

Midrash *Sh'mini* ("Eighth") Leviticus 9:1 – 11:47

This Portion connects in time back to the last chapter of Exodus

Aaron's Offerings

Leviticus 9:1-24

Moses Assembled the Tabernacle on Nisan 1

The Priesthood was then consecrated for 7 days

Therefore, the 8th Day (Nisan 8) starts this Portion

"New Beginning"

We will revisit this
in Numbers 7-9

"Consecrate" מָלֵא *Malah* "to fill (the hand)"

We come before God with empty hands and He fills them!

Aaron consecrates his 4 sons

The Rabbis teach that this offering was to atone for the Golden Calf

Who fashioned the Golden Calf?

"Today the LORD will appear to you."

Compare to "the thief in the night"

verse 4

I Thess 5:2 & II Pet 3:10

Aaron's Offerings: For Aaron's Sins:

Calf for a **Sin Offering** (Purification)

Ram for a **Burnt Offering** (Surrender of Self)

For the Sins of the People:

Goat for a **Sin Offering**

Calf & Lamb for **Burnt Offering**

Bull & Ram for **Peace Offering** (Fellowship with God)

Meal Offering (Consecration of Labor)

Pronounced the Aaronic Blessing (before it's written in Torah) upon the People

Verse 23

Fire came down & consumed the Burnt Offering

Reminiscent of Elijah & the Prophets of *Ba'al*

Perhaps how God signified the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice & not Cain's?

I Kings 18:1-40

Genesis 4:4-5

Everybody is now *echad*, but.....

The Death of Nadab & Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-20

The Sons of Aaron: *Nadab* = "Generous" (Firstborn)

Avihu = "He is My Father"

Eleazar = "God Has Helped"

Ithamar = "Coast of Palms"

Strange Fire = Unconsecrated – something that was not commanded. Possibly:

Used fire from other than the Altar of Sacrifice (from Heaven)?

Out of God's Timing – the daily sacrifices were finished?

Didn't consult Aaron?

They went beyond the veil into Holy of Holies?

What happened to these two??

Consider the High Priest's garments:

Materials of the Ephod

"Bells" on the hem פְּעָמוֹן *pa'amon*

Root of פָּעַם *pa'am* "to strike"

What do these describe?

Exodus 28:5

Compare this incident with that of *Ananias & Saphira*

Acts 5:1-11

The same fire that marks the acceptable sacrifices also condemns these two.

God holds leadership to the strictest standards of justice

Were they drunk? See verse 9

Aaron & the two remaining sons are expected to carry on normally – no mourning
Duties of Priest take precedence over personal grief
Not because He is cruel – but because He is HOLY!
Compare with Psalm 39:7-11 & Isaiah 53:7

“Put a difference between holy and unholy.”

Verse 10

Distinguish **בדל** *badal* “a difference”

Disagreement between Moses & Aaron:

Verses 16-20

Aaron was to eat the Sin Offering, but burned it instead
..... just as his 2 sons were burnt!

Aaron’s act of mourning ... and Moses understood

We come into God’s Presence on HIS Terms

Clean & Unclean Animals

Leviticus 11:1-47

Purposes of the Dietary Laws:

God desires healthy souls in healthy bodies
Disease is a sign of weakness, sin & failure

Discerning between clean & unclean sharpens our discernment between holy & unholy

Trains us to master our appetites: both physically & spiritually

Fosters self-surrender (obedience), not self-righteousness (salvation)

Clean Animals: Separate hoof
Cloven hoofed
Chews the cud

Unclean Animals: Beasts of prey (meat eaters)

The presence of just one clean attribute is considered worse than having none; denotes hypocrisy
Also speaks to the issue of mingling.....

Clean Fish: Both fins & scales
Examples of unclean fish: sharks & cat fish (no scales)

Unclean Birds: All birds of prey
No definition nor examples of clean

Clean Insects: 4 types of locusts
John the Immerser ate locusts & wild honey

Unclean Things:
Dead carcass of any type of animal, clean or unclean
Cleanliness (holiness) is NEVER transferred by contact – only uncleanness

Anything that creeps on the ground or lives below ground

Anything that comes in contact with a dead carcass

It’s all about separation; about not mixing the holy with the unholy

“You shall therefore be holy, for I am Holy.”

Verse 45

Haftarah: II Samuel 6:1 – 7:17 Bringing the Ark Back to Jerusalem
Abinadab (“Father of *Nadab*) has stored the Ark for David
It is his son *Uzzah* (“Strength”) who touched the Ark to steady it & was struck dead

Brit Chadashah: Acts 10:9-22 & 28 Peter’s Vision of Clean & Unclean People