

Parshat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim Bringing Order to Chaos

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The Books of Shmot, Vayikra and Devarim each contain within them a single Parsha that is replete with Mitzvot that reflect the character of that Sefer. In Shmot, it is Parshat Mishpatim; in Devarim, it is Parshat Ki Teitze; and in Vayikra it is Parshat Kedoshim. In each case, the Parsha is comprised of a list of Mitzvot that are an expression of the unique attributes of the particular Sefer, but are seemingly disconnected. It is as if there is one non sequitur after another, a codex of random laws and precepts. Bringing order to that chaos is not only beneficial in highlighting the literary style employed in the presentation of these laws, but it is also essential to opening up the key to understanding the broader messages being conveyed by the compilation of the individual Mitzvot and their layout.

This type of shiur is much more easily presented in oral form. Therefore, in order to facilitate the ability to present this in written form, we have included a one-page visual presentation that should ease one's ability to follow the structures and nuances that will be presented

In Parshat Kedoshim, we are going to focus in particular on Perek 19 which is the opening chapter of the Parsha and which contains sixty Mitzvot.¹ There are two distinct features in the opening Pasuk of the Parsha. The first is that this is one of only two places in the Torah where Moshe is directed to present a Parsha to the entire congregation (דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל).² This would seem to indicate that this Parsha is dealing with something of a fundamental nature that requires being conveyed to everyone directly and simultaneously. In addition, the Parsha opens with a broad charge of Kedoshim Tiyihu (קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ) which is a demand that derives from God's holiness (כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי). It implies that somehow that which is found in this Parsha has the capacity to bestow holiness and

is reflective of God's sanctity. While Kedusha is thematically consistent with the motif of Sefer Vayikra, it is nevertheless not self-evident how the subsequent laws relate to that theme.

The Midrash Rabba already takes note of these anomalies and opens with the implicit question as to why is it that Parshat Kedoshim needs to be presented directly from Moshe to the entire congregation (פרשה זו נאמרה בהקהל)?³ Rabbi Chiya suggests it is because the majority of the fundamental laws of the Torah are presented in this Parsha. He does not explicate any further, but presumably since the laws are cardinal, they are the key Mitzvot that God wants Bnei Yisrael to excel at and focus on. That in turn will produce holy people who reflect God's sanctity. According to Rabbi Chiya, the combination of these two reasons explains why it is therefore necessary for everyone to hear these Mitzvot from Moshe Rabbeinu in the presence of the entire congregation.

The Midrash then presents the opinion of Rabbi Levi. It is not clear whether Rabbi Levi is offering an alternative to Rabbi Chiya or just trying to bring more clarity to the position of Rabbi Chiya. In either case, Rabbi Levi tries to make sense of this random list of Mitzvot by suggesting that it is a more detailed replica of the Ten Commandments.⁴ On the visual presentation of the Perek provided, one can see in parentheses at the end of the relevant Pasuk which of the Dibrot it relates to. For illustrative purposes, looking at the three verses, two through four (ב-ד), one can discern four or five of the Ten Commandments. Rabbi Levi suggests that in verse three (ג), the mention of fearing one's parents and the necessity to "guard" the Shabbat are similar to the Dibrot of Kibud Av V'Em and Shabbat.⁵ Pasuk Dalet (ד) is reflective of the commandment not to worship other Gods (לא יהיה),⁶ while the second verse contains "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)" which is reminiscent of the first of the Aseret HaDibrot.⁷ According to Rashi's explanation that Kedoshim Tiyihu is a directive that one should separate

¹ ר' יודן בשם ר"ש בן יוחאי אמר ג' פרשיות הכתיב לנו משה רבינו בתורה וכל אחת ואחת מהן יש בה מששים ששים מצות ואילו הן פרשת פסחים ופרשת נזיקין ופרשת קדושים ר' לוי בשם ר' שילא דכפר תמרתא אמר משבעים שבועים א"ר תנחומא ולא פליגי מאן דעבד פ' פסחים ע' כלל עמה פרשת תפילין מאן דעביד פרשת נזיקין ע' כלל עמה פרשת שמטה מאן דעבד פרשת קדושים ע' כלל עמה פרשת עריות. (ויקרא רבה פרשת קדושים כד,ה)

² דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (ויקרא יט, ב) \ \ דַּבְּרוּ אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיְקַח ה' אִישׁ שָׂה לְבִית-אָבֹת שָׂה לְבִית: (שמות יב, ג)

³ תני ר' חייא פרשה זו נאמרה בהקהל מפני שרוב גופי תורה תלוין בה (ויקרא רבה פרשת קדושים כד,ה)

⁴ ר' לוי אמר מפני שעשרת הדברות כלולין בתוכה אנכי ה' אלקיך וכתיב הכא אני ה' אלקיכם לא יהיה לך וכתוב הכא ואלהי מסכה לא תעשו לכם לא תשא וכתוב הכא ולא תשבעו בשמי זכור את יום השבת וכתוב הכא את שבתתי תשמורו כבוד את אביך ואת אמך וכתוב הכא איש אמו ואביו תיראו לא תרצח וכתוב הכא לא תעמוד על דם רעך לא תנאף וכתוב הכא מות יומת הנואף והנואפת לא תגנוב וכתוב הכא לא תגנוב לא תענה וכתוב הכא לא תלך רכיל לא תחמוד וכתוב הכא ואהבת לרעך כמוך (שם)

⁵ איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת-שבתתי תשמרו אֲנִי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (ויקרא יט, ג)

⁶ אל-תפנו אל-האלילים ואלהי מסכה לא תעשו לכם אֲנִי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (שם ד)

⁷ דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְקֹנֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (שם ב)

themselves from illicit relations,⁸ then it would also be parallel to the proscription of adultery (לא תנאף) in the Ten Commandments.⁹ A quick survey of the suggested correspondence between the beginning of Kedoshim and the Aseret HaDibrot, yields the following interesting contrast. All the more detailed Dibrot found in the Ten Commandments appear in a summary form here in Parshat Kedoshim while those that are only briefly mentioned in the Aseret HaDibrot are more fully explicated upon here. In other words, there is an emphasis in Parshat Kedoshim on the Mitzvot that relate to interpersonal relationships, whereas the Aseret HaDibrot focus more heavily on one's relationship with God. It could be that Parshat Kedoshim takes for granted the faith-based commandments that are emphasized in the Aseret HaDibrot and it is simply building on that foundation. Nevertheless, this yields the first insight gleaned from the structure of Parshat Kedoshim which is that at least Kedusha, holiness, seems to more heavily relate to our interactions with and behavior towards others than on our adherence to the laws of worshipping God. It also seems to make a value statement that the laws governing our interactions with others are at least on par if not greater than the Mitzvot Ben Adam LaMakom. It is also interesting to note that the sequence of the Ten Commandments is changed to emphasize the more active faith-based Mitzvot like Shabbat and Kibud Av V'Em and the more common violations like theft.

Radatz Hoffmann (ר' דוד צבי הופמן) in his introduction to Parshat Kedoshim does an unbelievably insightful and masterful job of dissecting the literary style of Parshat Kedoshim. He points out that the recurring refrain "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)" or "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)" are key to understanding the Parsha. The two refrains appear fifteen times¹⁰ in chapter nineteen. If one looks at the intervening sections of Mitzvot that do not contain these phrases (פסוקים ה-ח ויט-כב) as buffers that divide up the remaining Mitzvot, then the Pesukim divide into three sections with a typological structure (noted on the left side of visual included); the first section has three Pesukim, the second five verses and the third

seven Pesukim (similar to the number of words in each Beracha in Birkat Kohanim). In addition, the Perek is divided in half by the secondary introductory statement, "You shall keep my statutes (אֶת-חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ)," found in the middle verse of the chapter.¹¹ The closing Pasuk of the Perek states that one should "observe all my statutes and all my laws (וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת-כָּל-מִשְׁפָּטַי)." ¹² Based on that conclusion, one would surmise that if the second half of the Perek is dealing with Chukim then it implies that the first half of the chapter is associated with Mishpatim, natural or rational laws. Appropriately, the closing crescendo of that first section is "Love thy neighbor as thyself (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ)." ¹³ Furthermore, one can see that the first half of the chapter subdivides into two sections (annotated on the right side of the included visual); a section with Mitzvot concluding with the refrain "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)" followed by another section of Mitzvot that end with the phrase "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)." This is also emphasized by the opening Pasuk of the chapter ending with "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)" while the concluding verse ends with "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)."

It is also interesting to note that there is a sequence of similar Mitzvot mentioned in the first half of the Perek that is then repeated in the second half (color coded Pesukim on included visual). It starts with a header (yellow), then is followed by Mitzvot relating to Shabbat and fearing either one's parents or the Temple (green). After that, it discusses restrictions against alternative gods and practices (turquoise), and the requirement to help those less fortunate, especially the Ger (magenta). It then concludes with the requirements to be honest, kind and just with other people (gray).

This parallel is actually more pronounced when one focuses on similar language used in Pesukim in the first half of the Perek compared with the second half (delineated by bold letters on included visual). Some of them such as Shabbat (פסוקים ג ול, letter A) and alternative gods or powers (אל תפנו – פסוקים ד ולא, letter B) are very obvious while others are more subtle. For instance, the usage of the word "corner (פאת)" to mean both the corner of one's field and

⁸ קדושים תהיו - הוּו פרושים מן העריות ומן העבירה, שכל מקום שאתה מוצא גדר ערוה אתה מוצא קדושה... (רש"י שם)

⁹ המדרש רואה שההקבלה ללא תנאף היא נמצאת בפרק כ של פרשת קדושים – פרשת העריות

¹⁰ בפסוקים ב, ג, ד, י, יב, יד, טז, יח, כה, כח, ל, לא, לב, לד, ולו ובאמת שש עשרה פעמים כולל פסוק לז שהוא פסוק הסיום של המבנה

¹¹ אֶת-חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ בהמתקן לא-תבריע פלאים שךך לא-תזרע פלאים וּבְגָד פְּלָאִים שֶׁעֲטוּזָה לֹא יִעָלֶה עֲלֵיךָ: (ויקרא יט, יט)

¹² וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת-כָּל-מִשְׁפָּטַי וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה: (שם כז)

¹³ לֹא-תִקְחֶם וְלֹא-תִטְרוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה: (שם יח)

the corner of their beard (פסוקים ט וכו', letter C) or the word "profaning (חלול)" that is used in reference to God when one swears falsely and also in relationship to the status of one's daughter who engages in harlotry (פסוקים יב וכו', letter D). What is the meaning of all these connections?

First of all, the fact that the Torah gives equal consideration to Mishpatim and Chukim shows that there is a parity between these two forms of Mitzvot. As was already noted above, it emphasizes that common decency is just as important as and an integral part of one's personal relationship with God. Profaning another individual is on par with profaning God's name. How one treats others affects one's relationship with God.

In addition, the repetition of Shabbat, as well as other Mitzvot, in both sections (Mishpatim and Chukim) is a broader indication that all Mitzvot have aspects of Mishpatim (rational, natural law) and Chukim (statutes) embedded in them. The balance may shift, whereby one Mitzva is more heavily weighted towards the Mishpatim side while others are more readily defined as Chukim, but every Mitzva contains a combination of both of these characteristics. This speaks to the limitation of man's capacity to logically grasp and understand all the repercussions of their actions. There are aspects of Shabbat that are very comprehensible, logical and rational, but Shabbat does not end there. There are metaphysical aspects that are beyond one's mastery and there are aspects of Shabbat that might even seem illogical. The same is true with regards to chasing after foreign gods. Of course, it seems eminently reasonable that turning to other gods is a serious breach of one's fealty to God, but what is wrong with finding out about the future through sorcerers and other mediums. The Torah prohibits both unequivocally, whether one understands or disagrees; whether it feels right or wrong. Submitting to both aspects requires tremendous humility and fidelity to God.

The same is true with regards to human interactions. Loving one's neighbor (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ) is the paradigmatic gold standard that the Torah expects of an individual when it comes to their treatment of others. On the other hand, one may feel that the other party is not deserving of that loyalty or that it is a standard to be practiced by or applicable to unique individuals and not the common folk. To that the Torah responds, in the

Chukim section, with "one must love the Ger like themselves because you were Gerim in Egypt (וְאָהַבְתָּ לוֹ כְּמוֹךָ כִּי-גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם)." No equivocations – it is an obligation because of where Bnei Yisrael came from and their indebtedness to God. It is God's expectation irrespective of all other considerations. In that spirit, Chazal invoke the principle of "Love thy neighbor as thyself (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ)" to determine what would be the most humane execution for a criminal while still complying with the Torah's requirement for specific capital punishments.

What might also become evident from this layout is that the two concluding refrains used to delineate each Mitzva, "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)" or "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)," are used alternately for each pair of Mitzvot found in the first and second section. For instance, in the Mishpatim section, the Mitzva of Shabbat (פסוק ג, letter A, green) ends "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)," while in the Chukim half (פסוק ל, letter A, green), it concludes with "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)." The opposite is true of Loving one's neighbor (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ) which in the Mishpatim section culminates with "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)" and its parallel of loving the Ger in the Chukim unit concludes "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)." While there are exceptions to this pattern, more generically, the phrases "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)" and "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)" appear an equal number of times in the chapter (eight each) to emphasize the universal and particularistic impetus for worshipping God

From the literary structure of Parshat Kedoshim, we learn that pledging allegiance to God through the Mitzvot is an unambiguous statement of loyalty only if it is unequivocal compliance with the precepts of God. That means acceptance and adherence to both the Mishpatim and Chukim facets of the Mitzvot. In addition, it requires equal devotion to those Mitzvot that are Ben Adam LaMakom (בין אדם למקום) and Ben Adam L'Chaveiro (בין לאדם לחבירו) with an emphasis towards the latter. Attaining Kedusha, as this week's Parsha indicates, requires both an acceptance of "I am the Lord (אֲנִי יְהוָה)," the universal comprehensible God, and "I am the Lord your God (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)," the transcendental, abstruse and unfathomable God; submission just because I am your God.

Shabbat Shalom

ויקרא פרק יט

(א) וידבר יקנוק אל-משה לאמר:

(ב) דבר אל-כל-עדת בני-ישראל ואמרת להם קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני יקנוק אלקיכם: (לא תנאף?, אנוכי)

A (ג) איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת-שבתתי תשמרו אני יקנוק אלקיכם: (כבוד אב ואם ושבת)

B (ד) אל-תפנו אל-האלילים ואלהי מסכה לא תעשו לכם אני יקנוק אלקיכם: (לא יהיה)

(ה) וכי תזבחון זבח שלמים ליקנוק לרצונכם תזבחהו:

(ו) ביום זבחכם יאכל וממחרת והנותר עד-יום השלישי באש ישרף:

(ז) ואם האכל יאכל ביום השלישי פגול הוא לא ירצה:

(ח) ואכליו עונו ישא כי-את-קדש יקנוק חלל ונכרתה הגפס הוא מעמיה:

C (ט) ובקצרכם את-קציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שדה לקצר ולקט קצירך לא תלקט: (י) וכרמך לא תעולל ופרט כרמך לא תלקט לעני ולגר תעזב אתם אני יקנוק אלקיכם:

(יא) לא תגבון ולא-תכחשו ולא-תשקרו איש בעמיתו: (לא תגנוב)

D (יב) ולא-תשבעו בשמי לשקר וחללת את-שם אלקיך אני יקנוק: (לא תשא)

(יג) לא-תעשק את-רעה ולא תגזל לא-תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד-בקר:

E (יד) לא-תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל ויראת מאלקיך אני יקנוק:

F (טו) לא-תעשו עול במשפט לא-תשא פני-דל ולא תהדר פני גדול בצדק תשפט עמיתך: (טז) לא-תלך רכיל בעמירך לא תעמד על-דם רעה אני יקנוק: (לא תענה, לא תרצח)

(יז) לא-תשנא את-אחייך בלבבך הוכח תוכיח את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו חטא:

G (יח) לא-תקום ולא-תטר את-בני עמך ואהבת לרעה כמוך אני יקנוק: (לא תחמוד)

(יט) את-ווקתי תשמרו בהמתך לא-תרביע כלאים שדה לא-תזרע כלאים ובגד כלאים שעטנז לא יעלה עליך: **פ**

(כ) איש כי-ישלב את-אשה שכבת-זרע והוא שפחה נחרפת לאיש והפדה לא נפדה או חפשה לא נתן-לה בקרת תהיה לא יומתו כי-לא חפשה:

(כא) והביא את-אשמו ליקנוק אל-פתח אהל מועד איל אשם:

(כב) וכפר עליו הכהן באיל האשם לפני יקנוק על-חטאתו אשר חטא ונסלח לו מחטאתו אשר חטא: **פ**

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

(כד) ובשנה הרביעת יהיה כל-פריו קדש הלולים ליקנוק:

(כה) ובשנה החמישית תאכלו את-פריו להוסיף לכם תבואתו אני יקנוק אלקיכם:

(כו) לא תאכלו על-הדם לא תנחשו ולא תעונו:

C (כז) לא תקפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנך:

(כח) ושרט לזנפש לא תתנו בבשרכם וכתבת קעקוע לא תתנו בכם אני יקנוק:

D (כט) אל-תחלל את-בתך להזנותה ולא-תזנה הארץ ומלאה הארץ זמה:

A (ל) את-שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני יקנוק:

B (לא) אל-תפנו אל-האבת ואל-הידענים אל-תבקשו לטמאה בהם אני יקנוק אלקיכם:

E (לב) מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלקיך אני יקנוק: **פ**

(לג) וכי-יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תונו אותו:

G (לד) כאזרח מכם יהיה לכם הגרו הגרו אתכם ואהבת לו כמוך כי-גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים אני יקנוק אלקיכם:

F (לה) לא-תעשו עול במשפט במדה במשקל ובמשורה:

(לו) מאזני צדק אבני-צדק איפת צדק והין צדק יהיה לכם אני יקנוק אלקיכם אשר-הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים:

(לז) ושמרתם את-כל-חקתי ואת-כל-משפטי ועשיתם אתם אני יקנוק: **פ**

משפטים
אני ה' אלקיכם

משפטים
אני ה' אלקיכם

חוקים
אני ה' אלקיכם ואני ה' אלקיכם

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