

## I Pentateuch

### A. From this week's portion:

#### Leviticus, chapter 9

1: And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel;...

6: And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you....

22: And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.

23: And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.

24: And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

#### Leviticus, chapter 10

1: And **Nadab and Abihu**, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם.

2: And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

3: Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace...

4: And Moses called **Mishael and Elzaphan**, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp...

5: So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said.

6: And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto **Eleazar and unto Ithamar**, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled...

16: And Moses **diligently sought** the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying, דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ

17: Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

18: Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded.

19: And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin offering today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

20: And when Moses heard that, he was content.

B. In other portions:

Ex. 33

18: And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19: And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20: And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21: And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Numbers 16

19: And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

20: And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

21: Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

22: And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

Numbers 20

3: And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

4: And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5: And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

6: And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

Exodus 16

2: And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

3: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger...

7: And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD...

Exodus 24

16: And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17: And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

**II Sefer Emunot v'Deot 2:10 (Book of Beliefs and Opinions)**

**III Shir Hakavod ("Hymn of the Glory" attributed to R. Judah of Regensburg)**

I sing hymns and compose songs  
Because my soul longs for thee.

My soul desires thy shelter,  
To know all thy mystery.

When I speak of thy glory,  
My heart yearns after thy love.

Hence I utter thy glories,  
And offer thee songs of love.

I tell thy praise, though I have not seen thee;  
I desire thee, though I have not known thee.

Through thy prophets amidst thy worshipers  
Didst thou show forth thy majestic splendor.

Thy greatness and thy power  
They traced in thy mighty work.

They imagined thee, not as thou art really;  
They described thee by thy acts only.

They depicted thee in countless visions;  
Despite all comparisons thou art One.

They saw in thee both old age and young age,  
With the hair of thy head now grey, now black;

Age in judgement day, youth in time of war,  
As a warrior whose hands fight for him,

A helmet of triumph tied on his head,  
His holy right arm bringing victory;

His head is drenched with dew of light,  
His locks are filled with shards of the night.

He glories in me, he delights in me;  
My crown of beauty he shall ever be.

His head is like pure gold; on the forehead  
He engraved his holy name.

For grace and glory, beauty and splendor,  
His own people has made a crown for him.

The locks of his head are such as in youth;  
His curls, forming countless ringlets, are black...

May his people be a crown in his hand,  
A royal diadem of great beauty.

Borne by him, he uplifted and crowned them;  
Being precious to him, he honored them.

His glory rests on me, and mine on him:  
He is near me when I call to him.

Dazzling he is and ruddy, his clothes red,  
When from treading Edom's winepress he comes.

The meek one was shown a tefillin knot tefillin  
When the Lord's image was before his eyes.

Pleased with his people, he glorifies them;  
Enthroned in glories, he glories in them.

Thy chief word is truth, Creator of all;  
Care for thy people who see thee forever...

May my praise be deemed a crown for thy head;  
Let my prayer rise like incense before thee.

Let a poor man's song be precious to thee  
As the song that was sung at the offerings.

May my blessings rise to God who sustains,  
Creates and brings forth, the Just, the Mighty.

As for my prayer, nod thy approval,  
And accept it as the choicest incense.

May my meditation be sweet to thee,  
For all my being is yearning for thee.

### III Isaiah Chapter 6

ג וקרא זה אל-זה ואמר קדוש | קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות מלא כל-הארץ כבודו:

3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

# Shemini @ the DC Beit Midrash

Monday, March 24, 2003; 21 Adar II

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Welcome to the DC Beit Midrash!

The *Chumash* (Five Books of Moses) is divided into 54 portions, which Jews read sequentially each week in services. This Shabbat, we will be reading Parshat *Shemini* from the book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus). Tonight, a member of our community will lead us in a text-study of this portion. The voices of both past and contemporary interpreters will inform our discussion.

Below you will find a summary of this week's Torah portion, along with brief biographies of the commentators cited. The presentation will be followed by *chevruta* (paired) study on a subject of your choice.

## ***This week's parsha (Torah portion): Shemini, Vayikra (Leviticus) 9:1-11:47***

*Parshat Shemini* opens with Moses' instructions to Aaron and his sons for bringing offerings to the sanctuary as atonement for any sins that they or the people may have committed. Aaron follows Moses' instructions carefully and places the offerings on the sanctuary altar. Afterwards two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, decide to bring fire offerings of their own. Because they have brought offerings not commanded by God, they are punished by death. Moses tells Aaron and his other sons, Eleazar and Itamar, not to mourn for them. Later God tells Moses and Aaron which foods are permitted for eating and which are forbidden to the people of Israel.

(Excerpted from Harvey Fields, *A Torah Commentary for Our Times*, p 111.)

## ***This week's sources:***

### **Isaiah, Chapter 6 (c. 740-700 BCE)**

The Book of Isaiah is located in the *N'viim* (Prophets) rubric of the Bible. This poetic text is set in the First Temple period, during one of the most turbulent times in Jerusalem's history (c. 740-700 BCE). Israel is beset by internal social turmoil and external threats from Assyrian expansionism. Authorship is traditionally attributed to Isaiah ben Amoz (c. 740-681 BCE), a prophet from an affluent Jerusalem family who was an outspoken mouthpiece of the common people. (Academic scholars, however, have suggested that chapters 40-66 were written by a "Second Isaiah"). In this book, Isaiah counsels a passive political and military approach in the face of Assyrian expansionism and rebukes the upper Jewish class' corruption. He puts his faith in divine salvation, which he claims will follow from a necessary change in the moral leadership and in the people's spiritual tenacity. Chapter 6 is Isaiah's call to prophesy and vision of the heavenly court.

(Adapted from [www.joi.org/celebrate/rosh/glossary.shtml](http://www.joi.org/celebrate/rosh/glossary.shtml),  
[www.bible.org/docs/ot/books/isa/isa-intr.htm](http://www.bible.org/docs/ot/books/isa/isa-intr.htm), and  
[www.us-israel.org/jsource/biography/Isaiah.html](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/biography/Isaiah.html)).

### **Saadia Gaon (882-942)**

Saadia Gaon lived in Babylonia from 882-942 CE under Muslim rule. Because the Jewish intelligentsia of Babylonia spoke Arabic and were fairly easily accepted into the Arab culture, Saadia struggled to keep upper-class Jews Jewish. His philosophic work, *Emunot v'Daot*, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, defended the rational underpinnings of Judaism and showed logically that every rational Jew could believe in the Torah as well as Aristotle and Plato. By applying both the accepted philosophical methodology and the language revered by the Muslim culture, Saadia succeeded in refocusing many semi-assimilated Jews back on Torah and *Halachah*. Beyond this treatise, Saadia also wrote the first Hebrew grammar book, a Hebrew dictionary plus a compendium of rhyming words for Hebrew poets, and the first Arabic translation of the Bible.

(Adapted from [www.us-israel.org/jsource/biography/SaadiaGaon.html](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/biography/SaadiaGaon.html)).

### **Emunot v'Daot**

**Rabbi Judah of Regensburg (1150-1217)**

*Shir HaKavod* (Hymn of Glory) is attributed to Rabbi Judah of Regensburg, a noted philosopher, poet, saint, and mystic. The hymn is found in most prayer books and is colloquially referred to by its opening phrase, "*Anim Zemirot*." Most Orthodox and some Conservative synagogues of the United States sing the hymn at the conclusion of Shabbat services. It is almost never recited in Reform congregations on account of its anthropomorphism.

(Adapted from Solomon Moshowitz and [learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/sources/judahhehasid.shtml](http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/sources/judahhehasid.shtml)).

**Shir HaKavod (Hymn of Glory)*****This week's teacher:*****Solomon Moshowitz**

Solomon Moshowitz is Immediate Past Chair of the National Havurah Committee. He is a founding member of the *Kotli Kanay Chevra Shas* (Talmud Study Group) and lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. For a living, Mosh splices genes.

**Diligen@cs.com*****This week's food sponsor:*****Anonymous*****This week's food shlepper:*****Leah Weissman**

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Wanna teach, think about teaching, or suggest a teacher? [jnovoy@post.harvard.edu](mailto:jnovoy@post.harvard.edu)

Wanna sponsor food? [Ariellabock@hotmail.com](mailto:Ariellabock@hotmail.com)

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