

## Message from the Rav - Parshas Achrei Mos/Kedoshim

### #1

In Parshas Kedoshim (19:2) we are instructed “to be holy.” Interestingly, Rashi explains the need “to be holy” by exhorting us separate from arayos (forbidden relationships).

Why mention arayos in this context? What is the connection between arayos, one of the worst sins, and being kadosh?

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, ZT'L, answers: In order to separate ourselves from arayos, we must first make ourselves kadosh. If we are not holy to begin with, it will be impossible to overcome the Yetzer Hara for arayos.

### #2

So how do we become holy?

According to the Sforno, it is the fulfillment of the Mitzvos mentioned in Parshas Kedoshim that enable a person to become holy. This is difficult to understand. The Mitzvos mentioned, such as the prohibition against stealing, speaking falsehoods, or withholding wages, seem to be extremely obvious and basic. How do these specific Mitzvos help a person become holy?

It is interesting to note that the admonition against stealing appears in two places, one as a singular prohibition (found within the Aseres HaDibros), and one as a plural (found in Parshas Kedoshim). What is the difference between them?

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, ZT'L, explains that the first instance refers to acts of thievery which society would recognize as forbidden. For example, society acknowledges that someone who robs a bank is a thief, and has acted immorally.

However, the second instance, mentioned in Parshas Kedoshim, does not refer to specific acts of thievery, but rather to any immoral action which society might permit. For example, while Loshon Hora is obviously forbidden by Halacha, our society permits, and sometimes even encourages, gossip. In order to reach a level of personal holiness, we must be able to overcome not only those things which society recognizes as wrong (such as robbing the bank) but even those things which society accepts as permissible (such as Loshon Hora).

### #3

When describing the avoda on Yom Kippur, the Torah (Parshas Achrei Mos 16:5) instructs that two male goats should be taken as a Korbon Chatos. Chazal explain that these two goats must be completely identical in terms of age, color, height, value, and that they must be purchased at the same time.

Why must we have two identical goats?

The Rikanti teaches that the goats symbolize an important lesson to us. We know that these goats were identical, yet one of the goats is for Hashem and the other for Azazel. Likewise there can be two identical people, with the same level of potential. But one chooses to follow the path of Hashem, while the other goes toward Azazel.

According to Rav Mordechai Druk, ZT'L, it is for this reason that on Yom Kippur, we read about the avoda in the morning and about arayos in the afternoon. By focusing on these two subjects, we remind ourselves that a person has the opportunity to reach the highest levels of holiness by following the Derech Hashem. At the same time, a person has the ability to waste the opportunity, and stray to the lowest levels of arayos. We all have the same potential, but it is up to us to maximize it.

#### **#4**

What do we learn from all this?

The avoda is not just for the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. Each of us has our own daily avoda to become holy. In this world, the Yetzer Hara surrounds us at every move, yet we must always remember that we have the opportunity to choose two paths. We can choose kedusha, or we choose arayos. We can't have both. The way to obtain this kedusha is to observe Hashem's Torah and Mitzvos, and not fall into the trap of engaging in forbidden actions simply because society has deemed it acceptable. It is only in this way that we can truly protect ourselves from falling into the trap of arayos.

Good Shabbos.