

Parashat Kedoshim- 2014, 5774
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In the previous parshiyot the Torah has been teaching the halachot of Tum'ah and Ta'hara and now we turn out focus upon the halachot of Kedusha and Kedoshim.

The Seforno makes a distinction between characteristics of Tum'ah and halachot discussed in parashat Kedoshim. The halachot of Tum'ah are primarily titles or labels that people receive and do not reflect a person's actions or deeds. A level of Tum'ah is usually achieved simply through circumstances, such as a natural bodily function or encountering a dead body. These things do not reflect us as people but rather reflect the circumstances in which we are put.

The halachot presented in our parasha are fundamentally different than those of Tum'ah. Kedoshim describes rules of *bein adam le'chaveiro* (between man and his fellow human being) such as giving gifts to the poor (19:9-10), dealing honestly with others (19:11-15), loving every Jew, *Ve'ahavta Le'rei'acha Ka'mocha* (19:18). Even such sensitive issues as "holding a grudge" can be a Biblical violation. In the same pasuk as above the Torah prohibits us to take revenge- *Lo Tikom veLo Titor*. The Gemara Yoma (23a) explains the two terms. *Lo Tikom*: do not take revenge. Revenge consists of retaliating against someone who had displeased you, by attempting to do him some harm, or by refusing to do him a favor that you would have normally done. Even if someone does not retaliate, it is forbidden to bear a grudge, *Lo Titor*, by saying, for example, "I will lend you the tool you need even though you refused me when I needed something from you." HaShem wants us to purge the insult or misdeed from our hearts. Imagine, lending him the item and still getting a sin of a Grudge, by expressing words like "I'm not like you". Ask anyone to describe a holy person, a very religious person, a tzaddik, and they will probably tell you it's a person who davens (prays) sincerely, who keeps all the stringencies of Shabbat, or one who deprives himself of worldly matters. Notice- all manifestations of *bein adam LaMakom* (Between man and G-d). But our parasha teaches- "*Kedoshim Ti'hiyou*" , You shall be holy- how? By observing mitzvot of *bein adam le'chaveiro*.

The Rambam was never one to label people but he breaks his rule on one occasion. He labels Ya'akov Avinu with the title "Tzaddik".(Hilchot Sechivot 13:7) Rambam bestows the title Tzaddik on Yaakov because of the way he conducted himself as a worker for Lavan. As a paid employee he never took a minute break for personal reasons, and he worked with all his energy and devotion. This, the Rambam states is the paradigm for every employee, and that is what gives one the credentials of being called a "Tzaddik"

Parashat Kedoshim teaches us to be holy, meaning, being honest, compassionate, having integrity- and being a decent human being. Seems simple, yet most people don't get it. Just see how many Jewish people are in prison for dishonest business practices, cheating the government, violence against spouses or other human beings, yet-they insist on receiving Glatt Kosher food in prison, or being taken to a Mikveh before Yom Kippur!