

Kedoshim

by Benjamin Gee - Wednesday, May 08, 2019

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Is 'holiness' for you?

Parashat Kedoshim holds the record.

It's a record that relates to words. As is well known, the title of a Parasha comes from the first key word in that portion. Often it's the very first word, sometimes the second, third or fourth. But let's have a look at the beginning of parasha Kedoshim, "*Vayedaber Hashem el Moshe lemor: Daber el kol adat b'nei Yisrael v'amarta aleihem kedoshim t'hiyu*", it's the 14th word! At this point the Torah tells us "You must be holy".

Why the long introduction leading up to 'kedoshim t'hiyu'? It's in order that we should know that Moshe was to instruct 'Kol adat b'nei Yisroel', the entire assembly of the Children of Israel about the content of this portion. Rashi explains that seeing as the majority of the primary principles of the Torah are included in this portion – that's why it was important for Moshe to impart it directly to the entire nation.

The Alshich Hakadosh adds a further insight. He says that there is a danger that some people might think that not all of the mitzvot relate to them - that they're only for 'frum' or holy people. Therefore the Torah says to every single individual 'kedoshim t'hiyu', you have a responsibility to be holy yourself.

Furthermore, we recognise that there are some people who cannot easily relate to the concept of Kedusha, holiness. They might feel that a holy person is an extraordinary spiritual lady or a Rabbi – they are the only ones who can be holy. However the Torah here wants every individual to know that we ourselves can and should be holy.

We are currently living in a world in which artificial intelligence is being developed in order to enhance human achievement, and we already know that some computers are more intelligence than human beings. But with all the artificial intelligence in the world, a computer will never have a 'neshama' - it doesn't have a soul. A computer cannot experience the presence of Hashem, it cannot achieve spirituality - that is something that only we can do! In this age of advanced technological prowess, we often find that our souls are cry out for a channel through which to express their spirituality, and as a result there's an enormous need for Kedusha today.

There is an important part of our prayers which we call Kedusha. Its starts 'Nekadesh et shimcha ba'olam', let every single one of us sanctify the name of God in this world. Let us take heed of the mitzvah of 'kedoshim t'hiyu', the imperative of this week's Parasha, in order that every single one of us can become holy and can increase holiness in this world.

Shabbat Shalom.

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