DKJA

Parshat Emor
Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23

Emor is the word by which G-d tells Moses to "speak" the laws of holiness to the priests. The portion begins with a detailed description of the laws of holiness as they pertain to the priests and to the offering of sacrifices.

The priests had a higher status than the rest of the Israelites because of their special duties. Essentially, these laws set the priests apart from the rest of society.

The High Priests were further set apart from the regular priests. In five respects, they were greater and better - stature, strength, wealth, intelligence, and appearance.

The parasha concludes with one of the few narrative passages in the Book of Leviticus, the story of the man who blasphemed G-d (24:10-23). The entire passage is very brief and it is left to the reader to speculate on the nature of the argument, which caused the man to "pronounce the name of G-d in blasphemy." The story is noteworthy in that it is one of only four incidents in the Torah in which Moses is shown asking G-d how to decide an issue. Moses sought G-d`s judgment because the punishment for blasphemy had not yet been detailed. More significant, however, is the placement of this story. It is, in effect, a cautionary tale, coming as it does on the heels of the sections demanding holiness and morality from the Israelites.

Sometimes the things we say cause real damage. What is this incident in the Torah trying to tell us?

Food for thought:
1. What elements within Judaism set Jews apart from the rest of the world?
2. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of being set apart?
3. What do you think is important in a leader? What makes a good leader?
4. What important personal qualities not listed here also makes a person very special?
5. Does one have to be born with special personal qualities, or can one develop them?
6. What are your best qualities?
7. Have you ever spoken things in anger that you really did not mean to say? What was the result?

Shabbat Shalom
Candle lighting - 7:45 PM

Jewish Federation
OF SOUTH PALM BEACH COUNTY