

Stollen Moments – Emor – May 14, 2022

PARASHA SUMMARY FROM WWW. REFORMJUDAISM.ORG

- Laws regulating the lives and sacrifices of the priests are presented. (21:1-22:33)
- The set times of the Jewish calendar are named and described: the Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the Pilgrimage Festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. (23:1-44)
- God commands the Israelites to bring clear olive oil for lighting the sanctuary menorah. The ingredients and placement of the displayed loaves of sanctuary bread are explained. (24:1-9)
- Laws dealing with profanity, murder, and the maiming of others are outlined. (24:10-23)

Leviticus Chapter 23

1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: These are My fixed times, the fixed times of the Lord, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions. 3 On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no work; it shall be a sabbath of the Lord throughout your settlements.

4 These are the set times of the Lord, the sacred occasions, which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time: 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the Lord, 6 and on the fifteenth day of that month the Lord's Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. 7 On the first day you shall celebrate a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. 8 Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to the Lord. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.

9 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 10 Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall elevate the sheaf before the Lord for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it on the day after the sabbath. 12 On the day that you elevate the sheaf, you shall offer as a burnt offering to the Lord a lamb of the first year without blemish. 13 The meal offering with it shall be two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord; and the libation with it shall be of wine, a quarter of a hin. 14 Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages in all your settlements.

15 And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering — the day after the sabbath — you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: 16 you must count until the day after the seventh week — fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the Lord. 17 You shall bring from your settlements two loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to the Lord. 18 With the bread you shall present, as burnt offerings to the Lord, seven yearling lambs without blemish, one bull of the herd, and

two rams, with their meal offerings and libations, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord. 19 You shall also offer one he-goat as a sin offering and two yearling lambs as a sacrifice of well-being. 20 The priest shall elevate these — the two lambs — together with the bread of first fruits as an elevation offering before the Lord; they shall be holy to the Lord, for the priest. 21 On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages. 22 And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God.

23 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 24 Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts. 25 You shall not work at your occupations; and you shall bring an offering by fire to the Lord.

26 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 27 Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall practice self-denial, and you shall bring an offering by fire to the Lord; 28 you shall do no work throughout that day. For it is a Day of Atonement, on which expiation is made on your behalf before the Lord your God. 29 Indeed, any person who does not practice self-denial throughout that day shall be cut off from his kin; 30 and whoever does any work throughout that day, I will cause that person to perish from among his people. 31 Do no work whatever; it is a law for all time, throughout the ages in all your settlements. 32 It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your sabbath.

33 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 34 Say to the Israelite people: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the Lord, [to last] seven days. 35 The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations; 36 seven days you shall bring offerings by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring an offering by fire to the Lord; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations.

37 Those are the set times of the Lord that you shall celebrate as sacred occasions, bringing offerings by fire to the Lord — burnt offerings, meal offerings, sacrifices, and libations, on each day what is proper to it — 38 apart from the sabbaths of the Lord, and apart from your gifts and from all your votive offerings and from all your freewill offerings that you give to the Lord.

39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. 40 On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. 41 You shall observe it as a festival of the Lord for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. 42 You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, 43 in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God. 44 So Moses declared to the Israelites the set times of the Lord.

Etz Hayim commentary:

The Israelites find the presence of God in the sanctuary, which represents the permanent holiness of sacred space, and on the festivals, which represent the recurring holiness of sacred time.

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

The Mishkan is called an Ohel Moed - a tent of meeting - for in that tent Bnei Yisrael [symbolically] 'meet' God. In a similar manner, the Jewish holidays are called Moadim, for their primary purpose is that we set aside special times during the year to meet God. Clearly, in Parshat Emor, the Torah emphasizes the "bein adam la'makom" [between God and man] aspect of the holidays. Not only do we perform the mitzva of aliya l'regel, we also perform a wide range of special mitzvot that occupy our entire day during those holidays.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Holy time itself comes in two forms, as Emor makes clear. There is Shabbat and there are the festivals, and the two are announced separately. Shabbat was sanctified by God at the beginning of time for all time. The festivals are sanctified by the Jewish people to whom was given the authority and responsibility for fixing the calendar.

Hence the difference in the blessings we say. On Shabbat we praise God who "sanctifies Shabbat". On the festivals we praise God who sanctifies "Israel and the holy times" – meaning, it is God who sanctifies Israel but Israel who sanctify the holy times, determining on which days the festivals fall.

Even within the festivals there is a dual cycle. One is formed by the three pilgrimage festivals: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. These are days that represent the key historic moments at the dawn of Jewish time – the Exodus, the giving of the Torah, and the forty years of desert wandering. They are festivals of history.

The other is formed by the number seven and the concept of holiness: the seventh day, Shabbat; the seventh month, Tishri, with its three festivals of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot; the seventh year, Shemitah; and the Jubilee marking the completion of seven seven-year cycles.

These times (with the exception of Sukkot that belongs to both cycles) have less to do with history than with what, for want of a better word, we might call metaphysics and jurisprudence, ultimate truths about the universe, the human condition, and the laws, both natural and moral, under which we live.

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 2:8-9

(8) Rabban Gamliel had, on a tablet, and on the walls of his loft, various drawings of the moon, which he showed to simple witnesses, and said, "Was it like this [drawing] that you saw, or like [the other one]?" It happened once, that two witnesses came and said, "We saw [the moon] in the East in the morning, and in the evening in the West." [In that case,] Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri said, "They are false witnesses." [But] when they came to Yavneh, Rabban Gamliel accepted [their testimony. It] also [happened once that] two witnesses came and said, "We saw the moon at its time [meaning, on the first of the two possible days], but it was not [to be] seen [afterwards] on the evening of its intercalation," and Rabban Gamliel accepted [their testimony]. Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinus said, "They are false witnesses; how can they testify that a [certain] woman gave birth [on a certain day], and, on the next day that her 'womb was between her teeth' [and the fetus still inside]?" [Then] Rabbi Yehoshua said to him, "I perceive [the truth of] your words."

(9) [Upon hearing this,] Rabban Gamliel sent [Rabbi Yehoshua] word, saving, "I decree upon you to come to me with your staff and your money on the day that comes out to be Yom Kippur, according to your calculation." Rabbi Akiva went to [Rabbi Yehoshua], and found him grieving; he said to him, "I have with what to teach, that all that Rabban Gamliel has done is [bindingly] done, as it is stated (Leviticus 23:4), 'These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim;' whether at their [proper] time, or whether not at their [proper] time, I have no holy convocations except [for the ones proclaimed by the court." When Rabbi Yehoshua] came to Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinus, [the latter] said to him, "If we are to [question the decisions] of the court of Rabban Gamliel, we must [also question the decisions] of all the courts which have stood, from the days of Moshe until [today]; as it is stated, (Exodus 24:2), 'Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up.' Why were the names of the elders not specified? Rather [it was] to teach, that every three men that form a court [to be responsible] over Israel, behold [that court] is to be [considered] like the court of Moshe." [After this], Rabbi Yehoshua took his staff and his money in his hand, and went to Yavneh to Rabban Gamliel on the day that came out to be Yom Kippur, according to his calculation. [At that point], Rabban Gamliel stood up, and kissed him on his head, [and] he said to him, "Come in peace, my teacher and my disciple! My teacher — in wisdom; and my disciple — in that you accepted my words."