

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Kedoshim

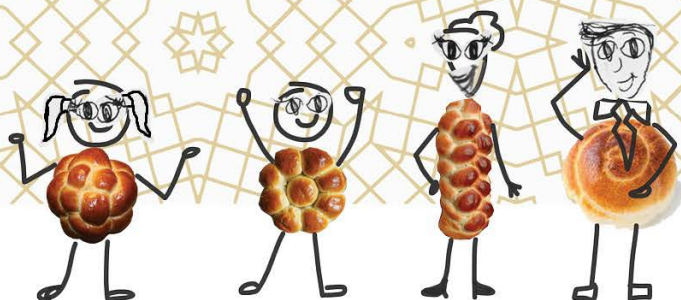
Title: Love and Holiness

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In our *parsha*, God speaks to Moshe, instructing him to speak to the Israelites and say... a lot of things. It's a pretty detailed list of what to do and what not to do in order to be good people. God starts with a huge ask in 19:3: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." Then God goes on to instruct that the people



keep Shabbat, not pray to idols, leave the edges of fields unharvested as food for the poor, not steal, be kind to the stranger, and then again in 20:7-8, “you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I the Lord am your God. You shall faithfully observe My laws: I the Lord make you holy.” And once again in 20:26, “you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine.” There is a clear trend here if you ask me.

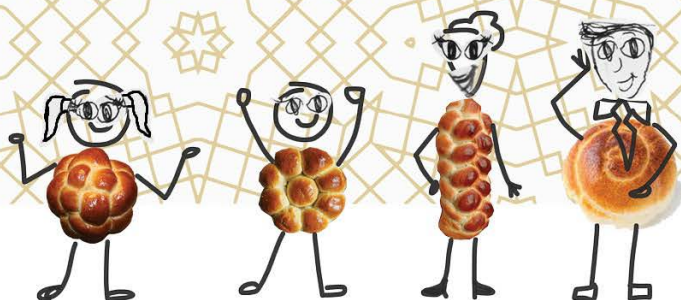
Zooming In:

The expression “I am God” appears 19 times in our parsha. This brings an added layer of importance to the words that God is expressing and sets a serious tone.

Earlier at Mt. Sinai in Shemot 19:6, the people were told that they’d become a Holy Nation. Here in our parsha, they are instructed to bring about that holiness *themselves!* How are they supposed to accomplish this?

The Torah commentator Ramban takes this challenge and flips it around. He says that instead of asking if an action is allowed or illegal, one should ask instead if through that action I will be expressing that I’ve been made *‘B’tzelem Elohim,’* in the image of God. God answers the challenge of becoming holy by taking the opportunity to command the people to love their neighbor as themselves.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch writes about how difficult it is to be commanded to feel a particular emotion, and that it might be impossible to literally love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Hirsch writes that more than an emotional bond, God is instructing that our actions towards other people be based in kindness and be an attempt to understand them.



Questions for Consideration:

- Is there anyone you'd consider holy? What about them makes you feel this way?
- What does it mean for you to love your neighbor?
- Is there a difference between loving your neighbor and loving your neighbor as yourself?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

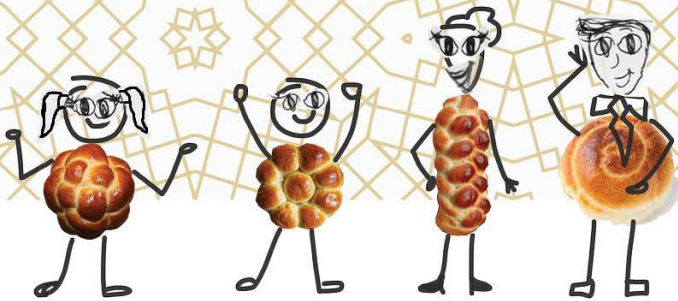
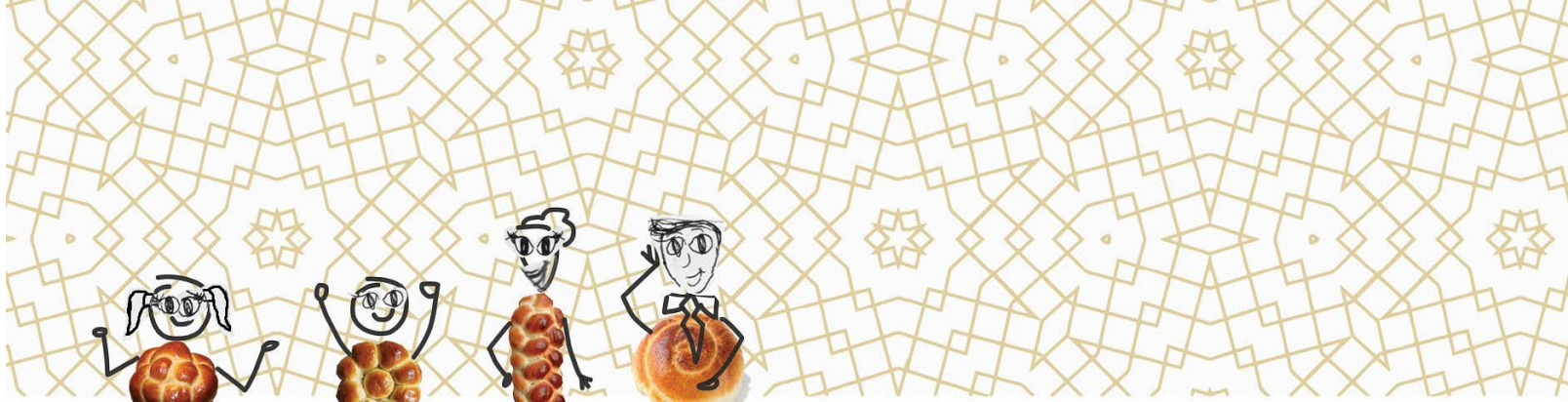
The Parsha in Practice:

NOTE: This activity might require writing/drawing.

Step One: Think about/write about/draw all of the ways that you exemplify holiness. You were created 'B'tzelem Elohim'! What does that actually look like? Are there physical qualities about you? Are there emotional qualities that show you how you were made in the image of God? What about your actions? Do parts of how you act at home make you a holy being?

Step Two: How do you love your neighbor? Think about your actual neighbors and think about the people you pass by on the street or who sit with you on the school bus. Some of those are people you know, and some are complete strangers. Do you interact differently when someone is a stranger? Are you still kind to them? Do you smile and hold the door for people walking behind you?

Step Three: What are some things you could do after Shabbat ends that would add to the love you show for your neighbor? Talk about how these actions would



bring you closer to holiness. Make a concrete plan and challenge yourself to make holiness a habit!

Shabbat Shalom!