

**PARSHAT KEDOSHIM -shiur #2**

**THE HEADER / KOL ADAT YISRAEL**

Does the name 'EDAH' imply something 'good' or something 'bad'? Even though EDIH carries a negative connotation in the story of the spies in Parshat Shlach, in the opening pasuk of Parshat Kedoshim it seems to imply something very positive.

In the following shiur we suggest a thematic connection between the word EDIH and the first half of Parshat Kedoshim (i.e. chapter 19).

**INTRODUCTION**

In contrast to most parshiot in Chumash which begin with the standard header:

"And God spoke to Moshe saying, speak to BNEI YISRAEL..."

Parshat Kedoshim adds a short but important phrase:

"And God spoke to Moshe saying, speak to KOL ADAT Bnei Yisrael... - to the entire congregation of Israel" (19:1-2).

This special header indicates that there must be some specific reason why this parshia was given to KOL ADAT YISRAEL - i.e. to the entire EDIH - congregation of Israel. [Note that ADAT is simply the 'smichut' form of EDIH.]

Rashi, quoting the Midrash in Torat Kohanim, explains that specifically this parshia was given to the 'entire congregation' because it includes most of the basic principles of the Torah ['rov gufei Torah tluvin bah']. [See also Chizkuni (19:2) who quotes a similar Midrash Tanchuma.]

Even though Rashi explains why it was necessary for Moshe to relay these mitzvot in a special gathering, he does not explain why specifically the word EDIH is used! In other words, the Torah could have simply said: speak to KOL Bnei Yisrael (ALL of Bnei Yisrael / see Devarim 1:1), or could have used the Hebrew word KAHAL instead of EDIH, which would have been a more precise way to describe a gathering.

Therefore, the Torah's choice of the word EDIH suggests a connection between the mitzvot of Parshat Kedoshim and the word EDIH. To find that connection, we must consider its etymology.

The Hebrew word EDIH stems from one of two possible roots:

- 1) ayin.daled - which implies to AFFIRM or TESTIFY  
[e.g. the word EID= a witness; EDIH= a female witness]
- 2) yod.ayin.daled - which implies to APPOINT or to DESIGNATE

The first root would imply that Am Yisrael, when called an EDIH, serve as sort of a WITNESS, while the second root would imply that they have been APPOINTED for a certain purpose. How would either or both explanations tie into Parshat Kedoshim?

From the opening commandment of Parshat Kedoshim, one could suggest an interesting interpretation:

"KEDOSHIM TIHIYU - You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy..." (19:2).

By acting as a holy nation, Am Yisrael 'testifies' (to itself and to other nations) that God exists, for He is holy. [See Sforno 19:2.]

Why is this testimony necessary?

Testimony is usually needed order to prove a fact. Considering that God is transcendent, it is difficult for man to perceive His existence. Therefore, God commands ADAT BNEI YISRAEL to keep special mitzvot which help create a society which 'testifies' to God's existence. One could actually combine both meanings and suggest that it is for this reason that God DESIGNATED Bnei Yisrael to become a nation.

**KEDUSHA - FOR A PURPOSE**

Even though this interpretation may not be 'simple pshat', it blends nicely with Sefer Vayikra's theme of KEDUSHA in the three

realms of MAKOM, ZMAN, & ADAM, which we developed in our shiur on Acharei Mot.

a) KEDUSHAT HA-MISHKAN ['kedushat makom'], we explained, implies that God separates a special place and infuse it with an intense level of holiness IN ORDER that it affect and thus elevate the level of the area which surrounds it.

b) In a similar manner, God separated SHABBAT ['kedushat zman'], infusing it with a intense level of holiness, IN ORDER to elevate the spiritual level of the entire week.

c) So too - KEDUSHAT AM YISRAEL ['kedushat adam']. God separates a special nation, infusing it with an intense level of holiness, IN ORDER to elevate the spiritual level of all nations. God 'designates' Am Yisrael to follow the mitzvot of KEDOSHIM TIHIYU to fulfill this purpose, and in this manner we 'testify' before all nations that God exists.

This concept, which may only be alluded to here in Parshat Kedoshim, is stated more directly in Sefer Devarim as Bnei Yisrael prepare to enter the Promised Land:

"See, I have taught you CHUKIM & MISHPATIM [compare Vayikra 18:3-5!] for you to keep in the land which you are about to conquer. Observe them faithfully, for that will be PROOF of you wisdom IN THE EYES OF THE NATIONS who upon hearing all these laws will say:

Surely, that great nation is a wise people, for what great nation is there that is so CLOSE TO GOD... or what great nation has such perfect CHUKIM & MISHPATIM as the TORAH that I set before you on this day..." (Devarim 4:5-8).

**TWO OTHER PARSHIOT**

In addition to Parshat Kedoshim, there are two earlier parshiot of mitzvot which are directed specifically to ADAT BNEI YISRAEL.

- 1) Parshat Ha-Chodesh - Shmot 12:1-20 (see 12:3) which discusses MAKKAT BECHOROT & KORBAN PESACH.
- 2) Parshat Vayakhel - the commandment to build the MISHKAN.

One could explain the Torah's use of the phrase ADAT BNEI YISRAEL in these two parshiot in a similar manner.

(1) Parshat Ha-Chodesh (as we all know) is God's very FIRST commandment to Bnei Yisrael (see Rashi Breishit 1:1). The laws of Korban Pesach that are detailed in that parshia serve a double purpose. For Am Yisrael to:

- a) recognize God's hand in their salvation from MAKKAT BECHOROT [which caused the Egyptians to finally recognize God. [See Shmot 11:1-10.]
- b) AFFIRM their covenantal commitment to BRIT BEIN H-'BTARIM (i.e. Brit Avot). [See shiur on Parshat Va'era].

(2) Parshat Vayakhel describes the commandment to build the MISHKAN which itself serves as a symbol and testimony of God's presence. [Recall that at the focal point of the Mishkan lie the LUCHOT ha-EIDUT / see Shmot 25:16,21-22.]

One could even suggest that these three parshiot which are given to ADAT Bnei Yisrael reflect once again the three realms of KEDUSHA:

Parshat ha-Chodesh - kedushat ZMAN  
Parshat Vayakhel - kedushat MAKOM  
Parshat Kedoshim - kedushat ADAM

**FOR FURTHER IYUN**

1. Note in the first Rashi on "daber el kol ADAT Bnei Yisrael" that Rashi states: "melamed she-ne'emar be-HAKHEL". How does the parallel to Shmot 35:1 help us better understand this Rashi?
2. In Sefer Bamidbar (see 14:26-27 and its context), Bnei Yisrael sin at chet ha-meraglim. Those sinners are referred to as an EDIH RA'A - a wicked (or bad) EDIH?

Can our explanation of 'witness' still apply in this case?

3. Note that Korach's splinter group is also called an EDIH, and in Korach's original complaint we find the same word - "ki KOL ha-EDAH kulam KDOSHIM u-vetocham HASHEM..." (see Bamidbar 16:3). Can you relate this complaint of Korach to this week's shiur and the Torah's use of the word EDIH?