

Shomer Mitzvah Shomer Nafsho?

This week is a double portion from Parshiot Acharei Mot and Kedoshim (*Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-20:27*). This week's question is "*Shomer Mitzvah Shomer Nafsho?*" (שֹׁמֵר מִצְוָה שֹׁמֵר נַפְשׁוֹ) for us today? Let's study a portion of the Scriptures from *Vayikra / Leviticus 18-20*.

The Lord instructs Israel to not do what is done in the Land of Egypt nor do what is done in the land of Canaan (18:1-5). The commands against incest are given (18:6-20), homosexuality is an abomination (18:22), intercourse with an animal is prohibited (18:23), these are the things the nations do and are the reason they are being cast out from the land (18:24). It is written in 18:30 that we are also not to keep any of the abominable customs of the nations. We are to honor our father and mother and not turn to idols or molten gods (19:1-4). 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). We are told that three years are to be given for freshly planted fruit trees before harvesting (19:23-24). We are commanded not to practice divination or soothsaying (19:26). Do not cut your body for the dead or make tattoos or marks on yourself for "I am the Lord" (19:28). Do not turn to mediums or spiritists, doing so will cause one to become defiled by them (19:31). You are to keep the Shabbat (19:30), do not do wrong to the stranger in the land (19:33-34), and keep correct weights and measures (19:35-37). The Lord God states that any person who gives his son or daughter as a sacrifice to Molach is to be put to death (20:1-4). The Lord says to the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists that He will turn His face against that person and cut him/her off from among his people (20:6). We are told to consecrate ourselves and be holy for our God is holy (20:7). The Scriptures state that God sanctifies us in His Word (*Tehilim / Psalm 86.1-5*). It is written that anyone who curses his mother or father is to be put to death (20:9), if one commits adultery with another man's wife he is to be put to death (20:8), if a man lays with his father's wife, daughter in law, or commits incest, he is to be put to death (20:9-12), if a man lays with another man (homosexuality) they are to be put to death and their blood is upon them (20:12). If a man lays with an animal he is to be put to death (20:15) and the same for a woman who approaches any animal (20:16).

The reading this week concludes saying 20:25 'You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. 20:26 'Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine. 20:27 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.' (NASB)

שְׁדוּקָה יִבְתַּח / The Holy Scriptures

סֵפֶר וַיִּקְרָא פָרָק כ	<i>Vayikra / Leviticus 20:7</i>
ז וְהִתְקַדְּשִׁתֶּם וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:	20:7 'You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. (NASB)

In the midst of the reading for this week, we are told to consecrate ourselves and be holy for our God is holy (20:7). With regard to *Vayikra / Leviticus 20:7*, is "*Shomer Mitzvah Shomer Nafsho?*" (שֹׁמֵר מִצְוָה שֹׁמֵר נַפְשׁוֹ) for us today? The Hebrew words "*Shomer Mitzvah Shomer Nafsho?*" (שֹׁמֵר מִצְוָה שֹׁמֵר נַפְשׁוֹ) are taken from *Mishley / Proverbs 19:16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of conduct will die. (NASB)* So "*He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul*" is this meaningful for us today? Parshiot Acharei Mot and Kedoshim speak on incest, homosexuality, bestiality, creating graven images (idols), not to practice witchcraft, or consult mediums, etc. By observing (keeping) these commandments do we keep our souls? The Apostle Paul said in *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor; 4:5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 4:6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 4:8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (NASB)* The lists of prohibitions are very important for us today; we are not to practice these things because we are a holy people that worship a Holy God. We are also told that every man is to bring their sacrifice to the door of the Ohel Moed (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, Tent of Meeting). Doing this means going before the Lord on a regular basis. All of these commands are given to us to warn us to watch carefully what we do so that we do not defile ourselves and become detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Today, our bodies being the Temple of the holy Spirit, are there things in our things we could do, in body and in spirit that would cause us to be impure before the Lord? The Apostle Paul suggests so and that we were not made for "impurity." Food for thought this week on how we should live our lives.