



Welcome to our study of this week's Torah portion, which is called **Emor (Speak)**.

Discover new insights into the Word of God as you read along with us this portion of Scripture that will be read in synagogues around the world this Shabbat (Saturday).

[Shabbat Shalom Hans,](#)

Emor (Say)

Leviticus 21:1–24:23; Ezekiel 44:15–31; James 1:1–18

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Say [emor] to the priests, the sons of Aaron...'" (*Leviticus 21:1*)



A 13-year-old Jewish boy pays respect to the Torah.
(Ministry of Tourism photo taken by Yonatan Sindel, Flash 90)

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In this week's Torah reading, **Emor**, which means **Say**, God gives Moses instructions regarding rules of purity for the **priests (Kohanim)**. **They are to be held to a stricter standard than the general population.**

For instance, the priests are not to make themselves ceremonially unclean through contact with a person who had died, unless that person was a very close relative such as a father, mother, son, or daughter.

The priests also have to carefully adhere to stringent laws of holiness; for example, a priest cannot marry a prostitute or a divorced woman. The **Kohen Gadol (High Priest)**, who had been anointed with the holy anointing oil, is compelled to even higher standards: he must marry only an Israelite virgin.

"The woman he marries must be a virgin. He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, so that he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the LORD, who makes him holy." (*Leviticus 21:13–15*)



A Jewish man wears a tallit (prayer shawl) and tefillin (phylacteries) as he prays using a siddur (Jewish prayer book) at the Western (Wailing) Wall in Jerusalem.

The high priest could not even show traditional signs of mourning, such as allowing his hair to become unkempt (uncovering his head) or tearing his garments, not even for his mother or father.

The Brit Chadashah (New Testament) reveals that, like priests, some of us will be judged by a stricter standard than others; for example, teachers of the Word of God.

"Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow Believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly." (*James 3:1*)

Why? Teachers are leaders, and with that calling comes greater responsibility. Teachers can have a wider circle of influence—for good or for evil—than the general population, since they teach others not only by their words, but by example.

Students often look up to their teachers; therefore, **those who teach God's Word are to live an exemplary life—a sobering challenge.**

Some servants of the Lord may be called to live by a stricter standard. For example, the apostle Paul said that although all things are permissible, but not all are helpful:

"All things are legitimate [permissible—and we are free to do anything we please], but not all things are helpful (expedient, profitable, and wholesome). All things are legitimate, but not all things are constructive [to character] and edifying [to spiritual life]." (*1 Corinthians 10:23*)



Christian Quarter of Jerusalem

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The truth is that as Believers in Yeshua, we are His ambassadors, royal family, and priests—we represent Him; therefore, each of us are held to a high standard of morality when interacting with the world and each other.

Biblically, we are called to sanctify God's holy name:

"Do not profane My holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who made you holy." (*Leviticus 22:32*)

In Judaism, this is considered the most important **mitzvah (commandment)** of the 613 mitzvot (plural of mitzvah) in the entire Torah. Our behavior must exemplify our relationship with God.

In this way, we can be lights shining in the darkness.

"Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." (*Matthew 5:15*)

While we are all His representatives, **each of us has a unique role in Adonai's plan**. When we strive for greatness in whatever purpose God has given us in that Divine plan, and work on developing all of our God-given gifts and qualities, then we can bring honor to Him and light to the world.



God's Plan Revealed in His Appointed Meeting Times

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are My appointed festivals [moadim], the appointed festivals [meeting times or feasts] of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies''"(Leviticus 23:1-2)

In addition to instructing the Kohanim (priests) on how to meet with and serve Him, God gave the Israelites instructions about observing the moadim (special meeting times and festivals). These include the following:

- **Shabbat (Sabbath)** on the seventh day;
- **Pesach (Passover)** for seven days beginning at sundown on the 14th day of the first month of Nissan;

- **Bikkurim** (Firstfruits) on Nisan 16;
- **Shavuot** (Feast of Weeks) 50 days after Pesach ends;
- **Rosh Hashanah** (New Year) on the first day of the seventh month (Tishrei);
- **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement) on the 10th day of the seventh month; and
- **Sukkot** (Tabernacles) for eight days beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month.



Jewish men pray in a synagogue on Sukkot. They are holding Sukkot's Arba'ah Minim (Four Kinds), plants that are mentioned in Leviticus 23:40

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God introduces these appointed meeting times with the Shabbat —a holy day that reminds us God is the Creator of heaven and earth. It testifies to the fact that God is still actively involved with His creation and sustaining it. That is the starting point for faith.

Since the Israelites are commanded to keep the Shabbat "in all your dwelling places (*Leviticus 23:31*)," the Shabbat forges a link between the Creator and every Jewish household.

The other appointed times listed above are sometimes referred to as the Feasts or Festivals of Israel but, in actuality, God says they are **the appointed times of the Lord—His moadim**.

These moadim were not merely meant to be remembrances of times past; each one gave the Israelites clues to God's future plan of redemption for them and the world. That is, **each of these moadim or appointed feasts point to the Messiah in profoundly spiritual ways.**



Blowing the shofar at the Western (Wailing) Wall in Jerusalem

As Believers, we are privileged to see how Yeshua has either already fulfilled these feasts in His first appearance on earth or will fulfill them at His Second Coming.

Yeshua fulfilled the festivals of Pesach (the Passover sacrifice of a lamb on Nisan 14) with His final sacrificial/atoning death on Nisan 14 as the unblemished Lamb of God (*Isaiah 53; John 1:36; Hebrews 9:11–14, 22–24*).

In this offering of Himself, Yeshua also fulfilled Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

Yeshua then became our Bikkurim (Firstfruits) of the barley harvest held on Nisan 16 when He resurrected on Nisan 16 as the first of all who will rise from the dead on the Last Day (*Psalms 16:8–11; Acts 2:24–28; 1 Corinthians 15:20–23*).

Shavuot (Pentecost) on Sivan 6 is a celebration of the giving of the Torah. **On this same day (Sivan 6), Yeshua poured out Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) onto His Believers.**

The Ruach wrote the Torah on their hearts, empowering the Believers to live holy lives (*Joel 2:28; Jeremiah 31:31–33; Acts 2*).

The Fall festivals of Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets or New Year) and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) will be fulfilled when the shofar blows and Yeshua returns to establish His reign on earth. It will happen this way:

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [shofar]; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (*1 Corinthians 15:52*)



In these Last Days before the return of Yeshua, please pray for the salvation of the Jewish People and help us bring the Good News to Israel.

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