

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at
Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe
Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

K'doshim

The pasuk says in Vayikra 19:2 says "You shall be Holy. K'DOSHIM TIHYU.

Why tell us this now? Wouldn't a more suitable place be immediately following the Ten Commandments? The sentence would make more sense in the reverse order: TIHYU K'DOSHIM. As translated in English. Why the emphasis on "Holy shall YOU be?"

This chapter interrupts the sequence of the prohibitions of incestuous unions (perek 18) and the punishments which those who transgress them will incur (20:10-27). The Torah wishes to teach us that even commandments that deal with obligations between man and his fellow, such as honoring one's parents and refraining from theft and robbery, must be observed because they are Hashem's command and not because they are improper. Although the nations of the world may punish for the infractions of these laws, however, the purpose of punishment in "their" view is not to cause people to improve their ways, but to prevent their citizens from being victimized by criminals. As a result, the lawbreaker does not realize that his crime is essentially an unseemly act, and as such he will seek ways to get around the law. Hashem's concern, however, is rather for the purpose of teaching man simply to understand that these actions

are totally unacceptable. This, then is the meaning of "You shall be Holy."

One must change his nature and his ways in order that his body and his thoughts to be in sync with the purpose of their creation. Therefore, prior to detailing the punishments, the Torah states K'DOSHIM TIHYU. Improve yourselves to the extent that you should "desire" the Torah and want to embrace the Mitzvot. The Torah then proceeds to enumerate the mitzvot which one cannot observe unless he is "holy", meaning that he comprehends the mitzva. For example, the need to fear one's father and mother, even if he is superior to them. One must also realize that tzedaka to the poor is not a gift but rightfully theirs. These mitzvot can be understood properly only if we have elevated ourselves to a higher level of holiness. Indeed, the motivation of one to adhere to these mitzvot should be our motivation to attain a higher spiritual level and proximity to Hashem.

It always remains interesting that we read this Parsha of K'doshim around the period of Memorial Day for our Fallen Soldiers and Yom Haatzmaut. Especially this year, we owe so much to those who paid the ultimate price and becoming the ultimate K'DOSHIM, so we may live and prosper in a holy fashion with higher spiritual goals in our land of Eretz Yisrael. May we continue to be blessed in leading our lives with this unique relationship between ourselves and G-d in Heaven. Shabbat Shalom 🕯️