

PARSHAT SHEMINI
26 NISAN 5781/08 APRIL 2021



Havdalah
Mixed media by Nishima Kaplan

SACRED DIVISION

1. “On the eighth day...” (Leviticus 9:1)
2. Overwhelmed by joy on perceiving the new fire, they sought to redouble their love; whereupon they “took each one his censer...” (Midrash, Sifra 24)
3. Nadav and Abihu did not maliciously transgress the word of God. But in their superabundant joy they lost their judgment and entered the Holy of Holies to burn fine incense although this had not been commanded. In their excessive love they were eager to minister before God with the new incense, in addition to the dedicatory offerings of the day. (Moses Mendelssohn Biur)
4. Whatever one experiences when one enters the holy domain must be carried with them when one returns to the everyday world. One must not seek ecstasy for its own sake, but for the sake of the subsequent return. A religious experience must not be left as a memory; it must remain active in animating the whole of one’s life. (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson)

5. When the sun set upon the departure of the Sabbath, the darkness became palpable as the sun set. The first human was terrified and exclaimed, "Surely darkness comes to bruise me; perhaps the one of whom it is said 'He shall bruise your head' (Genesis 3:15) will come to attack me!" What did the blessed Holy One do? God presented the human with two flints, which the human struck together and light came forth, whereupon the human blessed it, "Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who creates the lights of fire." (Midrash, Bereishit 11:2; Pesachim 54a)
6. Tyrannus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva, "Whose works are better, those of God or those of humans?" The rabbi replied, "Those of humans." The rabbi set before the governor ears of grain and cakes. "The unprocessed grain is the work of God. The cake is the work of the human. Is it not more pleasant to eat cake than raw ears of grain?" (Tanchuma, Tazria 5)
7. The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy!...Everything is holy! Everybody is holy! Everywhere is holy! (Allen Ginsberg, "Footnote to Howl")
8. Remember to separate
Two flames once again
Union will come soon
Shamor v'zachor
(Nishima Kaplan)