

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM

Haftora: What Makes Us Holy?

The Haftora for Parshas Kedoshim is from the book of Yechezkel, Ezekiel. The connection to our Parsha is that the Haftora is a rebuke to the people of Yerushalayim, before the destruction of the first Temple, for committing many of the sins mentioned in our Parsha - mostly dishonesty, oppressing the powerless, and committing the innocent to death because of corruption.

Hashem rebukes them first for the time they were in Egypt, for not giving up the degenerate ways of the Egyptians. Then He rebukes them for the time they were in the desert, for the sin of the spies and for holding on to the ways of the Egyptians.

Hashem says that the only reason He took them out of Egypt was for His own sake so

that the nations of the world shouldn't say that He couldn't save the Jewish people.

He says twice about the mitzvahs that He gave us at Mount Sinai, that they are

what "A person should do and live through them." He also says twice about the land of Israel, that it is "most beautiful (tzvi) of all lands." And He mentions several times the importance of keeping Shabbos, that it is a sign between us and Hashem.

It is strange that so much emphasis is put

on the verse, "A person should do and live through them." Because at the end of the previous Parsha, Acharei, it says the exact same words, however, it isn't mentioned at all in our Parsha. This forces us to conclude that although it is in the previous Parsha, it is central to the theme of our Parsha, Kedoshim. What is the connection between this verse and our Parsha?

This week's Parsha is called Kedoshim, to be holy, as the opening verse of our parsha says, "You should be holy," and the second to the last verse says, "You should be holy to me." What does it mean to be holy?

If you look at the laws found in our parsha, you will see that it has nothing to do with purity and impurity, nor does it have to do with meditation. Rather, it has to do with the most basic rules of decency. Kedoshim is from the word kadosh, which means holy and separate. In other words, if we want to be holy, we have to distinguish ourselves in the way we act. In order for us to be a beacon of light to the world, we have to be recognized as different. We have to stand out as Hashem's people; through honesty, decency, and morality.

In order to stand out as Hashem's people, we have been given the Shabbos. Keeping the Shabbos, dressed in our finest, the table set beautifully, candles lit, our essence comes through. We are princes and princesses, children of the King of the world, Hashem, and because of that, we stand taller, and

**OUR MITZVAHS,
HONESTY,
DECENCY, AND
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when we walk down the street, the people of the world see it and think, "There goes Hashem's people."

When you put honesty, decency, and morality together with keeping Shabbos, we become true beacons of light to the world, Hashem's ambassadors, and they are affected by us.

This is the life of a Jew; this is how we "live through them." When we take the path of Torah and mitzvahs, we are truly alive because we are being true to ourselves. We are doing what we were created to do. And one is most satisfied and feels alive when doing what he or she was created to do.

The Talmud tells us that we learn that saving a life takes precedence over any other mitzvah, including keeping Shabbos, as the verse says, "You should live through them - (meaning) and not die through them."

There is a chassidische teaching on this verse. The verse could be translated to mean, "And you should give life to them." meaning that everything we do, eating, drinking, business, exercise, etc., should be to infuse our service to Hashem with energy and life.

The Tzemach Tzedek's daughter-in-law, Rebbetzin Rivka, was not well, and the doctor said that she should eat as soon as she wakes up. However, she didn't want to eat before davening, so she quickly davened and then ate. The Tzemach Tzedek said to her, "It is better to eat in order to daven than to daven in order to eat."

This is one way we merit to have the land of Israel, the "most beautiful (tzvi) of all lands." Through honesty, decency, morality, keeping Shabbos and the rest of the mitzvahs in our Parsha, and through using our mundane daily activities to energize our service to Hashem, we merit to have the land of Israel and keep it.

Why does it use the word tzvi, which means a deer, to mean beautiful?

Because you may ask: If the land of Israel is so small, how are all of the Jewish people going to fit in it?

That is why it is called tzvi, a deer. A deer's skin is too tight for its body, but it stretches to fit the deer. The same is true about the land of Israel. It looks as if it is too small, but it stretches to fit all of the Jewish people.

May we merit to see the beautiful land of Israel stretch out as we all return to the Holy Land with the coming of Moshiach, and we will see how it was our mitzvahs, honesty, decency, morality, and keeping Shabbos that ushered in the redemption. May he come soon. The time has come.

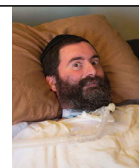
"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

Hashem should shower down refuah, simcha and long life with your beautiful family and friends. So inspiring!!!! You do more mitzvots than a person who is physically functional and thus can bring us Mashiach sooner!"

- Naftalie R, Great Neck

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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