

Sanctifying the Lord in our lives

In weeks reading from **Parashat Shemini** (*Vayikra / Leviticus 9:1-11:47*). The most significant event that occurs in Parashat Shemini is the story of Nadav and Avihu who went before the Lord with strange fire resulting in their deaths (*10:1-5*). In this instance, we see the demonstration that God is a consuming fire. We know according to the Scriptures that sin is burned up in the presence of God and if one is filled with sin when going before the Lord his prayers will not be answered except the prayer of repentance. The author of the book of Hebrews wrote in *Hebrews 12:29*, καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκων, *12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.* (NASB) David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 65*, according to the Aramaic Targum, “*Blessed is the man whom You (God) choose and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5).*” In Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3, “*Rabbi Hoshaiia taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred not to the court of the Temple, but to the court on high.*” The rabbis say that the one who prays is as the one who abides in God’s courts, not in the earthly Tabernacle or Temple, but in the heavenly court. The general consensus based upon these Scriptures and the rabbinic literature is to take note of the importance of sanctifying the Lord in our lives. It is very important that we consider who it is before whom we stand as believers in Yeshua the Messiah.

The Scriptures say that in the eighth day, Moshe called to Aaron, his sons, and to the elders of Israel. (וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי קָרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וְלִבְנָיו) א וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח-לֶךָ עֵגֶל בֶּן-בְּקָרָה לְחִטָּאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה תְּמִימִם וְלִזְבְּחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְלִבְנָיו: (וְהִקְרַב לְפָנָי יְהוָה:). Moshe tells Aaron and his sons to offering an ox and a ram for peace offerings and a grain offering mixed with oil because today the Lord will appear to them. Aaron and his sons proceed to make the offering before the Lord according to the instruction of Moshe (*9:7-23*). After doing as Moshe had instructed, the Scripture say in *Vayikra / Leviticus 9:24*, כִּד וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנָי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת-הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-הַחֲלֵבִים וַיֵּרָא, 9:24 *Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and*

when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. (NASB) We then read that Nadav and Avihu went before the Lord with strange fire and they died (10:1-5). The Lord then spoke to Aaron saying “Do not drink strong drink when you come into the Ohel Moed” (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד) so that he and his sons will not die. The reason being is for “u’le’havdil” (וְלִהְיוֹת בְּדִיל), that one is to make a distinction between the holy and the profane (בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל וּבֵין הַטְּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר). In the MT, Moshe reverses the word order using the following pattern:

holy (קֹדֶשׁ) ↔ profane (חֹל)
 unclean (טְמֵא) ↔ clean (טְהוֹר)

The reader must pay careful attention to the way the text is written. We are called to make a distinction and not be confused on what is holy and clean, as opposed to what is unclean and profane. This appears to be the point Moshe is making in the Torah portion. In a similar manner, we should pay attention to seek the Lord our Father in heaven with a pure heart and to sanctify Him in our lives.

ספר ויקרא פרק יא Vayikra / Leviticus 11:44-47

מד כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהִתְקַדְּשׁוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם בְּכָל-הַשְּׂרָץ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: [מפטיר] מֵהַיָּם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי: מִזֶּה תֹרַת הַבְּהֵמָה וְהָעוֹף וְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת בַּמַּיִם וְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הַשְּׂרָצָה עַל-הָאָרֶץ: מִזֶּה לִהְיוֹת בֵּין הַטְּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר וּבֵין הַחַיָּה הַנֹּאכֶלֶת וּבֵין הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תֹאכַל:

11:44 ‘For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 11:45 ‘For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.’ 11:46 This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, 11:47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten. (NASB)

The Torah Portion for this week speak of the sanctity of drawing near to the Lord. Nadav and Avihu are a testimony to that indicating for us the importance of going before the Lord with fear and reverence. These Scriptures are very important, in light of what we do in our bodies and what we think in our hearts which are coupled to our drawing near to the Lord in prayer.

The rabbinic commentaries have a lot to say concerning these things. Rashi states the following:

Rashi on Leviticus 11:44, Part 1

כי אני ה' אלהיכם *FOR I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD — Just as I am holy, I, Who am the Lord your God, similarly*
והתקדשתם *MAKE YOURSELVES HOLY below on earth*
(Sifra),

Rashi expounds upon the importance of the Scripture from *Vayikra / Leviticus 11:44*, where the Lord says, *מִדְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִרְמָשׁוּ עִלַּי וְהִיָּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּכָל-הַשָּׂרֵץ הַרְמָשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: [מפטיר] 11:44 'For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. (NASB)* The way to separate one's self as holy unto the Lord and to Yeshua the Messiah is to obey the commands of God. Note that it is the Lord God in heaven who sanctifies us making us holy, and as a result we are called to live sanctified lives.

Judaism's concept of the commandments and holiness has been expounded upon in a book titled "*The Nineteen Letters.*" The *Nineteen Letters* was first published in 1836, as a written correspondence between a Rabbi and a student in doubt as to the meaning and value of his Jewish identity. The book speaks of the tenets of Judaism, the author tackles the issues of assimilation, secularism, modernity, reform, and the difference between a self-centered world-view vs. a God-centered world-view. The Rabbi considers history and tradition, and discusses the theological, philosophical, and the practical aspects of Torah, and the author shows what it means to have a life steeped in the adherence to the Divine commands. Take for example the following quotes:

Nineteen Letters 11:2

They furthermore tend to enable thy inner character that it become pure and free of all that could drag thee down from the high pinnacle of thy holy mission. They bid thee put aside pride and desire of sensual pleasure, to respond sympathetically to the sorrow or joy of all beings, and to embrace them all in thy love as children of thy God. These injunctions are but the applications of the principles demonstrated as true in the revelations given in the actions, in the mighty deeds, of God. His commandments are but the expressions of these principles; revealed as concepts, not as mere incomprehensible behests; whosoever desires truth will accept them.

Nineteen Letters 12:2

Strive ever to draw nearer to God, to be more closely united to Him in love and piety, more devoted and faithful to thy sacred mission on earth. Strive also to make the earth a truly human habitation, its creatures truly human possessions, in order that, in addition to your internal resources you may acquire also external wealth as means for carrying out your mission of blessing, and in order to be able independently to establish a house, as a temple in which shall be reared young scions of Adam's race as ideal human beings, ideal Israelites. For such purpose, to grace such a house, take a wife and bring her into your home. Next follows the first task of your blessed mission of love, the first and the highest; to be all in all to helpless human creatures without claim or demand upon you; even to sacrifice your own welfare in order that they shall be able to attain to both earthly well-being and spiritual ideal; that your child may become man-Israel.

Judaism speaks of the individual person as having a sacred mission before God. Judaism speaks of the commandments as teaching the one who walks in God's commands produces morality, to be sympathetic towards

others, to draw nearer to the Lord, to be filled with love, and that the purpose of wealth is to carry out our service to the Lord, to help others and to show our love for one another. Is it surprising see how the rabbis teach a very similar theology to what is taught by Yeshua and the disciples in the Apostolic Writings?

The Jewish commentaries Messilat Yesharim and Rashi state the following,

Messilat Yesharim 12:27

In order to instruct us that this applies not only to unclean beasts or to earth creatures, but also to those animals, which, though in the “clean” category, are ritually unclean, Scripture tells us (Leviticus 11:47), “To distinguish between the unclean and the clean,” upon which our Teachers of blessed memory comment (Sifra ad loc.), “There is no need to point up the distinction between an ass and a cow. What, then, is the meaning of ‘between the unclean and the clean’? - between what is unclean to you and what is clean to you; between the cutting of most of the windpipe and the cutting of half. And what is the difference between most and half? - a hairs-breadth.” The reason that they concluded in this manner (“And what is the difference between ‘most’ ...”) is to show how amazing the power of the mitzvot is, that a hair’s-breadth constitutes the difference between uncleanliness and cleanliness itself.

Rashi on Leviticus 11:47, Part 1

להבדיל *TO MAKE A DISTINCTION* — *Not that one should only learn the laws, but it is a command that you should know and recognize the differences and be expert in them (Sifra).*

Rashi on Leviticus 11:47, Part 3

ובין החיה הנאכלת *AND BETWEEN AN ANIMAL THAT MAY BE EATEN* — *Is it necessary to say that one should learn to distinguish between a stag and a wild ass? Have not these already been closely defined as to their distinguish-*

ing characteristics? But the meaning is: that you should thoroughly understand to distinguish between the case when there have arisen in it (in the animal) signs by which one might regard it as forbidden (טרפה) and yet it is permitted as food (כשרה), and the case when there have arisen in it signs by which one might regard it as forbidden and because of which it is actually unfitted to be eaten (Sifra).

These commentaries discuss making a distinction between animals, but we know this discussion on foods leads to a deeper meaning of the commands, to distinguishing between good and evil, morality and immorality, and that we are called to become an experts in knowing the differences. (For more on this read *“The Torah and Holiness,”* 2014, <http://www.amazon.com/The-Torah-Holiness-Duane-Miller/dp/1494274183>) The Author of the book of Hebrews taught the same thing, saying this was a very important task according to *Hebrews 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 6:2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 6:3 And this we will do, if God permits.* (NASB) Considering Romans 6 and 7, dead works is synonymous to practicing sin. Note how all of these things are drawn in the context of the Torah and drawing near to the Lord.

Regarding prayer and drawing near to the Lord, the rabbis in Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3 begin (דיבור המתחיל) with a discussion on the Scripture from the Aramaic Targum *Tehillim / Psalms 65:5 “Blessed is the man whom You choose and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts.”* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“Rabbi Hoshai taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred not to the court of the Temple, but to the court*

on high.” The entire midrash states the following:

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3

3. Blessed is the man whom You choose and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5). Rabbi Hoshai taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred not to the court of the Temple, but to the court on high. This court he also referred to in the words How precious is Your loving kindness, O God. Therefore the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They will be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 36:9). To this the sons of Korah also referred in saying, For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Tehillim / Psalms 84:11). And this is also referred to in the verse Blessed are they that dwell in Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 84:5).

מדרש תהלים פרק סה סימן ג

ג אשרי תבחר ותקרב ישכון חצריך. אמר רב הושעיא בשם רב שמואל בר שילא משמיה דרב, אמר דוד רבונו של עולם אשרי למי שאתה מקרבו לחצר, ולא בחצר אלא במרום, מה יקר חסדך אלהים ובני אדם בצל כנפיך יחסיון ירויון מדשן ביתך (תהלים לו ה ט), גם בני קרח אמרו כי טוב יום בחצריך (שם תהלים פד יא), וכן הוא אומר אשרי יושבי ביתך (שם תהלים פ"ד ה).

The rabbis say that when David says, *65:5 How happy is the one You will choose and bring near; he will abide in Your courts. The righteous will say, “We will be satisfied in the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple.” (EMC)* the abiding in Your courts is a reference not to the earthly Tabernacle or Temple, but to the heavenly court. How does one enter into the heavenly court? One does so through prayer. According to the Tanach, there are a number of descriptions of the courts of God. The Tanach mentions God’s throne in the *1 Kings 22:19, Isaiah 6:1-4, Ezekiel*

1:24-28, *Daniel 7:2-10, and Zechariah 3:1-7*. In each of these descriptions, we see the Lord sitting upon His throne.

The midrash states that David was speaking of drawing near to the Lord, and to the heavenly court. Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3 concludes saying, *“To this the sons of Korah also referred in saying, For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Tehillim / Psalms 84:11). And this is also referred to in the verse Blessed are they that dwell in Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 84:5).”* Blessed indeed is the man to whom the Lord hears his prayers. The conclusion of this midrash is that when we pray, the Lord draws us near, even into His throne room to allow us to make a petition by reason of His mercy and grace, while praying in the name of Yeshua the Messiah.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4 continues speaking (in the **דיבור המת”** **חיל**) on David’s words saying, *“With wondrous works do You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation; You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off (Tehillim / Psalms 65:6).”* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“With regard to this verse, rabbi Hanina son of Papa asked rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani, What is meant by the words You have covered Yourself with a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through (Lamentations 3:44)?”* What is meant by the words You have covered Yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through? The rabbis reference *Lamentations 3:44*.

Lamentations 3:40-50

3:40 Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the Lord. 3:41 We lift up our heart and hands Toward God in heaven; 3:42 We have transgressed and rebelled, You have not pardoned. 3:43 You have covered Yourself with anger And pursued us; You have slain and have not spared. 3:44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through. 3:45 You have made us mere offscouring and refuse In the midst of the peoples. 3:46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. 3:47 Panic and pitfall have befallen us, Devastation and destruction; 3:48 My eyes run down with streams of water Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. 3:49 My eyes pour down unceasingly, Without stopping,

3:50 *Until the Lord looks down
And sees from heaven.*
(NASB)

Lamentations 3:44 states, :מִדְּסָכוֹתָיִךְ בָּעָנָן לָךְ מֵעָבוֹר תִּפְלֶה: *3:44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through.* (NASB) Breaking down the sentence, the author writes סָכוֹתָיִךְ meaning “to entwine as a screen; by implication, to fence in, cover over, (figuratively) protect or cover, defense, defend, hedge in, join together, set, shut up,” בָּעָנָן meaning “a cloud (as covering the sky), e.g. the nimbus or thunder-cloud or cloud,” מֵעָבוֹר meaning “to cross over; used very widely of any transition (literal or figurative; transitive, intransitive, intensive, causative),” and תִּפְלֶה meaning “intercession, supplication; by implication, a hymn, prayer.” Here, the Lord covers Himself because of our sins. Solomon is speaking of the people seeking the Lord, however, because of their sins it appears the Lord does not hear their prayer which is described as the Lord covering Himself with a cloud so that no prayer may pass through. He describes the situation by drawing a parallel to God’s people as a dung heap and the cloud as a covering so the Lord does not see or smell the stench of dung. These words of Solomon appear to paint a picture of what David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.* (NASB) and *Revelation 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.* (NASB) We do not want our prayers to be considered stinky and smelly. Our prayers are supposed to go before the Lord as a fragrant and sweet smell. If we hold things in our heart, darkness, sin, hatred, etc, these things are considered as dung and produce an awful stench in our prayer life. The reason is we take these things and pray selfishly for the detriment of others rather than for the help and peace between brothers, enemies, man and God. If our prayers proceed from the heart, we should ask the Lord first according to *Tehillim / Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.* (NASB) and then bring our petition before Him. Take for example, we would not drink alcohol and then expect to go before the Lord in prayer (*Vayikra / Leviticus 10*) right?

In Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4, the rabbis believe there are times when the gates of prayer are open and other times when the gates of prayer are

shut. This is similar to the cloud that covers the Lord (*Lamentations 3*) He does not hear us by reason of our sin, or the that He does not answer our prayers for some other reason. The midrash states that the gates of repentance however are never closed. The gate analogy offers us an interesting way of viewing repentance. Take for example, the gate is something that would bar entrance to a house or a court. We read of the gates of heaven in *Revelation 21:12*. The book of Revelation speaks of the gates of heaven and the nations, peoples, and kings walking through the gates, and these gates never closing. When the rabbis speak of the gates of repentance never closing, this includes both that of prayer, and of walking through these gates, righteous deeds, those deeds meet for repentance. The deeds that are done to show a repentant heart, is what John the Baptist was referring to in *Matthew 3:7-12*.

Matthew 3:7-12

3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 3:8 'Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; 3:9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 3:10 'The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 3:11 'As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 3:12 'His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' (NASB)

This is the same reasoning Yeshua used when he said in *Matthew 5:22-25*. The man who was repentant brought a sacrifice in fulfillment of the command to do so according to the covenant. Repentance included both a heart felt sorrow, followed by prayer seeking forgiveness, and then the

action to make right the wrong, and to turn from sin towards God's ways. Notice how the rabbis say these same things in the midrash, *the words, You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off, mean that repentance is like the sea which is never barred, so that whoever desires to bathe in it, bathes in it whenever he desires; whenever a man desires to repent, the Holy One blessed be He, receives him.* They are making a distinction between repentance and general prayer suggesting that for repentance a man is never barred from doing. General prayer on the other hand has set times. This concept is expounded upon by *Rabbi Jose son of Halafta saying, in the words But as for me, let my prayer be unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), an acceptable time shows that there are set times for prayer.* The question is what is the acceptable time that David is speaking of? The midrash states, *חד מנהון אמר מי שהוא גומל חסדים יהא מבושר שתהא תפלתו נשמעת,* *One of them maintained, He who practices lovingkindness may feel assured that his prayer will be heard, for it is said, Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in lovingkindness (Hosea 10:12).* They say, the one who practices chasidim (חסידים), mercies, graces, lovingkindness, may be assured that his prayer will be heard. Do you think this is true? This is consistent with John the Baptist's statements in *Matthew 3*, and Yeshua's statements in *Matthew 5*. The rabbis continue saying *"And what does the verse go on to say? That is the time to seek the Lord, meaning that when such a man prays to the Holy One blessed be He, he is heard,"* suggesting that a man should seek the Lord in prayer from a repentant heart. This is the way David acted throughout his life, humble, repentant, and making right to those he wronged, which stand as an example for us to live humble and repentant lives before the Lord which includes both thought and action.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4 concludes saying, *"And the other said, I do not set aside the words of my Master, but from Scripture I merely add another proof to his comment, for directly after the verse, O God, because of the abundance of Your lovingkindness (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), there follows, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14)."*

The rabbis conclude saying that the Lord is abundant (בְּרַב) in grace (יְיָ) (וְאֲנִי תַפְלֵתִי-לְךָ | יְהוָה עֵת רְצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב-חַסְדֶּיךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאֱמַת יְשׁוּעָה: (בְּאֱמַת) of His salvation (יְשׁוּעָה). Taking all of these

things we have been learning regarding what the rabbis are saying concerning prayer. Notice what Yeshua says regarding prayer in *John 14:11-18*.

John 14:11-18

14:11 'Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 14:12 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 14:13 'Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14:14 'If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 14:15 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 14:16 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 14:18 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (NASB)

Yeshua speaks of being one with the father, of doing the works that he did, of believing in Him (our Father in heaven), of praying in His name (Yeshua's Name), of praying in the name of God's Salvation, and that doing all of these things the Lord will hear our prayers. Note the context here, Yeshua speaks of being one with the Father and works as a reference to the Torah commands, and that the one who believes in Him will do these and greater works. He goes on to say that he will send the Holy Spirit, for what? To help us walk in the Truth, Righteousness, and Justice, to do maasim tovim according to the Torah. Yeshua promises to never leave us, that he will come to us. Yeshua provides a great hope and expectation that the Lord will move in our lives. He also provides us with the expectation of our calling, to walk according to His Word, the Torah. Note that these statements are within the context of *John 14:15* to keep the commandments. This corresponds to living a repentant life, and bringing our lives humbly in line with God's Word.

This week's Torah Portion, general flow of the narrative, (i) Moshe

instructs on the sacrifices and the Lord's presence in Israel's midst, (ii) Nadav and Avihu draw near to the Lord and die because they do not sanctify the Lord, (iii) the priestly instruction on the role and involvement in making atonement for the people (God's plan of Salvation), and (iv) the mitzvot on kashrut (living and walking in God's ways) for the purpose of consecrating yourself as holy before God so that we can learn to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, sin versus righteousness, immorality versus morality, etc. What more joy could we have than to talk in the manner in which our Savior Yeshua walked? Simchat Torah, the Joy of Torah is to walk in God's ways by the power of Christ in our lives. This is what it means to sanctify the Lord in our lives. By doing so, we can rest assured that He will hear our prayer when we stand in His court! Halelluia!



