

The Commentator's Bible
The JPS Miqraot Gedolot – Leviticus, edited by Michael Carasik.
Jewish Publication Society 2009.

The Rabbis liked the book of Leviticus because it was full of 'halakhot rabbot', many laws; most Progressive Jews dislike it for the same reason, and especially so because many of those laws are to do with sacrificial rituals in which we no longer have any interest.

Nevertheless, this second volume in the JPS magnificent edition of Miqraot Gedolot, the biblical text with its classical commentaries translated into English, contains much fascinating material, for there is more to Leviticus than sacrificial law – the dietary laws, the priestly garments, the death of Nadav and Avihu, and the Holiness Code of chapter 19 to name but a few.

Those who have engaged with the previous volume in the series, Exodus, will be familiar with the intelligent and sensitive style that Carasik adopts, paraphrasing where necessary and adding some source references that would not be found in the original commentaries.

As previously the text is preceded with explanatory notes on how to use the book and brief biographical details of the commentators, and concluded with some short 'Special Topics' essays.

This is an invaluable learning and teaching aid for anyone interested in deepening their knowledge of the views of the great medieval commentators on the Torah text.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh