Points to Ponder

Kedoshim 5782

**קְדשִׁ֣ים תִּֽהְי֑וּ  You shall be Kedoshim (19:2)** - How do we get to that status of being “holy?” **Sivan Rahav Meir** noted that the Parsha introduces 51 different ways of achieving holiness in our lives – through Mitzva observance. These mitzvot contain supreme values that were not only relevant during our journey through the Sinai Desert, but also in the days of the judges and the kings, down to our own times in modern Israel, and even in outer space, including not stealing, loving one’s fellow man and many Mitzvos of those sort that are applicable to every one of us, no matter where we find ourselves in life. These Mitzvos also  constitute a social policy of trust and, if implemented here, would bring glory to the people and State of Israel.

**קְדשִׁ֣ים תִּֽהְי֑וּ  Kedoshim Teheeyu (19:2) - Ramban** notes that one needs to be careful not to be a  נבל ברשות התורה - a degenerate within  the parameters of what is permitted by the Torah.” Since, according to Torah law, one may marry many wives, one could arrange that he would always have one of  his wives available to him. A person could be careful to make sure that all the food he eats is kosher, but eat in a gluttonous fashion. Such a person, without refined eating habits and an elegant style in his interpersonal relations, is one who is a נבל. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that many have the mistaken impression that a life of asceticism, consisting of frequent fasting, abject poverty, and withdrawal from social interaction, is considered to be a life of kedushah. However, that does not seem to be in line with Yahadus’s definition of kedushah. The Gemara (Yoma 86a) explains that the Possuk ואהבת את ד אלקיך  includes the requirement that – “שיהא שם שמים מתאהב על ידך the of Heaven become beloved through you.” In other words, one should act in such a way that those who observe him should “fall in love” with Hashem. People should see the way a Jew acts and become so enamored with Yahadus that they feel compelled to join the Jewish religion. Clearly, in our world, one who lives an ascetic lifestyle will not likely be able to influence others.

**הוֹכֵ֤חַ תּוֹכִ֨יחַ֙ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶ֔ךָ Reprove your neighbor but do not bear sin against him (19:17)** - The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (6:6) notes that one of the 48 ways of acquiring the Torah is though loving the reproof. What is the difference between “accepting” and “loving” the reproof? **Rav Dovid Povarsky ztl**. explained that when a person knows that a bad-tasting medicine will save his life s/he loves it. This is the same thing that happens when we receive Tochacha – it is there to improve the sickness of the soul. Once upon a time, there were Maggidim who were able to give Musar to the masses and the people would accept it. Today each of us needs to do the work ourselves which is why the Mussar movement exists.

**וּבֶ֤גֶד כִּלְאַ֨יִם֙ שַֽׁעַטְנֵ֔ז לֹ֥א יַֽעֲלֶ֖ה עָלֶֽיךָ The clothes of Kilayim are Shaatnez and they shall not be upon you (19:19) - Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus ztl.** noted that Jewish clothing is distinct in 3 ways: first, it is Tzanuah, it is not designed to be arousing. Second it does not contain anything forbidden by the Torah like Shaatnez and third - it is a means to Mitzva performance in that where appropriate it provides an avenue for Mitzva performance like with the wearing of Tzitzis. Rav Pinkus added that in the same manner that clothes protect us from the strong elements of nature, Kosher clothing protect us from outside non-kosher elements as well. After all, would one enter a non-kosher restaurant with a Kippah or with long flowing Payos? The clothing helps us guard against an unholy mix.

**כְּאֶזְרָ֣ח מִכֶּם֩ יִֽהְיֶ֨ה לָכֶ֜ם הַגֵּ֣ר | הַגָּ֣ר אִתְּכֶ֗ם וְאָֽהַבְתָּ֥ לוֹ֙ כָּמ֔וֹךָ כִּֽי־גֵרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם For you too were Geirim (19:34)** - Chazal (Yevamos 48b) note that one of the reasons that Geirim of the time sometimes experience Yissurim is that they delayed becoming Geirim. But is a non-Jew COMMANDED to become a Ger? Why is there a punishment of Yissurim for the delay? **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** explained that when a person gets a moment of awakening if s/he capitalizes on it, great. But if one allows the moment to pass, there are Yissurim that come as a result. And if it is true for Geirim then it is certainly true for us as well. We cannot allow moments of inspiration to pass.

**לֹא־תַֽעֲשׂ֥וּ עָ֖וֶל בַּמִּשְׁפָּ֑ט בַּמִּדָּ֕ה בַּמִּשְׁקָ֖ל וּבַמְּשׂוּרָֽה Don’t carry out a miscarriage of justice concerning weights (19:35) - Rav Chaim Yisrael Belsky ztl**. noted that stealing and thievery are noted both in the individual and the communal. The reason is that while the individual cannot steal, the community may not create an environment of thievery and needs to encourage honesty and fair play. He noted that the **Chofetz Chaim** bemoaned a communal laxity on thievery and dishonest weights and wrote a special kuntres about it. Rav Belsky adds that the community that tolerates dishonesty deserves the punishment brought on it by the individuals that they tolerate. The community gets branded as one of deceit because of the individual it allows to enjoy full opportunities within it.

**חֶ֣סֶד ה֔וּא  It is Chessed (20:17) - Rav Dessler ztl.** explained that Chessed is a wonderous Middah and it can go too far fast. Hence, when one overuses it inappropriately will come not to use it when it is appropriate.  Rav Dessler adds that this is why when we mention the protection Hashem provides, we refer to Mogen Avraham – whose middah of Chessed needed Hashem’s protection to be kept in proper check.

**Haftara:**

**כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֚ה אָֽנֹכִי֙ מְצַוֶּ֔ה וַֽהֲנִע֥וֹתִי בְכָל־הַגּוֹיִ֖ם אֶת־בֵּ֣ית יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל  I will shake out the House of Israel among all the nations (Amos 9:9) - Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** explains that like a farmer who shakes out the threshed grain to separate the kernels from the chaff, God will shake out the Jewish people. The righteous will be forced to leave so that they will not assimilate with the host nations and lose their identity as Jews. Those who choose to insist on staying where they are in the “security” of their comfortable lives will lose Jewish identity and be lost forever.