

# Sh'mini - 25

**Torah: Leviticus 9:1 - 11:47**

**Haftarah: II Samuel 6:1-7:17**

**Brit Chadassah/New Testament: Hebrews 7:1-19**

Sh'mini is a portion possibly best known for two things: 1) the death of High Priest Aaron's elder two sons for offering "strange fire" right after the Glory of the Lord had been made manifest, and 2) the eleventh chapter of Leviticus which contain the food laws.

Let's briefly set the scene. Moses had been sanctifying Aaron and his four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar to serve in the Tabernacle or Mishkan.

From the previous portion, Tsav, we read:

*33 And you shall not go outside the doorway of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the day that the period of your ordination is fulfilled; for he will ordain you through seven days. 34 The Lord has commanded us to do as has been done this day, to make atonement on your behalf. 35 At the doorway of the tent of meeting, moreover, you shall remain day and night for seven days and fulfill your duty to the Lord, so that you will not die; for so I have been commanded." 36 Aaron and his sons did all the things which the Lord had commanded through Moses. Leviticus 8:33-36*

The five men had been staying in the Mishkan for the past seven days and it was now the eighth day. There was one last round of sacrifices required.

*6 And Moses said, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the Lord may appear to you." 7 Moses then said to Aaron, "Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, so that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, so that you may make atonement for them, just as the Lord has commanded." Leviticus 9:6-7*

After this was completed, the people all saw the Glory of YHVH and it terrified them.

*23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 Then fire went out from*

*the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell face downward. Leviticus 9:23-24*

Right after this, for some unknown reason, but often thought to be drunkenness, Aaron's two elder sons, Nadab and Abihu, offered "strange fire" and immediately were executed by fire by YHVH Himself.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on the fire and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.

*2 And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the Lord spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" Leviticus 10:1-3*

They did what was not commanded. They did not treat YHVH as Holy right after His Glory was shown forth. For this, they died. This was on the eighth day.

That leads to the thought that in the eighth millennium, there will be the Great White Throne Judgment, and those who refuse to treat YHVH as holy even after the Glory of Yeshua's Thousand-Year Reign will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

*7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of*

*fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:7-14*

Therefore, all of Israel, if they wish to live, must treat YHVH, Yeshua, and the Ruach as Holy!!!

What we consume has an impact on us. We learn this from what YHVH personally told Aaron, instead of through Moses, about alcohol. This is why many, me included, think the two older sons were drunk when they died.

*8 The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, 9 "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you do not die—it is a permanent statute throughout your generations— 10 and to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, 11 and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses." Leviticus 10:8-11*

The High Priests, the Aaronids, have to avoid wine and strong drink in their service, not only to avoid death, but also to not impair their ability to discern between the holy and profane, and unclean and clean, and not to impair their ability to teach the sons of Israel all of the statutes. While this is primarily addressed to the Aaronids, the Levites and the rest of the sons of Israel can take this lesson to heart.

The ability to discern clean and unclean is not restricted to the Aaronids as the next chapter makes clear, and it is to the food laws we now turn.

The first thing that we must realize about Leviticus chapter 11 and restated in part in Deuteronomy chapter 14 is that these two chapters are about what living and moving creatures in the sky, on the earth, and in the waters we can eat. Nothing in these two chapters concern fruit, vegetables and grains.

As YHVH told Adam in the beginning, before the Fall,

*16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; Genesis 2:16*

Nothing has changed since then about eating from the trees or from what is grown. A vegetarian or vegan does not need to concern himself or herself with the food laws.

It was not until after the Flood that YHVH added animals, birds, crawling things, and sea life as food to Noah and his sons, and by extension, all of the nations. Yet, blood was not allowed to be consumed.

*2 The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every animal of the earth and on every bird of the sky; on everything that crawls on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea. They are handed over to you. 3 Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I have given everything to you, as I gave the green plant. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Genesis 9:2-4*

Here's the thing to understand about the food laws of Leviticus 11, it restricts what YHVH's people, Israel can eat so they can be holy just like YHVH is Holy. This is emphasized twice in verses 44 and 45.

*43 Do not make yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean. 44 For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, because I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45 For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; so you shall be holy, because I am holy.” Leviticus 11:43-45*

The criteria that YHVH gives us for land animals is that they have hoofs that are split into two and they chew the cud. Both elements must be present. If a beast has one but not the other, then it is not clean for us to eat.

For the sea life, if they have fins and scales, they're good.

For the avian birds, there's a list of birds that are disqualified.

Locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers are insects that are clean and can be eaten.

I found this helpful post by the United Church of God that graphically illustrates what are clean and unclean creatures. The clean we can eat; the unclean we don't. The link is: <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/what-does->

[the-bible-teach-about-clean-and-unclean-meats/infographic-which-animals-does-the-bible-designate-as-clean-and-unclean](#)

I'm more interested in what we can eat than in what we can't. Focusing on what we can't eat can lead to complaints and rebellion.

I took the below list from the above article. Looking over this list, we actually do have a lot of choices!

## **Clean Animals**

### **Mammals That Chew the Cud and Part the Hoof**

Antelope, Bison (buffalo), Caribou, Cattle (beef, veal), Deer (venison), Elk, Gazelle, Giraffe, Goat, Hart, Ibex, Moose, Ox, Reindeer, Sheep (lamb, mutton)

### **Fish With Fins and Scales**

Anchovy, Barracuda, Bass, Black pomfret (or monchong), Bluefish, Bluegill, Carp, Cod, Crappie, Drum, Flounder, Grouper, Grunt, Haddock, Hake, Halibut, Hardhead, Herring (or alewife), Kingfish, Mackerel (or corbia), Mahimahi (or dorado, dolphinfish [not to be confused with the mammal dolphin]), Minnow, Mullet, Perch (or bream), Pike (or pickerel or jack), Pollack (or pollock or Boston bluefish), Rockfish, Salmon, Sardine (or pilchard), Shad, Silver hake (or whiting), Smelt (or frost fish or ice fish), Snapper (or ebu, jobfish, lehi, onaga, opakapaka or uku), Sole, Steelhead, Sucker, Sunfish, Tarpon, Trout (or weakfish), Tuna (or ahi, aku, albacore, bonito, or tombo), Turbot (except European turbot), Whitefish

### **Birds With Clean Characteristics**

Chicken, Dove, Duck, Goose, Grouse, Guinea fowl, Partridge, Peafowl, Pheasant, Pigeon, Prairie chicken, Ptarmigan, Quail, Sagehen, Sparrow (and other songbirds), Swan\*, Teal, Turkey

Again, if we restrict our meat to the above sources, we are choosing holiness and exercising our awareness of what is clean and unclean. We are choosing to be like Him Who took us out of Egypt.