

קְדוּשָׁה

“We will sanctify Your Name . . .”

The third prayer of the Eighteen Prayers (שְׁמוֹנֵי עָשָׂרָה, *sh'monei esrei*) is the “Kedushah,” which means “sanctification.” Our word “sanctify” means “to set apart,” so when we talk about “sanctifying Your Name,” we mean to set apart G-d’s name so that everyone knows He is the One and only true G-d, and that He is different than all the false gods which people “make-believe” actually exist.

This prayer begins: “We will sanctify Your Name in this world just as they sanctify it in heaven above.” It is this prayer to which Yeshua Himself made reference when, teaching His own talmidim to pray, He began: “Our Father in Heaven, holy is Your Name! May Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.”

The first thing we need to know about as we study this third prayer of the *sh'monei esrei* is what we mean by G-d’s Name. In the ancient times, people gave their children a name that would identify what kind of person they were or what kind of person they hoped they would be. For instance, when Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, it was because G-d had promised he would be the “Father of many (nations),” which is what Av (father) Raham (multitude) means! So when we talk about G-d’s Name, we understand that the Name He has tells us something very important about what He is like. Actually, G-d has told us that He has many names (that’s because He is so good, and we need to understand how His goodness has many different expressions). For instance, one of His names is אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי, El Shaddai, which means the “G-d who gives children.” Sometimes He is known just as אֱלֹהִים, El, which means “Sovereign” or “King.” He is also known as אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, which identifies Him as the Creator, and יְהוָה, *Yah*, which is a name emphasizing that He is Eternal. The Name that He has given as His memorial Name, or the Name that identifies Him as the G-d Who acts in our lives (and the history of the world) is יְהוָה, the Name we are not sure how to pronounce (because the scribes of ancient times, afraid the Name would be misused, refused to write the vowels when they wrote this Name, and the exact pronunciation has been forgotten). Since we don’t know it’s exact sound, we substitute אֲדֹנָי, *Adonai*, (which means “Master” or “L-rd”) whenever we come to pronounce this Name, and await the return of Yeshua to hear exactly how the Name is pronounced.

Since these names of G-d (and there are others as well) tell us something important about G-d Himself, we should always be very careful how we use the names of G-d. We should not speak them in an unkind way, or even in a joking way. We should always remember that G-d’s Name is sacred, and that when we speak His Name, we are reminding ourselves and others of how great He is, and how kind He is to us.

But we also “sanctify the Name” in our world when we do the mitzvot that He has commanded us to do. When we live according to His ways, we tell everyone around us that we worship the One true G-d, and that He is different than all the other made-up gods of the pagan nations. In living according to His Torah, we “sanctify His Name in this world, just like it is sanctified in heaven.”

Psa. 8:9

O Adonai, our
Master,
How majestic is
Your Name in
all the earth!

