

Emor

April 30- May 1, 2021
17-18 Iyar 5781

This week's parsha, Emor, opens with the discussion of the rules applied to Kohanim. Later in the parsha we read about all the holidays and their laws, and sacrifices. The chronology of way the Torah lists the holidays is in order of how they occurred in "history" so to speak. That is, the first testimonial holiday that takes place, is Pesach, as it is the first holiday and subsequent laws that were as a result of the exodus from Egypt. The second holiday is Shavuot, which, is a holiday that represents two primary events, the counting of the Omer as it relates to the crops, and the giving of Torah. Next in the order of events of the calendar comes Rosh Hashana, then Yom Kippur, and finally Sukkos. This culminates the 5 main holy days of our calendar.

I read a nice mashal from Ma'reh Yechezkel about why Hashem repeats the holidays for us. There was a king his son and their entourage that were traveling in the desert and they ran out of water. Instead of going to the nearest town the King commanded his servants to dig a well in the location to find water and post a sign in the location that water can be found. The king explained that although they can go to the nearest town to get water, there may come a time where the prince is travelling himself, and will run out of water, and without the current means you will have to re dig the well to obtain the water. Therefore, make the sign now, that even if the sand and weather buries the well, you will know where to easily dig to obtain water. The holidays themselves are sign posts during our year, for us to reconnect regardless of if our "wells become unrecognizable", furthermore, Hashem repeating it for us in the Torah is an additional signpost of reminding us of all the love Hashem shows us.

After this portion, the next part of the torah talks about the Kohen's commandment to crush the olives to be used for the menorah lighting. This juxtaposition, perhaps, is a hint to the future when we will add the holiday of Chanuka to our holiday list. (As it says in perek 24 posuk 4 that it will be

continual.) Finally, there is a hint to Purim, in that right after the menorah commandment, we learn about the "lechem hapanim". The lechem hapanim is related to Sara our foremother's tent, and Sara is connected to 127 and Ester, from the story of purim.

Finally, we learn about the commandment to count the Omer. The word "Sefiras" means to illuminate as told by the Magid of Mezritch. The Alter Rebbe explains that the Omer itself and the growth that we are to have to achieve the Torah at the end of it, falls into a vacillating relationship called "Ratza" and "Shuv" between us and Hashem. Pesach is about going out, whereas Shavuot is about returning. This serves as a dictum for our daily service to Hashem, in as much as what we are supposed to accomplish during the Omer counting. The Omer counting as well is about our growth in accomplishing a sounder approach to Ahvas Yisroel, which is a "klal godol batorah". As the gemara in Yoma 9b explains, the Beis Hamikdash's were destroyed on account of wanton (gratuitous) hatred. Even though the gemara questions this, as there was also widespread learning and observance. The gemara answers that what would happen is people would eat with each other, (kindness) but stab daggers in each other's backs with words, when the people were apart. And the gemara says, this is equal to the 3 capital transgressions for which we would be allowed to die, that is immorality, idol worship and murder. Therefore, one must ask, how terrible it must be if we don't have true Ahvas Yisroel. Unfortunately, although Lag Baomer (today) should be a celebration, due to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's request from us, and the plague of Rabbi Akiva's students ceased, we were witness to the biggest non-wartime casualty in Israel- in Meron. It breaks my heart to write about it.

We need to do more to love each other, so that we can merit the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash and the coming of Mashiach

Good Shabbos.