

EMOR – “SAY”

LEVITICUS (VAY’YIKRA) 21:1 – 24:23

INTRODUCTION

1. Previous portion addressed the entire nation in a call to be holy.
 - a. This portion turns to the priests and their responsibility to maintain higher standards.
2. At the close of the previous portion, Israel was called to separate themselves from the nations.
 - a. To abstain from activities that would have contaminated them.
3. This portion calls for priests to separate themselves even more by higher standards of purity.
4. They are priests 24 hrs. a day and are not to contaminate themselves even when not performing priestly duties.
5. It addresses the fact that anybody or anything that comes near to God must be perfect.
 - a. Both sacrifice and priest must be free of physical defects and blemishes.

CHAPTER 21: REGULATIONS CONCERNING PRIESTS

1. Verse 1: “Don’t defile himself for the dead” – contact defiles making him unfit for duty.
 - a. Although in case of unattended body, priest or Nazirite was to attend to body.
2. Verse 2-3: “Except for his kin” – Exceptions are made for those closest to him.
 - a. Can join funerals of closest relatives; God understands need to mourn loved ones.
 - b. If his sister was married, the priest could not come in contact with her corpse.
 - c. She is then considered part of her husband’s family.
3. Verse 4: “being a chief man” – this is why he is subject to these special requirements.
4. Verse 5: “Shall not a make a bald spot” – as a sign of mourning; that is the context.
 - a. This was something commonly done in the nations.
 - b. Seeing they were allowed to contaminate for funerals of relatives, limits imposed.
5. They were not to shave in relation to mourning for the dead nor cut themselves.
 - a. This was covered in previous Torah portion.
6. Verse 6: “They shall be holy” – because they minister in the *mishkan*.
 - a. The concept of holiness implies abstinence and especially for the priests.
 - b. They should do this, not for personal glory, for the sake of God’s will.
7. “They shall not desecrate” – do not have the right to resign from their position.
 - a. Can’t detach from responsibility given them and its requirements.
 - b. To do so would desecrate God’s name.
8. The priest was to be very selective in whom he married.
 - a. No harlot or any woman who is desecrated where the *mishkan* is concerned.
9. Verse 8: “You shall sanctify him” – implying the people were to enforce his requirements.
10. Verse 10: “Shall not leave his head unshorn” – literally “wild growth.”
 - a. Not permitted to allow it to grow in mourning.
 - b. In regular practice, the High Priest kept his hair cut.
 - c. Being our High Priest, does this imply that Y’shua did NOT have long hair?
11. Verse 11-12: “shall not leave the Sanctuary” – not even for father or mother when at duties.
 - a. For the crown – God’s anointing – was upon him.
 - b. He remains the High Priest even if he makes a mistake – anointing is upon him.

- c. A responsibility remains upon him to continue in his purpose.
 - d. Not removed from position if he sins, greater responsibility means great standards.
 - e. Perhaps, punishment for those mistakes is greater as well.
 - f. David, though not a priest, was not removed from position for his sin.
12. Verse 13-14: “Shall take a woman in her virginity” – only permitted to marry virgin.
- a. Does not necessarily mean he was required to marry.
 - b. Married from among his kin, some say, of the priestly families.
14. When we consider Y’shua as High Priest, would only wed a virgin from among His people.
15. This was so “his seed” would not be profaned.
- a. The line of Aaron was not to be impaired by improper marriages.
16. The remaining portions of chapter are devoted to physical blemishes that disqualify priests.
- a. I believe these have spiritual ramifications.
 - b. For instance, “dwarf” not permitted; spiritual dwarfs cannot meet the challenge given.

CHAPTER 22: SANCTITY OF OFFERINGS

1. This chapter deals with the physical purity necessary to handle the different offerings.
2. Verse 2: “That they may separate themselves” – sacred foods only eaten by priests and family.
 - a. Only if they are ritually clean.
3. If they become contaminated, they must withdraw from all aspects of service – not position.
 - a. So that they will not contaminate the offerings of the people.
4. The word “separate” (נָזַר *nazar*) is derived from the word “crown” (כִּרְתָּם *zer*).
 - a. Implies that Israel is crowned with distinction.
 - b. That should not suggest they are permitted things not allowed to others.
 - c. To the contrary, this crown proclaims their responsibilities are greater than others.
5. Again, this responsibility is so that they will not desecrate His name.
 - a. One who desecrates the offerings of the people desecrates His name.
 - b. Though apples and oranges, “offerings” misused by ministries has profaned His name.
6. Verse 3: “Shall be cut off from before me” – does not appear elsewhere.
 - a. By eating the offerings in a contaminated state, one ignores God’s holiness.
 - b. Thus, he is removed from the Holy Presence since He had no regard for it.
 - c. Is it possible this principle applies today seeing there is no *mishkan*?
7. Verse 10: “No common man shall eat of the holy thing” – no non-priest.
 - a. Verse 15: They are not to desecrate it by giving it to non-priests thus causing to sin.
 - b. Yet, David eats of the holy bread in 1 Samuel 21 – he was not a priest.
 - c. Abimelech determined it was a life or death situation and gave it to him.
 - d. Required that he and men retain spiritual purity to which David agreed.
8. Y’shua’s addressed the issue:

“Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, ‘Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?’ But Y’shua answering them said, ‘Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which

is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?’ And He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.’” - Luke 6:1-5

9. This would imply that, when it comes down to life and death, that takes precedent.
 - a. The holy bread was not to be used for common purposes, however.
 - b. Life and death is not a common purpose but a holy one.
10. Just as priests with blemishes are not permitted to serve in Sanctuary, blemished animals are disqualified from being used as offerings.
 - a. The blemishes that disqualify the animal are similar to that which disallows the priests.
 - b. If a blemished animal is bigger and more valuable than another it is still disqualified.
 - c. God doesn’t measure perfection in monetary value.
11. Verse 23: Though a blemished animal not placed on altar, can be donated for other purpose.
12. Verse 27: Animals suitable for offerings are to be at least 8 days old.
 - a. Must live through a Shabbat; Shabbat gives validity to the Universe.
13. Verse 28: Not to kill the mother or it’s young on the same day.
14. Even animals would be tortured emotionally to see young killed (or their parents).
 - a. Love for child is not product of reason but of feeling; animals share that emotion.

CHAPTER 22: SANCTIFICATION AND DESECRATION OF THE NAME

1. Verse 32: “Shall not profane my Name ... I will be hallowed”
 - a. This verse called “Israel’s Bible in little.”
 - b. Warns against profaning the name (*chillul Ha’shem*).
 - c. Supports the responsibility to sanctify His name (*kiddush Ha’shem*).
 - d. This is addressed to all of Israel.
2. We sanctify or desecrate His Name (authority) by our behavior, especially in public.
 - a. One person can bring infamy upon the name by a public failing.
 - b. The world is always ready to ridicule God’s people when this happens.
 - c. When failure occurs, the world, like a wild beast, pounces – His name desecrated.
3. Thus, one may be required to give up his life if alternative is to desecrate His name.
 - b. When faced with idolatry, forbidden relationships and blood.
4. To do so under those circumstances is to sanctify His name rather than sin.
5. If one is called upon to do this, should do so without expecting a miracle to happen.
 - a. Act as Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan. 3:17-18).
 - b. Knew God was capable of delivering them but prepared if He did not.
 - c. Someone prepared to do so without miracle sets the stage for a miracle.
6. In private, when one withdraws from a sin because it pleases God, he sanctifies the Name.
7. Must sanctify His Name even among our own people, something Moses did not succeed in.

“Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, **because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel.”**

– Deut. 32:49-51

8. Thus we see that this is a very serious matter.
9. To accentuate the point, He reminds them that He is the one who brought them out for Egypt.
 - a. Thus you are mine and I have right to make demands of you.

CHAPTER 23: THE MOEDIM: PESACH & OMER

1. This chapter addresses the children of Israel because of the universal nature of the *moedim*.
 - a. Called “appointed times” because they are special days to “meet” with God.
 - b. The people invited to assemble in prayer and thanksgiving and to celebrate.
 - c. The calling together was done by means of two silver trumpets (Num. 10:1-10).
2. *Moed* refers to “appointed place” for a specific purpose (e.g. *ohel moed* – tent of meeting).
 - a. Likewise, *moed* is “appointed time” for an appointed purpose.
 - b. These days stand out from the other days of the year.
3. They were not dedicated to gluttony and physical pleasure as among the nations.
 - a. These moedim are prefaced with obligation to “sanctify the name.”
 - b. Celebration can easily lead to activity that desecrates the Name.
 - c. His festivals are not to become revelry but should hallow Him among the people.
4. Verse 3: “Sabbath of solemn rest” – Shabbat is the first of the *moedim*.
 - a. Every week we are to “meet” with Him during Shabbat.
5. There are seven festival days of rest:
 - Two during Unleavened Bread (Passover)
 - Two during Sukkot (Tabernacles)
 - Shavuot (Pentecost)
 - Yom Teruah (Trumpets)
 - Yom Kippur (Atonement)
6. The weekly Sabbath is symbolic of them all.
7. Verse 4: “That you are to designate in appointed season” – must be based on the calendar.
 - a. Calendar is based on sighting of the new moon (*rosh chodesh*) by two witnesses.
8. The new moon is not mentioned in this chapter.
 - a. Not necessarily a day of rest nor considered a “holy convocation.”
9. “To designate” also alludes to responsibility to make sure festivals occur at proper season.
 - a. Pesach must be in spring, thus an additional month is added when necessary to assure.
10. Verse 5: “In the first month” – referring to Aviv which is the beginning of months (Ex. 12:2).
 - a. Pesach offering is brought on the 14th day in the afternoon.
 - b. The actual festival (*chag ha'matzot*) begins that evening at dusk.
11. The feast of Unleavened Bread begins with the eating of the Passover (*pesach* offering).
 - a. *Matzah* is eaten for seven days.
 - b. Some commentators argue one is obligated to eat *matzah* only at *seder*.
 - c. But if you eat bread during that time, it must be *matzah*.
12. Verse 7: On that first day, you are not to work – holy convocation.
 - a. This is the usual work one would do during the week.
 - b. Rabbinical works do not prohibit preparation of food on this day.
 - c. Making it less strict than Shabbat and Yom Kippur.
13. Verse 9: The Omer is first counted on festival of first-fruits.
 - a. Before grains can be harvested a measure of barley must be brought to Temple.
 - b. Barley ripens two to three weeks sooner than wheat; first sheaf is brought.

14. This occurs on Firstfruits and it is called the עמר *omer*.
 - a. The word *omer* is from a root that means, “to collect.”
 - b. Connected to the idea of the daily food needs of one person (Ex. 16:16).
 - c. Put another way, it is equivalent to “our daily bread.”
 - d. This word is related to the word אמר *amar* which means “speech” or “say.”
 - e. Amar is the root for *Emor* – this Torah portion.
15. My point: *omer* is related *amar* – daily bread is related to word.
 - a. Man doesn’t live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from mouth of God.
 - b. Omer is counted 50 days leading up to Shavuot which commemorates giving of Torah.
16. Verse 11: “On the morrow of the rest day” – the day after the Shabbat.
 - a. This has been subject of heated controversy since early rabbinic times.
 - b. Sadducees (Boethusians) interpreted it to mean after weekly Sabbath.
 - c. Pharisees after the feast day; consequently *omer* would always be brought on 16 Aviv.
 - d. Boethusians considered heretics mainly because they did not accept Oral Torah.
17. My opinion is it should be determined based on the weekly Shabbat.
 - a. If it was a predetermined day, why doesn’t the text indicate as much?
 - b. In the case of Y’shua crucifixion and resurrection I believe it was thus:
 - c. Crucified on Thursday, followed by convocation followed by Sabbath meaning:
 - d. Any tradition you wish to hold to, He was the firstfruits.

“But now Messiah is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” – 1 Corinthians 15:20

CHAPTER 23: THE MOEDIM: SHAVUOT & FALL FESTIVALS

1. Unlike all the other feast days, Shavuot is not identified by a particular day on calendar.
 - a. Determined by 50th day from Firstfruits – offering the omer.
 - b. If it was that *omer* is presented always on 16 Aviv, Shavuot always falls on 6 Sivan.
 - c. Point: Underscoring my belief that *omer* is presented on first day after Shabbat.
2. Count is made for seven weeks and the day after – the 50th (Pentecost) – is Shavuot.
3. It is associated with the “season of giving of our Torah.”
 - a. From the Exodus to the crossing of Red Sea; then they began to count.
 - b. This intermediate period is called *sephirah*, “counting”; also related to *sefer*, “book.”
 - c. Shavuot (weeks) is attached to Pesach by a 7 week period; it is *atzeret* (conclusion).
 - d. Liberation from bondage is not to be the all in all; makes it possible to receive Torah.
 - e. Indicating that freedom (Pesach) without instruction (Shavuot) ends in anarchy.
4. Maimonides related this counting toward Shavuot as one who counted the days until his closest friend was to appear.
5. This is interesting considering the “friend” came down in a cloud with the sound of trumpets.
 - a. Exodus 19 – thick dark cloud, voices, lightnings, waxing sound of the shofar.
 - b. Is there a parallel for us? Deliverance, an exodus & counting the days until the mount?
6. Verse 16: “A new meal offering” – because this came at the time of wheat harvest.
 - a. The *omer* had been barley.
7. Verse 17: Two wave loaves are brought both baked with leaven or *chametz*.
 - a. They were not placed on the altar because nothing with leaven can be upon Altar.
 - b. Many believe two loaves represent the two branches: natural and wild together.

8. Considering that much emphasis is placed on counting leading up to this:
 - a. Two leavened loaves must be presented before the Revelation (Torah) can come.
9. Goes back to the 12 stones of the *choshen* must be in place for there to be illumination.
 - a. *urim v'tummim*.
 - b. 12 stones of altar had to be repaired before fire could come down.
10. Verse 24: The seventh month is to the year what Shabbat is to the week.
11. *Yom Teruah* is day of sounding the shofar – a day of rest.
 - a. Also a remembrance of the *Akedah* – binding of Isaac but saved by ram's horn.
 - b. The ram offered in Isaac's stead.
 - c. Ram's horn is blown to call to repentance.
12. Blowing of shofar had a different significance than that of the silver trumpets.
 - a. More awe-inspiring than joyous (silver trumpets).
 - b. Spoke of contrition, penitence and repentance.
13. Verse 27: Day of Atonement - *Yom ha'kippurim*.
 - a. Moses came down from Sinai with second tablets of law on 10 Tishri.
 - b. Signifying Israel was forgiven of Golden Calf.
 - c. Became the eternal day of forgiveness.
14. *Yom Teruah* is *yom ha'din* – Day of judgment – but Yom Kippur is atonement.
 - a. You are to afflict your soul – fast.
 - b. Day of total rest and a statute forever.
 - c. Verse 32: Begins in the evening of 9 Tishri – *kol nidre and neilah*.
15. Verse 34: 15 Tishri is beginning of Sukkot (Tabernacles) – commenced at full moon.
 - a. Literally “booths” which commemorates God providing for Israel in wilderness.
 - b. Some consider “booths” to be literal – the booths they lived in.
 - c. Some consider it to allude to the “clouds of glory” that sheltered in the desert.
 - d. Time to rejoice in fact God is concerned with our well-being.
16. Consists of seven days – followed by the 8th day, an *atzeret*, a solemn assembly (verse 36).
 - a. Called *Hoshana Rabbah* followed by *Simchat Torah*.
 - b. Also called Feast of Ingathering.
 - c. Is, thus, called the “time of our joy.”
17. First comes redemption at Pesach; purpose of redemption at Shavuot; joyous fulfillment at Sukkot.
18. Verse 40: The four species are waved:
 - Etrog – “fruit of goodly trees.”
 - Lulav – “branches of palm trees.”
 - Myrtle – “boughs of thick (leafed) trees”
 - Willows of the brook.

CHAPTER 24: PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY

1. Chapter begins with command to light the menorah perpetually.
 - a. The provision of oil was to be a community responsibility.
 - b. This speaks of the fact that, to be a light to the nations, we are responsible to render oil.
 - c. We produce fruit but that is pressed to render the fuel for the “menorah.”
2. To set the showbread (12 cakes) appropriately – was renewed each Sabbath day.
 - a. It is described as an “eternal covenant”, the only offering that is.

- b. Divided among the priests each Shabbat which is also “an eternal covenant.”
- 3. Shabbat forbids work and ordains each enjoy food without worry of where it is coming from.
 - a. The manna was given each day with a double portion on sixth day.
 - b. Israel didn’t have to worry about their daily bread.
- 4. Y’shua alludes to this:

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.’”

- Luke 12:22-31

- 5. When considering how much of this book speaks to God’s holiness and Israel’s call to holiness, this story stands out as a blatant challenge to our commission to sanctify the Name.
 - a. At first, it seems to be out of place but it makes a point.
- 6. It is set up by the menorah and table for showbread – both pure.
- 7. Verse 10: He “went out” – into the camp and got into a quarrel.
 - a. Doesn’t state what the quarrel is about and is immaterial; sin is blasphemy.
 - b. But because his sin was witnessed, he became liable to the death penalty.
 - c. That anger was present, it leads to other things – no good thing comes from strife.
 - d. Consider what happened to Lot as result between shepherds of Abraham and Lot.
- 8. He was the son of an “Israelitish woman” and an Egyptian father – mixed multitude.
 - a. It was mixed multitude that incited the Golden Calf incident.
 - b. Thus we learn what should happen to the mixed multitude.
- 9. Verse 18: “life for life” is to say “fair compensation.”
 - a. If you take a life, you should have to give up yours.
 - b. If you kill someone’s animal, you should compensate him fairly.
- 10. Rabbinically, it is believed that “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” is not necessarily saying pluck out someone’s eye to if they knocked out someone else’s.
- 11. Verse 22: “one manner of law for home-born and stranger.”
 - a. Strengthens the concept of equality of home-born and stranger.
 - b. Also undermines the notion that there is a different law for Israel and for Church.
 - c. God’s law is the only law that establishes the “one law” concept.
 - d. These “stranger” are not aliens in the sense we think of – they joined themselves.
 - e. It was the mixed multitude who continually stirred up trouble.