

May 3, 2018

Parashat Emor

<https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.21.1-15?lang=bi&aliyot=1>

<http://mirowitztorahreading.weebly.com/emor.html>

Ezra ***Ezra ben Yehoshu'a Asher v'Temima Fayga***

Shauni ***Chana Lilah bat Kalanit v'Warren***

Annika ***Chanukkah bat Miriam v'Yosef***

Abigail ***Yosef bat Laura v'Steven***

Omri ***Omri ben Eli-Mordecai v'Osnat***

Shauni: This week's Torah portion is *Parashat Emor*. We will be reading from *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 21, Verses 1-3. *Emor* means "speak." G-d tells Moshe to speak to the *kohanim*, the priests, about what they should do to be extra holy in order to serve in the Temple. *Parashat Emor* also tells us about the special holidays of the Jewish calendar, which make time holy throughout the year. The holy days connect us with our people, the land, the seasons, and with God. The first holy day mentioned is Shabbat, the day of rest.

Omri: Then come *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, followed by the fall holidays: *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Sukkot*. *Parashat Emor* also includes the *mitzvah* of counting the omer. All of us are commanded to count the omer. All year long, the Kohanim at our Holy Temple, offered wheat to God. In a ceremony from Pesach until Shavuot, barley was added, and the *Kohanim* counted on behalf of the Jewish People. These days we do the counting for ourselves. We count from the second day of Passover until just before Shavuot. That's 7 weeks of 7 days - 7 weeks x 7 days equals 49 days! The 50th day is *Shavuot*. The rabbis said the number of days of *sefirat ha'omer* is also the number of days from when we left Egypt to when we arrived at Mt. Sinai.

Shauni: After teaching us about many of our holidays, the Torah continues on to give the Israelites the rule that when they enter the land of Israel, they are not to harvest their fields all the way to the edges and are not to pick up anything they have harvested that has fallen to the ground while they were harvesting. These fruits, grains, and veggies are to be left for the poor people and for people from other communities that have come to live with us.

Question #1

Annika:

Near the beginning of chapter 23 we read that for six days we are to work and that the seventh day is a *Shabbat*-of-stopping, a holy time, a time when we are not to do work. What is something you do on *Shabbat* that makes it holy for your family? <<<Shauni Picks 3>>

Omri: To me doing something holy means following G!d's rules. One holy thing my family sometimes does on shabbat is that we go to synagogue and pray. That feels holy to me holy because when I pray at synagogue I feel like I'm doing what G!d is telling me to do.

Question #2

Shauni:

The Israelites are still wandering in the wilderness and haven't made it to the Land of Israel yet. But this week's *parashah* gives us lots of rules for how we are supposed to treat the Land of Israel--and each other--when we get there. In chapter 23 we learn that when we harvest the fruits, grains, and vegetables of the land of Israel, people with land are not to harvest all the way to the edges of their fields.

Ezra: Food growing at the edge of the field is to be left for the poor and for strangers who come to live with the Israelites. Why do you think the Torah would tell people with land to leave the edges of their fields for the poor and strangers? <<Abigail picks 3>>

Annika: I think that this is the Torah's way of telling us that people with land should take care of the poor or people who are new to our community and might find it difficult to feed themselves since they may not have their own land.

Question #3

Abigail: Even though I am a farmer, most of us here in the room are not farmers. We don't have fields. We can't leave the fruit, grains, or veggies growing at edges for people who need them. If we decided we wanted to help poor people and people who are new to our country, what is one thing that *we* could do? <<Annika Picks 3>>

Shauni:

There are a lot of things we could do to help! We could give money to people who might need it or buy food for people in need and give it to them. Also we could help out at the St. Louis Food pantry. They are an organization that gives out food to people who might need food but might have a tough time buying it for themselves. There are other organizations that you can volunteer at too.