

Leviticus 20v6-9

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When God created the universe, He made things in couples: Heaven and Earth, Night and Day, Male and Female. One cannot be understood without the other. Each is in a relationship with the other. And there is a thin line of separation between Heaven and Earth. Angels appear instantly to Daniel after his prayer, indicating the distance between realms is not far to travel. And since time immemorial there has been a strong attraction and desire to know the future from the other side. The Fall of Man in Genesis occurred following the belief in a lie. To be like God was the Serpent's promise, yet Adam and Eve were already made in the image of God. The desire is for more forbidden knowledge. Moses warns the community against seeking such knowledge from familiar spirits (called the *Avot* in Hebrew, the fathers) and wizards (from the root word in Hebrew: to know). Why do we seek after such knowledge? In our discussion, we brought up issues like lack of trust, a lack of confidence, and lack of assurance in God, in ourselves, in our personal situations and in the often bleak world future of pandemics, financial crashes and climate change. These all contribute to our desire to seek answers to current problems from impure sources.

God is holy, and as part of our relationship with Him, we are called to walk in holiness. Holiness has an element of partnership. God calls the Sabbath holy and then commands us to guard and keep the Sabbath holy. God's name is holy and we are commanded to guard and keep the name of God holy. God makes us holy and then commands us to keep ourselves holy. Seeking profane wisdom is not a holy undertaking and can lead to separation from God, who truly values and desires our relationship. Thus in this specific passage in Leviticus, the punishment for ignoring the holiness code and turning to mediums comes from the Lord Himself. He sets His face against us. Nothing should be more terrifying other than hearing the words, 'I never knew you!' In a similar warning, Paul the Apostle admonishes the Corinthians to remember that they are temples of the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit of God dwells within them. Should they defile the temple of God, which is holy, then the Lord God will destroy them' (1 Cor 3v16-17).

Holiness is a process, like sanctification. Obedience is part of the process but it is not the sole part of the process. The Lord sanctifies us, but we are then called to maintain our sanctity. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is also given to those who obey (Acts 5). God initiates the work in us, but He does not force Himself nor His kingship upon us. He works through our own cooperating effort and relationship of free will. And we should never underestimate the importance of the call to holiness. As the writer of Hebrews 12v14 says, make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness, no one will see the Lord. God then instructs the Israelites that the most important people to act in holiness towards are your parents. Honouring parents is the commandment that comes with the blessing of long days. Those days could be shortened through the death penalty which is enacted on those who curse their mother and father. This is not simply saying something bad about one's parents, but rather refers to something deeply settled in the heart and spirit of children against their parents. Intergenerational conflict was (is) to be avoided amongst the people of God. Instead of berating the older generation, we should be engaging and learning from their wisdom and experience. Instead of avoiding the young, we should be sharing, coaching, guiding and teaching them. Using the Jewish exegetical argument of *kal-v'homer*, we note that if you don't obey your earthly father, then how much less will you obey your heavenly father.