

5 Ways to Hallow

(and be hallowed by) God's Name

'Our Father, who art in heaven, *hallowed be thy Name...*'

Jewish reverence for the Name of God impacts upon not only one's words, but every action, one's whole being. This witness can sensitize us Christians to the power of the Lord's Prayer.



Revere. Show loving reverence in speaking of God. Don't use the Divine Name lightly. Teach a child the Lord's Prayer, with attention to what we mean when we pray 'hallowed be your name.'



Rejoice. The Hebrew Scriptures convey the importance of *joy* [Hebrew: *simha*] in the way we relate to God (see Deut.26:11; Ps.100:2). As you notice daily gifts (e.g., food, shelter, health, family) praise the Name of God.



Listen. Be attentive in speech: to your conversation partner, your choice of words/names, your topic. Avoid mindless chatter. Make words and names count. Listen deeply. Respond thoughtfully, and lovingly.



Avoid. Refrain from all negativity, especially swearing and taking the Lord's name in vain. Whining, gossip, nitpicking, sarcasm... purge them from your conversations!



Bless. Bless those who are hard to love. Make a list and read aloud each name, saying, 'I bless you *N.*' As you finish, notice a softening within your heart. Very often our *feelings* of love follow our decisive *actions* of love.



Light of Torah

Ancient texts
through fresh eyes,
alive for today.

Why reflect on Torah?

At a meeting in Rome in 1982, Pope John Paul II urged bishops and other church leaders to study the relationship between the Church and Judaism, and to take special care with the way Judaism is presented in Catholic teaching:

'We should aim, in this field, that Catholic teaching at its different levels, in catechesis to children and young people, presents Jews and Judaism, not only in an honest and objective manner, free from prejudices and without any offences, but also with full awareness of the heritage common [to Jews and Christians].' (6.3.82)

The Pope's statement was more than a warning against anti-Semitic attitudes; it positively embraced the 'great spiritual patrimony' and 'spiritual bonds' linking Jews and Christians (see *Nostra Aetate*, 4) and urged that these bonds permeate the experience and teaching of the Christian faith.

This *Light of Torah* series takes up this call by helping Catholics to be more aware of the Torah as a gift of the Jewish faith, as the Scriptures that shaped the Jewish Jesus and as texts sacred to the Church. 'Torah' (in its specific sense) refers to the first five books of the bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

By opening ourselves to Jewish thinking, methods and sources concerning these biblical texts, our own Christian appreciation of God's Word is nourished and expanded.

Issue #29. 1 May 2010. Leviticus 21:1—24:23

The *Light of Torah* leaflet series for Catholic parishes encourages parishioners to be attentive to the gift of Torah as part of their sacred Scriptures, and to the gift of Judaism which gave us Jesus, the Living Torah. Text by Teresa Pirola. Illustrations by Francine Pirola. © The Story Source, 2010. Reproduction permitted for non-commercial church use. Further reading: www.lightoftorah.net; www.batkol.info and www.etz-hayim.com.





Torah Portion

From the Jewish calendar of Torah readings:

Leviticus 21:1—24:23

In today's portion lies a verse that describes two of Judaism's key commandments. This verse (Lev. 22:32) has been called 'Israel's bible in miniature.' First, it warns against profaning the Divine Name. Then it calls for the Divine Name (i.e., God) to be sanctified ('hallowed') by Israel. In Jewish teaching, this double-command is for every Jew, to be fulfilled by the witness of his/her life, and death.

(1) Heschel: American Jewish philosopher, 20th C. Quoted in Kelly.

(2) Yerushalmi Bava Metzia 2:5

Sources: Today's "Light of Torah" is based on the *Parashah Emor* commentary by Ann Kelly, fmdm, 2008, posted on the website of Bat Kol Institute, Jerusalem: www.batkol.info

Other works consulted: Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (NY,1995); Leibowitz, *New Studies in Vayikra, Vol 2* (NY, 1996); Munk, *The Call of the Torah* (NY, 1992).

Tasting Torah

You are not to profane my holy name, that I may be hallowed amid the children of Israel; I am YHWH, the one-who-hallows you."

(Lev. 22:32; Fox)

Although spoken to Israel's priests, this command has long been applied to the whole of Israel. The Hebrew term for sanctifying the Lord's Name is *Kiddush HaShem*. We are hallowed by God's holiness that we might hallow God's Name.

Touching Torah

Kiddush HaShem is to act in a loving and just way so that those who witness it become aware of the presence of God in their midst. God calls us into a relationship of love, and all our thoughts and deeds, every aspect of our lives, should reflect the holiness of our Creator. Abraham Heschel said, "Just to *be* is a blessing, just to live is holy." (1)

There is a famous *Kiddush HaShem* recorded in the Talmud (2). Rav Shimon ben Shetach's students bought a donkey for their teacher from a person from outside the Jewish community. They discovered a precious stone attached to the donkey unbeknown to the seller. Rabbi Shimon ordered them to return it. When questioned why it was necessary to do so since the law did not require it, Rav Shimon replied that his goal in life was not amassing wealth. Rather he desired hearing a non-Jew blessing God more than all the wealth in the world!

Depthing Torah

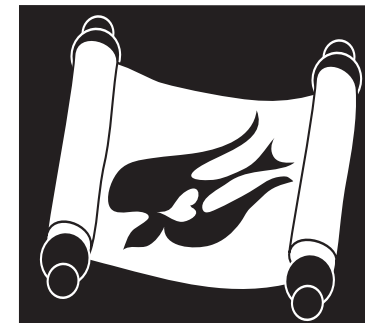
The command to sanctify God's name is, of course, just as applicable to Christians. Says Sr Ann Kelly, fmdm, of Lusaka, Zambia: "While studying this portion with my Torah partner, we became aware of a new meaning to the Lord's Prayer. When we pray 'hallowed (holy) be your name' we are expressing something which is integral in the Jewish spirituality of Jesus, the deep sense of the holiness of God's name. These words call us to constant conversion. The personal Divine mission for each of us in this world is to sanctify God's Name. We all have daily challenges to do this."

According to the Talmud, the sublime love of God calls for the active engagement of one's whole life, even unto death where death is preferable to desecrating the Name of God in public apostasy. However, while acts of martyrdom feature in Jewish history, biblical and rabbinic sources view *Kiddush HaShem* primarily as an expression of faith in the day-to-day realities of living.

Doing Torah

Think back over your day. In what practical ways did you 'sanctify the Lord's name'? What opportunities will come your way tomorrow?

Sing Bernadette Farrell's hymn, *God beyond all Names*, conscious of the lyrics, "All around us we have known you, all creation lives to hold you. In our living and our dying we are bringing you to birth."



Faith & Life

A parishioner shares:

My young nephew, Luke, is growing up with a wonderful mother, but no Dad around. He enjoys football, and is a very dependable team player. When Luke was about ten years old, his football coach began calling him "The Rock." Over the next couple of years I saw Luke successfully living up to his "name." His coach had identified a strength in him, named it, and called it forth.

There is power in a name, even a nickname. If this is the case with human beings, how much more so in the act of acknowledging and calling upon the name of our Creator.