

## Torah Portion: Emor (Leviticus 21:1-24:23)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding the community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to, as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/> ]

While last week's portion was in excess of 90 pages, including the appendices, this will be considerably shorter commentary as there is limited direct instruction to the average person in Israel. There is a considerable passage directly related to priests and the High Priest, specifically, and we can glean a bit of insight and instruction from these, however, they are not directly applicable to most in the Restored House of Israel.

Leviticus 21 begins with direct instruction to the priests.

**21** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean for any of his people who die, <sup>2</sup> except for a close relative, such as his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother, <sup>3</sup> or an unmarried sister who is dependent on him since she has no husband—for her he may make himself unclean.

The direct instructions continue through 22:16. Many may seek to make this passage normative for all people, particularly followers of Yeshua! They may base it on 1 Peter 2:9-12.

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good

lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Peter's epistle is to the 'aliens scattered abroad,' aka 'the lost tribes.' He uses terminology in the above cited passage that demonstrates his clear connection with the prophecies over the house of Israel, particularly those of Hosea. (See Hosea 1:5-10 esp.) In doing so, he demonstrates the set apart nature of God's people in/through Messiah Yeshua. But, even as a holy/set apart priesthood, we will return as the tribes, not as Levites. And, technically, even among the Levites, the passage cited from Leviticus 21 is directed at the 'sons of Aaron' meaning it is directed at those who serve *in the Tabernacle/Temple*.

As we return to the Torah and begin to function as families, clans and tribes, we will do so as Gaddites and Reubenites, Asherites and Danites, etc... Scripture does say that some will be chosen as Levites (Isaiah 66:21) presumably to replace the Levites that Ezekiel 44:10-14 states will not serve in the Temple.

Therefore, the passage in Leviticus 21 *may* have some direct application to *some returning Israelites*, it is not directly applicable to the vast majority of the House of Israel. (For a detailed understanding of who the House of Israel is, where they are returning from and their history, read *Ten Parts in the King; The Prophesied Reconciliation of God's Two Witnesses*.)

The reason we *know* the Leviticus 21/22 instructions to the priests, descendents of Aaron, does not apply to the House of Israel is that Isaiah 4:1 prophesies that the returning people will be large plural families composed of women who were previously covered in shame but have been redeemed. (Men will be in short supply due to the judgement against them for not doing their jobs as heads and leaders, but that is a different topic for another day.)

Among the instructions for the sons of Aaron are instructions dealing with divorcees and harlots, neither allowed among the wives of priests who enter the sanctuary.

**Leviticus 21:**<sup>7</sup> They shall not take a woman who is profaned by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God.

What we must understand is that many women who have been defiled will be in the band of returnees to Israel. Further, *they must be covered*. There will not be a raft of single women returning. Each and every one will be under the covering of a man, whether a husband, father, brother or son. Being outside of that protective covering and her created role is one definition of harlotry. It is, by definition, a place of rebellion.

This is a topic that most western Christians, especially women, find exceedingly challenging because of the feminism and witchcraft absorbed into culture and the church. This baggage is transported wholesale by most women into the Hebrew roots/Torah/Messianic movement. It is an area of rebellion and sin that God *will clean up before* we enter the Land.

God's order, consistent through the entire Bible, expressed in I Corinthians 11:3, is:

God => Messiah => man => woman

Restoration is dependent on restoring this order in families, clans and tribes!! If that order is restored, by definition, many women who are currently uncovered, whether by divorce or other circumstances, will be covered!

As previously stated, there *may be some* men who feel called to *not* marry a divorcee or widow because the Father has something else for them. However, this *in NO way* reduces the very important duty, even joyful responsibility, of the men called to provide covering and protection to those women who have been abused by the worldly system that profaned or allowed them to be profaned by divorce, harlotry, etc. *Many, many* men are being called to the task of covering, protecting and rebuilding these precious daughters of Abraham that are foundational to family units, clans and tribes.

Our Elohim, may He be praised forever, is an elohim of second chances and restoration. In Messiah Yeshua, we have forgiveness for sin and the opportunity to hit the 'restart' button. We can learn and walk in His Ways.

**Leviticus 22:**<sup>10</sup> 'No layman, however, is to eat the holy *gift*; a sojourner with the priest or a hired man shall not eat of the holy *gift*.  
<sup>11</sup> But if a priest buys a slave as *his* property with his money, that one may eat of it, and those who are born in his house may eat of his food.  
<sup>12</sup> If a priest's daughter is married to a layman, she shall not eat of the offering of the *gifts*. <sup>13</sup> But if a priest's daughter becomes a widow or divorced, and has no child and returns to her father's house as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's food; but no layman shall eat of it.

There are multiple important notes to be made from this passage.

- While several of the uses of ‘layman’ refer to a ‘stranger’, at least one refers to ‘a man’. The general takeaway is that there is a distinction between the priests and those not of the priestly line.
- Someone purchased by the priest receives all the rights and benefits of being a member of that priest’s ‘house’ as if they were born as his son or daughter. This is important in understanding the role and covering of the head of the house. The same concept of membership, or ownership, exists in the home of every man, whether Israelite or not. Man is the head of his house and all in his house belong to him.
- A woman, when she is joined to a man, is no longer a member of her father’s house, she is now a member of her new husband/masters/baal’s house. This speaks to the relationship structure whereby she is transferred from the covering of her father to that of her husband.
- A woman who loses her covering, even if he was a layman, may return to her father’s house with full benefits of covering as his daughter. This speaks to the necessity of the woman being covered and the continuing place of protection by her father *if* the relationship with her husband/head is severed, whether by divorce or widowhood.

A final note from this portion is to note that Leviticus 23 is written to the ‘sons of Israel’ with the duty for those sons, the men, to teach their wives and families! The men are held accountable. Notice Leviticus 23:2, 10, 24, 34, 44. This is a phrase that occurs over and over. It is a phrase that will be the standard against which men are judged. This *may* be the reason that judgment falls so heavily on men and there are so few left...

Men, headship, patriarchy, and the right leading of your families to obedience to the Ways of the Lord are on your shoulders. This is a very serious duty that carries great blessing and reward, or heavy judgment and curses. Consider carefully what the Torah instructs. You/we are accountable and bear the burden for our families.

There is more, but this is sufficient for now.

Shabbat shalom!!