



Parshas Kedoshim 2019, physical holiness

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in the memory of Lori Kaye HY"D, the victim of the terrorist attack on the Chabad of Poway last Shabbos, may G-d grant solace and comfort to her family and community and a speedy recovery to those who were injured in the attack.

Our Parsha begins with the statement: **"You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy."** This is followed by the commandment of many laws. These include the mitzvah of charity, the principle of equality before the law, Shabbos, morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one's parents, and the sacredness of life.

We also have the commandment of **"Love your fellow as yourself."** According to Rabbi Akiva, this is a cardinal principle of the Torah, and the great Hillel once said, *"This commandment is the entire Tórah, and the rest is just commentary."*

However, there is a question that we must ask ourselves; we are commanded to **be holy, for G-d is holy**. Does it mean we must meditate daily or seek to feel at peace with nature? What does it mean to be **"Holy"**?

Furthermore, you would expect that the laws following the commandment to be holy would be of a lofty nature, focusing solely on the spiritual aspect of life, giving us ways to deepen our connection with G-d, not laws that pertain to the physical and mundane elements of life?

Throughout history, many people have fallen in love with the idea of Spirituality and Mysticism; they want to feel a connection to something higher than themselves.

But most are not willing to do the labor-intensive work necessary to build a true and everlasting relationship with G-d; therefore, their connection is at most, shallow and trivial.

Even though Judaism is certainly rich in spirituality, the mystical perspective helps us better understand our faith. The road to holiness is not celestial but rather practical and physical nature. Spirituality can be theoretical and abstract, but Holiness is factual and found in the ordinary everyday things that we do.

The word **Kadosh** in Hebrew means **holiness**; however, the profound translation is **separation** and **distinctiveness**.

G-d is telling the Jewish people that although we are a part of this physical world, we must **differentiate** ourselves spiritually and physically. **We must march to a different beat.**

We express our distinctiveness through our self-restraint, discipline, honesty, and decency because they are the roads that will lead us to holiness.

That is why the same Parsha that reminds us to keep Shabbos also warns us not to lie, to pay our employees on time, and not to gossip, for this is truly **holy**.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that in order to affect real and everlasting change in our business practices or personal relationships.

It is not enough to just learn theory; we must also experience it first-hand in real-life scenarios. Not only will we be able to discern where the change is needed most.

But it will also test our conviction and determination to see if the change is permanent and lead us closer to accomplishing our potential.

“Experience is the best teacher. First it tests us, then it teaches us, and those lessons can be forever.”

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*