

PARASHAT SHEMINI

(EIGHTH)

LEVITICUS 9:1-11:47

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

2 Samuel 6:1-7:17

Testimony of Yeshua

On Yeshua our great High Priest: **Hebrews 8:1-6**

On the altar of incense: **Luke 1:8-11**

On YHVH's judgment against unfaithful servants: **Acts 5:1-11**

On the qualifications for leadership within the congregation of the righteous: **1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9**

On clean and unclean meats: **1 Timothy 4:3-5**

On being holy (set-apart) vessels of YHVH's Spirit: **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 9:1 The Priestly Service Begins: Sin, Elevation and Peace Offerings Performed
- 9:24 The Fire of YHVH Consumes the Elevation Offering
- 10:1 YHVH Executes Nadab and Abihu for Offering up Strange Fire upon the Altar
- 10:8 The Prohibition Against Drinking Intoxicants While Ministering in the Tabernacle
- 10:12 The Priest and His Family Permitted to Eat the Remainder of the Day's Elevation and Peace Offerings
- 10:17 The Dispute Between Moses and Aaron
- 11:1 The Laws of *Kashrut* (Clean and Unclean Meats)

Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion)

1 10:1-7, Nadab and Abihu were executed by the fire of YHVH for not following his commandments. Likewise, at the end of the Messianic Age (Millennium) unrepentant sinners will be executed by the fire of YHVH in the lake of fire (Rev 20:15). We are now living in an age where, thankfully, most of our sinful actions are not met with instant divine judgment (the case of Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts would be a notable exception). Does knowing that YHVH will not instantly "zap" us with the proverbial lightning bolt from heaven when we sin cause us to become lax and even calloused toward sin in our lives? Do we truly walk in the fear of YHVH? Do we fear the consequences of sin even though the results may not be immediate? How loose is your spiritual walk? How many hidden sins that no one knows about do you have that you are failing to deal with? The path of righteousness is becoming narrower and narrower.

There are levels of rewards in Yeshua's kingdom. Not everyone will be "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven". Some will be the least, and many will not even be there (Matt 5:19).

2 10:13, *Because it is due.* In the days before coinage, a man's wages were weighed out in silver bullion or bartering occurred. In the case of the Levites (including the priests), they were given a portion of the offerings and sacrifices as their wages for serving the people. It can be the attitude of those in congregations that ministers should serve the people for free—without pay, and they therefore refuse to give. This is contrary to the Torah, which commands the Israelites to remunerate the Levites for their services (see Lev 27:30,32). What does YHVH call the tithe to his ministers? (Read Num 18:21,26.)

Although the Testimony of Yeshua doesn't uphold the concept of tithing per se, it does enforce the Torah principle of giving to the ministry. For example, Paul instructed the believers in Philippi about giving. He addresses the issue of supporting his ministry and that by their faithfulness in giving to him it is in effect giving an offering (a sacrifice) to YHVH. What did Paul say would be the benefits to the redeemed believer of giving? (Note Phil 4:16–19.) What does he say is the responsibility we have toward those who are feeding us spiritually? (Read 1 Tim 5:17–18.) Paul backed up this assertion by quoting a Torah principle here.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."

What are some other benefits of giving to YHVH's spiritual work on earth? (Look at Mal 3:10–11.)

To not tithe, according to the Scriptures is called "robbing Elohim" (Mal 3:8–9). What happens to those who don't tithe? (See Mal 3:9.) Those who don't support the ministry are guilty of what? (See Mal 3:8–9.) Paul rebukes the congregation in Corinth for not supporting him financially, and states that he has "robbed" other churches who did support him, thus forcing him to use their offerings to pay his ministry expenses in Corinth (2 Cor 11:8–9). Was Corinth the only church in the first century that failed to support its spiritual teachers? (Note Phil 4:15). As you can see, the problem seemed to be widespread then as it is today.

3 10:16, *Diligently sought or inquired insistently* (ASET). According to one Jewish tradition, these two words are the exact halfway mark of the words of the Torah. "This is to teach us that the entire Torah revolves around constant inquiry. One must never stop studying and seeking deeper and broader understanding of the Torah" (*The ArtScroll Vayikra/Leviticus Commentary*, p. 159). How many times have you read a passage in the Word of Elohim only to receive a fresh revelation or to find a new nugget of understanding? Why is this? (Read Heb 4:12; John 14:25–26; 16:13; also Ps 119:30; Isa 55:11.) It must be noted that other Jewish traditions place the center of the Torah in other passages. (These options are discussed in the *Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin* 30a.)

4 11:1–47, Let's briefly discuss the subject of clean and unclean meats. There are many issues here that need to be explored. How serious are you about obedience? Is your belly your god? (See Phil 3:19; Rom 16:18.) Do your taste buds or the Word of YHVH rule your life? Remember, Torah covers all aspects of life: physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, civil, agricultural, political, jurisprudence, religious, and economic. Torah is a very holistic handbook on life. Are you one who takes the (humanistic) pick-and-choose approach to Torah-obedience? "I'll obey only the biblical laws that suit me." Such an approach is akin to what the serpent told Adam and Eve when he said, "You can have it your way ... YHVH didn't really mean what he said when it comes to obedience."

5 The biblical kosher laws involve many areas such as health issues, holiness (not defiling the body, the temple of YHVH's Set-Apart Spirit), and separation issues—how we're to act, live, eat, worship, think, dress and talk differently than the heathens around us. The word *kosher* derives from the Hebrew word *kasher/ כָּשֵׁר* (*Strong's H3787*) meaning "to be straight, right, acceptable" (see Est 8:5; Eccl 11:6; 10:10). YHVH has called his people out of this world and sanctified (set-apart) them to be "straight, right and acceptable" to him. Therefore, YHVH hasn't give us the liberty to act, speak, dress, eat and live the way the heathens do. He's called us to a higher standard. We can't expect to be called the children of the Most High, yet live

like the children of the world. We must choose whom we are going to serve (see Josh 24:15): YHVH or mammon and this world (Matt 6:24).

6 11:4,47, Unclean. The word *unclean* is the Hebrew word *tameh* meaning “defiled, impure, polluted ethically, ritually or religiously” and the word *clean* is the Hebrew word *tabor* meaning “pure physically, ceremonially, morally, ethically.” In verse 43, YHVH says that in eating unclean meats one becomes *abominable* (or *detestable, filthy*). In Ezekiel 22:26, YHVH rebukes his people because, “Her priests have violated my Torah-law, and have profaned my set-apart/*kadosh* things: they have put no difference between the set-apart/*kadosh* and profane/polluted/common, neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.” In Leviticus 11:45, the Torah states, “For I am YHVH that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim. You shall therefore be set apart, for I am set apart/holy.” What is YHVH trying to tell us here about the foods we eat? Is this more than just an issue of physical health? Why the mention of leaving Egypt here?

7 In 2 Corinthians 6:16–17, we read:

And what agreement does the temple of Elohim have with idols? For **you are the temple of the living Elohim**; as Elohim has said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate,” says the Master, “**and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.**” (emphasis added)

The issue of clean or pure and unclean, polluted or abominable meats is not simply a dietary or health consideration, but a spiritual issue with YHVH. Both Moses (Lev 19:2) and the apostolic writers had a clear sense of the fact that without holiness no one will see YHVH (Heb 12:14), and that holiness or being *kadosh* or set-apart from the ways, lifestyles, ideologies of this world (i.e., from spiritual Egypt) is an absolute requirement of YHVH for his people. Is it possible to spiritualize away the concept of set apartness and still be true to the Word of Elohim? Can one be spiritually sanctified (set-apart) through the atoning work of Yeshua at the cross, but then have a polluted lifestyle? In other words, can one follow the spirit of the law and violate the letter and still be acceptable to YHVH? What did James say about faith without works (Jas 2:20)? What did Yeshua teach at the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) about uniting the letter and the spirit of the law and practicing both? (Specifically read Matt 5:21–48 for the answer.)

8 Leviticus 11:10, 20, 23, 41, 42, Abomination. Heb. *sheqets* (*Strong's* H8263) meaning “a detestable thing or idol.” It can also mean “to make abominable” or “contaminate.” This word is also used in connection with idolatrous practices, either referring to the idols themselves as being abhorrent and detestable in Elohim’s sight, or to something associated with the idolatrous ritual (*TWOT*, pp. 954–955; e.g. Jer 16:18; Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 2 Chron 15:8). Not only are the idols an abomination, but those who worship them become detestable as well (Hos 9:10). In fact, the word *abomination* in “abomination of desolation” as mentioned in Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 is the same Hebrew word. It is generally viewed that this prophecy was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes (a prophetic foreshadow of the Antichrist) set up an idol of Zeus in the Jerusalem temple (*Ibid.*). It should be clear that when YHVH uses *sheqets* (or its cognates) in relationship to certain practices (e.g., eating unclean meats or idol worship) that he is attempting to impress upon his people the extreme gravity of the sins they are committing against him. So the next time you start to eat that pork chop, bacon or shrimp, think twice!

9 11:47, Make a difference or distinguish between. See also Ezek 22:26; 44:33. Swimming upstream against the current is never easy. Yet this is exactly what Yeshua expects of his people with regard to the ways of this world, which seem right to the carnal minded man, yet lead to death and destruction (see Prov 16:25). Yeshua instructed his disciples to be salt and light in this world (Matt 5:13–14), and that they were to be “in the world” but not “of this world” (John 17:11 cp. 14). How did Yeshua say the world would react against those who walk contrary to that which is the accepted norm according to the world’s standards? (Read John 15:18–20; 16:2,35; 17:14.) What are the blessed rewards of those who are persecuted because they stand for righteousness? (See Matt 5:11–12.)

10 **Leviticus 11:44, *Be holy [Heb. *kadosh*], for I am holy [kadosh]***. (See also verse 45; Lev 19:2; 20:26; 1 Pet 1:16.) How do we as redeemed believers initially **become** *kadosh* or set-apart? This occurs only through the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim at the time of our salvation.

And from Yeshua Messiah, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. (Rev 1:5)

“Come now, and let us reason together,” says YHVH. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isa 1:18)

How does one *stay* set-apart or sanctified and *stay* in fellowship with a *kadosh* Elohim? This is accomplished by staying under the blood of Yeshua the Lamb and confessing and forsaking sin (i.e., violation of the Torah-law of Elohim—1 John 3:4) on a regular basis:

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness [sin or Torahlessness], we lie, and do not the truth [i.e., Torah/YHVH’s instructions in righteousness], but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Messiah Yeshua his Son cleans us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:6–9)

11 What are some other ways we can defile, pollute or destroy the spiritual temple of our bodies? Examples could be alcoholism, nicotine, suicide (self-murder), eating junk food, pornography, illicit sex, watching immoral and unrighteous movies and television, engaging in gossip or slander, entertaining wrong thoughts (lust, bitterness, pride, etc.), desecrating the Sabbath and YHVH’s feasts for example.

12 YHVH cares about our entire person: body, soul and spirit (1 Thess 5:23). We are to worship and serve him with the totality of our being (with all our heart, soul and might—Deut 6:5; Mark 12:30). Isn’t obeying the commandments concerning clean and unclean meats a way to love YHVH with not only the mind, but the body as well? What did Yeshua instruct us to do in John 14:15? Isn’t it about love for our Heavenly Father and a desire to be *kadosh* like him? When YHVH created man, he made us in his very own likeness or image (Gen 1:26). Is not YHVH transforming and renewing us by the washing of the water of his word (Eph 5:26), and the work of the Set-Apart Spirit in our lives and conforming us into the image of his Son who is both the Written and Living Torah-Word of Elohim (Rom 8:29; 12:2; John 1:1–14)?

13 Did YHVH ever change his standards of holiness and righteousness? What do Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 say? Does he have one set of standards for the “Jews” and another for the “Gentiles?” Is he a respecter of persons? (See Acts 10:34.)

14 There is a saying, you are what you eat. Adam and Eve sinned when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That which is pure and set-apart or clean is *good*, while that which is polluted, defiled or unclean is *evil* in the eyes of YHVH. The word *Babylon* means “mixture” or “confusion” and in the last days, YHVH is calling his people out of spiritual Babylon (Rev 18:4). Are you feeding from the tree of knowledge by eating both clean (good) and unclean (evil) meats, or from the tree of life by eating only food that is pure or sanctified by the Word of Elohim (1 Tim 4:5)? Have you turned away from eating abominable food physically and polluted food spiritually (traditions of men which nullify the Word of Elohim, Torahlessness, lies, false doctrines, false teachings, false prophets and false messiahs)?

A Brief Explanation of Controversial Passages in the Testimony of Yeshua as They Relate to the Biblical Kosher Laws

Excerpted from “Food for Thought—The Heart & Spirit Behind the Biblical Kosher Laws” by Natan Lawrence
http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/food_for_thought.pdf

Let’s first establish some facts.

- ☞ YHVH’s character is perfect and righteous. What was right and righteous for him in the past will remain so in the future. His standards of righteousness and perfection do not change. (Ps 100:5; Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17). They are immutable. He is not a man that he should lie (Num 23:19).
- ☞ YHVH does not have one set of rules for one group of people and another set of rules and standards of righteousness for another group of people. YHVH is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Deut 10:17; Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; 1 Pet 1:17). His ways are straight and narrow (Matt 7:14). His Torah—ways are truth (Ps 119:142, 151; John 17:17). Yeshua, the Word of Elohim made flesh (John 1:1–14), is truth and light. Truth *is* light (Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23). A law of physics declares that free of outside influences light always travels in a straight line. Similarly, free of the influences of the traditions of men by which the Word of Elohim is made of non-effect (according to Yeshua in Matt 15:6), the truth of YHVH’s Word remains straight, true and unchanged.
- ☞ Since Yeshua was the Word of Elohim in flesh-form and in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9), then his physical life on earth was a reflection of the perfect will and character of YHVH Elohim (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Matt 26:39). As such, all of his words, thoughts and deeds lined up perfectly with the Torah.
- ☞ Because Yeshua was the Torah-law of Elohim made flesh, he in no way would have abrogated or nullified it (rendered it inoperative and non-binding, see John 1:1–14; Matt 5:16–17).
- ☞ The apostles were commanded to be faithful to the teachings of Yeshua and to carry them forth, teaching their disciples *to observe all* that Yeshua had commanded them (Matt 28:20).
- ☞ Paul was a follower or imitator of Yeshua and urged believers to follow him in this (1 Cor 11:1).
- ☞ Paul, the one who many claim freed us from the Torah-law actually spoke favorably of the Torah-law (Rom 7:12, 14) and remained obedient to it until his dying day (Acts 24:14; 25:8; 28:17, 23).

For an explanation of controversial Scriptures from a pro-Torah perspective, please read the teaching article by Ya’acov Natan Lawrence entitled “Food for Thought—The Heart and Spirit Behind the Biblical Kosher Laws,” which is located at http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/food_for_thought.pdf. The following difficult scriptures that many church teachers believe condones the eating of biblically unclean foods are explained:

- Matthew 15:11 and Mark 7:18–19. Is Yeshua declaring all foods, both clean and unclean, to be edible in contradiction of the Torah?
- Acts 10. What about Peter’s vision?
- Luke 10:8 and 1 Corinthians 10:27. Do these Scriptures command us to eat whatever someone places before us in order not to offend them?
- Romans 14:2. Is this scripture saying that those who are spiritually weak or immature keep the biblical dietary laws, while those who are spiritually strong or mature can eat anything?
- Romans 14:14. Is Paul saying that laws of clean and unclean meats are irrelevant?
- Colossians 2:16. Is Paul saying here that we can break YHVH’s Torah, including his biblical food laws, for all was fulfilled in Yeshua?
- 1 Timothy 4:3–5. Is Paul saying here that all we have to do is say a prayer over our food and unclean food suddenly becomes clean?

HAFTORAH READING — 2 SAMUEL 6:1-7:17

Despise Not the Anointing of YHVH

1 6:1–2, 16–23, Some purveyors of dead, stale or fossilized religious systems may turn their noses skyward in arrogance at the tokens or symbols of YHVH's Presence. On the other hand, there are those who are partial to equally petrified and lifeless religious systems that look to the presence of religious icons to somehow breathe life into that which would otherwise be spiritually dead. This can easily become nothing more than thinly veiled idolatry and relic worship. Neither was the case with David when he sought the return of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The ark was, for the Israelites, the symbol of Elohim's blessed Presence among them. With passionate zeal from a heart of worship, David longed for the ark's placement in Jerusalem in a place of honor, and YHVH honored David's desire.

As physical humans, YHVH knows that we need *points of contact* to aid us in connecting to the deeper things of life—especially to those things of the heavenly realm. In the physical realm, a cherished photo of a loved one, a wedding ring, a souvenir from a trip, a gift from a friend or a family heirloom may serve to refresh our memories and to stir the emotions reminding us of the people, places or events behind the keepsakes. A *souvenir* is something we purchase while on a trip to remind us of that trip when we return home. The word *souvenir* is a direct borrowing from the French word of the same spelling meaning “to remember.” The power of keepsakes, heirlooms or souvenirs over one's mind and emotions can be so strong that they can cause us to shed a tear, go into a depression, or bring us great joy. Our emotional attachments are so strong to them that often they will be the things that we will retrieve before anything else from our burning home. These things serve as points of contact with important events that have happened in our lives.

In our spiritual lives, we have similar points of contact. It could be a cherished, well-worn Bible or other token of our faith and devotion to YHVH. The Bible shows us that anointing oil or an anointed cloth is a point of contact with YHVH the Healer. Communion and baptism are both points of contact to higher spiritual truths. It is heresy, possibly even idolatry, to say that the water of baptism actually spiritually cleanses the sinner, or the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of the Savior. But they are important in that they are a physical representation of deeper spiritual truths or realities.

Perhaps now we can appreciate David's zeal over the ark of the covenant's return to Jerusalem. Embodied in that box was the very heritage and future of Israel, for it represented YHVH's divine Presence in the midst of his people. David recognized this and knew that like Moses, unless YHVH was with him (Exod 33:14–15), the future looked bleak and he despaired about going forward without YHVH's Presence among them.

What are the items or memories in your spiritual life that serve as points of reference, contacts, milestones, road signs, or souvenirs either reminding you of or pointing you toward YHVH's grace in your life? David literally danced for joy before the people when the ark came into Jerusalem. Do we have such tenderness of emotions, enthusiasm and exuberance about anything spiritual that we, like David, can worship him with total abandon? Or do we, like Michal, David's wife, criticize those who are able to do so? Everything in that ark pointed to Yeshua—the Living Word of Elohim. Do we still possess our first love for Yeshua, or have we lost it? (Read Rev 2:4–5.) What did YHVH-Yeshua threaten to do to the assembly at Ephesus if they did not reignite the passions of their first love for him?

2 6:3–7, While in the house of Abinadab, the ark's presence had become so commonplace such that, as Matthew Henry states in his commentary, the familiarity of it engendered contempt (or at least a casual disregard) for it. Perhaps an irreverence for YHVH's set-apart things had gripped Uzzah's heart prompting him to touch that which was forbidden to do so. In our modern culture, and Christianity is no exception, there is very little respect for authority, one's elders, the law or others' property, much less that which is holy or set-apart. In YHVH's order of things, this is unacceptable behavior. The Scriptures draw strict lines of demarcation between that which is holy (*kadosh* or set-apart) and that which is commonplace or profane. YHVH has designated certain times, places, things and even people to be honored and

respected — even revered. Are we in danger of incurring Elohim’s wrath, as Uzzah did, for not properly recognizing this?

3 **6:16**, [*Michal*] despised [*David*] in her heart. In reality, what was Michal despising — David or the ark itself? Often humans in actuality despise the things of YHVH though they misdirect their disregard and spite toward his human agents. The Torah reveals that the children of Israel’s rebellion against Moses was really against YHVH himself. If the ark was a prophetic picture of Yeshua, then for whom was Michal really showing contempt? Yeshua is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to many people. Many claim to follow Yeshua, yet they despise his Word and messengers. They also despise those who are passionate devotees and worshipers of Yeshua calling them right-wing fanatics, extremists, unbalanced, Bible-thumpers, or Jesus freaks. How passionate for Yeshua and his ways are you? What does YHVH say about this attitude? (Read Rev 3:15–19.)

4 **7:2–3**, This is one of the few examples in the Scriptures where a prophet of YHVH “missed” the Word of Elohim and delivered an inaccurate prophetic word represented as being from YHVH. Unlike many modern “prophets” in the church who deliver “words” from “the Lord” that are inaccurate or fail to come to pass, Nathan quickly recognized his mistake and corrected it. Nathan heard a word from YHVH, but he “missed” it in that YHVH wanted to raise up the house of David instead of David raising up the house (or temple) of Elohim, which the following verses go on to show us was the accurate word YHVH wanted delivered. This is an important point to which our attention needs to be called.

The office of a prophet is a valid one — even in our day (see Eph 4:11).

Because many in religious circles today wrongly teach a cessationist view regarding the gifts of the Spirit and the commonly-called five-fold ministry offices of Ephesians 4:11, the office of the prophet is often demeaned in an effort to invalidate its present legitimacy. Furthermore, in light of the fact that the church-system has produced so many self-proclaimed “prophets” who are no more than prophets for hire seeking financial *profit* — giving all the more fuel to the fires of those claiming the prophetic gifts are passé — what must our view be toward those who have prophetic giftings? What does the Bible say? (Read Joel 2:28.) What should be our view of prophecy in our assemblies? (Read 1 Thess 5:19–20; 1 Cor 14:1 and 39.) If anyone gives forth a prophetic word what should be our response to it? (Read 1 Cor 14:28–31.) Note what verse 29 says about prophets judging the words of other prophets. This is something that seldom occurs in the church system. How do the Scriptures define a false prophet? (Read Deut 13:1–11; Jer 23:9ff; Ezek 13 and 22:25ff.)

The Ministry of the Prophet in Its Hebraic Context Transmitting the Oracles of YHVH Accurately

by Ya’acov Natan Lawrence

The Prophetic Ministry Within the Congregational Setting

THE OPERATION OF THE GENUINE GIFT OF PROPHECY IS TO BE ENCOURAGED in the congregational setting for the edification, exhortation and comfort of the individual members of the body of Messiah (1 Cor 12–14). But YHVH is not the author of confusion. It is the duty of wise and discerning spiritual leadership to protect the local congregation of saints against confusion and manifestations of the flesh and the devil. When the genuine Spirit-led prophetic gifts are allowed to function within the congregation, the body of Yeshua is built up, comforted and exhorted (1 Cor 14:3), and even sometimes corrected. When counterfeit prophetic words come forth masquerading themselves as the genuine thing, the opposite occurs. Into the body of believers is injected confusion, strife, division, contention and conflict. These are the fruits of the flesh or demonic activity and are not from the Spirit of Elohim.

In order that spiritual life and not confusion occur, the building up of the body of Yeshua and not its tearing down, and the genuine Spirit-led gifts occur and not manifestations of the flesh or demonic counterfeit gifts, it is imperative that we understand what the Scriptures say about the office of a prophet and the gift of prophecy. The purpose of this teaching, therefore, is to bring clarity to these issues and to do so in light of the Hebrew roots of

our faith. We also hope to offer some guidelines that will allow the genuine prophetic gifts to be able to function unhindered within the body. At the same time, we will offer some guidelines that will help leaders to discern those manifestations that are not from the Spirit of Elohim.

A Scriptural Overview on Prophets and the Gift of Prophecy

A Prophet Knows the Heart of YHVH

A prophet is one who hears the word, heart and will — or oracles — of YHVH and accurately transmits what he has heard only to those to whom YHVH has told him to go, and only when and where he has been told to go. If that prophet does not follow YHVH's specific instructions in this regard, then YHVH will hold him accountable. If he repents for his disobedience (like Nathan the prophet did when he told David to build the temple, 2 Sam 7:3–17) then he will still remain a prophet before YHVH. If he does not repent, then YHVH considers him to be a false prophet and YHVH's judgment will come against that false prophet (e.g. Jer 23:9–40) ...

To continue reading this article "*Understanding the Ministry of the Prophet*" by Ya'acov Natan Lawrence, go to <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/propheticmin.pdf>.