

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Kedoshim:*** Leviticus 20:9-27
 Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15
 B'rit Chadasha: I Peter 1:15-16

You are not to live according to the customs of the nations....
[Leviticus 20:23]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:175-176;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 2, *Teshuvah* [Turn Back to the Torah]

Ki-ish ish asher yeqalel et-aviv v'et-imo – If/when a man will degrade his father and his mother ... ***mot yumat*** – death, surely death Leviticus 20:9a.

The theme of parsha *Kedoshim* – as with the entire *Kedusha* Discourse - is now clear: The Holy One is calling the people He has redeemed to *be holy* in a unique and powerful way that releases an ever-flowing fountain of blessing for the world. This is, we have learned this week, the central theme of the entire Torah. In fact it is the central theme of all Scripture.

We have learned that '*holiness*' the Holy One's way is radically differently than we ever imagined – and so is '*loving your neighbor*' His way. We have found that the Holy One is much more interested in practical, mundane issues of day-to-day life than He is in flashy ministries, big meetings, bigger buildings, religious branding, debates over doctrine, and the like. Our Bridegroom-King has not called or empowered us to be monks, maharishis, gurus, or any other kind of spiritual superstars. He has called us to be BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. He wants us to be *Godly dads, moms, brothers, sisters, and kids*. He has called us to be *good neighbors*. He has called us to be *faithful servants*. He has taught us to be *trustworthy stewards*. He has called us to be *honest businessmen*. He has called us to *hospitable hosts*. He has called us to be *patient, faithful friends*. And He has even called us to be *honorable enemies*.

We have learned this week that holiness is not as complicated as we thought. It just means *sh'ma-ing* our Bridegroom-King's voice and walking in His Torah directives as we humbly and prayerfully go about the assigned Covenantal tasks of:

- [a] honoring father and mother,
- [b] protecting, guarding and cherishing the holiness of the Holy One's *shabbatot* [Sabbaths],

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- [c] providing for the poor out of the abundance the Holy One has granted,
- [d] accepting and loving the foreigner,
- [e] acting justly in business and personal dealings,
- [f] being truthful and kind, and refusing to hate any person or group;
- [g] being forgiving, and trusting the Holy One to avenge and punish any wrongs inflicted on us or our loved ones;
- [h] keeping our tongue from *lashon ha ra* – *i.e.* saying negative things about other people, even if true;
- [i] not tampering with natural order and DNA of Creation;
- [j] honoring the bodies and physical forms the Holy One designed for us by not adopting hairstyles, facial hairstyles, body art styles, and clothing that mimic the pagan world and make us look like the “Canaanites” or “Egyptians” of our world;
- [k] respecting the aged and the foreigner;
- [l] not engaging in reckless or dangerous conduct just for a thrill;
- [m] showing favoritism, or bias of any kind, in judging people;
- [n] honoring betrothal and marriage; and
- [o] loving our neighbor - and the foreigner - as if he/she/they were bone of our bone.

So today as we conclude parsha *Kedoshim* do not just lightly pass over the words you will read. The rest of this parsha describes the essence of *who we are as new creations in Messiah*. The Holy One provides us in Torah with *a mirror into which we may look and see who the Holy One created us to be*.

We all like to recall the words of Yeshayahu [Isaiah] and Micah that say:

*It will come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the Holy One’s house will be established on the top of the mountains,
And it will be exalted above the hills; and all nations will flow to it.
Many people will come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Holy One, to the house of the God of Ya’akov;
He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.”
For out of Tziyon will go forth the law,
And the word of the Holy One from Jerusalem
[Isaiah 2:2-3]*

But part of what that is going to mean is that there is going to be a legal system in place on the mountain of YHVH that will decree some pretty serious penalties on those who flagrantly rebel against the ‘law’ that goes out from Tziyon and the ‘word of YHVH’ that goes forth from Jerusalem. We will be stewards of the world – and that will not always be pleasant.

The Honor Protocols of the Covenant and the Kingdom

The Kingdom of Heaven is not only a Kingdom of *beauty, benevolence, blessing,*

forgiveness, redemption, and restoration; it is also a Kingdom of *kavod* – i.e. what our English Bibles call ‘*honor*’. What is *kavod*? First of all, let’s talk about the polar opposite. The opposite of giving *kavod* is to *qalal*. That means to *demean, to curse, to mock, or to disrespect anyone or anything to the point of belittling or bringing the thing disrespected to scorn*. If a man *qalal*’s his father or his mother, that is total, outright rebellion against the calling and ways of the Kingdom. To *qalal* anyone is to declare independence from the Holy One and His ways, and go AWOL from every Kingdom role we are called to play. Yes, it is most definitely *death, surely death*. That is not a penalty or a punishment, however; it is a diagnosis. It is an acknowledgement that anyone who would do such a thing is – at least for that moment – completely cut off from his Life Source.

If *qalal* is the opposite of *kavod*, what then is *kavod*? It is an amalgamation of all the factors that make up *gravitas* – i.e those characteristics or attributes that cause someone or something to take be taken seriously. It is *recognized value, assigned worth, appreciated substance, and notable sobriety*. It is *having – and/or being afforded – esteem as one who is known to excel in some area*. It is *credibility*. It is *dignity*. It is *favor*. It is *a level of respect that comes to one who has approached and handled Covenantal roles with calmness, wisdom, effectiveness, and consistent trustworthiness*. It is *a high level of Kingdom ‘weight’ – or at least of societal ‘clout’*. It is *spiritual and/or social relevance*. It is *pleasing – or at least attention getting - essence*. It is *influence*. It is *beauty*. It is *wisdom*. It is *skill*. It is *glory*. The people of the nations and cultures that surround us bow down to false gods, assign priority to temporal, fleshly things, and give honor to foolishness. They pride themselves on sarcasm, impudence, discourtesy, derision, ridicule, mockery, irreverence, and hype. We are called to be a counter-culture –people of a more excellent way. We are to have nothing to do with things like sarcasm, impudence, discourtesy, derision, ridicule, mockery, irreverence, and hype. We are called to give – and bring – *kavod* to the Holy One, the One Who spread out the Heavens and laid the foundations of the Earth – and to all His servants.

We are called to be people of radical, unceasing *kavod*. We are called to be the most honorable – and honoring – people on the planet. The first and foremost object of our *kavod* is to be our Creator. We are worthy of *kavod* to the extent we give – and bring – *kavod* to the Holy One. To give *kavod* to the Holy One means to cherish, value, and prioritize His Presence, His Covenantal requirements, His Directives [i.e. the Torah], His Calling upon our lives, and His Grand Plan of Redemption for Mankind as a species and for the Restoration of Creation to its originally intended state of Edenic beauty, fruitfulness, and shalom.

The second most important object of our *kavod* is to be our father[s] and mother[s].

This starts with our biological parents, but extends to [a] the *avot* and *imot* – i.e. the patriarchs and matriarchs of Torah; [b] all our national and communal sages; and [c] all personal mentors, teachers, and rabbis, from whom we received revelation, affirming discipline, lifestyle training, or inspiration.

At a different, more guarded level we are to honor everyone who is our ‘neighbor’ – sharing the same time, space, road, pathway, marketplace, and/or neighborhood with us. This includes people of special honor –the widow, the fatherless, and the poor of our community. At an even more guarded level we are to honor the foreigner who comes to sojourn in our midst. And finally, we are even to find a way, within adequate safeguards, to even honor our enemies.

All of our Kingdom interactions and transactions are designed to be governed by *honor protocols*. We who belong to Him, and serve Him, are to always feel, express, and live our lives so as to bring, *honor* – first to our King, then to the ‘Great Cloud of Witnesses’ made up of our ancestors in the Covenant [Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, Ya’akov, Rachel and Leah, Moshe, Yehoshua, Eli, Sh’muel, David, Sh’lomo, the prophets, the apostles, etc.], and finally to our biological parents and our spiritual fathers and mothers [*i.e.* the Kingdom examples, mentors, and rabbinical teachers who have inspired and/or helped us to take up our assigned post on the Kingdom Wall]. If we do not give honor to each of these, at proper priority levels [*First*, the Holy One, Who alone is worshipped; *second*, to the *avot*, who pioneered the Covenant walk; and *third*, for our biological and spiritual parents, who completed the most recent link in the Covenant chain] according to Kingdom protocols, we destroy our Kingdom credibility. And Heaven forbid - we prove ourselves less than ‘honorable’.

The Minimum of Honor Owed to Everyone We Meet

Remember, one of the promises the Holy One made to Avraham was that he would make his *shem gadol*. **Genesis 12:2**. This is usually translated into English as ‘*great name*’, but in Hebrew – the language in which the promise was spoken – it means much, much more. To have one’s *shem* made *gadol* by the Holy One – or by His People - means to have one’s face and name thought of and remembered fondly, one’s presence welcomed, one’s life valued, and the larger body of one’s works, one’s words, and one’s legacy respected, valued, esteemed. It includes having one’s failures, mis-steps, mistakes, and unflattering moments or seasons considered not as disqualifications but as merely as components of the greater context – understandable human lapses that are overshadowed by a life generally well-lived and a legacy generally well-handed down.

That is what we are to look for in every person – even our enemies. But that does not mean we will always find it. Sometimes, unfortunately, what we find will

require our community, acting through its legal system, pursuant to the Holy One's due process protocols, will have to make some tough decisions.

The Holy Legal System that the Redeemed Community Is To Institute In the Land of Israel and Model To the World

Yesterday the Holy One extended His focus from the *individual* to the *community* - and its *legal system*. He started by declaring the responsibility of the *beit din* [literally, "house of judgment", more commonly known as the 'Sanhedrin'] to enforce the sentence of death in regard to the most blatant forms of idol worship – i.e. those involving child sacrifice and the practice of the occult arts. That passage began a section of Torah in which the Holy One specifies what penalties the Sanhedrin is to enforce in specific situations where it has been proven beyond a strict standard of proof [upon the testimony of two or three witnesses] in a judicial proceeding that a person in the redeemed community has committed actions that the Holy One in His Wisdom advises are so incompatible with the holiness of the land that punishment is necessary. The minimum amount of force necessary for the protection of the Redeemed Community and its mission is always the guideline. Here is how today's aliyah begins:

Ki-ish ish asher yekalel et-aviv ve'et-imo
For everyone who curses his father or his mother

mot yumat
he will surely die

aviv v'imo kilel damav bo
He has cursed his father and his mother. His blood will be upon him.
[Leviticus 20:9]

Remember, cursing one's father or mother does not just happen in an instant. It takes time – and a long-term surrender to unclean spirits – to occur. The curse does not begin in the organs of speech - it begins in one's soul. It begins in a person's mind, his will, and his emotions. And it has to have allowed to fester there quite awhile - long enough to destroy the precious Divine gift of innocence, childlikeness, familial affection, and respect. Indeed, for the words of an incantation/curse/spell to come out of one's mouth to do injury to a mother or a father means there is a deep, dangerous volcano of toxic *tumah* rumbling inside the person's soul. This has serious ramifications for the fledgling community of the redeemed. If the Bridegroom-King's plan for a holy people to arise and bless the world is going to be successful, this kind of toxicity cannot be permitted. It is not a matter of punishment or vengeance. It is a matter of collective mission and destiny – and the special holiness the land of Israel needs to possess to fulfill the Holy One's assigned mission.

The Holy Legal System Assigns Tough Consequences To A Few Extremely Toxic Kinds of Covenant-Destructive Behavior

The Holy One prescribes specific punishments that the legal system of the nation of Israel is to enforce for the following 15 actions that undermine the Holy One's great plan of redemption:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Child sacrifice | [mot yamut – he will die] |
| 2. Consulting mediums/fortune-tellers | [<i>karat</i>] |
| 3. Cursing father or mother | [mot yamut] |
| 4. Adultery – non-relative | [mot yamut – both] |
| 5. Fornication with mother/step-mother | [mot yamut - both] |
| 6. Fornication with daughter-in-law | [mot yamut – both] |
| 7. Homosexual fornication | [mot yamut – both] |
| 8. Fornication with mother & daughter | [mot yamut – all involved] |
| 9. Bestiality (by male or female) | [mot yamut + animal killed] |
| 10. Staring at a sister/half-sister unclothed | [<i>karat</i>] |
| 11. Sexual intercourse during menstruation | [mot yamut – both] |
| 12. Adultery with aunt or niece | [childlessness – both] |
| 13. Adultery with brother's wife | [childlessness – both] |
| 14. Necromancy [contacting the dead] | [mot yamut] |
| 15. Wizardry | [mot yamut] |

Note carefully what types of conduct the Holy One considers to be so inconsistent with and so dangerous to the society and redemptive mission of the redeemed that consequences had to be Divinely prescribed and enforced by the Sanhedrin. Welcome to the 'fear of Heaven' Code.

The 'Fear of Heaven' Code

Remember that the primary subjects of parsha *Kedoshim* are holiness and love language. The emphasis of this parsha is not on violence. Rage and vigilantism are not part of the Covenant. The focus is not on punishment – or enforcement of personal or property rights. Those things come up in every society – and are dealt with even by pagans. In this section of the Torah, therefore, the Holy One is not dealing with things that pose a threat to personal or property rights, much less the peace and welfare of pagan societies. What He is dealing with are things which pose a threat to the continuation of the special, holy society which is to function in the world as His *mamlaket kohanim* [kingdom of priests] and *goy kadosh* [nation of holiness]. He is dealing with the things that endanger the particular purpose and calling of Israel – to be a '*light to the nations*'.

The Holy One knows what kinds of conduct in the land and among the holy nation have the capacity to *blot out our light* and *render our "salt" flavorless*. So let's

look at the list of things that the Holy One says are so inconsistent with the Torah lifestyle that *mot yumat* is the only appropriate consequence. The first such thing is *child sacrifice*. The Holy One says:

'Anyone of the children of Yisra'el, or of the strangers who live as foreigners in Yisra'el, who gives any of his seed to Molech, death, surely death will ensue!

[Leviticus 20:2]

Why would anyone “give any of his seed [his children or grandchildren] to Molech? And if someone did do such a thing, how would that affect the holiness of the Holy One’s community, and blot out its light? As we discussed earlier this week, in Hebrew *Molech* is a form of the word “king” [from *malak*, meaning ‘he rules/reigns’]. This name was also the name of a “god” worshipped by the Ammonites and by the Phoenicians² – who were destined to live “next door” to Israel. The Ammonites and Phoenicians would hold sacred ceremonies at harvest time, in which the men of the community would copulate with, and impregnate, young priestesses of this “god”. The children born would then be considered to be Molech’s children, and would be burned alive in a pyre set up in front of his idol/statue – all in hopes that Molech would be happy and not send a blight on the next year’s harvest. Also, in some cults, the firstborn children of Ammonites and Phoenicians would be burned alive in the same way, at some anniversary of their birth.

The Holy One knows that anyone who would even consider [a] copulating with a priestess of a foreign ‘god’, or [b] taking his or her firstborn [which the Holy One gave, and, as a result of the covenant of Pesach, is dedicated to the Holy One alone], has NO FEAR OF HEAVEN. He/she is, to the Holy One’s community, a terrorist-in-waiting. He/she is a cancer on the *goy kadosh*, a hijacked airliner about to crash into the spiritual “twin towers” of the *mamlaket kohanim* [kingdom of priests], destroying all Israel stands for - and taking innocent lives with him.

The very first thing the Holy One covenanted with Avraham, with Yitschak, and with Ya’akov, you see, was that He would give them “seed” – i.e. a sea of children. The reason Avraham was a “friend of the Holy One” was that he “*would teach His*

² To some Ammoni, Kena’ani, Phoenicians and Assyrians, the god of fire was known as Molech, or Milcom. Worship of a god by this name/title is attested as early as the 3d millennium B.C. Some identify Molech with Chemosh, the chief god of Moav. Lawrence J. Joyce, in the web article “*ANALYSIS: THE ONLY CURE FOR SUICIDE BOMBINGS*”, <http://www.888webtoday.com/joyce6.html>, states:

“By Canaanite law, the first-born of every woman had to be sacrificed to Molech. Some Canaanite cities would use a hollow bronze statue of Molech, with jewels set in his eyes. He was depicted with a body of a man and the head of a bull. He would be shown seated with his arms stretched forward, his hands palms up. At the time of the sacrifice, the priests would light a fire under the statue until it glowed. The jewels set in the eyes would fiercely blaze. The servants of the priests would bang their drums into a deafening crescendo, whereupon one of the priests would take the newborn and place it into the blazing hot palms of the idol. The child, of course, was burned alive. The only solace lay in the fact that the roar of the drums would drown out its screams.”

children and his household after him to keep [sh'mar] the way [derech] of the Holy One". Genesis 18:18-19. A man/woman who would offer the promised child to a foreign 'god' was forsaking and deliberately profaning the covenant the Holy One made with Avraham as well as the covenant entered into at Mount Sinai.

And so, as a cancer must be cut out of a living organism in order that the organism may continue to live and function as it was intended, so one with no FEAR OF HEAVEN must be excised if the holy nation was not to implode from within, and profane rather than bring honor and glory to the Holy One's Name.

Similarly, any offense against the sanctity of *marriage* and/or *the family*, as the institutions established by the Holy One for the propagation and training of His *goy kadosh*, had to be met with swift and severe punishment. Adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, voyeurism, and cursing father or mother all fit in this category. All indicate a total lack of the FEAR OF HEAVEN, or of any level of respect whatever for the covenant of the Holy One.

What Kind of Due Process Safeguards Did Torah Envision Before the Penalties Were Imposed?

Chapter 20 of Leviticus, which we study today, prescribes serious consequences for various extreme types of breaches of covenant. Some of these consequences are going to be enforced by the Holy One Himself. With regard to others the Redeemed Community itself is to be involved. Please however take note of two very important things about the king of participation the Torah envisions the Redeemed Community having in the enforcement of these consequences.

First of all, *the consequence provisions cannot be viewed outside the context in which they are given.* Leviticus 20 follows immediately after and is intrinsically connected to Leviticus 19. If the Redeemed Community follows Leviticus 19 no one will be [a] *perverting justice (Leviticus 19:15)*, [b] *spreading slander (false accusations) about anyone (Leviticus 19:16(a))*, or [c] *doing anything that endangers another's life (Leviticus 19:16(b))* – this would include *encouraging or condoning any action for which the Divinely prescribed consequence is death.*

Even more important, under the literal wording of Leviticus 19 *no one was qualified to be a witness against another in regard to a sin unless he or she had first "rebuked his neighbor frankly"* – otherwise, Torah instructs us, we could *bear the sinner's guilt* (disqualifying us as witnesses). The interpretation of the phrase *"rebuke his neighbor frankly"* in Hebraic understanding has always included specifically [a] modeling the right behavior steadfastly; [b] gently warning the wrongdoer that the conduct in question not only violates the Torah, but carries a

specific consequence (and what it is); and [c] encouraging and attempting to lead the wrongdoer to make *t'shuvah*.³ If a person does these two things, and does so *in love, and not in a show of self-righteous judgment*, as Leviticus 19:17 requires, and the wrongdoer still refuses to cease the wrongdoing and make *t'shuvah*, then and only then is the one who has thus “*rebuke[d] his neighbor frankly*” qualified to go to the authorities and act as a witness against the wrongdoer. Moreover, unless there are at least two of such persons who have thus “*rebuked his neighbor frankly*”, under the Torah there can be neither an adjudication of guilt nor the imposition of any punishment.

Yeshua's Affirmation of the Torah System of Procedural Due Process

Remember the episode where a woman ‘caught in the act of adultery’ was brought to Yeshua for judgment? This episode is frequently cited as proof that Yeshua did away with the Torah, because although Torah plainly says a woman caught in adultery [and the man, for that matter] is to be stoned to death, Yeshua did not stone her. But look closer. Look at this through *Torah eyes*. When in Yochanan [John] 8:7 Yeshua said to the accusers of the woman caught in adultery “*He who is without sin cast the first stone*” He was not excusing the woman from Torah-mandated consequence. He was merely fully implementing Torah’s system of procedural law. If legitimate witnesses had been present, and had insisted, He would not have stopped the stoning – because in that situation for Him to do so would be violate the Torah. That He would not do.

Read the text. Yeshua did not say ‘Torah is wrong – this woman should not be stoned!’ He did not abrogate the Torah -- He invoked the Torah. He asked if there were any Torah-qualified witnesses against the woman – i.e. any persons who did not bear this woman’s guilt according to Torah, because they had before bringing her for punishment “rebuked his neighbor frankly”.

What Yeshua did in John 8 to disperse the accusers was to point out that there were no qualified witnesses – because none of those present had “rebuked” the woman frankly according to the Hebraic understanding, in love and without judgment – with the result that, since they all desired evil to happen to the woman, according to the Torah, *they actually bore her sin* under **Leviticus 19:17(c)**.

Hence because those who claimed to be witnesses against the woman bore *her* sin, they were not “*without sin*” in the matter and could not serve as witnesses. And

³ For examples of how Yeshua followed this practice of frank rebuke, read the accounts of his rebukes of Kefa [Peter] – see Matthew 16:23-27—and Nicodemus -- see John 3. Consider how He frankly and repeatedly rebuked His fellow Jews, especially the P’rushim [Pharisees] and Sofrim [scribes].

since under Torah legitimate Torah-qualified witnesses had to be the ones to cast the first stone, there could be no stoning. Moreover, under Torah, if these men persisted in making their accusations, though they were not qualified witnesses, they would themselves become subject to the same punishment they sought for her. **Deuteronomy 19:16-19**. That is why they all dispersed, leaving the woman uncondemned. What saved the woman caught in adultery from stoning was thus not some new doctrine of forgiveness being brought forward by Yeshua – it was *Torah*.

Who Was Responsible for Enforcing Divinely Scripted Consequences?

Secondly, it must be kept in mind that not just anyone was expected or authorized to enforce the Divinely scripted consequences spelled out in Leviticus 20. The consequences were not to be enforced by either individuals or mobs⁴. The Torah establishes a fair and efficient *judicial system* (see **Exodus 18:17-26, Deuteronomy 16:18-20**, for instance) that is to handle such matters. Cities of refuge were provided. Rules about qualifications of witnesses (as discussed above) were enforced.

It was never the job of individual persons – or mobs - to enforce the Divinely prescribed consequences of Leviticus 20. It was the natural result of a society of persons who were walking out a betrothal covenant relationship with the Holy One. It was a community of love – for only in the context of a community of love does punishment for wrongdoing (after multiple warnings coming from hearts of love, with refusal to make *t'shuvah*) reflect the Holy One's marvelous Light.

The Holy One's Covenant community does not stick its head in the sand and ignore dangerous behavior. Neither does it practice “*sloppy agape*” with regard to matters within its jurisdiction and authority. But neither is *adat B'nei Yisrael* a community of self-righteous tongue-waggers. Nor is anyone in the Redeemed community to singlehandedly either expose or stamp out ‘evil’, injustice, or oppression. A Torah community *sh'ma*'s the words of the Holy One and treasures and guards them – *all* of them (i.e. not just a few that suit their fancy if viewed out of context and applied in a way that justifies what they are doing).

Keeping First Things First

The Holy One has over the last few chapters been calling His Redeemed Community to *be different from the Egyptians and the Kana'anites* in every way. He has been calling His people to be *Kedoshim* – “holy ones”, or saints. This

⁴ This is another Torah-consistent reason why Yeshua did not ‘condemn’ the woman. Judgments such as stoning were under Torah reserved for *the Sanhedrin* – not the Messiah. The Messiah will judge sinners and rogue nations upon the establishment of His millennial reign – but that time had not yet come.

means He calls us to be a *betrothed Bridal community*, visibly set apart to Him, reflecting His Light to the nations instead of absorbing their darkness. This requires, in a context of love and right judgment, after warnings and offering several chances of restoration, for those who threaten to introduce darkness into the Community to be purged – according to carefully-worded instructions from the Holy One, by and through honest, capable judges upon whom the Spirit of God rests. This is not “legalism” – it is *true love*.

The penultimate words of our aliyah - and for that matter of parsha *Kedoshim* - constitute words for much meditation this *Shabbat*. In these words the Holy One sums up all He has said before about the holiness He has called and empowered us to exhibit on this earth in a few lines. Here they are:

Ush'martem et-kol-chukotai v'et-kol-mishpatai

Safeguard all My decrees and all my judgments

va'asitem otam

and asah them,

v'lo taqi etchem ha-aretz

and the land will not vomit you out

asher ani mevi etchem shamah l'shevet bah

which I am bringing you to settle.

V'lo telchu b'chukot ha-goy

Do not follow the customs of the nation

asher-ani meshale'ach mipneichem ki et-kol-eleh

that I am driving out before you, since they did all the above mentioned

asu va'akutz bam

and I was disgusted with them.

V'omar lachem atem tir'shu et-admatam

I therefore said to you, 'Take over their land.

v'ani etnenah lachem l'reshet otah

I will give it to you so that you can inherit it –

eretz zavat chalav udevash

a land flowing with milk and honey.

Ani Adonai Eloheichem asher-hiv'dalti etchem min ha-amim

I am the Holy One your God Who has separated you out from among all the nations.

V'hivdaltem beyn ha-behemah ha-tahorah l't'me'ah

And separate out the tahor animals from the tamei

uveyn-ha'of ha-tamei l'tahor

and the tahor birds from the tamei,

v'lo-teshaktzu et-nafshoteichem b'behemah uva'of
Do not make pollute your souls on account of animals, birds

Uv'chol asher tirmos ha-adamah asher-hivdalti
or other creatures that I have separated out

lachem l'tamei
as being tamei for you.

V'heyitem li kedoshim ki kadosh ani Adonai
And be holy to Me, for I, the Holy One, am holy,

v'avdil etchem min ha-amim liheyot li
and I have separated you out from among the nations to be Mine.'
[Leviticus 20:22-26]

Always remember *who* and *Whose* you are. You are part of a people called to release fountains of vision, life, health, joy, and peace. You are called to stay on mission, and to gently nurture as many as will follow toward a greater destiny.

That means we are not to yield to the distraction of events and circumstances that we cannot change - however traumatic those events may be. We are never to surrender to either despondency, disgust, outrage or fear. When either cataclysmic events on the world stage or emotional drama on the personal stage take place we are to respond differently from the rest of the world. We are called to keep our eyes fixed on Messiah and what He is doing in the world at all times – and not to let ourselves be distracted or made distraught by what any terrorist, politician, Beast, false-prophet, or Anti-‘Christ’ on the world stage -- much less some two bit prima donna or drama queen mucking up the waters in our neck of the woods -- is doing to distract the attention and disturb the peace of those around us.

We are to continue to meditate on and walk out the Holy One's beautiful Torah day and night. We are to resist the temptation to join the conversations of the nations catch their paranoia or take up their offenses. We are to continue speaking of Torah's revelations about the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven and the Bride Calling upon our lives as we lay down and as we rise up, as we sit at meat and as we walk along the way. We are never to give in to our wily but outclassed Adversary's pathetic attempt to distract us toward silly political theories, moralizing, and grandstanding rhetoric.

No, Dear Reader. We have been put on earth at such a time as this for a much greater purpose. We have been on earth at such a time as this not to despair and point fingers alongside the humanists and secularists and clueless devotees of powerless religion, or to condemn the darkness of this world; we have been called forth at such a time as this to shine the glorious Light of Heaven into the world's

darkest places, spaces, and faces.

Arise and shine, Beautiful People - for the Glory of the Holy One has risen upon you! As you press into the Heart of the Divine Bridegroom, and walk the narrow path of His Torah, He will turn this era of intense darkness into your greatest hour!

One More Thing ...

There is however one last issue the Holy One wants to address with us this week. It concerns those who choose to try to become *kedoshim* through ‘other ways’ than those prescribed by the Holy One in Torah.

Contrary to modern ‘pop theology’ there are not ‘many ways’ to God, nor ‘many ways’ to relate to Him. Torah is the prescribed pathway. Every other pathway is *chol* - a way initiated and powered by, and which plays to human self-will or ego, which leads away from the Holy One, and which ends in death. Hence the concluding words of our parsha are as follows:

V'ish o-ishah ki-yiheyeh vahem ov o yid'oni

Any man or woman who is involved in [the practices of] the mediums or oracles

mot yumatu ba'even yirgeimu otam d'meiheh bam

Is to be put to death, pelted to death with stones to the point of death.

The *medium* [necromancer – who contacts the dead] and the *wizard* [soothsayer, fortune-teller, diviner] must be put to death by legal process. Moreover, anyone who consults a medium or wizard must be *cut off* from the community [Hebrew *karat* - a form of social ostracism].

But some might ask, ‘*What is the danger to the holy nation of this type of activity?*’ The lifestyle of the Holy One’s people is to be a *sh’ma* lifestyle.⁵ **Deuteronomy 6:4-9.** They/we are to live not by ‘*bread alone, but by every word which comes forth from the mouth of the Holy One.*’ **Deuteronomy 8:3.**

To *sh’ma* the Holy One, you see, means that we consciously choose to *lo sh’ma* all other voices – and that means all other sources of spiritual knowledge/insight. Yeshua said, “***The voice of another they will lo sh’ma.***”

The problem of Chava was that she *sh’ma*-d the voice of the Serpent regarding spiritual matters – whether the Holy One “truly said” what He said, whether she would “surely die”, and whether the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was “good for food” – and in so doing, lost contact with the reality of what the

⁵ An article on the elements of this lifestyle, written by the Rabbi’s son, is available to anyone who desires to read it, free of charge. Just email the author at billbullock.rabbisson@gmail.com

Holy One had said.

Necromancy – contacting the dead through ‘mediums’ – is the seeking of spiritual knowledge/insight from a source other than the Holy One – from the realm of DARKNESS and DEATH.

Wizardry – seeking to know the future, or place curses on, or manipulate people or circumstances by magical means – likewise requires turning the back on, and refusing to *sh’ma*, the Holy One.

If the *mamelekot Kohanim* is to live by “*every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Holy One*”, seeking other voices, and other means of dealing with life, is poisonous fruit indeed.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. Today’s Torah reading starts with a discussion what should be the response and reaction of the Holy One’s people to the fully developed self-centeredness which leads to child abuse - in this case, the act of “giving” children to the god of the Ammonites and Phoenicians - *Molech*. That action had been prohibited in Leviticus 18:21 [parsha **Acharei Mot**]. For background of how this self-centeredness, was not judged, but infected the people of the Holy One, read I Kings 11:7 and II Kings 16:3. See also Jeremiah 32:35:

And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through [the fire] unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

[A] What do you think led Shlomo and Ahaz, who were called to be ***Kedoshim*** just as you and I are, to set up altars to Molech?

[B] What does Torah say is to be done with one who gives his child to Molech? Why?

[C] What does the Holy One say the effect and result of offering a child to Molech is?

2. In verse 7 the Holy One repeats the central theme of the book of Vayikra, and particularly of this passage - ***Be Kedoshim, for I am Kadosh!***

[A] According to verse 8 how do *Kedoshim* act?

[B] List the breaches of Covenant mentioned in Leviticus 20 that require a death sentence.

[C] List the breaches of Covenant mentioned in this chapter that require that the perpetrator be “cut off from his/her people”.

[D] List the breaches of Covenant for which the punishment is imposed by

God, instead of by B'nei Yisrael.

[E] What is a “medium” or “spiritist”, and why do you think the Holy One says a person who makes a lifestyle of practicing their occult craft must be put to death?

3. In verses 25-26 the Holy One repeats for emphasis the instructions concerning animals whose flesh the Holy One’s *Kedoshim* are, out of love for the Holy One and in full confidence that the Holy One knows what is best for them, to choose not to eat. These are not “Jewish customs” or “traditions of man”, but very clearly pronounced instructions from the Holy One Himself.

[A] What if anything do you think the food we choose to eat (and not to eat) might have to do with our “glowing” [that is, reflecting the Holy One’s Light] as *Kedoshim*?

[B] Do you think the instructions the Holy One gives regarding food have passed away as part of an abandoned covenant? If so, how can you trust a God who abandons a covenant, or changes His mind about what is right and good?

[C] Chapter 20 is largely about appropriate punishments. Is a specific punishment prescribed for disobedience to the instructions about eating animal flesh? What does that say to you?

4. In the Haftarah a shepherd named Amos from a village called Tekoa [20 miles South of Y’rushalayim] receives from the Holy One a prophecy about the “day of His coming” upon fallen Israel.

[A] What does the Holy One say He will do in the “day of His coming” to the “sinners” in the midst of Israel?

[B] What Torah instructions do you think they violated?

[C] What do you think today’s Torah has to do with today’s Haftarah?

5. After prophesying judgment upon the sinful ones in the nation of Israel, Amos prophesies a dramatic regathering and restoration.

[A] What is “David’s fallen tent”?

[B] What does it mean that “the plowman will overtake the reaper”?

6. According to I Peter 1: 15-16 we are to be “holy” in “all we *do*”.

*... but just as he who called you is holy,
you yourselves also are to be holy in all of your behavior;
because it is written, "You will be holy; for I am holy."*

Write a short essay on what kind of *conduct* that you have personally witnessed that you consider [a] holy, and [b] profane, and on what criterion you base the distinction.

*May the Holy One's people receive His words of love with joy,
and may all of us glow with His holiness, this and every day.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 119:175-176 [TAV]

Let my soul live, that I may praise you.

Let your ordinances help me.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

*Seek your servant, for I don't forget your **mitzvot**.*