

way that radiates love and patience. That means holy in a way that exudes kindness and compassion. That means holy in a way that keeps its focus on future potential instead of present sin. That means holy in a way that is gentle, longsuffering, meek, and merciful. That means holy in a way that forgives sin, iniquity, and even rebellion for the sake of the Greater Plan of Redemption and Restoration. That means holy in a way that makes holiness beautiful, not ugly.

Are you ready to embrace a kind of holiness like that? Are you ready to put away all selfishness, all hate, all taking of things from others, all falsehood, and all deception? Are ready to find out what 'loving your neighbor as yourself' looks like in real time? Are you ready to dedicate your mind, your mouth, and your members to faithfully observing the King's statutes and judgments, and making them come alive in every arena of life? Are you ready to delve into the 'weightier' matters of Torah? Are you ready for the challenge the parsha called *Kedoshim* is about to present? Let's see what treasures lie waiting to be uncovered!

A Treasure Hunter's Travelogue For the Upcoming Week

Kedoshim begins with the Holy One calling *B'nei Yisrael* His *adat* – *i.e. witness throng*. We are not just His Redeemed. We are not just His Covenant Partners. We are not just His Bride-People, His Army, or His Nation. We are, first and foremost, His WITNESSES. Our lives are supposed to serve as unambiguous proof-texts of the power and the beauty of His love. Our lives are supposed to provide solid evidence of the wisdom and superiority of His Ways. The people of the world are supposed to be able to look at us, listen to us carry on conversations, business transactions, and relationships, and be inspired to want to be like us.

After calling us His *adat*, the Holy one then briefs us on our primary *adat* assignment: “***You are to be kedoshim*** - *i.e. holy ones* - ***for I, the Holy One your God, am kadosh*** – *i.e. holy.*” Leviticus 19:1. The reason He redeemed us from bondage is now clear: we are being trained to *present the world a way out of both mediocrity and depravity*, and to *lead anyone who wishes to come out of such things into a new, more excellent way of life consisting of holiness, wholeness, harmony, hospitality, and hope*. He wants us *to be fully present and functional in this fallen world*, yet never to consider ourselves *of or be even one bit like it*. He calls us to be an elite *spiritual special forces team*, ‘shadowing’, ‘echoing’, and emulating the character, attributes of our Redeemer-King in all things - and walking in His Ways at all times, in all situations, before all men. We are not a *strike force*; nor are we a bunch of code enforcers or vigilantes; we are a *M*A*S*H* [*i.e. mobile army surgical hospital*] unit. We are called – and trained – and expected - to serve in the danger zones of this world – at risk of our own lives, expecting nothing from those we help – we have everything we need and more from the King Whose Kingdom we represent. We are to be about this *Adat B'nei Yisrael* mission wherever we live.

We are to be fully engaged in this witness through calling in times of prosperity and in times of deprivation. We are to be about this service in times when we enjoy the favor and friendship of our fellow human beings, and in times when we are confronted with hate, ridicule, persecution, and holocaust. We are to do this *'be holy ones as He Who calls us is Holy'* gig when everything is going right in our families, communities, and nation – and when all Hell is breaking loose in and around us. We are to do this even – indeed especially - when war rages, when famine strikes, when pestilence breaks out, and when 'natural' and/or man-made disasters befall. We are His First-Response Team. We are his field medics. We are to run to the flames, not from them. No retreat. No compromise. No surrender. No turning back. No *man*, no *woman*, no *child* left behind. This is *job one*. This is our *Mission: Impossible*. Ready ... Set ... Go!

The Holy One does not want us confused regarding what the 'holiness mission' to which we, as *Adat B'nei Yisrael*, are called looks like and consists of. His mission-statement as is immediately followed by dozens of very practical examples of what doing that – *i.e.* emulating our Bridegroom-King – is to look like in real time. These examples include the following 31 very practical matters, all of which constitute part of the Holy One's 'love language':

1. *making it a noticeable priority to unselfishly honor both our father and our mother* in ways that surpass the parental respect shown in the nations, and show the supremacy of the Holy One's ways over the ways of fallen man;
2. embracing and cherishing in our hearts, minds, homes, and communities, and beautifully modeling to the world, the healing, quieting, wholeness-restoring gift of *the 7th Day Sabbath*;
3. being diligent to steer clear of any trace of *idolatry* or any hint of *duality of reverence*;
4. keeping our *love for both God and our fellow men vibrant, never lukewarm*;
5. keeping our thanksgiving celebrations, our confessions of surrender, and all our acts of service *fresh and nurturing*; never allowing them to get stale, dry, or toxic;
6. approaching and doing – *and thereby modeling for the world - tzedekah* as the Holy One does *tzedekah* - *i.e.* fruitful charity/benevolence provided wisely and responsibly, always with redemption and restoration in mind, never motivated by pity, condescension, manipulation, or disdain;
7. making sure that all our *business dealings are ethical and honest*;

8. *recognizing and honoring the personal dignity and property rights* of all – rich or poor;
9. being consistent in *truthfulness* – speaking only whatever we have been authorized and instructed by our King to speak, and doing so calmly, *in love*;
10. trustworthiness – i.e. *faithfulness to fulfill our commitments* and keep our promises;
11. returning borrowed – or compensating the owner for damaged - items promptly;
12. paying day-workers’/contract laborers’ wages daily;
13. *behaving respectfully toward all people* – including the deaf, the blind, the poor, and the rich – even when they are not present or have no way of knowing what you are saying or doing;
14. *refusing to speak or listen to lashon hara* – i.e. negative talk, accusation, or complaint about, or condemnation of, any person];
15. always *valuing human life* above convenience, ideology, or self-interest;
16. *refusing to indulge feelings of hatred, malice, or contempt* toward anyone;
17. caring enough to personally go to and privately warn others in the Covenant community of the consequences of thoughts, speech, behavior or reactions that is contrary to the Covenant plan AND to offer to assist them in making *teshuvah* [i.e. a meaningful, practical, methodical return back to the Covenant ways] and *tikkun* [i.e. healing and restoration];
18. leaving vengeance/retribution – i.e. ‘payback’ – to the Holy One, and *trusting Him, not men, to make things ‘right’*;
19. *keeping no record of wrongs*, but bearing all things, and enduring all things without holding a grudge – i.e. being quick to forgive every insult and offense;
20. loving our fellow man as we ourselves have been loved by the Holy One;
21. refusing admixtures/adulterations practiced by the people of the world who do not know the Holy One’s ways;

22. always focusing our energy, passion, and activity on the goal and Divinely prescribed pathway for *kippur* [atonement] rather than on the moral depravity of or the damage done by other people's – or our own - sin;
23. responsible, patient, God-honoring fruitfulness;
24. refusing to ingest the blood of any creature – i.e. respecting each creature's purpose, function, and place in, as well as its value to the ecosystem, Creation;
25. not seeking 'knowledge' or receiving counsel from any 'occult' – i.e. uncleanness/unclean spirit influenced – source;
26. grooming, dressing, and adorning ourselves only as our Bridegroom-King tells us will bring Him honor;
27. speaking and acting reverently toward the Holy One and everything He says is holy [especially the *Sabbaths* and the *Mish'kan* – i.e. the earthly courts of Heaven];
28. speaking and behaving reverently toward the aged;
29. treating foreigners/strangers with respect, being sensitive to the challenges of disorientation and loneliness they face, and showing them practical forms of love in the same way you do those who dwell with you;
30. not cheating or applying different standards or measures for different people;
31. cherishing and putting into practice all the Holy One's instructions as to how life is to be lived; and
32. understanding, and dealing appropriately with, the most dangerous forms of breaches of Covenant/failure of essential purpose.

Parsha *Kedoshim* consists of 64 verses. The Hebrew mnemonic for 64 means "glow". The theme of parsha *Kedoshim*, and indeed of all the Torah, is that we are to "glow", to "shine". Is not this what the prophet Yeshayahu said [Isaiah 60:1: *Arise, shine, for your Light has come ...*]? This was the heart of the message of both Yeshua [see Matthew 5:14-16] and of Shaul of Tarsus [see Philippians 2:12-15].

So, Beloved – we truly have a great calling. We have been offered the opportunity and taught the methodology to know, and commune and co-labor with, the Creator of the Universe. We have the privilege of serving as the earthly ambassadors of His

Glorious Heavenly Kingdom. We were created for so much more pleasure than the fleeting and always destructive sensual experiences offered by this world could ever give us!

The Week's Theme:

Real Holiness, Wholeness, Harmony, Hospitality, and Hope Lived Out in Real Ways In Real Time for a Real World

The placement of *Kedoshim* at the very heart of the Torah is far from coincidental. The *essence of Torah* is contained in this short parsha. In other words, if for some reason you could only have one parsha of Torah to read and study *Kedoshim just might be the parsha to choose*. Now that's a bold statement; let's see if the Torah can back it up.

The theme of *Kedoshim* is that the Holy One is calling the people He has redeemed to *be drastically different from, live by a different standard than, and become a blessing to* the people of the nations who surround them. This concept of the Divine Will and Upward Call of the Holy One was first expressed to Avraham, then in turn to Yitzchak and Ya'akov. But at the beginning of Exodus 19 the Holy One broadened this calling to all descendants of the patriarchs - both natural and engrafted. At the beginning of the Mount Sinai experience He spoke prophetically and creatively over all those who followed Moshe out of Egypt that He would make them a *goy kadosh – i.e. a holy nation.*' Exodus 19:4-6. A holy nation' must necessarily consist of *holy people*. And I mean a people holy not merely in some moral or religious sense – holy in a COVENANTAL sense. What does it mean to be holy in a covenantal sense? To be holy in a covenantal sense means to *adopt a lifestyle of thought, word, and action that conforms to and keeps the focuses of attention ever on the purposes and protocols of the covenant*.

Kedoshim means “*holy ones*” in a covenantal sense. *Kedoshim* is *who we were created to be*. You. Me. Our spouses. Our kids. Ordinary Joes and Janes. Holy ones. A holy nation. *Kedoshim*.

Real holiness in real time for a real world. Think about it! But ... how can this be? What exactly does it *mean* – and even more important what exactly does it *take* – for an ‘ordinary Joe’ or ‘Jane’ to be ‘holy’ – and not just to be a little holy, but *holy like the Holy One Himself is holy* – and to do it in the *real world in real time*?

Can a real flesh and blood person be holy while he is getting an education? Can a real person be holy while he is looking for or doing a job, and/or trying to find a mate? Can a real person be holy when he is dealing with bills and appetites and emotions and cantankerous family members at home? Can a real person be holy

while he is hanging out, having dinner, and joking around with friends? How about while he is trying to make way to work through heavy traffic or while he is being jostled, insulted, ignored or taken advantage of by rude, obnoxious, lustful people in the marketplace?

Is the Holy One demanding/expecting *the impossible*? Perhaps this warrants a little investigation! The calling of the Holy One upon our lives - *i.e.* the primary elements of His Covenantal ‘love language’ - can be summarized by five words: *Holiness, Wholeness, Harmony, Hospitality, and Hope*. Do those words describe your life? Do they describe the kind of life, family, and community you want? Do they at least *stir positive passion* in you? Let’s talk about each one, and what it entails.

1. The Love Language of Holiness

Most people who live in 21st Century America are at best ambivalent about, and frequently downright hostile to, any suggestion that *holiness* could actually be the goal of life. Our culture, after all, is a *Rosemary’s Baby* of overblown religion and over-hyped sensuality. Birthed from the illicit union of Hollywood and Madison Avenue we slobber over celebrities, swoon over grown men who play children’s games for obscene paychecks, and go gaga over the latest gadgets and gizmos – not to mention pyrotechnics, laser light shows, and computer-animated action sequences. The world in which we live is absolutely obsessed with exposed flesh, outrageous hair, Botox smiles, surgically enhanced body parts, hyped-up emotions, fake news, and shock-value ‘entertainment’. We are connoisseurs of altered states and alternate lifestyles. We all fancy ourselves philosophers. We even like to trumpet our culture as ‘advanced’, ‘civilized’, ‘post-modern’, and ‘enlightened’. In the midst of such a culture it is only natural we are uncomfortable with the implications of the Creator’s call to ‘holiness’. That is because to us, in a society with a decidedly latter-era Greco-Roman worldview, holiness is an *abstract concept, not* a physical reality. We tend to define ‘holiness’ as a sort of lofty but impossible-to-define spiritual goal for unenlightened prudes and religious fanatics to aspire to, not as the very real state of being in which man was designed by His Creator to thrive.

Western culture tends to think of “holiness” as an impossible-to-achieve and downright scary spiritual state like the new age’s concept of *nirvana* – a state of detachment where *the physical world around us all-but disappears*, where *time all-but stands still*, where *all we do to occupy our time is commune with God and His angels*, and where *all our bodily and emotional needs, and all our worldly cares and affairs become irrelevant*. To someone with a Hebraic mindset, and who understands *covenant*, however, *kadosh* does not imply a state of *nirvana* – or

indeed any state involving detachment from ‘real life’ - at all. *Kedusha* – i.e. ‘holiness’- is just part of our new creation identity. It is *who we are*. It’s *how we roll*. It is what makes us *us*, makes our lives meaningful, and enables us to be a blessing to all the families, ethnicities, and bloodlines on the earth. Every time we trade the *kedusha* love language that our King has showed us for the common vernacular, priorities, philosophies, ideologies, religions, pleasures, and passions of this world we start becoming irrelevant. We become a lamp that will not produce a flame. We become salt that has lost its savor; fragrant, healing oils that have lost their potency. Covenantal holiness is not an ‘escape’ from the mundane affairs of life; it is allowing our love of the Divine Bridegroom, our thankfulness for His goodness, and the Words of Torah that He has written on our hearts to infiltrate our ordinary daily activities and transform them into instruments of praise to the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Holiness is the oil in our lamp - and the flavor in our salt.

The Contagion of Holiness at Work

We are supposed to be exposed to – and infected - by holiness. And even more than that, we are supposed to be so acutely and obviously infected with holiness as to be highly contagious carriers of it. We are *supposed to* – and are in the process of being *Divinely empowered to* – bear the image of the *kadosh* pictograph. To be “holy” as described above is the mechanism whereby we, as sons of Avraham, are to become a blessing to all nations. We are to do it by reflecting the Holy One’s holiness in the world. That is why holiness is ***the central theme of the Torah***. Becoming holy is *our purpose in life*. Becoming holy brings glory to the Holy One our Maker and Covenant Partner. Becoming holy is *why we were redeemed from Egypt*. Becoming holy is *why we were betrothed to the Holy One at Mount Sinai*. Becoming holy is *what Messiah came to earth to model for us how to do*, even while we live real lives in real time in the midst of a very, very real, very perverse, narcissistic and neo-pagan society. Hence holiness is found not by *escaping* the physical world, but by *sanctifying* it, even its most mundane aspects. How can this be done? By surrendering to a gradual process and protocol of conforming in thought, attitude, word, and deed to the image described in the Divine Bridegroom’s instructions for living. Holiness is found in embracing both the vastly different *worldview* and the vastly different *lifestyle* of Torah. Holiness finds expression in blessing the Holy One, day by day, hour by hour, in the midst of the most mundane of daily activities – from waking up, to choosing clothes to wear, to conversing with and honoring one’s parents, spouse, children, siblings, and neighbors, to what one talks about, to driving in traffic, to choosing what food to cook or eat, to how to go about making a living, to how to handle the day’s crises [at work, in the home, and in the world], to how one relates to other people and to animals, to how one manages one’s finances, etc., etc. It even includes how one

goes to the bathroom.

Covenantal Holiness: Where Does It Come From?

Leviticus 19:2 is usually translated into English as “**Be holy**”. Reading this alone one might think the Holy One was using an imperative – *i.e. commanding us* to somehow ... well, to just somehow be holy. As if that were possible – or would somehow give the Holy One glory. This nonsensical way of looking at the phrase ‘**be holy**’ conjures up images of us enslaved forever, nose ever to the grindstone and shoulder ever to the wheel, determined against all odds to somehow *make holiness happen* through human effort and determination. But that is nothing like what the Hebrew text is saying. If God had been demanding that we produce holiness, He would not have used the prophetic, future tense “*Kedoshim tiheyu*”, which literally means “**you will be/become holy**”. We who are the Holy One’s are therefore not *ordered* to be holy – as if holiness were something we could achieve through meritorious deeds or spiritual disciplines. We are instead *empowered by Divine prophetic word* to be/become ‘holy’. As He moved upon the face of the darkness and chaos of the primordial waters, and thus caused light to come forth into the world, so He moved upon the darkness and chaos of our individual and collective *nafshot* [souls] at Sinai and imbued us with holiness-capacity with prophetic, creative words – in this case: ***Aleihem Kedoshim tiheyu ki kadosh*** – *i.e. Holy ones you will be/become . . . for holy am I. Leviticus 19:2.*

The abiding presence, energy, and cleansing action of the Holy One’s *WORD* is what makes us holy. Think about the *Shabbat*. How did the Holy One make the seventh day holy? By *speaking holiness* over it. **Genesis 2:3**. Nothing we can do can *make* the seventh day holy – because the Holy One has already infused it with holiness. We are not therefore told by the Holy One to ‘*make* the seventh day holy’. We are merely instructed to ‘remember’ it and ‘*keep* it holy’. **Exodus 20:8**. Hebraically this means to *cherish* and *guard* and *be watchful over to protect* the holiness that is inherent in the day – not to let the holiness of the day *pass us by unnoticed* and not to *let its holiness be profaned*.

Letting Go of Mediocrity ... and Grabbing Hold

Holiness always involves *letting go* of something that is inconsistent with the Holy One’s Plan for us as revealed in His Covenant with Avraham – *i.e. something from which He calls us to ‘go out for ourselves* – and it also involves *grabbing hold* of, *embracing* and *running with* something that is essential to His Plan for us as revealed in the same Covenant. Every time we voluntarily give up some toxic attitude, self-righteous opinion, some dark mood, some offense, some man-centered ideological or political position, some unhealthy behavior pattern, or some Kingdom-stifling defense mechanism, we get closer to *kedusha*. That is like Avraham leaving Charan. But it cannot stop with ‘leaving’ places, people, or

cultural situations. It has to involve ‘going’ where the Holy One calls us, and learning to replace/displace everything we have given up with a Kingdom-advancing substitute. We grab hold of, embrace, and run with *shalom* when we used to walk around stressed and offended. We grab hold of, embrace, and run with *joy* when we used to walk around frustrated, wounded, anxious, and depressed. We grab hold of, embrace, and run with *kindness*, when we used to walk around self-centered, self-righteous, controlling, and judgmental. We grab hold of, embrace, and run with *patience* when we used to walk around waffling between irritation and outrage. We grab hold of, embrace, and run with *Covenant Mission* when we used to walk around looking for the next thrill, the next gimmick, and the next trending hot-topic to get excited about.

2. The Love Language of Wholeness

If, as, when and to the extent we embrace those things the Creator of the Universe calls *kadosh* [i.e. *holy*], and embark on the great journey of *kedusha* [i.e. *holiness*], we begin to sniff of and peek at *the second level of Covenant life* – the one which in English we call ‘wholeness’. This second aspect of the calling of the Holy One upon our lives consists of several phases.

A. The First Mile Post on our Journey to Wholeness – Tahorah

Our Great Covenant Journey toward wholeness begins with a season of *tahar-ing* – i.e. *defragmentation*. This is the process by which, as we learn to bask in and absorb the Divine Energy and Attributes of the Holy One, the *conflicting loyalties* and *flesh’s self-obsessed priorities* of our fallen flesh actually start to *yield to His will* and *conform to His far more excellent vision*. Double-mindedness yields single-minded focus. Divided hearts become undivided. Many minor attractions, affections, and interests are discarded in favor of the One Superior Love which begins to consume us, body, mind, and soul.

The key factor in this initial phase of the journey to Covenant-based wholeness is learning to distinguish between, and begin to separate ourselves from, and radically transcend, everything the Holy One calls:

1. **tumah** – i.e. ‘uncleanness’;
2. **sheketz** – i.e. *corruption, contamination*;
3. **shatnetz** – i.e. *polluted/diluted/misrepresented by improper admixture*;
4. **aven** – i.e. ‘iniquity’; *fruitlessness; vanity*;
5. **to’eh** – i.e. *diverging/straying from the path*; or
6. **to’ebah** – i.e. *abominable, wholly perverse and irredeemable*.

The laying aside/putting away of these things, then dismantling each and every stronghold that has been erected upon their foundation, is a progressive, lifelong endeavor. It can only happen as and to the extent we embrace the Manifest

Presence of, and walk in constant communion with, the Holy One. As Yeshua said – *He that abides in Me, and I in him, that one brings forth much fruit; but without Me, you can do nothing.* John 15:5.

B. The Second Mile Post – Labash-ing Tzedekah

Once the *defragmentation process* is established, a season of *labash-ing tzedekah* – i.e. putting on, or dressing ourselves in, ‘righteousness’ – begins. ‘Righteousness’ – which really just means *saying and doing, in every situation, exactly what the Holy One directs us to do ... and nothing else* - then begins to become not just something we do, or some legal or moral status or reputation to which we might aspire, but *an essential component of our redeemed identity and persona*. In this phase, *tzedekah* – i.e. *saying and doing, in every situation, exactly what the Holy One directs us to do ... and nothing else* - actually begins to *define who we are*. *Tzedekah* begins to color our approach to and temper our engagement with every moment we live, every place to which we travel, every activity in which we engage, every person with whom we interact, and every situation and circumstance we encounter. *Tzedekah* becomes a begins to energize us, to motivate us, and to become ‘second nature’ to us. How to do/make/establish *tzedekah* becomes our primary focus in life, replacing both [a] the avoidance of pain, effort, inconvenience, and discomfort and [b] the pursuit of pleasure, treasure, leisure, comfort, power, glory, and wealth.

C. The Third Mile Post – Rifut

As we progress in *labash-ing tzedekah* - i.e. putting on ‘righteousness’ in every facet of life – we begin to experience *inner healing* [Hebrew, *rifut*; see *Proverbs 3:1-8*], and to enter a continuum of gradually improving spiritual health [Hebrew, *bri’ot*]. This means we finally break free of self-limiting approaches and behaviors like sulking, whining, complaining, and blaming others for the setbacks we have experienced in life. It means we start shaking off the crippling death-grip of serpentine strongholds of offense, outrage, worry, anxiety, envy, resentment, guilt, shame, and regret. It means we quit letting fear of getting hurt [again], or rejected [again], or failing [again] cause us to back from our opportunities to have a positive impact on the people and situations in our spheres of influence. It means we stop triggering. It means we fully and finally forgive those who have trespassed against us. It means we joyfully release, acquit, pardon, and ecstatically bless people who once hurt us. It means we turn loose of the past and *move on* – because we are completely confident that the Holy One is working all things together for good.

D. The Fourth Mile Post: Becoming Tamim – i.e. ‘perfect’ in a Hebraic Sense

The *rofit* – i.e. healing - process described above enables us to finally start making meaningful and consistent progress toward becoming *tamim* – i.e. KJV ‘perfect’. *Tamim* does not connote flawlessness, but it does mean *sound, solid, strong, well-*

trained, thoroughly equipped, functioning at a high level, and increasingly fruitful.

*E. The Fifth Mile Post: Taking Stewardship of **Hashpa'ah** – Influence*

As *tamim* status begins to settle in, and fruitfulness begins to manifest, the world around a person takes notice. The reactions of people to your new level of calm, gentleness, focus, and fruitfulness may be favorable or unfavorable, peaceful or violent, but they will not be ambivalent. Success requires a response and garners attention; and in the process, it opens incredible opportunities of *hashpa'ah* – i.e. influence. How humbly, peaceably, and responsibly we handle each opportunity of influence determines whether these opportunities will increase or decrease. The quicker we learn to steward influence opportunities meekly, gently, and wisely, the sooner the Holy One will advance us to a position where we can impact regions, nations, times, and the readiness of the peoples of the world for the return of Mashiach.

*F. The Sixth Mile Post: Putting on **Mik'lal Yofi** – the Perfection of Beauty*

All the aforesaid processes, working in tandem, gradually begin to bring about *mik'lal yofi* – i.e. the perfection of beauty, splendor, brightness, and reflection of Divine light. We put on beauty for ashes. We dress ourselves in a garment of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness. We smile more. Our faces begin shine with the oil of gladness. We exchange laughter for tears, *simchah* for *shiva*, and dancing for mourning. We serve more humbly - and effectively. We love more deeply – and unselfishly. We become slow to speak, slow to anger, quick to forgive. We become more and more difficult to offend – and virtually impossible to outrage. We are repulsed less and less, and disgusted hardly at all. It happens a little at a time - often in fits and starts. First comes one area, then another, and so on. There are setbacks, but they are temporary.

*G. The Destination: **Sh'lemut** – Wholeness*

The goal of it all – the ultimate destination for each of us who take the Great Journey that begins with *defragmentation* – is **sh'lemut** – i.e. *wholeness*. This involves becoming an *oak of righteousness* – a tree planted by the rivers of living water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf never withers, and who prospers in all things and facets of life. This involves being a consistent net 'giver' instead of a net 'taker'; being a 'given' instead of a 'variable'; being an *integer* instead of a fraction; and being *a source of nurture, shade, and inspiration for a vibrant, thriving ecosystem* – i.e. for one's household, one's kinsmen, one's community, and ultimately one's region, nation, and generation. Our *sh'lemut* means that our spouses, children, and children's children are thriving – and even if they fall seven times they get back up, dust themselves off, and press forward. Our *sh'lemut* means that *tikkun* is being made for the sins and shortcomings of those in

our bloodline. Our *sh'lemut* means that our communities are bustling – and even if a crisis or disaster comes, they do not collapse or turn on themselves. Our *sh'lemut* means that we release *shalom*, joy, hope, and wisdom into our world, and inspire kindness, patience, and faithful service in others. In short, our *sh'lemut* – to the extent we attain and embrace it – causes the Kingdom of Heaven to forcefully advance in the world, rolling back the darkness, and causing the knowledge of the glory of the Holy One to cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. On our watch. Selah!

Does this all sound too high a goal to attain? Does it sound too good to be true? Consider the words of Shaul of Tarsus about this process: He Who has begun a good work in you will be faithful to complete it - unto the day of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach. **Philippians 1:6.**

3. *The Love Language of Harmony*

An additional aspect of our calling as kedoshim is to be a people who understands and reflects *remuniah* – *i.e.* *harmony*. *Remuniah* is what happens when different things, voices, or instruments work together smoothly, in coordination, to achieve a pleasing and desirable result. In the realm of music, *remuniah* is what happens when voices or instruments play in the same key, in proper sequence, in a way that complements one another. In the realm of Kingdom life, *remuniah* is what happens when members of a family, clan, community, or nation put aside their differences and ‘diversity’ in favor of a higher objective. It is what happens when people choose to overlook insults and resist envy and offense in order to co-labor in a Greater Plan.

Harmony is what happens when men and women of the Covenant are ***‘kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Holy One; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, distributing to the needs of the kedoshim, given to hospitality, blessing those who are persecuting you; blessing and never cursing; rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep. Being of the same mind toward one another; not setting our mind on high things, but being content to associate with the humble; not being wise in our own opinion; repaying no one evil for evil; having regard for good things in the sight of all men; and, to the maximum extent possible, as much as it depends on us, living peaceably with all men.*** Romans 12: 10 ff. See also **Philippians 2:3 ff: *Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through self-serving ambition or conceit, but in humility of mind let each of you esteem others better than yourselves.*** And see Ephesians 4:1 ff: ***Walk worthy of the calling of which you are called, with all meekness and gentleness, with longsuffering/patience,***

bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Ruach in the bond of shalom.

As the *adat* – i.e. witness throng – of the Holy One, we are called to live together – with each other and with as many of the people of the nations as possible - in *remuniah*. We are not here to hate. We are not here to compete. We are not here to take. We are called and empowered to see beyond people’s attitudes and behaviors to the vast reservoirs of potential the Holy One designed into them – even if they are not even close to tapping into those reservoirs yet. We are to value other people’s lives – even if they are fantasizing about killing all of us. We are called to love when everyone else hates. We are called to humble and gentle – albeit wise - when everyone else is being arrogant and cruel.

The opposite of harmony is *discordant selfishness*. This usually manifests in competition, dissension, complaint, jealousy, *lashon hara*, harsh dealings, divisive rhetoric, acts of sabotage, vengefulness, and, ultimately in one level or another of civil war. We are not called to discordance. We are not called to dissent or dissonance. We are not called to clamor. We are not called to cacophony. We are not called to chaos. We are called to offer the peoples of the world a healthy alternative to all that.

4. The Love Language of Hospitality

Among all the other things, our calling as an *adat* – i.e. witness throng – requires us to be a people of extreme hospitality. In Hebrew thought, this involves two things: 1. *haknasat orchim*, or being inclusive of strangers, and 2. *hek’desh*, becoming/providing a sanctuary/safe place in/through which people can get to know the Holy One, His ways, His blessing, and His calling in a nurturing, inspiring, encouraging, loving ‘Beauty Realm’ atmosphere and environment.

The critical importance of the hospitality aspect of our Covenant calling cannot be overstated. It is in the home –where we drop all the masks, kick off our shoes, and let our hair down – that the truest test of our commitment to and relationship with the Holy One. Anyone can put on a good ‘face’ in public; but in private, behind closed doors, when no one is watching? When tiredness shows? When there is nowhere to hide a selfish mood or attitude? When the children misbehave? When familiarity breeds contempt – or at least temptation to focus on personal comfort and convenience, and take the other people for granted? Where the television and computer screens always call for ‘me time’, but never seem to deliver what we are looking for? Where the laundry piles up like falling leaves in Autumn, the lawn needs mowing, and the trash cans need to be emptied again? Where the spouse’s and/or the kids’ clutter threatens your sanity? Where the sheets need to be changed? Where supper needs to be cooked, then dishes washed [no, it’s *your* turn

– I did it yesterday!]?

Introducing the ‘Lovely Tent’ People

Remember when Bila’am, the prophet of the nations, was hired to curse B’nei Yisrael [Numbers 22-24] but couldn’t? He gazed with a prophet’s eye at the Yisraeli encampment and declared: *Mah tovu ohaleicha Ya’akov* – i.e. How lovely are your tents, Oh Ya’akov ... *mish’kanoteicha Yisrael* – your dwelling places, Yisrael! Numbers 24:5. Now you get it right? We, more than any other people on the earth, are to have lovely tents and dwellings. They are to be beautiful to look at, and delightful to visit. They are to make people feel welcome. They are to make people feel safe. They are to make people feel alive – and full of hope, promise, and potential waiting to be tapped. They are to make people feel inspired, empowered, nurtured, and loved. They are where the neighborhood kids – and widows, and fatherless, and foreigners – want to come to ‘hang out’, ‘chill out’, and, when the table is spread, ‘pig out’ [figuratively speaking only, of course!]. That is the way it is *supposed* to be. Our homes are supposed to be a *magnet* – and a safe, comfortable, uplifting, healing haven - for the lonely, the hurting, the downhearted, the overstressed, and the perplexed, as well as the weary, the thirsty, the hungry, and the lost. I call this the ‘*lovely tent*’ phenomenon. It should apply in our homes whether we are rich or poor, young or old, captive or free.

What causes this phenomenon? What makes our tents lovely? What makes our homes a delight? What makes being in our homes feel better than being anywhere else? It is not the fact that we have two refrigerators and a *mezuzah* on every door. It is not the fact that the rooms are decorated with Hebraica from the Promised Land. It is not that we know how to promote health and a sense of well-being in a room by diffusing frankincense, lavender, and other essential oils. It is not that we have holy books lying open on desks and tables, and psalms of praise to the Holy One playing through our sound systems even when they are not being sung around our table. Well, at least it is not *just*, or *primarily*, those things. Avraham didn’t have those things – and he didn’t need them. He was still ‘Mr. Hospitality’. His tent was always ‘the place to be’ – for angels as well as for men. Why? It wasn’t so much because of what he *had* in his tent; it was because of what he *didn’t have* there. He didn’t have *anger* there. He didn’t pollute the atmosphere there with sexual perversion. He didn’t make the air heavy with idols, images, icons, and oppressive religious symbols. He didn’t glorify sin, death, or drama there. He didn’t indulge in *self-pity* there. He didn’t utter a syllable of *profanity* or *coarse speech* there. He did not speak curses, make accusations, cast blame, or there. Racial, ethnic, regional, class, or political/ideological prejudice were strangers. Hate was not welcome there. *Lashon hara* – i.e. negative, accusatory, gossip-laden speech - was never heard there. Deception, control, and manipulation were nowhere to be seen. *Avraham* was there – and he *talked to and walked with the*

Creator of the Universe there – all the time ... and man, did it show! As a result of the way Avraham interacted with the Holy One there, making a home away from Home there for Him, Avraham's tent was transformed. The calming, inspiring Manifest Presence of the Almighty was always there, bringing *bayit shalom* – i.e. *peace in the home*. Avraham's tent thus became a dispensary of blessing, a sanctuary of wholeness, a factory of wellness, and a fountain of wisdom. As a result of being immersed in that atmosphere all the time, Avraham became infinitely trustworthy. The people around him became certain that he was never going to turn on them, steal from them, lie to them, judge them, rant at them, manipulate them, creep on their wives or daughters, or use them. Avraham had developed a good heart, a good attitude toward life and all other people, and imparting to him what the sages like to refer to as a 'good eye'.

Part of having a 'good eye' – i.e. a redemption-focused eye that looks beyond unpleasant attitude and sinful behavior to potential and need - is understanding that every stranger, widow, fatherless son or daughter, and impoverished person the Holy One allows to come into the orbit of our influence is there to provide as a test of our commitment to be a blessing [per the Avrahamic covenant, Genesis 12:3 and Genesis] to every family on the face of the earth. Moreover, one with a 'good eye' [in Hebrew *ayin tov*] also understands it is never only the person our eyes look upon who is standing before us – it is all his or her generations. It is every member of his or her family. It is every one of his or her ancestors – and descendants. How we respond will not only affect the person we see with our eyes, but will impact – for the Kingdom or for our flesh - on generation after generation yet to come. That is why hospitality is so very, very important.

5. The Love Language of Hope

Our Covenant calling as an *adat* – i.e. *witness throng* – also requires us to be a people of *tikvah* – i.e. *hope*. *Steadfast hope*. *Unshakeable hope*. *Active hope*. *No matter what the circumstances – or the prognosis – hope*. The kind of hope I am talking about *never despairs, never gives up, never gives in, never retreats, and never surrenders*. *Tikvah*, which our English Bibles translate as 'hope', is derived from a verb meaning 'to bind'. In Covenant, we do not just 'believe' in the Holy One, our lives are *bound up with Him, His Ways, His Will, His Plan, His Promises, His Strategies, and His Timing*. We do not just have a book, or a systematic theology, or a belief system, you see – we have a KING. We have a glorious, eternal, immortal, benevolent, wise and faithful King Who does all things well. We are bound up with our King's essential goodness. We are bound up with His deep, abiding, enduring love for us – and all His Creation. We are bound up with His fierce loyalty to His Covenant with each of Avraham's descendants individually and with all of B'nei Yisrael corporately. We are bound up with His

Shabbat Shalom, His *Pesach* Deliverance, His *Shavuot* Empowerment, His *Yom Teruah* shofar call, His *Yom Kippur* atonement protocol, and His sweet *Sukkot Sh'kinah*. We are bound up, as well, with the sights, the sounds, and the fragrances of our King's 'Beauty Realm'- on earth as it is in Heaven. We have a haven there – not just someday, but now. We have a great love story being told there - and a glorious love song being sung there. We have a seat at the table there. We have a voice in the *choir* there. We are bound up with the stunning redemptive plan that has been written there eternally, inscribed in the books of life, and which is slowly – but surely – being implemented on earth, moment by moment, lifetime by lifetime, generation after generation, as nations and movements, economies, empires and ideologies, statesmen and tyrants, armies and peaceniks, systems and institutions, all rise and fall. We are bound up with the understanding that it is all just seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night. Everything is going to turn out for the good – our King will see to it. It is just a matter of patience, timing, strategy, sequencing, and awaiting the opening of the most prodigious window of redemptive opportunity.

For this reason, the People of the Holy One should never be people of despair or paranoia. We should never fret over evildoers. We should never obsess over injustices. We should never even be discouraged, much less depressed. We should never be offended or outraged. We should be people who know anxiety and worry as merely a temporary, fleeting sensation - banished easily by thinking of, speaking with, and giving thanks and praise to our King.

A Brief Look At the Haftarah For the Week of Kedoshim

Ezekiel 22:1-19

In the haftarah the Holy One will speak to and through *Yechezkiel* [Ezekiel] concerning the city of Jerusalem (shortly before the Holy One brought the Babylonians to attack, besiege and devastate it, and carry its surviving inhabitants into *galut* [exile]). At the time of this prophecy Jerusalem - the capitol of the Southern Kingdom and the site of Sh'lomo's Temple - was a city the leadership of which had for many generations *refused the Holy One's antidote for covenant-unfaithfulness* – *i.e.* atonement. The once holy city was therefore so full of sin's poison that a more drastic form of redemption was necessary. So the therapy the Holy One applied was like chemotherapy, which kills the diseased cells of a cancerous growth in order that the vital organs being consumed by the cancer can live. The Holy One tells *Yechezkiel* how to initiate this process:

Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers

***... they didn't walk in my statutes, and they rejected my ordinances,
which if a man keep, he shall live in them;
and my Shabbatot they greatly profaned.***

The Holy One gives Yechezkiel a promise of end-time restoration for the faithful remnant of the Southern Kingdom. He proclaims:

***I am the Holy One your God:
walk in [halak] my statutes, and keep [sh'mar] my ordinances,
and do [asah] them; and make my Shabbatot holy;
and they will be a sign between me and you,
that you may know that I am the Holy One your God.***

As the Holy One gave Moshe three prophetic ‘signs’ – *the shepherd’s rod that when thrown down turned into a crocodile* but when picked up again became a shepherd’s rod⁵, the pure skin which when hidden away inside one’s tunic turned to *tzara’at* but when extended toward the Holy One was healed⁶, and the life-giving water that when poured out on dry ground turned to blood⁷, so the Holy One gives three signs to those who will make up his faithful remnant. The three prophetic signs the Holy One says will be manifested by His faithful remnant are:

1. *walking in His ‘statutes’,*
2. *keeping His ‘ordinances’,* and
3. *re-establishing the holiness of His Sabbaths.*

Moshe’s signs were given in order that the exiled and enslaved descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov would know that the Holy One had indeed appeared to him and commissioned him. If you have ears to hear and eyes to see, the three signs of the remnant are analogous to the three signs given to Moshe. The statutes of the Holy One are the shepherd’s rod that some have cast aside, choosing to see them – and cause others to see them - as destructive and dangerous. The Holy One’s ordinances are the perfect skin covering that some have chosen to misuse and to regard – and cause others to regard - as leprosy. The Holy One’s *Shabbatot* represent the life-giving water that we called to pour out on the dry land and thirsty lands in which we live. As we pour out this life-giving water, He will cover those who receive it with His Blood.

Go and search out these mysteries, Dear Reader. These signs are given to the remnant in order that the scattered prophesied by Amos may know that the Holy One has indeed appeared to and commissioned the faithful remnant of Y’hudah prophesied by Yechezkiel.

Do you want to know if you could possibly be a part of the faithful remnant of which the Holy One is prophesying in this haftarah? If so, it is not really a very hard thing to discover. All you have to do is look for the three signs the Holy One has said must coexist.

⁵ Exodus 4:2-4.

⁶ Exodus 4:6-7.

⁷ Exodus 4:8-9.

***A Quick Look at this Week's Readings
from the Apostolic Scriptures***

I Peter 1:1-16

Our readings from the B'rit Chadasha this week will cause us to meditate upon Kefa's exhortations to holiness. He wrote his first letter to "*the elect, strangers in the world, scattered*" In that letter he calls upon us to set our hope fully on the grace which will yet be given to us at a future date - the day "*when Yeshua HaMaschiach is revealed*". Kefa will then echo the 'holiness' theme of parsha *Kedoshim* loudly, as He joins the Bridegroom King in calling us to kedusha with these familiar words:

*... just as he who called you is holy,
So be holy in all you do."*

*May the Bridegroom-King's Words and His Empowering Breath both have their intended effect;
And make you become holy through your interaction with them both.*

The Rabbi's son

***Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week
Petition #5, Rofei - the Prayer for Healing and Health***

Rofeinu Adonai v'nerofei

Heal us, Holy One, and we will be healthy

hoshieynu v'nivosheyah

Rescue us, and we will be saved

v'halay r'fuah sh'layma l'chol makoteinu

Bring complete healing for all our afflictions

ki El Melech rofei ne'aman v'rachamon atah

for You, God and King, are a Faithful and Compassionate healer

Baruch Atah Adonai rofei cholai amo Yisrael

Blessed are You, O Holy One, Healer of the Afflicted among His People Israel