

## Holiness and being Counted Worthy of the Calling

This weeks reading is from Parshat Kedoshim (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:1-20:27*). In Parashat Kedoshim, the Torah Portion opens with the Lord instructing Moshe to speak to the people saying, בְּדַבָּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדוּת, 19:2 *‘Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. (NASB)* There is something very significant with regard to maintaining holiness as it is related to our relationship with the Lord and being called His people (e.g. being called by His name). The Apostle Paul emphasized this in his letter to the Ephesians saying in *Ephesians 4:1*, ἸΠαρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. (NIV)* The Greek word ἀξίως means to consider something by weighing, or of one who has merited something as being counted worthy.

ἀξίως, d \{ax-ee'-oce\}

1) weighing, having weight, having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much 2) befitting, congruous, corresponding to a thing 3) of one who has merited anything worthy 3a) both in a good and a bad sense 1) suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of

This is Paul’s way of referring to the Holiness of God and how the Lord wants holiness for His people. The meaning of holiness is very important for us today as it is related to sin, justice, and the grace and mercy of God. We find a parallel here when comparing the Hebrew text in the Torah to Paul’s words, קְדוּשִׁים תְּהִיוּ, “*You are to be holy*” because (כִּי) “*holy am I the Lord your God*” (קְדוּשַׁת אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) and Paul’s use of ἀξίως referring to one who has merited something as being counted worthy. The Scriptures speak of “*The holiness of God*” which calls out for us to strive for holiness in our lives. This is the peshat (פשט) of the text. Holiness affects every aspect of our lives: economics, politics, relationships, what we see, what we hear, and how we live; everything with which we are involved

with including honoring our parents is related to our love, honor, and respect for our Father in heaven. Let's discuss this a little further.

**ספר ויקרא פרק ט** *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:1-8*

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה  
לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת  
בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹ-  
שִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ג אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו  
תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת-שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ  
אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ד אֶל-  
תִּפְנוּ אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֱלֹהֵי  
מִסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ה וְכִי תִזְבְּחוּ זֶבַח  
שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבֹּ-  
חֶהוּ: ו בְּיוֹם זִבְחֲכֶם יֹאכַל ו-  
מִמָּחָרְתוֹ וְהַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי-  
שִׁי בָאֵשׁ יִשְׂרָף: ז וְאִם הָאֵכַל  
יֹאכַל בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פְגוּל הוּא  
לֹא יִרְצָה: ח וְאֵכְלוּ עֹוֹנוֹ יִשָּׂא  
כִּי-אֶת-קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה חִלַּל וְנִכְרַתָּה  
הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מֵעַמִּיהָ:

*19:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:  
19:2 'Speak to all the congregation of the  
sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall  
be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.  
19:3 'Every one of you shall reverence his  
mother and his father, and you shall keep  
My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. 19:4  
'Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves  
molten gods; I am the Lord your God. 19:5  
'Now when you offer a sacrifice of peace of-  
ferings to the Lord, you shall offer it so that  
you may be accepted. 19:6 'It shall be eaten  
the same day you offer it, and the next day;  
but what remains until the third day shall  
be burned with fire. 19:7 'So if it is eaten at  
all on the third day, it is an offense; it will  
not be accepted. 19:8 'Everyone who eats  
it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned  
the holy thing of the Lord; and that person  
shall be cut off from his people. (NASB)*

In the opening verses for this week's Torah portion, we are told, **ג** *19:3 'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. (NASB)* The honoring of father and mother appear to be connected to keeping the Sabbath days of the Lord. Why do you think these two things are brought into close proximity to one another in the Torah? Note also the command to honor mother and father and the Shabbat proceed the commands that follow. The leading nature of these commands lends itself to be representative of who we are in the Lord and in God's Messiah.

## Summary of Commands

1. We are to honor our father and mother, the Shabbat, and not turn to idols or molten gods (19:1-4).
2. It is commanded to eat all of the Shelamim Korban (Peace offering) by the third day. Anything remaining by the third day is to be burned with fire (19:6). The person who eats of the sacrifice on the third day will bear his iniquity and will be cut off from his people (19:7).
3. We are told not to steal, not to swear falsely, not to slander others, and not to hate your neighbor or brother (19:11-17).
4. *“Love your neighbor as yourself”* (19:18)
5. We are told that three years are to be given for freshly planted fruit trees before harvesting (19:23-24).
6. We are commanded not to practice divination or soothsaying (19:26).
7. Do not cut your body for the dead or make tattoos or marks on yourself for *“I am the Lord”* declares the Lord (19:28).
8. Do not turn to mediums or spiritists, doing so will cause one to become defiled by them (19:31)
9. You are to keep the Shabbat (19:30)
10. Do not do wrong to the stranger in the land (19:33-34), and keep correct weights and measures (19:35-37).
11. The Lord God states that any person who gives his son or daughter as a sacrifice to Moloch is to be put to death (20:1-4).
12. The Lord declares that the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, He will turn His face against that person and cut him/her off from among his people (20:6).
13. We are to consecrate ourselves and be holy for our God

is holy (20:7).

14. It is written that anyone who curses his mother or father is to be put to death (20:9),
15. If one commits adultery with another man's wife he is to be put to death (20:8),
16. If a man lays with his father's wife, daughter in law, incest, etc he is to be put to death (20:9-12),
17. If a man lays with another man (Homosexuality) they are to be put to death and their blood is upon them (20:12)
18. If a man lays with an animal he is to be put to death (20:15) and the same for a woman who approaches an animal (20:16).
19. It is repeated in the Scriptures כג וְלֹא תִלְכוּ בְּחֻקֵּי הַגּוֹי 20:23 אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מוֹשְׁלֵחַ מִפְּנֵיכֶם כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֲלֹהֵי עַשׂוֹ וְאֶקְיָץ בָּם: *'Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. (NASB)* we are not to follow the custom of the nations.

Examining this list, note how the command to observe the Shabbat is repeated. A lot could be said concerning the word order and layout of the commands in Parashat Kedoshim. The rabbis make use of these things in their interpretation on the command, ג איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת-שבתתי, 19:3 תשמרו אני יהוה אלהיכם: *'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. (NASB)* The Mishnah begins with a discussion on the way Moshe speaks these words (the word order).

**Mishnah Keritot 6:9:**

*Rabbi Shimon says: Lambs come before goats in all places [in Scripture]. You might think [that it is] because they are choicer. [Therefore,] Scripture states, "And if he bring a lamb as his offering" (Leviticus 4:32), To teach [us] that*

*both are equal. Turtledoves come before young pigeons in all places [in Scripture]. You might think [that it is] because they are choicer. [Therefore,] Scripture states, “A young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin-offering” (Leviticus 12:6), To teach [us] that both are equal. The father comes before the mother in all places [in Scripture]. You might think [that it is because] the honor due to the father exceeds the honor due to the mother. [Therefore,] Scripture states, “You shall fear every man his mother and his father” (Leviticus 19:3), To teach [us] that both are equal. But the Sages have said: The father comes before the mother in all places, Because both he and his mother are bound to honor the father. And so it is also with the study of the Torah; If the son has been worthy [to sit and study] before the teacher, The teacher comes before the father in all places, Because [both] he and his father are bound to honor the teacher.*

The Mishnah opens with the order of the words making a comparison between the Lamb and goats, the turtledove and a pigeon. The lamb being mentioned preceding the goat suggests that the lamb is more important than the goat. In a similar manner, the turtledove preceding the pigeon suggests the turtledove is more important. The command to honor mother, father, and the Shabbat proceeding the other commands lends itself to the interpretation of the commanding being weightier. In addition, the man preceding the woman suggests a man is to be given more honor, however, in our verse from *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:3*, the woman precedes the man suggests that both the father and the mother are equal in God’s eyes and should be equal in our eyes as well.

Rashi has the following to say concerning *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:3*.

***Rashi on Leviticus 19:3, Part 1***

*איש אמו ואביו תראו means, EVERYONE OF YOU SHALL FEAR HIS MOTHER AND HIS FATHER; this is the literal sense. The Halachic explanation of the verse, however, is as follows: Since Scripture says איש I have here only the*



*law that a man must fear his father and his mother; whence do I know that this applies also to a woman? Because Scripture states תיראו (in the plural), it is evident therefore that it speaks here of two (man and woman). But if this be so (that Scripture means to include a woman also) why does it use the term איש, a man? Because it is the man who has the means to do it, whilst the woman is under the control of others (what she does is dependent upon her husband's consent).*

Rashi looks at two words, “man” (איש) and “fear” (תיראו) and states the word תיראו is in the plural form and speaks of both the mother and father equally interpreting the Scripture to suggest both man and woman are equal in God’s eyes, similar to the Mishnaic interpretation.

Ein Yaakov has the following to say concerning Vayikra / Leviticus 19:3.

***Ein Yaakov, Yevamot 1:1***

*YEBAMOTH (Fol. 6) We are taught in a Baraitha [concerning the passage] (Lev. 19, 3) Ye shall fear, every man his mother and his father, etc. One might assume that if his father should tell him to defile himself, or not to restore, [a lost article to its owner], that he is to obey his order [even though it is contrary to the law]. It therefore says, ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and My Sabbaths ye shall keep; I am the Lord: ye all are obliged to honor Me. We are taught: One might assume that the building of the Temple should supersede the Sabbath. But the passage reads (Ib., ib. 30) My Sabbaths shall ye keep and My sanctuary shall ye reverence; i.e., ye all are obliged to preserve My honor. We are taught : One might assume that the above fear refers to the sanctuary itself. It therefore says (Ib.) My Sabbaths shall ye keep, and My sanctuary shall ye fear. In connection with the Sabbath, we find the word Shmira (keep), and in connection with the sanctuary, we find the word Mora (fear). Just as the word Schmira (keep) used in connection with the Sabbath (Ib. b.) should*

*not be construed to mean that one should fear the Sabbath, but rather Him who commanded concerning the Sabbath (God), so also does the word Mora (fear), used in connection with the sanctuary, not apply to the fear of the sanctuary, but the One who commanded concerning the sanctuary. What do we understand by fearing the sanctuary? One must not enter the Temple-mound with his staff, nor wearing his shoes, nor with his purse, nor with dust on his feet; and one must not use it as a short cut in his way, nor spit on the ground of the Temple-mound. The last is deduced by the syllogism. From this I could only prove when the Temple was in existence. Whence do we infer that such is the law even after the Temple's destruction? It therefore says: My Sabbaths shall ye keep, and My sanctuary shall ye reverence; i.e., just as the word Shmira (keep) used in connection with the Sabbath is everlasting, so also is the word Mora (fear) used in connection with the Sanctuary everlasting.*

***Ein Yaakov, Kiddushin 1:13***

*Our Rabbis were taught: It is said (Ex. 20:12) Honor thy father and thy mother, and again it is said (Pr. 3, 9) Honor the Lord with thy wealth; Scripture compares the honor of father and mother unto the honor of Heaven. Again it is said (Lev. 19:3) Ye shall fear every man, his mother and his father; and again it is said (Deut. 10:20) The Lord thy God shalt thou fear; Scripture compares the fear of father and mother unto the fear of Heaven. Again it is said (Ex. 21:17) And he that curses his father or his mother shall surely he put to death; and it is said (Lev. 24:15) Whosoever curseth his God shall hear sin. Scripture compares here the blasphemy of father and mother unto that of Heaven. However, as far as beating is concerned the comparison is impossible; and so also should it be according to the logic of law ; for these three — Heaven, father and mother — are partner in the child.*



Ein Yaakov makes the connection between honoring one's father and mother to honoring heaven and by proxy honoring our Father in heaven. He repeats as the Scriptures say, , אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת-שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ , אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם : 19:3 *'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. (NASB)* Keeping the Shabbat is synonymous to honoring our Father in heaven. Notice how both the Shabbat and the sanctuary are drawn into context. Where is the sanctuary of God today? In our hearts, our bodies? What is the requirement of the Shabbat? To rest from work and thus sanctifying the body and God right? Can you see the rabbinic connections that are being made here based upon the Torah? Ein Yaakov then concludes honoring mother, father, and the Shabbat (heaven) to the command on the violation of the Shabbat one is to be put to death, and similarly, the one who curses his mother and father are to be put to death (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 24:15*). Rashbam is in agreement with these conclusions saying:

### ***Rashbam on Leviticus 19:3, Part 1***

*ואת שבתותי תשמורו, just as in the Ten Commandments the command to honor parents appeared next to the command to observe the Sabbath, honoring parents is almost on a par with honoring the Creator Himself, the Torah placed these two commandments next to one another here too. This is the plain meaning of the text.*

Rashbam concludes the reason Moshe drew the command to honor mother and father next to honoring the Shabbat, is because the honoring of our parents is almost on par with honoring the Creator.

Midrash Tehillim 92, Part 6 provides us with more background information on the Shabbat. The midrash says, *“Adam was driven out, and he went forth out of the Garden of Eden and abode on Mount Moriah, for the gates of the Garden of Eden are closed by Mount Moriah.”* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“God had taken Adam from there, He returned him, returned him to the place from where he had been taken.”* It is interesting how the Midrash states that Adam was driven from Eden and he went to dwell on Mount Moriah. We are also told that the Lord had created Adam on Mount Moriah and that the gates of the Garden of



Eden are closed by the Mount. This holy place Moriah (מֹרְיָה) is the name given to a mountain range in *Bereshit / Genesis*, and is the location of the sacrifice of Isaac (the Akedah). In the book of 2 Chronicles, Mount Moriah is reported as the location of Araunah's threshing floor, and that the Temple of Solomon was built over Araunah's threshing floor (*2 Chronicles 3*). This has led to the rabbinic interpretation that this is the peak of Moriah, the temple mount.

In addition, the rabbis say, *"For it is said, And the Lord God took Adam (Bereshit / Genesis 2:15). From what place had He taken him? From the place where the Temple was to stand. And he dwelled outside of the Garden of Eden on Mount Moriah, as it is said, Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to fill the ground from whence he was taken (Bereshit / Genesis 3:23)."* So the basic premise is that the Lord removed Adam from the holy place where the Temple was to stand and so the Garden of Eden was in that location. It is believed the tree of life stood at the most holy place on Mount Moriah. So the Lord had him stand outside of that place upon Moriah, and the rabbis say that the gates to the Garden were closed in that place. Was the gate to the garden the place of the Holy of Holies? We are told according to the Midrash, the Lord gave Adam the Shabbat rest saying, *"the Shabbat day kept Adam from hellish grief and from all the cares of heart, as is said When my cares are many within me, Your comforts delight my soul (Tehillim / Psalms 94:19)."* The Lord used the example of His resting on the seventh day of Creation to establish the principle of the Shabbat for His people. This presents a problem for many Christians, because modern Christian theology states that the Sabbath was for the Jews and not for the Church. This premise of the separation of the Church where Christians do not believe they are graft into Israel as the Scriptures say those who believe in Yeshua are, leads us to the following questions.

1. *"Do you consider yourself a part of His people?"*
2. *"What does it mean to be called 'His people?'"*
3. *"Does the phrase 'His people' only refer to Israel?"*
4. *"What does it mean to be called a child of God?"*



In *Shemot / Exodus 20:8-11* and *Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:12-15*, the Lord God gave the fourth commandment to “remember” the Sabbath day and to “keep it holy.” One day out of every seven, God’s people are called to rest from their labors and give the same day of rest to their servants and animals. This was not just a physical rest, but a cessation of laboring. Whatever work they were engaged in was to stop for a full day each week. The Sabbath day was established so the people would rest from their labors, and take time to draw near to the Lord God in heaven and to spend time with family. Note how this is what the mother and father should be doing, to honor God, and train up their children to do so, and the children should do both, honoring mother and father and the Lord in heaven, all based upon this verse, **ג אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירְאוּ וְאֶת-שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה** :**19:3** *‘Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. (NASB)*

The timing of this day (the seventh day) has been established by the Lord according to the Scriptures and has not changed. The midrash speaks of Adam finding rest from grief and the cares of the heart, and how the Lord comforts the soul. The author of the book of Hebrews picks up on this as he writes in *Hebrews 4:9-13* the following:

### ***Hebrews 4:9-13***

*4:9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 4:10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 4:11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience. 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (NASB)*

The author of Hebrews speaks of entering into the Sabbath rest of God and refrains from working, and confirms that the Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. Is the book of Hebrews written to the Church or

to the Jew only? Again, “*Are those who believe in Yeshua the Messiah considered the people of God?*” If the answer is “*YES*” then why is the church considered something “*other*” today? Note in *Hebrews 4:11*, the author speaks of being diligent to enter that rest otherwise one would be found in the same situation as the example of disobedience the people had found themselves in during the wilderness journey. What is this Sabbath rest the author is speaking of? Christian commentators today spiritualize this command and say that it is accomplished by faith in Yeshua the Messiah. The author of Hebrews continues writing saying that the Word of God is powerful and sharper than a two edged sword and divides the soul and spirit and is able to judge the intentions of the heart. Note the connection here to the body and the spirit, and one’s thoughts and intentions. One’s attitude towards honoring mother and father and the Sabbath rest is evident by how one lives and obeys God’s Word. The Author of Hebrews goes on to say the following:

#### ***Hebrews 4:14-16***

*4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NASB)*

He speaks of our High Priest, Yeshua the Messiah, who entered into the Heavenly Holy of Holies with his blood. Note he speaks of holding fast to our confession of faith in Yeshua and the connection to the commandment of the Sabbath rest. Yeshua was tempted and overcame, unlike us who fall short. Our High Priest can sympathize with us with regard to our weaknesses and He stands in the presence of God our Father in heaven. By our faith we are able, empowered to overcome, and to walk in truth and righteousness according to God’s Word. This is the Lord’s work in our lives.

The Torah portion this week opens speaking of honoring our parents and God this the, *ג איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת-שבתתי תשמרו אני יהוה אלהיכם: 19:3* ‘*Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you*

*shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. (NASB)* Based upon the Torah and Paul's words (*Ephesians 4:1*), קְדוּשֵׁים תִהְיוּ "You are to be holy" because (כִּי) "holy am I the Lord your God" (קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) and Paul's use of ἁγίως referring to one who has merited something as being counted worthy. The Lord seeks that we would walk in His righteousness and truth, clothing us with His ways in the Messiah Yeshua so that we may be set free from sin, and enter into His rest. The Scriptures speak of "*The holiness of God*" which calls out for us to strive for holiness in our lives. This appears to be the significance of the Scriptures to honor our father and mother and the Shabbat, being paralleled to honoring our Father God in heaven!

