

*D'var Torah – Parashat Emor*  
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Shabbat Shalom! This week's Torah portion is Emor from the book of Vayikra. The word Emor means to "speak". In Emor, the Lord speaks to Moses about some of the laws which have guided Jews today.

The priests had limitations on whom they could marry, rules for contact with a dead person, and physical defects that would prevent a priest from offering a sacrifice. There were many laws including, that when any man of Israel presents a burnt offering it must be acceptable in the Lord's favor, and it must be a male without blemish or defect. The Torah goes on to specify those defects that would prevent a priest from making an offering. Offering cannot be brought by men who are blind or lame, have a broken arm or leg, who are hunchbacked or a dwarf, or who have limbs that aren't perfect. All who suffer from those conditions and more are not allowed to offer a sacrifice in the temple thus disallowing such people to become priests. He also said, "No man of your offspring throughout the ages who has a defect shall be qualified to offer the food of his G-d." "The Lord also says, you shall not make an offering that has a defect". It seems to me here that G-d was prejudiced against people who were imperfect. It seems, He wasn't willing to accept or help them and He was actually turning his back on them. He was blaming them for not being perfect. To me, this seems unacceptable because it is not their fault for having physical or mental defects.

I believe people's differences should not affect the way they are viewed by others. I feel anyone should be able to achieve what they want if they work hard enough for it. If a man with differences wanted to become a priest then he should be able to. I wonder

what G-d's reasoning for creating differences in people is, and the why He put restrictions on what they can do?

My brother told me a story which the Rabbi had told him for his portion. Once there was a rabbi who was riding his donkey in the hills of the Galilee. He was feeling very good because he had studied a lot of Torah. An ugly man appeared and greeted the rabbi. "Shalom Rabbi." The rabbi said to the man, "Tell me, are all the people in your village as ugly as you?" The man answered, "Ask the craftsman who made me." Obviously the craftsman is G-d. The rabbi was wrong in his actions with the man. The importance of this story is that everyone is created equally because we were all created in G-d's image. For my Bat-mitzvah project I played with the kids my age, who have disabilities. My mitzvah-project relates to how I feel people with disabilities should be treated. When I played with these disabled children I blew bubbles to them and played on the computer. I realized that some of the kids can't even move parts of their bodies. I also played soccer with a kid who has mild autism.

I would like to thank Mrs. Fox for helping me gather ideas for my d'var torah, Mrs. Holtman and Mr. Pinchover for teaching me my service, and My Hebrew school teachers for teaching me Jewish history and the importance of being a Jew. I thank Rabbi Lazowski for his wise advise and for being here this morning. I would also like to thank my family and friends for coming to celebrate this special occasion with me. Last but not least, I would like to thank my brother for helping me with my portion and d'var torah, and especially my parents for supporting and taking me to my bat-mitzvah lessons and Hebrew school. Without your help, mom and dad I wouldn't be up here right now. Thank You!!!! Now please turn to page 717 in the *Etz Hayim*.