



Jewish Congregation of Marco Island

# A CLOSE LOOK AT TORAH

Focus on a question in the weekly portion

April 11, 2026



“Fostering diverse modes of attention to textual details cultivates correlative forms of attention to the world and divine reality”

Michael Fishbane (1943-), *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּדָה הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוְּנוּ לְעֶסוֹק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה:

## “Tachometer Torah”



...read down to the red line

## Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Sh'mini

Consists of: Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Sequence—

in Leviticus: 3<sup>rd</sup> of 10

in annual Torah cycle: 26<sup>th</sup> of 54



HON

## A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Leviticus 9:1-5

**Context:** *Leviticus, third of the Five Books of the Torah, is a catalogue of ceremonial laws, dealing in large part with the sacrificial offerings made on God's Altar. Although named for the Levitical priests who officiated at the Altar, it defines the ritual; spiritual; and, in some cases, ethical norms for all of Israelite society.*

**Content:** *The latter part of Exodus detailed the manufacture of the Israelite Altar; the initial part of Leviticus detailed the sacrificial offerings, which the Aaronide priests would be making on that Altar. Now the eight-day ritual that simultaneously consecrates the Altar and ordains the Cohanim comes to its conclusion, as on its eighth and culminating day Moses relinquishes his temporary rôle of High Priest and hands things off to his brother.*

9:1] - Then on the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron and his sons, together with the Israelite Tribal leaders.

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי קָרָא מֹשֶׁה  
לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

9:2] - He instructed Aaron: “**Take yourself** a calf of the herd for a **purgation-offering**, and a ram for a **burnt-offering**— both of them unblemished— to be offered in the Presence of The Eternal One.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל אַהֲרֹן **קַח לְךָ** עֵגֶל בֶּן  
בְּקָר לְחַטָּאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה תְּמִימִם  
וְהִקְרַב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

9:3] - “Then you are to instruct the Israelites: ‘**Take** a goat for a **purgation-offering**, and an unblemished calf and yearling ewe for a **burnt-offering**,

וְאֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר **קָחוּ**  
שְׂעִיר עִזִּים לְחַטָּאת וְעֵגֶל וְכֶבֶשׂ בֶּן־  
שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם לְעֹלָה

- more over

9:4a] - “ ‘as well as an ox and a ram for a **celebration-offering** to slaughter in the Presence of The Eternal One, together with a **grain-offering** drenched in oil—

וְשׁוֹר וְאַיִל לְשִׁלְמִים לְזֶבַח לְפָנָי  
יְהוָה וּמִנְחָה בְּלוֹלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן

9:4b] - “ ‘for this day The Eternal One is appearing to all of you’.”

כִּי הַיּוֹם יִהְיֶה נִרְאָה אֵלֵיכֶם

9:5] - So **they brought** everything Moses had instructed to the entryway of the Tent of Meeting, whereupon the entire assemblage came up and stood in the Presence of The Eternal One.

וַיָּקָחוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה אֶל פְּנֵי  
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּקְרְבוּ כָּל הָעֵדָה  
וַיַּעֲמְדוּ לְפָנָי יְהוָה

<b>verses 2 and 3 -</b>	<b>burnt offering</b> <u>Leviticus 1:3</u>	עֹלָה	ע-ל-ה “to ascend”
<u>alternate:</u>	“holocaust”	όλοκαυτώματ	“complete burning”
<b>verses 2 and 3 -</b>	<b>purgation offering</b> <u>Leviticus 4:3ff, 6:18</u>	חַטָּאת	ח-ט-א “to sin”
<u>alternate:</u>	“sin offering”	ἁμαρτίας	“sin[-offering]”
<b>verse 4a -</b>	<b>celebration offering</b> <u>Leviticus 3:1ff</u>	שְׁלָמִים	ש-ל-ם “to be whole”
<u>alternate:</u>	“peace offering”	σωτηρίου <i>pacificorum</i>	“salvation” “peace-making”
<b>verse 4a -</b>	<b>grain offering</b> <u>Leviticus 2:1ff</u>	מִנְחָה noun “tribute”	ח-ו-ח “to appease”
<u>alternate:</u>	“meal offering”	δῶρον <i>oblationem</i>	“gift” “offering”



9:2- He instructed Aaron: “**Take yourself** a calf of the herd . . .”

verb **קח** = imperative form of ח-ק-ל  
“take; acquire; procure; bring”

preposition + pronoun = prepositional phrase  
אֶל “to; for”      אַתָּה “you”      לְךָ “to you”

- continued

I) Idiom of Utility -

A) Exodus 5:11 -

אתם לכו **קחו לכם** תבן מאשר  
תמצאו כי אין נגרע מעבדתכם  
דבר

Get ye hence— **get your own** straw,  
from wherever you may find it; yet there  
must be no decrease in your work quota.

B) Exodus 9:8-9 -

**קחו לכם** מלא חפניכם פיה  
כבשן וזרקו משה השמימה  
לעיני פרעה . . . והיה על האדם  
ועל הבהמה לשחין פרח

**Take yourselves** handfuls of furnace  
soot, and let Moses toss it skyward in  
Pharaoh's presence . . . that boils may  
burst forth on man and beast alike.

**קח לך** מגלת ספר וכתבת עליה את כל הדברים אשר דברתי אליך על  
ישראל ועל יהודה

C) Jeremiah 37:2-3 - **Get yourself** a blank scroll, that you may write upon it  
all the words which I have spoken to you regarding Israel and Judah.

אולי ישמעו בית יהודה את כל הרעה אשר אנכי חשב לעשות להם למען  
ישובו איש מדרךכו הרעה וסלחתי לעונם ולחטאתם

Perhaps the House of Judah will then consider all the evil which I have planned to do to  
them and each will repent his evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sins.

II) Idiom of Personal Advantage -

והתחתנו אתנו בנותיכם תתנו לנו **ואת בנותינו תקחו לכם**

D) Genesis 34:9 - Intermarry with us: give us your daughters, and you may then  
**take our daughters for yourselves.**

**עשה לך תבת עצי גפר** קנים תעשה את התבה וכפרת אתה מבית ומחוץ  
בכפר

E) Genesis 6:14, 6:17-18, 6:21 - **Make yourself** an ark of *gofer*-wood, crafting it  
tightly and caulking it inside and out with pitch.

ואני הנני מביא את המבול מים על הארץ לשחת כל בשר אשר בו רוח  
חיים . . . והקמתי את בריתי אתך ובאת אל התבה

For I am bringing a great flood of water over the earth, to destroy every living thing; **but**  
**I am making My promise to you, that you** may come inside the ark [and be spared].

ואתה **קח לך** מכל מאכל אשר יאכל ואספת אליך

Moreover, **you must take yourself** all kinds of food and gather it in with you.

**לך לך** מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך

F) Genesis 12:1-2 - Get yourself out of your land, your birthplace and your father's house, to the land which I will show you—

וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדְּלָהּ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה

for there I will be making of you a great nation, blessing you and making your reputation great so that you will be a blessing.

**קח לך את יהושע בן נון איש אשר רוח בו וסמכת את ידך עליו**

G) Numbers 27:18-20 - Take yourself Joshua bin-Nun, a man of spirit, and appoint him to leadership.

וְהִעַמְדַתְּ אֹתוֹ לְפָנַי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלְפָנַי כָּל הָעֵדָה וְצִוִּיתָה אֹתוֹ לְעִינֵיהֶם וְנִתְּתָה מִהוֹדֶךָ עָלָיו לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Stand him before ElAzar, the High Priest, and before the entire assemblage; and formally instruct him in their presence, giving some of your glory to him in order that the Israelite community may obey him.

**III) An idiom of personal initiative -**

**שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**

H) Numbers 13:2 - Send yourself some people to tour the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites.

אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְמִטָּה אֲבֹתָיו תִּשְׁלְחוּ כֹל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם

You are to dispatch one man from each paternal Tribe— each of them a credible chieftain.

I) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Numbers 13:2 -

שְׁלַח לְךָ - אֲנִי אֵינִי מִצְוֶה לְךָ

“Send yourself” - I am not instructing you thusly;

אם תרצה שלח

send if you want.

J) Midrash Numbers Rabbah 16:8 -

א"ל הקב"ה למשה . . . אם בקשת שְׁלַח לְךָ לְעֶצְמְךָ

The Holy And Blessed One told Moses “If you are making the request, then ‘send yourself’— that is, “on your own initiative.”

K) Talmud, Sotah 34b -

אמר ריש לקיש שְׁלַח לְךָ מִדְּעִתְךָ

Reish Laqish says that “Send yourself” denotes “based on your own understanding.”

וכי אדם זה בורר חלק רע לעצמו

והיינו דכתיב וַיִּטֹּב בְּעֵינֵי הַדָּבָר

But does this good man then not bring about evil upon himself? Yes, for it is even as it is written: “That seemed to me a good idea [Deuteronomy 1:23],”

אמר ריש לקיש בְּעֵינֵי וְלֹא בְּעֵינֵי שֶׁל מְקוֹם

on which Reish Laqish elaborates: “to me”— but not to The Omnipresent One!

IV) The self-advantage of expiation -

קח לך יֵגֶל - להודיע שמכפר לו הקב"ה

L) RaSHI on Leviticus 9:2 - "Take yourself a calf" - to inform us that The Holy And Blessed One is thereby making expiation for him,

ע"י עגל זה על מעשה העגל שעשה

by means of this calf, for his having earlier made the [Golden] Calf.



The Israelites Revere the Golden Calf  
Nuremberg Bible, 1403

קח לך יֵגֶל - כי אומרו לך כי זה יהיה לו לאות  
עולם כי לא עשה הוא העגל בכוונה חס ושלום

M) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), *Or haChayim* on Leviticus 9:2 - "Take yourself a calf" - when it says

"yourself," it means that this will be to Aaron an eternal sign that he had not made the [golden] Calf intentionally (which Heaven forbid!), neither had he gone astray by offering it obeisance.

ולא טעה אחריו אלא שבא על ידו בלא כוונה ובלא מחשבה רעה ולצד זה יועיל לכפר בעגל

Because— precisely to the contrary— it came about without prior plan, and without evil intent; for which reason, he is allowed to make expiation by means of [offering] a calf.

מה שאין כן ישראל לצד שמעשיהם בעגל הוא בחינת המזיד ולא יבא העגל לחטאת להם והוא אדרבה קטיגור

This is not the case with his fellow Israelites. Inasmuch as their making of the Calf was entirely willful and wanton, for them to bring a calf as a purgation-offering would not be apt, but would be— to the contrary!— an indictment.

ותמצא שהקפיד ה' על אהרן לבל יכנס לבית ה' פנימה ביום הכיפורים בבגדי זהב לצד שעשה העגל זהב

You will thus find [in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 21:10] that The Eternal One mandated that on Yom Kippur Aaron was not to enter the interior shrine of God's Own Abode while wearing the golden vestments, inasmuch it was from gold that he had earlier made the Calf.

The High Priest of Israel  
wearing his golden vestments  
17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch sculpture



ויאמר אל אהרן קח לך יֵגֶל כִּן בְּקָר לְחַטָּאת מלמד שאמר לו משה לאהרן אחי אע"פ שנתרצה המקום לכפר על עונותיך

N) Midrash Sifra, M'chilta d'Millu'im 3 - "He instructed Aaron: 'Take yourself a calf of the herd for a purgation-offering'" teaches that Moses told Aaron: "My brother, even though The Omnipresent One is willing to make expiation for your sins,

**צריך אתה ליתן לתוך פיו של שטן שלח דורון לפניך עד שלא תיכנס למקדש שמא ישנאך בביאתך למקדש ושמא תאמר אי"צ כפרה אלא אני**



**"you are first going to have to present some gift to the Prosecutor, before you may enter the Sanctuary— not lest He hate you when you come into the Shrine, but lest you think: 'I need no other expiation than my own self'!"**

Aaron making his first offering,  
under Moses's direction  
by Gerard Hoet, 1670

**וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל אַהֲרֹן קַח לָךְ עֵגֶל בֶּן בָּקָר לְחֻטָּאת למה לי שמע מינה קַח לָךְ מִשְׁלֹךְ הוּא**

O) Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 3b - Why should Scripture stipulate "He then instructed Aaron: 'Take yourself a calf of the herd for a purgation-offering'"? Learn from this **"take yourself" that** "[it must be furnished] **from your own** [personal herd]."

**ביום הכפורים מכדי כתיב בְּזֹאת יבֹא אַהֲרֹן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּפָר בֶּן בָּקָר לְחֻטָּאת וגו' וּמֵאֵת עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קַח שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירֵי עִזִּים לְחֻטָּאת וְהַקָּרִיב אַהֲרֹן אֶת פֶּר הַחֻטָּאת אֲשֶׁר לוֹ למה לי**

As for the offerings of Yom Kippur, we see that it is written: "Here is how Aaron is to enter the Shrine: having offered up a bull as a purgation-offering" [Leviticus 16:3. Since that same passage goes on to say that] "he is to take from the Israelite assemblage two goats as **their** purgation-offering [16:5]," why should it then proceed in the next verse to say "then Aaron is to offer up the bull purgation-offering **which is his** [16:6]?"

**שמע מינה האי לו משלו הוא**

Learn from this **"which is his"** [that is must be be **furnished**] **from his own** [personal herd]."

**V) Advantage: restoring the glory of Aaron -**

**שִׁפְתֵי כַהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת**

P) Malachi 2:7 - The lips of a priest must preserve knowledge,

**וְתוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ כִּי מִלֶּאֱדָ יְהוֹה צְבָאוֹת הוּא**

for Torah is sought from his mouth, since **he is an emissary of Eternal One, Lord of Hosts.**

**תנו רבנן כיצד סדר משנה משה למד מפי הגבורה נכנס אהרן ושנה לו משה פירקו נסתלק אהרן וישב לשמאל משה נכנסו בניו ושנה להן משה פירקו**

Q) Talmud, Eirubin 54b - Our Mishnaic sages taught: how was Torah conveyed?

Moses learned it directly from the Mouth of the Almighty. Then **Aaron entered, and Moses taught him the regulations involving him**. When Aaron stepped aside and sat at Moses's left, Aaron's sons entered; Moses taught them the regulations involving them.

נסתלקו בניו אלעזר ישב לימין משה ואיתמר לשמאל אהרן רבי יהודה אומר לעולם אהרן לימין משה חוזר נכנסו זקנים ושנה להן משה פירקו נסתלקו זקנים נכנסו כל העם ושנה להן משה פירקו

When Aaron's sons stepped aside, ElAzar sat at Moses's right side, and Itamar at his left (although Rabbi Judah says that Aaron alone remained always at Moses' right-hand side!), the leaders of the community entered; Moses taught them the regulations involving them. When the communal leaders stepped aside, the entire people entered, at which Moses taught them the regulations involving them.

**נמצאו ביד אהרן ארבעה ביד בניו שלשה וביד הזקנים שנים וביד כל העם אחד**

**Thus Aaron heard four** [recitations of the Torah]; his sons, three; the leaders, two; and the entire people, one.

נסתלק משה ושנה להן אהרן פירקו נסתלק אהרן שנו להן בניו פירקו נסתלקו בניו שנו להן זקנים פירקו **נמצא ביד הכל ארבעה**

When Moses departed, Aaron taught the rest; when Aaron departed, his sons taught them; when his sons departed, the Tribal leaders taught; and when the Tribal leaders left them, everyone retained Torah, by virtue of a four-fold repetition.

מכאן אמר רבי אליעזר **חייב אדם לשנות לתלמידו ארבעה פעמים**

Rabbi EliEzer says on this basis that **a person is obligated to instruct the pupils the same lesson four times.**

R) Leviticus 9:1 -

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי קָרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

On the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron and his sons **and all the Israelite leaders.**

S) RaSHI -

וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - להשמיעם שעל פי הדבור אהרן נכנס ומשמש בכהונה גדולה ולא יאמרו מאליו נכנס

“And all the Israelite leaders” - **to let them hear that it was by Divine mandate that Aaron was embarking into service of the high priesthood, so that none of them could say that it was of [Moses'] own initiative.**

מצינו שחלק הקב"ה כבוד לזקנים אלא בכמה מקומות

T) Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 11:8 - We find that The Holy And Blessed One appor-tions honor to the leadership of the community not just once, but on numerous occasions.

לָךְ וְאַסְפֹּת אֶת זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַמְרַתְּ אֲלֵהֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֵלַי

At the burning bush, God proclaimed: “Go and gather together the Israelite leaders, telling them: ‘The Eternal One, the God of your forebears, appeared to me’ [Exodus 3:16].”

במצרים ובאת אֶתְּה וְזָקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאַמְרַתֶּם אֵלָיו יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִיִּים נִקְרָה עָלֵינוּ

In Egypt: “You and the Israelite leaders are to come to the Emperor of Egypt, and you are to tell him: ‘The Eternal One, the God of the Hebrews, has summoned us’ [Exodus 3:18].”

עֲלֶה אֶל יְהוָה אֶתְּה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וְאַבִּיהוּא וְשִׁבְעֵים מִזְקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם מֵרָחֵק

At Mount Sinai: “Come up to The Eternal One— you and Aaron, Nadav and AviHu, and seventy of the Israelite leaders— and together reverence Me from afar [Exodus 24:1].”

אֶסְפָּה לִּי שִׁבְעֵים אִישׁ מִזְקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִדְעַתָּ כִּי הֵם זֻקְנֵי הָעָם וְשֹׁטְרָיו  
וְלִקְחָתָ אֹתָם אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהִתְיַצְּבוּ שָׁם עִמָּךְ

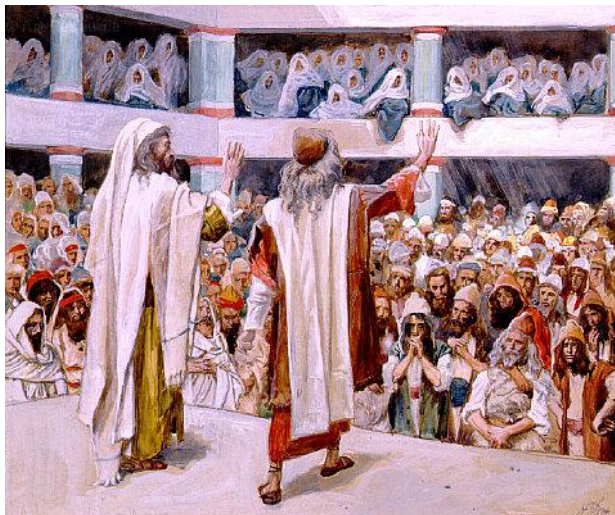
And in the Wilderness: “Please gather Me seventy people from the Israelite leadership, known to you to be credible and respected leaders of the people; and take them with you to the Tent of Meeting and position them there with you [Numbers 11:16].”

באהל מועד ולזקני ישראל

And in the Tent of Meeting: “...and all the Israelite leaders [Leviticus 9:1].”

אִף לַעֲתִיד לִבֵּא הַקַּב"ה חוֹלֵק כְּבוֹד לְזֻקְנֵי הַה"ד וְחִפְרָה הַלְּבָנָה וּבֹשֶׁת  
הַחֲמָה כִּי מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בָּהָר צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם וְנִגְדָּ זֻקְנָיו כְּבוֹד

Even in the future to come, The Holy And Blessed One is apportioning honor to the communal leaders. For even so is it written: “The moon shall hide its face, and the sun be abashed, when The Eternal One of hosts will rule in Zion and in Jerusalem, **with God's Own Glory revealed to His leaders** [Isaiah 24:23].”



Moses and Aaron Address the Israelite Leadership in Egypt  
by James Tissot, 1896