



Title: Be Kadosh (Set-apart). How?

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Text: Parashot Acharei Mot-K'doshim: Torah: VaYikra 19:15-20:27; Haftarah: Yesha'yahu 6: 2, 3; B'rit Chadashah: Hebrews 10: 19-22; Kefa Alef 1:13-16.

Theme: Torah and HaTorah bring Kadoshim (Set-apartness).

I. Introduction:

In this double portion we find more decrees for the kohanim: this double portion contains the **Kadoshim (Set-apartness) Code**. In **Kadoshim** we find decrees designed to make us a **Kadosh (Set-apart) people**.

II: "love your neighbour as yourself" (VaYikra 19:18)

VaYikra 19:18 is one of the most well known, and difficult, of the Scriptural Commandments. The Sage, Rav Yehuda, likens this Commandment to the relationship of husband and wife, the closest and most immediate of neighbours. As they should be (in caring and sacrifice), so should we all be.

R. Shlomo Riskin helps our understanding as he writes: One of the seven **b'rakhot (blessings)** under the **Chuppah (canopy)** even refers to the couple as **"re'im ahuvim" or "beloved (and loving) neighbours"** (or **beloved friends**), as most translations would have it. So let it be.

III. "You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart) to Me, for I YHVH am Kadosh (Set-apart), and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine" (VaYikra: 20: 26).

The second of this week's two parashot begins and ends with an injunction to be **Kadosh (Set-apart)**. At the start of **Parashah Kadoshim**, in **VaYikra 19: 1,2**, the Torah states **"YHVH spoke to Moshe, saying: 'Speak to the whole Yisra'eli community and say to them: You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart), for I, YHVH your Elohim, am Kadosh (Set-apart)."** And at the parashah's end, in **VaYikra 20: 26**, the Torah repeats this idea: **"You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart) to Me, for I YHVH am Kadosh (Set-apart), and I have set-you-apart from other peoples to be Mine."**

Kadoshim (Set-apartness) is a dominant theme in Hebraic Faith, we have **Kadosh (Set-apart)** days, **Kadosh (Set-apart) seferim (books)**, **Kadosh (Set-apart) people**, **Kadosh (Set-apart) objects**, our native language, Hebrew is called **Lashon Ha'Kodesh, the Kadosh (Set-apart) tongue**. And while achieving **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** might be a difficult task, defining it seems to be fairly straightforward: to be **Kadosh (Set-apart)** means to be separated, distinct from other elements in a group. Thus Shabbat is elevated from the other days of the week; Yisra'el, the **Kadosh (Set-apart) Land**, is considered exceptional among countries; Y'rushalayim, the most **Kadosh (Set-apart)** among Yisra'el's cities; and the **B'eit HaMikdash (Temple) Mount** is the most **Kadosh (Set-apart)** spot in the city, site of the **B'eit HaMikdash (the sacred Temple)**. Sorry, all you mullahs, the Dome of the Rock is not!

Elohim is also called **Kadosh (Set-apart)**, although our definition does not at first seem to fit with Him. R. Jonathan Mishkin writes: Can we say that Elohim is elevated among...other gods? No, obviously the Torah does not believe that other gods exist for comparison. In **Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 6: 2, 3** the Word says: "**Seraphim stood in attendance on Him. Each of them had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he would fly. And one would call to the other, 'Kadosh (Set-apart), Kadosh (Set-apart), Kadosh (Set-apart)! The Master of Hosts! His presence fills all the earth!'**" Targum Onkelos, the ancient Aramaic translation to the Scriptures, provides one of the standard interpretations for this verse: "Elohim is **Kadosh (Set-apart)** in the exalted heavens, Elohim is **Kadosh (Set-apart)** on earth, the product of His strength, and Elohim is **Kadosh (Set-apart)** forever and ever." Well, if to be **Kadosh (Set-apart)** means to be separate, then Onkelos is saying that in fact, Elohim is more **Kadosh (Set-apart)** than everything, he is above earth and space and time. He is so **Kadosh (Set-apart)** that He is completely separate from anything within our experience.

R. David Zvi Hoffman uses this point to explain a curious detail in the text of the Torah. Rabbi Hoffman reports noticing that whenever the Torah, in the **Sefer (Book) of VaYikra**, uses the word **Kadosh (Set-apart)** in reference to YHVH it is always written with plane spelling, meaning with the letter **VAV** so that the Hebrew root has four letters: **Kaf-Dalet-Vav-Shin: Kadosh**; whereas when the word is used in reference to man, it is always written with deficient spelling, meaning without the letter **VAV**, giving the Hebrew root only three letters: **Kaf-Dalet-Shin: Kad'shim**. When we look at the Hebrew original of the following verses this point will be well illustrated. **VaYikra 19:1,2: "Speak to the whole Yisra'eli community and say to them: 'You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart), (Ked'Shim), for I, YHVH your Elohim, am Kadosh (Set-apart), (Kadosh);"** and in **VaYikra 20:26: "You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart), (Ked'Shim) to Me, for I YHVH am Kadosh (Set-apart), (Kadosh), and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine."**

What does the Torah mean by commanding Yisra'el to **be Kadosh (Set-apart)**? Actually, we might ask whether **VaYikra 19:2** is in fact a **Mitzvah**, perhaps it is merely a statement of fact. Other references to **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** in the Torah seem to indicate that a state of **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** is a direct result of obeying YHVH's Commands. For example, **B'midbar 15: 38,4: "Speak to the Yisra'eli people and instruct them to make for themselves tzit-tzit on the corners of their garments throughout the ages... Thus shall you be reminded to observe all My Commandments and be Kadosh (Set-apart) to your Elohim."** The Torah is saying here that **tzit-tzit** are meant to remind Yisra'elim to observe **Mitzvot** and to act **Kadosh (Set-apart)**.

So, observing the **Mitzvot** naturally separates us, hence our **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)**. But perhaps the Torah wants us to consciously and directly set ourselves apart from the **olam (world)** and Commands us to put in affect this selectiveness. How is the **Mitzvah** fulfilled?

By saying '**Be Kadosh (Set-apart)**' and '**You shall yourselves be Kadosh (Set-apart)**' (**VaYikra 20:7**) the Torah is making general statements to observe the entire Torah. It is as if the Torah were to say '**Be Kadosh (Set-apart)** by fulfilling all that I, YHVH, have Commanded you and by avoiding all I have prohibited.'

There are **Mitzvot** that are essentially between man and YHVH, known as **Mitzvot Bein Adam La-Makom (observance of Shabbat, kashrut, etc.)** and those that govern our relationships with other people, **Mitzvot Bein Adam La-Chavero (Tzadakkah (charity), respecting one's parents, not stealing)**. Of all the hundreds of Commandments, there are only a handful whose performance are preceded by a **b'rakhah (blessing)**. For example, no **b'rakhot (blessings)** were instituted for negative Commandments which is why we don't say a **b'rakhah (blessing)** upon avoiding non-kosher food or upon resisting the urge to steal. But why are there no **b'rakhot (blessings)** for Commandments between people?

The Torah T'mima written by Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein offers one explanation in commenting on **Sh'mot 24:12**. "The solution to this problem seems simple to me: within the construction of **b'rakhot (blessings)**, for **Mitzvot**, is the phrase '**Who has set-us-apart with His Commandments and Commanded us**', the **b'rakhah (blessing)** for affixing a **mezuzah** for example, is '**Blessed are You, YHVH, our Elohim Master of the Universe, Who has set-us-apart with His Commandments and Commanded us to affix a mezuzah**') which indicates that through fulfilment of the specific **Mitzvah**, we become sanctified and separated from the other nations who do not perform these actions. This idea is only valid with regard to **Mitzvot Bein Adam La-Makom** like **tzit-zit, sukkah, lulav** and the like which are not practiced by the nations. On the other hand, when it comes to **Mitzvot Bein Adam La-Chavero** we find unbelievers equally active in the performance of such actions such as **Tzadakkah (charity), returning lost objects, and visiting the sick**. The

phrase **'Who has set-us-apart with His Commandments and Commanded us'** is therefore inappropriate for these sorts of **Mitzvot**, because we are not any different from unbelievers by their fulfilment."

Rabbi Epstein states that the Yisra'elim are only **Kadosh (Set-apart)** by virtue of the **Mitzvot** of the Torah because that is what separates them from everybody else. Let us return to the beginning of our parashah. Following the instruction to be **Kadosh (Set-apart)**, or promise of **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)**, the Torah goes on to present a long list of **Mitzvot**. In fact the entirety of **VaYikra chapter 19** is one Commandment after another. What is interesting is that many of the decrees in this collection dictate interpersonal relationships including such classic statements as **"You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am YHVH" (19: 17-18)**. The Torah specifically includes **Mitzvot Bein Adam La-Chavero** to tell us that **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** is not only achieved through performance of Mitzvot but, through proper treatment of other people.

While it may be true that unbelievers can treat each other as fairly and generously as Yisra'elim do, or as Yisra'elim ought to, there can be no avoiding the fact that the Yisra'eli's treatment of his fellow Yisra'eli is often guided by Torah. The Yisra'eli does not give **Tzadakkah (charity)** just because it is a nice thing to do, but because the Torah commands it. So while the action of a Yisra'eli might be similar to that of an unbeliever, ideally, the motive should be completely different. And because the driving force for these **Mitzvot** is the Will of Elohim there should really be a set of **b'rakhot (blessings)** for them as well.

Could it be that the whole purpose for even reciting a **b'rakhah (blessing)** before a **Mitzvah** is to formally recognize the reason for an action? He who recites a **b'rakhah (blessing)** on a **mezuzah** is stating that he is not putting up a **mezuzah** as a good luck charm or because it matches the decor, but because the Torah, and thus YHVH, Commanded him to.

The Torah itself includes such all encompassing commands such as **"Love your neighbour as yourself"** and perhaps **'Be Kadosh (Set-apart)'** is in a similar vein: in dealing with your fellow person, don't limit your behaviour to the letter of the Torah, go above the Torah and out of your way to treat him as you would have him treat you.

IV. Obedience to Torah is Love for HaTorah?

We must remember that first, and the most important of all, YHVH Elohim raised a **Kohan HaGadol (High Kohan)** to open the way into the **Kadosh (Set-apart) of Kadoshim (Set-apartness)**. This **Kohan HaGadol (High Kohan)** is Yahshua ha-Mashiach. Elohim said to His Son, **"You are a Kohan forever after the order of Malki-Tzedek."** (T'hilim 110:4; Hebrews 5:6) This **Kohan**

HaGadol (High Kohan), Yahshua, the Son of Elohim, lives forever, and He is perfect before Elohim. Yahshua cleansed with the **Korban (sacrifice)** of Himself everyone that has faith in Him, having destroyed our sins on the Tree. He entered with His own **Blood** into the heavenly **Kadosh (Set-apart) of Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** before the Father.

Yahshua, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Spirit. And, behold, the veil of the B'eit HaMikdash (Temple) was rent in two from the top to the bottom. (Mattityahu 27:50, 51)

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Kadoshim (Set-apartness) by the Blood of Yahshua, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh; and having a Kohan HaGadol (High Kohan) over the House of Elohim; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10: 19-22), in the Mashiach (Messiah) we have a most sure entrance to the Father!

Also, YHVH did not stay in the **Kadosh (Set-apart) of Kadoshim (Set-apartness)**. He went out! The **Ruach HaKodesh** came to the earth to expose the people of Elohim and bring us all to **t'shuvah (repentance)** and **emunah(faith)** in the **Mashiach (Messiah)**. The **Ruach HaKodesh** becomes life, strength and **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** for all them that receive Him. As the Son of Elohim manifested the Father, so the **Ruach HaKodesh** indwells our hearts, to manifest the Son of Elohim in us. Elohim came to us out of His **Kadosh (Set-apart) B'eit HaMikdash (Temple)** to perfectly save us and sanctify us. He became **chesed (grace, kindness)** for us.

It is in this **chesed (grace, kindness)** we are called to trust, so that it will produce **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)** in us. Kefa writes in **Kefa Alef 1:13-16**: **"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and fully trust the chesed (grace, kindness) that is given to you in the manifestation of Yahshua Mashiach (Messiah); as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which has called you is Kadosh (Set-apart), so be you Kadosh (Set-apart) in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be you Kadosh (Set-apart); for I am Kadosh (Set-apart)."** The **Emissary (apostle)** mentions the Torah verse out of our present Parashot: **VaYikra 19:1, 2 And YHVH spoke unto Moshe, saying: Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Yisra'el, and say unto them: You shall be Kadosh (Set-apart); for I YHVH your Elohim am Kadosh (Set-apart).**

He Himself, the **Kadosh (Set-apart) Elohim** that dwells in us with His **Ruach HaKodesh**, is the basis for our **Kadoshim (Set-apartness)**. He sets-us-apart with His Presence.

V. Obedience, the Purpose, Kedoshim (Set-apartness)

Remember, Parashah Kedoshim begins with the Command to **"be Kadosh (Set-apart), for I YHVH your Elohim am Kadosh (Set-apart)."** The Torah then follows with a list of things by which that Command is fulfilled.

Nu, **Kedoshim** means be **Kadosh or Set-apart**, set aside for a special purpose, different from others. **Kedosh**, the root word translated **Set-apart**, means **to become Kadosh (Set-apart), sacred or consecrated**. Nu, the Torah tells us that the People of Yisra'el are to become **Kadosh (Set-apart)**. Nu, how does one become **Kadosh (Set-apart)**? If we put these ideas together we come up with **Kedoshim (Set-apartness)** being **"following the Way of Him that was pierced"** or the Way of Mashiach. It is following the **"Way, the Truth and the Life"**, going in through the door. It is following His Example, walking in His Steps, living as He Lived.

Rav Mikha'el notes: Interestingly enough, while we generally think of Kedoshim (Set-apartness) **in religious terms the vast majority of what follows in Kedoshim (Set-apartness)** are not what we would call religious guidelines but moral injunctions. Why are the majority of the commands moral rather than religious? Because many of the religious commands of Torah are a means to an end and that end is the development of Elohim like character. Our **Kedoshim (Set-apartness)** is related to YHVH's **Kedoshim (Set-apartness)**, we are to be like Him. We are to develop His Attributes within ourselves. Those attributes are already part of our makeup, since we are created in His Image, and the Torah was given to assist us in revealing the Image of YHVH within us. That is why Rabbi Sha'ul called the Torah our schoolmaster; it is basic training. We do not cease to apply those basic lessons, once we graduate, but through the application of those lessons, we gain an appreciation for the larger goal and have been properly trained to achieve it. These are all things that make us people of integrity, of compassion, of love. Are not those the words we use to describe YHVH?

The B'rit Chadashah tells us in **Romans 10:17** that **faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of YHVH**. We must permeate our hearing, and thereby our lives, with the **Kadosh (Set-apart)** Words of YHVH, to be made **Kadosh (Set-apart)**. How can a person obey and emulate YHVH if he/she does not know what YHVH said and desires? He/she must come to know and follow Mashiach Yahahua YHVH and our Abba YHVH Elohim through His Scriptures.

To be **Kadosh (Set-apart)** is to be obedient to the concepts and precepts of Torah because Torah is the expressed Will of YHVH in writing. Only by practicing what is written does one become **Kadosh (Set-apart)**. We must become fervent followers of HaTorah.

How then can one ever learn Torah enough to practice and become **Kadosh (Set-apart)**? (Please do not confuse being **Kadosh (Set-apart)** with having **Kapparah (Atonement)** for your sins.)

A student came to Rabbi Hillel, asking to be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Rabbi Hillel responded, "'**Love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart soul and might, and love your neighbor as yourself.**' This is the Torah; the rest is commentary, now go and learn what it means."

Follower of Yahshua our Mashiach does this sound familiar? Hmmm, Rabbis you are very close. This is where we begin. **Love YHVH and love your neighbor as you love yourself.** The rest of the commentary tells us how to do this.

VI. Excerpts from Perkei Avot

1. 'Shim'on the Just was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say, "upon three things the **olam (world)** is based: upon the Torah, upon divine worship, and upon acts of benevolence"
2. 'Let your house be a meeting-house for the wise (in Torah); sit amidst the dust of their feet, and drink their words with thirst'.
3. 'Fix a period for study of the Torah'
4. 'An empty-headed man cannot be a sin-fearing man, nor can a person ignorant (of Torah) be pious," nor can one who is engaged overmuch in business grow wise (in Torah)'
5. 'Be watchful in the study of the Torah, and know what answer to give to the unbeliever; know also before Whom you toil and Who is your Employer Who will pay you the reward of your labour'
6. 'If two sit together and interchange no words of Torah, they are a meeting of scorners.'

VII Conclusion and Application:

VaYikra 19:18: You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am YHVH.

R. Gerson Cohen writes: These are a few of the phrases that have made many regard the **19th chapter of VaYikra** as the very essence of the Torah. Hillel the Elder, it will be recalled, when asked by a would be convert to put the whole Torah in a nutshell, rephrased the last verse cited here as: "'What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.' This is the essence of the Torah. The rest is commentary."

So, what are we to do for our **Kadosh (Set-apart) Elohim**?

In **VaYikra 20:8**, YHVH tells us, "**I am YHVH your Elohim. "And keep you My Commands, and do them: I am YHVH Who sets-you-apart"**.

YHVH brought us out of the **olam (world)**, where we once lived doing the desires of flesh and thoughts. Now, He calls us never to conform to the way the people that do not know YHVH Elohim live. We must never turn to their gods. We are to follow the One and only El that redeemed us with His Blood and gave us the ability to be **Kadosh (Set-apart)** in all our **halakhah (walk)** as He is

Kadosh (Set-apart).

Again, our **M'lakh (King)** Yahshua, when asked regarding the greatest Commandment in the Torah, said: **You shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.**

And the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Yochanan Mark 12:30)

We must all, young and old, Kol Yisra'el, all the Community of Yisra'el,` continually remember the Words of **Yechezk'el 36:27: "I will put My Ruach (Spirit) in you and move you to follow My Decrees and be careful to keep My Torah."**

Blessed is YHVH Yahshua that said it and does it! Blessed is the **Kadosh (Set-apart)** One that perfects His **kadosh (set-apart) ones!**

Now, let us all go and do as our Elohim desires of us and may His shalom be upon you all.

Shavua tov b'Yahshua (Have a good week in Yahshua)