His nature, Hashem is completely removed from the physical world; yet, His Presence fills, and He influences, every corner of this world. So, too, though a person wants to ascend to the highest spiritual levels, it is not Hashem's Will that we detach ourselves entirely from this world.

Rather, our goal should be to draw spiritual influences into our physical world. (Ohr La'shamayim) **R' Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter z"l** (1847-1905; second Gerrer Rebbe) writes: The Torah is proving to us that it is possible to be holy despite being in the physical world. After all, Hashem created the world and He continues to give life to everything in it, yet He is distinct from the physical world and is holy. (Sfat Emet: Likkutim) **Midrash Rabbah** comments on our verse:

Thus it is written (Tehilim 20:3), "May He dispatch your help from the Kodsh / Sanctuary and support you from Zion." [Until here from the Midrash] How are the two verses connected? **R' Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald z"l** (1867-1928; rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva in Oyber Visheve, Hungary) explains (in Keren Le'Dovid He'chadash) : The Gemara (Sukkah 52a) teaches that it is impossible to defeat the Yetzer Ha'ra without Divine assistance.. Our job is only to begin to serve Hashem; then Hashem completes the task for us. In truth, however, even the first step is not accomplished by our efforts alone. For that, too, we need Divine assistance. This, writes R'

Gruenwald, may be the purpose for which the entire Torah is taught to a fetus in the womb, only to have him forget it at the time of birth. Perhaps this is the initial assistance needed to help one serve Hashem. (Hamaayan)

Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisroel and say to them 'You shall be holy.' (19:2) Why does the Torah use the future tense you shall be holy. The Torah should use the present tense - be holy. The Torah is teaching us that this Mitzvah is like no other Mitzvah. Any other Mitzvah - once it is done - accomplished - it is done. The Mitzvah to be holy is a continuous Mitzvah. One is never finished with it. Whatever level of Kedusha one achieves - he can still do more and become more holy. (Ohr Hachayim)

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Long range

"לא תלך רכיל בעמך" - תנא ר' ישמעאל: זו רכילות זו לשון הרע, ולמה כן? תנא ר' נחמיה: שלא תהא כרוכל הזה שמטעין דבריו של זה ומביאו לזה, ושל זה ומביא לזה, וזה שנאמר "חצי גבור שנונים עם גחלי רתמים" [תהלים ק"ב, ד'], מה ראה למשול לשון הרע לחץ מכל כלי זין? אלא, כל כלי זין מכים במקומם, וזה מכה מרחוק - כך הוא לשון הרע: אדם עומד ברומי וממית בסוריא... ולא ככל שאר גחלים אלא כ"גחלי רתמים", שכל הגחלים כבו מבחוץ - כבו מבפנים, אבל גחלי רתמים אף על פי שכבו מבחוץ, עדיין בוערות מבפנים. כך כל מי שהוא מקבל לשון הרע, אף על פי שאתה הולך ומפייסו והוא כאילו מתפייס, ועדיין הוא בוער מבפנים. ומעשה ברתם אחד שהצית בו את האור, והיה דולק שמנה עשר חדש: חרף וקיץ וחרף...

[בראשית רבה צ"ח, כ"ג]

איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת-שבתתי תשמרו
אני ה' א'

"Ish / A man-Your father and mother you shall revere and My Sabbaths you shall observe-I am Hashem, your Elokim." (19:3) What purpose is served by introducing these commandments with the word "Ish" / "A man"? **R' Yehoshua Kaniel z"l** (1895-1970; Chief Rabbi of Haifa, Israel) explains, based on a comment by **R' Yaakov Kranz z"l** (1741-1804; Dubno Maggid): A person may say, "When I was a child, I definitely needed my parents and therefore had an obligation to honor and revere them. Now, however, I am an independent adult! Why should I revere my parents?" To counter this, the Torah begins the commandment with "Ish." Even when you are a grown person, you shall revere your

לכבוד האי גברא וב"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם
על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה
להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו
שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם
הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב
בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות
מיט יידישע נחת בזה ובבא ענגצב"ב

parents. Similarly, continues R' Kaniel, a person might say: "I am an adult with responsibilities. I have a family to feed. How can I refrain from working on Shabbat?" No! says the Torah. "Ish"—even a grown man with mouths to feed should observe My Shabbat. Why? Because "I am Hashem, your Elokim"—I make the rules, and I care for you. (Divrei Yehoshua II)

Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and My Sabbaths you shall keep (19:3) The Talmud teaches that there are three partners in the creation of a human being - the mother, the father, and G-d. It is, therefore, not sufficient for a person to honor only his parents; the third partner, G-d, demands His due as well: "And my Sabbaths you shall keep." (Shuva Yisrael)

לא-תשנא את-אחיד בלבבך הוכח תוכיח
את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו חטא

"Do not hate your brother in your heart." (19:17) There are many different words to describe the next person. Your friend, a person, a neighbor, a stranger - are some of the ways we can describe an individual. In this pasuk the Torah uses the word brother. The Torah is telling us - that when a person does something bad to you - you might not consider him your friend. You might not want to consider him your neighbor. You might not even consider him to be a person. But remember he is your brother. Just like one cannot disown a brother, one cannot disown a fellow Jew. (Rabbi Samshon Refoel Hirsh)

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall rebuke your fellow and not bear a sin because of him. You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow as yourself-I am Hashem." (19:17-18) **R' Elazar Weisblum z"l** (1839-1910; Chassidic Rebbe in Galicia, known as R' Elazar Reisher)

writes: This verse appears in the Parashah whose subject is "Kedoshim" / being holy people. Holy people despise sin and, as a result, experience difficulty loving people who act improperly. Therefore, the Torah cautions: True, you have an obligation to rebuke your fellow, but do so because you love him with your heart and soul and want the best for him, not with hatred. You shall not hate your brother, says the Torah; rather, you shall love your fellow as yourself. Only with such feelings may one offer rebuke. (Mishneh Le'melech) **R' Menachem Mendel Stern z"l** (1759-1834; rabbi of Sighet, Hungary) writes: We read (Mishlei 24:24-25), "One who tells a wicked person, 'You are righteous'—the people will curse him . . . and for rebukers it shall be pleasant." **R' Moshe Alsheich z"l** (1508–1593; Tzefat, Eretz Yisrael) explains that, although one should not flatter a wicked person, one who is rebuking him may say, "You are righteous! This bad deed is beneath you!" Similarly, R' Stern writes, our verse refers to rebuking "your fellow." Tell him: "I view you as my friend and equal. Bad deeds are beneath you!" (Derech Emunah)

Joining Hatzalah

"לא תעמוד על דם רעך" - תנו רבנן: מניין לרואה את חברו טובע בנהר, או חיה גוררת אותו, או לסטים באים עליו, שהוא חיב להצילו? תלמוד לומר: "לא תעמוד על דם רעך". ומניין לרודף אחר חברו להרגו, שניתן להצילו בנפשו, שנאמר "לא תעמוד על דם רעך".

[סנהדרין ע"ג, א']

"לא תעמוד על דם רעך" - ראה תינוק מבעבע בנהר, ואמר: לאחר שאחלוץ תפילי - אצילנו, ובזמן שהוא חולץ תפיליו, הוציא זה את נשמתו, ראה אשה טובעת בנהר, ואמר: לא דרך ארץ להסתכל בה ולהצילה - הרי זה חסיד שוטה...

[סוטה כ"א, ב']

לא-תקם ולא-תטר את-בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'

The Torah commands us to love every Jew as we love ourselves, a mitzvah known as Ahavas Yisroel. In Parshas Eikev (Devorim 10:19), there is an additional mitzvah of Ahavas Hager, to love every convert. The **Rambam** writes in Hilchos Deios (6:4) that when a person loves a convert, he fulfills two commandments: the mitzvah to love every Jew and the mitzvah to love a ger. In his sefer Pachad Yitzchok

(Pesach 29), **Rav Yitzchok Hutner** notes that this seems to contradict the Rambam's opinion (Sefer HaMitzvos Lo Saaseh 170) that when one mitzvah is always subsumed in another, it is not reckoned as an independent mitzvah in the list of the 613 commandments. For example, an ordinary Kohen and the Kohen Gadol are both forbidden to marry a divorced woman (Vayikra 21:7, 14), but it is only counted as one prohibition since one is inherently included in the other. In light of this principle, how can the commandment of Ahavas Hager be considered separate from the mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel when every ger is also a Jew? To resolve this difficulty, Rav Hutner offers a novel interpretation of the commandment of Ahavas Yisroel. He explains that the mitzvah is not simply to love every Jew, but specifically to love him because he is רעך – your brother. Thus, if someone feels love toward a neighbor or work colleague and unbeknownst to him that person is Jewish, he does not fulfill the commandment of Ahavas Yisroel, which can only be done when the feelings of love come from an appreciation of what it means to be part of the Jewish nation, and this obviously cannot happen if he is unaware of the person's status as a Jew. Applying this concept to Ahavas Hager, the mitzvah is not merely to love a person who converted to Judaism, but specifically to love him due to a recognition of all that converting entails. With this introduction, we now understand that even though every ger is by definition a Jew, the commandment to love a convert is not automatically subsumed in the broader mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel, since each requires an independent appreciation. In addition to resolving an apparent contradiction in the Rambam, Rav Hutner also gives us a valuable insight into all interpersonal relationships, that genuine feelings of love for every person in our lives must be rooted in recognizing and valuing that individual's unique background and character (Parsha Potpourri- Rabbi Ozer Alpor)

לא-תקם ולא-תטר את-בני עמך ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'

You shall neither take revenge

from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Hashem. (19:18) How can the Torah legislate on the heart and command us to love a fellow Jew?! Why is this important verse punctuated – crowned with the words, "I am Hashem"? What is that adding to the equation? Let us begin from a point that seems far from the subject. Everyone knows there is no such thing as "mother nature". It's kinda like the tooth fairy. Everybody plays along but knows it isn't true. The Hebrew word for the natural world is HaTeva which has a numerical value – a gematria of 86. The name for Hashem as He is manifest in this world is Elokim which is also 86. This helps us understand the "nature" is actually repeating miracles. When something happens once, we call it a miracle but when it happens repeatedly and predictably then we call it nature. Recently I discovered another word that has the numerical value of 86, "Halleluya". What connection could this possibly

To reprove or Not to?

"הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך" - אמר ר' אילעא משום ר' אלעזר בר' שמעון: כשם שמצוה לומר דבר הנשמע, כך מצוה שלא לומר דבר שאינו נשמע, שנאמר: הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך" - הוכיח למי שמקבל תוכחה. [יבמות ס"ה, ב' - ראה רש"י שם]

"הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך" - אמר ר' חנינא: לא חרבה ירושלים, אלא בשביל שלא הוכיחו זה את זה, שנאמר "היו שריה כאילים לא מצאו מרעה" [איכה א', ו'] - מה איל זה, ראשו של זה בצד וזנבו של זה, אף ישראל שבאותו הדור, כבשו פניהם בקרקע ולא הוכיחו זה את זה. [שבת קי"ט, ב']

have? Hallel is actually an expression of overflowing excitement. It's wildness. The end of the word has two letters YUD and HEY. The sages tell us that Hashem made this world with the letter HEY and Olam Haba – the Next World with a Yud. The Yud is the smallest of all the letters. It's a dot. It's the light at the end of the tunnel. It's also the light at the beginning of the tunnel. Like a star it seems almost insignificant from a distance but as we approach it, we understand it's infinitely larger than any sun. It's an Ohr Ain Sof – An Endless Light as the mystical books describe it. While in the narrow chamber, the tunnel of this world it's like the filament in the light bulb that

floods this world with ultimate meaning. We mentioned that this world was made with a Hey which is open broadly on the bottom because there are many ways to fall out and fail but there is a narrow window on the top for one to reenter with Teshuvah. The older and the more experiences I have had with the world, the more I appreciate that sketch-like portrait of this world. The **Maharal** points out (all puns intended) that the Hey is comprised of two letters, a Dalet which represents and means poverty and a Yud. There are two important implications. Without the Yud – Olam Haba we are destitute in this world. Secondly Olam Haba is to be found in Olam HaZeh -this world. That's why it's called Olam Haba, literally "the world that comes" because it comes from our behaviors and attitudes in this world. Wow! Once these ideas are discovered we can become wild with excitement and intoxicated with joy. The world around us is dense with meaning. We can recite Hallel about the Yud and the Hey that fill and surround creation. The is not a natural setting but a remarkably miraculous place with endless possibilities. Wow! Someone pointed out to me that the word "KOS" cup is also 86. Dovid HaMelech said, "My cup overflows..." To the real spiritual giant, the debate is not whether or not the cup is half empty of half full to discern who is the optimist and who is the pessimist but rather the cup is full and beyond. That's how Dovid HaMelech perceived the world. I have been thinking about this for a while now but just last night for the first time I was gazing at the words V'Ahavta L'Reyecha C'Mocha – Love your neighbor like yourself, and I started counting and lo and behold, the word K'Mocha – like yourself is also the gematria 86. Hmmm! I am thinking that once we realize that the world is rich with RUCHNIOS – ultimate spirituality then we understand about ourselves that we are truly wonders of creation. That view helps us to love our fellow because he too is miraculous being. He is "just like you". Hashem punctuates the verse because it's only that Hashem permeates the world and is apparent in me that I can now identify Him in others, just like me. (Rabbi Label Lam - Dvar Torah)

וכי-תבאו אל-הארץ ונטעתם כל-עץ מאכל
וערלתם ערלתו את-פריו שלש שנים יהיה
לכם ערלים לא יאכל

The Torah forbids the consumption of orlah, the fruits produced by a tree for the first three years (19:23). The Gemora in Shabbos (33b) relates that when Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was forced to flee to a cave to save his life, a carob tree miraculously sprouted there to provide him sustenance. How was he permitted to eat the fruits, which are considered orlah? **Rav Yissochar Dov of Belz** (Imrei Daas) cites the Yerushalmi (Orlah 1:1), which rules that if a tree grows in a place that is not designed for human settlement, which was the case with the cave of Rabbi Shimon, it is exempt from the laws of orlah. **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** zt"l (Derech Emunah Hilchos Maaser Sheini 10:6) notes that the **Rambam** rules that if a tree grows on its own in a public area, such that its fruits are ownerless and available to all, the laws of orlah do not apply to it. **Rabbi Aharon Yehuda Laib Stainman** in M'rafsin Igri gives a few answers. First, a tree that grows miraculously is exempt from all laws governing fruits, such as orlah and maaser. Second, the tree may have already been planted elsewhere for more than three years, and if it was transferred to the cave together with its roots, its fruits would be immediately permissible. Alternatively, Rabbi Shimon may have eaten the carob fruits while they were still small and not yet legally classified as fruits that are forbidden as orlah. The **Ma'adanei Asher** (Lag B'Omer 5769) writes that the fruits were permissible to Rabbi Shimon due to the principle of pikuach nefesh -one may transgress any prohibition, with three exceptions, to save one's life - and since he was trapped in the cave with nothing else to eat, he was permitted to eat fruits that would normally be orlah. However, he notes that it would be unusual for Hashem to miraculously save Rabbi Shimon's life in a manner that would require him to eat otherwise- forbidden food, especially when many opinions maintain that forbidden food eaten to save one's life still causes spiritual damage to a person. (Parsha Potpourri- Rabbi Ozer Alport)

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and you shall plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as orlah; for three years it shall be orlah to you, they shall not be eaten (19:23) The Gemara states (Shabbos 30b): "Trees are destined to yield fruit every day, for it is said, 'it will bear branches and produce fruit': just as the branches [exist] every day, so shall there be fruit every day." Now our Sages tell us that in the future, on the day they were planted, the trees will produce fruit (Sifra Bechukosai 1:1). The question is: Since the fruit are forbidden for the first three years due to orlah, what is gained by the fact that on the day they were planted, the trees will produce fruit? **Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank** explains that this is referring to a non-fruit-bearing tree, as the Gemara says (Kesubos 111b): "There is not a non-fruit-bearing tree in the Land of Israel that does not produce a load of [fruit for] two she-donkeys." And the law is that non-fruit-bearing trees are exempt from orlah. (Kaftor Voferach- Rabbi Yisroel Avrohom Stein)

"When you shall come to the Land and you shall plant any food tree . . ." (19:23) **R' Avraham Saba** z"l (Spain and Turkey; died 1510) observes that G-d has implanted in man an inborn desire to preserve the world, as Kohelet states (3:11), "He has also put ha'olam / the world into

their minds." Were this not the case, every person would say, "Why should I bother planting when someone else might end up eating my produce?" (Tzror Ha'mor) **The Midrash** on our verse cites the same verse from Kohelet that R' Saba cites, and it notes that the word "ha'olam" is spelled without the letter "vav." As a result, the verse from Kohelet can be read: "He has also put he'ellem / enigma into their minds." Says the Midrash, Hashem has hidden man's day of death from him, for if man knew when he would die, he would not plant and he would not build. That would be wrong. Just as each generation finds the world planted and built-up, so it must plant and build for the generations that follow. Regarding this, Hashem says, "Take your example from Me, for I have no use for what I plant, yet it is written (Bereishit 2:8), 'Hashem Elokim planted a garden in Eden.'" (Midrash Tanchuma)

And when you come into the land

(19:23) Certain commandments only pertain to the land of Israel, and are not applicable outside of its borders. Despite the admonition of the **Tzemach Tzedek** - the third Lubavitcher Rebbe - to "make here the land of Israel," we should not feel that it is acceptable to languish in exile for even one minute more than necessary. Our goal remains the physical land of Israel and the ushering in of the Messianic era through the coming of Moshiach. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Rav Shmuel Brudny zt"l (27 Av 5675/1915-10 Adar I 5741/1981) was one of the leading Talmidim of the Mir Yeshiva in Poland, and was given special attention and regard by **Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel**, the Mir Rosh Yeshiva. He became a Rosh Yeshiva in the Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn and was a role model and Rebbe to thousands of Talmidim. The following 8 thoughts and sayings were culled from various writings, citations and from talmidim and family members. **1.** If a Talmid chochom is giving a drasha, and someone in the tzibbur opens a sefer to leaf through it – this can be b'geder "Mezalzel b'talmid chochom b'rabim." (V'halachta bidrachav p. 38). **2.** There is no hope for a person

to come to the ultimate truth unless he finds a way to clean out within the inner recesses of his heart all of his "first impressions" and "initial thoughts on a matter" which are of the greatest biases that a person has. First and foremost of these "initial thoughts" are that it is very clear to him that he has never once made a mistake or error. Whatever he had once said are an almost immovable rock before him. (Zichron Shmuel 101:6) **3.** We see from the Chumash that Kayin was the originator of the idea of bringing a Korban and Hevel copied him – albeit by bringing a much better Korban. Kayin's was not accepted while that of Hevel's was. The Midrash further explains that when the two battled together, it was Hevel that originally had Kayin in a headlock, but Kayin told him, "What will our mother feel?" Hevel let him go and Kayin treacherously killed him. We see from here that the emphasis in this world is not Machshavah – but Maaseh. What is counted ultimately is what happens lemaaseh – not the thought behind it. (Heard from family) **4.** The Midrash tells us that Avrohom Avinu told Hashem, "I had what to respond when you told me to offer my son Yitzchok – that you promised me ki b'yitzchok yikareh lecha zerah.. Please Hashem, when Yitzchok's children will do Aveiros – remember the Akeidah and have mercy on them." What does "I had what to respond" mean? It was Hashem's will that Yitzchok be a korban! The answer is that the halacha is that Hashem does not go back on something good that He promised (See Shabbos 55a). It is just that Avrohom's desire to do Hashem's will was so strong that he knew that only good could ultimately come out of listening to Hashem. Now, just as I switched what appeared to be negative to positive – so too Hashem having mercy on Yitzchok's children and switch what appears to be a negative to the positive. (Sefer Zichron Chaim p. 155) **5.** Why is it that Purim achieved a higher status in terms of spirituality than Chanukah did? It is because on Purim, upon which it is stated, "Lech knos es kol haYehudim – go and gather all the Jews.." – we demonstrated achdus. Esther gave back a message to Mordechai that all the Jews should gather and daven and fast – to assist

in nullifying the horrible decree. Klal Yisroel demonstrated achdus. On Chanukah, however, there were many misyavanim – and we were missing this crucial component – we had no achdus. **6.** We see from the Sifrei in Parshas Ki Seitzei that even Avrohom Avinu was to blame for the argument between the shepherds of Avrohom and the shepherds of Lot. The reason for this is that even though there is a Mitzvah of Tochacha – rebuke – they still should have kept only to rebuke and not have made an argument about it. Avrohom Avinu should have instructed them better on the parameters and limits of rebuke – that they should have stuck just to mussar and not have argued about it. (Zichron Shmuel p. 97) **7.** I witnessed during the bombing of the Beis Midrash in Shanghai, everyone tried escaping to enter the bomb shelters – but when Rav Shmuel Birnbaum saw the extent of the bitul Torah that the bombing had caused – he sat down and learned Torah – undisturbed by the shelling and noises of the bombs.. [at a Bar Mitzvah drasha for an einikel of Rav Shmuel, Kesrah shel Torah p. 65] **8.** In the Mishnas Rabbi Elazar (chapter 10) there is a comparison between Gideon and Yehoshuah in terms of how they uplifted Klal Yisroel. Yehoshuah did so by filling them up with Torah – Gideon did so by being melamed zchus on them giving them the benefit of the doubt through Ahavas Yisroel. Certainly, Yehoshua's method is preferable. But Gideon's method is also very nice, by starting small with an Ahavah for Klal Yisroel – it can almost reach the level of Yehoshua. (Rabbi Yair Hoffman for 5ijt.com The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com)

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