

Parsha and Manuscript: Shemini

Leviticus 9:1-6 – on the eighth day

1. And it was on the eighth day, that Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel.	א וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי קָרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
2. And he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf as a sin offering, and a ram as a burnt offering, [both] unblemished, and bring [them] near before the Lord.	ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן קַח־לָךְ עֵגֶל בְּדִבְקָר לַחֲטָאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה תְּמִימִם וְהִקְרַב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
3. And to the children of Israel, you shall speak, saying, "Take a he goat as a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, [both] in their first year and [both] unblemished, as a burnt offering,	ג וְאֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר קְחוּ שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים לַחֲטָאת וְעֵגֶל וְכֶבֶשׂ בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם לְעֹלָה:
4. and an ox and a ram as peace offerings, to slaughter before the Lord, and a meal offering mixed with oil, for today the Lord is appearing to you.' "	ד וְשׂוֹר וְאַיִל לְשִׁלְמִים לְזֶבֶח לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּמִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן כִּי הַיּוֹם יִהְיֶה נִרְאָה אֲלֵיכֶם:
5. And they took what Moses had commanded, to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire community approached and stood before the Lord.	ה וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה אֶל־פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּקְרְבוּ כָל־הָעֵדָה וַיַּעֲמְדוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
6. And Moses said, "This is the thing the Lord has commanded; do [it], and the glory of the Lord will appear to you."	ו וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה תַּעֲשׂוּ וַיֵּרָא אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד יְהוָה:

Leviticus 9:23-24 – resting of the Divine presence

23 And Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting. Then they came out and blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.	כג וַיָּבֹאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם:
24 And fire went forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fats upon the altar, and all the people saw, sang praises, and fell upon their faces.	כד וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת־הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־הַחֲלָבִים וַיֵּרָא כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּרְנְנוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם:

Leviticus 10:1-3 – passing of the two sons of Aaron

- 1 And Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his pan, put fire in them, and placed incense upon it, and they brought before the Lord foreign fire, which He had not commanded them.
- 2 And fire went forth from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.
- 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, [when He said], 'I will be sanctified through those near to Me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' " And Aaron was silent.

Leviticus 10:8-11 – prohibition to drink wine

- 8 And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying,
- 9 Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication, neither you nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting, so that you shall not die. [This is] an eternal statute for your generations,
- 10 to distinguish between holy and profane and between unclean and clean,
- 11 and to instruct the children of Israel regarding all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses.

Midrash Vayikra Rabba

Rabbi Ishmael says: [They died because] they had entered the sanctuary after having drunk wine.

The proof is that after their death, [Scripture] admonished the survivors that they may not enter the sanctuary after having drunk wine.

This is analogous to a king who had a faithful attendant. [When he found him standing at tavern entrances, he severed his head in silence and appointed another attendant in his place. We would not know why he put the first to death, but for his enjoining the second thus, "You must not enter the doorway of taverns," from which we know that for such a reason he had put the first one to death. Thus [it is said], "And fire went forth from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." But we would not know why they [Nadab and Abihu] died, but for His commanding Aaron, "Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication." We know from this that they died precisely on account of the wine. For this reason Scripture showed love to Aaron by directing the divine utterance to him alone, thus, "Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication

Rashi

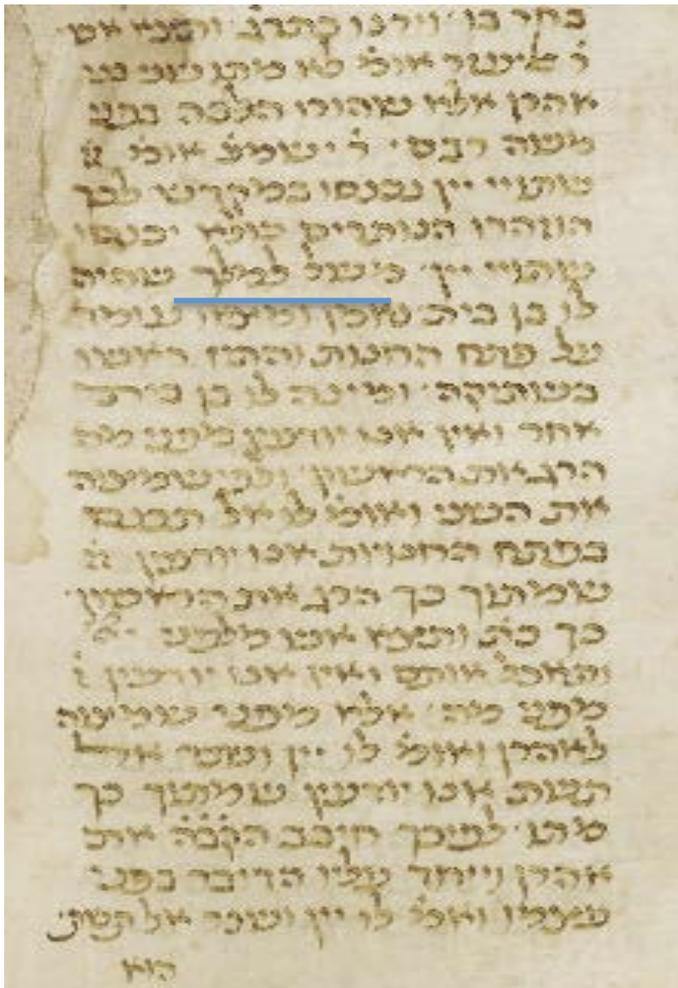
And fire went forth: Rabbi Eliezer says: Aaron's sons died only because they rendered halachic decisions in the presence of Moses, their teacher. Rabbi Ishmael says: [They died because] they had entered the sanctuary after having drunk wine. The proof is that after their death, [Scripture] admonished the survivors that they may not enter the sanctuary after having drunk wine. This is analogous to a king who had a faithful attendant, as recounted in Vayikra Rabbah (12:1).

Oxford Manuscripts

1 Bodleian Library MS. Oppenheim 34 (1201-1225) – as published edition – ‘This is analogous to a king who had a faithful attendant, as recounted in Vayikra Rabbah (12:1).’



2. Bodleian Library MS. Oppenheim Add. 4° 188 (1301-1400) – Rashi with whole parable from the Midrash.



3. Bodleian Library MS. Oppenheim 35 (1408) – Rashi with only: ‘This is analogous to a king, as recounted in Vayikra Rabbah (12:1)’ – omitting who had a faithful attendant and whole parable.

