



Emor

VaYikra (Leviticus) 21:1-24:23

Parshat Emor continues the description of the special rules and observances of the *Kohanim*. The priests are to avoid coming into contact with a corpse, and are not to shave smooth any parts of their heads. They are forbidden to marry a divorced woman, and must always be scrupulous in carrying out their duties.

Moses speaks to all the people about the holidays, this being one of several calendars of holidays found in the Torah. Apart from the Shabbat, the Jewish people are to observe Passover, and seven weeks later, Shavuot, a celebration of the harvest. On the first day of the seventh month (*Tishrei*), the people are to mark a “sacred occasion with loud blasts”, which we, of course, recognize as Rosh Hashanah and the sounds of the *Shofar*. The tenth day of the same month, *Tishrei*, is to be a Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

Sukkot, celebrated on the fifteenth day of *Tishrei*, follows Yom Kippur by 5 days, and is observed for seven days. The people are to mark the eighth day, the day after Sukkot, as *Shimini Atzeret*, with a special sacrifice. On all of these holidays, we are told to refrain from work.

The portion concludes with the description of an incident in which a man born of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian man fights with a man born of two Israelite parents. The half-Israelite blasphemes G-d's name in the course of the fight. G-d tells Moses that the man is to be stoned to death as punishment. Moses then explains to the Israelites the penalty for blaspheming G-d, or pronouncing G-d's name, and the rules by which restitution is to be made for crimes.



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