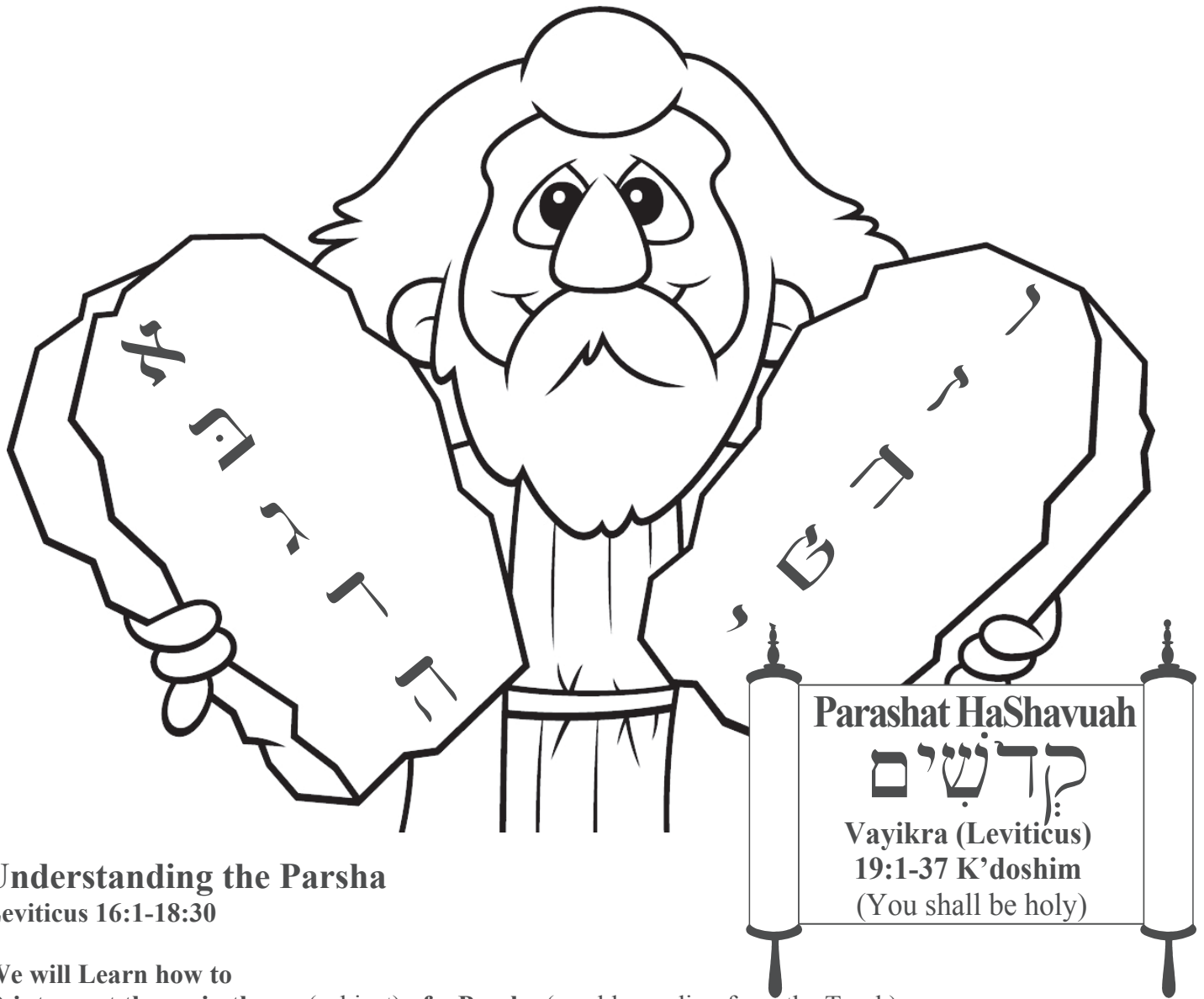




Understanding the Parsha

Leviticus 16:1-18:30

We will Learn how to

- 1) **interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha** (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) **make thematic connections to that Parsha** (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) **learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.**

Let's start by looking at the first Parsha P'tuchah in this sidra (portion).

Read Leviticus 19:1-22. What phrases are repeated many times?

I a Y or I am YHVH y G
HAHA am I Your God and

Do you see any pattern concerning the use of these phrases? YES NO

The first four times the phrase I am YHVH your God is used (Lev 19:1-10).
 Then I am YHVH is used in Leviticus 19:11-18.

It seems as if the first eighteen verses divide into two groups based on the use of the phrases above.

Read through the commandments in Leviticus 19:1-11.

Is there some theme that relates these verses as far as the type of relationship they are describing? A certain type of relationship is being addressed here. Who are the individuals involved?

These commandments deal with the relationship between A_{דְּאֵלֹהִים} and m_{אָדָם}.

Most of the commandments in this section, 1) observe the Shabbat, 2) turn from idols, 3) proper offerings and 4) using Adonai's name in vain, are for the relationship between Adonai and man. Thematically, who are the individuals involved in the commandments of Leviticus 19:11-22?

These commandments deal mainly with the relationships between m_{אָדָם}.

Most of the commandments in this section, 1) do not steal, 2) lying, 3) cheating, 4) compensation, and stumbling blocks, etc., deal with the relationships between men. Now put on your thinking caps.

Can you think of another passage of Scripture that is thematically related to Leviticus 19:1-18? Let me help you. The first half of the commandments are for the relationship between Adonai and man, the second half of the commandments are for the relationships between men. Ring any bell?

These verses are thematically related to the 10 Commandments!

Thematically, we can see that Moses used the 10 Commandments as a basis or template for this speech. We can find a parallel to every one of the Ten Commandments! Remember, the first five of the 10 Commandments basically deal with the relationship between Adonai and man, and the second five deal mainly with the relationships between men! This is not the last time that this will happen. So keep your thematic eyes open as we continue through the Torah!

We have stated that Leviticus 19:1-11 mainly deals with commandments between Adonai and man. We've seen that the phrase, I am YHVH your God, is neatly divided between these two sections.

Now read Leviticus 19:9-10. Why are these commandments, which deal with the relationships between men (feeding the poor and the proselyte - *a person from the nations who has joined the community of YHVH*), listed in the first half, which mainly contain commandments regarding the relationship between Adonai and man? To answer this question, we need to compare and contrast the actual type of the relationships mentioned here. Leviticus 19:11-18 describes our normal day-to-day dealings with people. The Torah implies that these people are equal to us in status. However, Leviticus 19:9-10 refers to the relationship between an Israelite and two specific groups of people—the poor and the convert.

Can you guess why these commandments concerning the poor and the convert are listed in the section mainly dealing with commands between Adonai and man?

These two verses thematically link serving the p_{אָדָם}
and the C_{כּוֹנֵן} with serving Adonai!

If we serve the poor and the convert, it is as if we served Him! Remember, Yeshua said, "Whatsoever you do to the least of these, you have done to me."

Notice that the last I am YHVH is in Leviticus 19:18. Read Leviticus 19:19-22. Do you notice a transition here? The Torah switches from commandments directly related to the 10 Commandments (Leviticus 19:1-18) to two commandments relating to mixtures (Leviticus 19:19-22). Leviticus 19:19 deals with forbidden mixtures among animals, agriculture and clothing. Leviticus 19:20-22 is difficult to understand and explain. If you have a Chumash, you will notice that the commentary says that due to the unusual circumstances, the slave woman was half Israelite and half slave.



Since the topic changes between Leviticus 19:18-19, verse 18 should be very important. It is the closing “**bookend**” on the subject of commandments for the relationships between Adonai and man and between men. Based on the analysis we just did, I say to you that the phrase “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” is the statement that sums up Leviticus 19:11-18.

What general theme do you think Leviticus 19:19-22 teaches?

Leviticus 19:19-22 teaches us that there are certain b boundaries across which we should not cross.

Let’s sum it all up

Remember, one of our goals in thematic analysis is to determine the unique theme associated with each Parsha.

How do we find the one unique theme for this Parsha P’tuchah (Leviticus 19:1-22)?

Before reading my answer, try to come up with a theme of your own which captures both parts of this Parsha.

Answer:

In Leviticus 19:1-18 Adonai gave commandments for the proper way to serve Him and our fellow man.

In Leviticus 19:19-22 Adonai said that certain things could not be mixed together.

These two ideas were placed in the same Parsha P’tuchah and must be related.

So, I think that the lessons of Leviticus 19:19-22 applies to the 10 commandments. It teaches us that there are **acceptable ways to serve Adonai and man**, and that there are **unacceptable ways**. We should never mix the two together! We must serve Adonai and man according to His pattern found in the 10 Commandments without ever mixing in other ways (like, for example, the practices of the pagan, non-believing nations).

This Parsha P’tuchah is an excellent example of how the Torah thematically links two ideas. Once you understand that each Parsha has one unique theme, then you know the different topics within the Parsha should be thematically related to each other—even though they may appear to be different topics! In our study we learned, the law of forbidden mixtures is clearly and definitely thematically connected to keeping the 10 Commandments.

