

February 14, 2019

Parashat Tetzaveh

Benjamin

Dvir

Exodus 27:20-30:10

Eitan Bachor ben Lvav u'Moshe Chaim

Dvir ben Guy v'Sivan

<http://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.27.20-30.10?lang=bi>

Dvir:

This week's Torah portion is *Parashat Tetzaveh*, and we will be reading from *Sefer Shemot*, Exodus 27, verses 10 and 11 and Exodus 28, verse 1. This week we read that Moshe is still on Mount Sinai receiving all the details about building the *Mishkan*, the portable sanctuary. Our portion describes the gold *menorah* and gives instructions for lighting it. The *menorah* is the model for the *ner tamid*, the eternal light - (*point to lamp above the ark*) - that we find in our sanctuaries to this day.

Ben: *Tetzaveh* also describes the special clothing that Aharon and his sons, the *kohanim*, should wear. Their special clothing includes a long, sleeveless shirt called an *ephod*, a breastplate containing gemstones--each one standing for a different tribe of Israel--and the *urim* and *tummim*, which many believe helped the *kohanim* predict the future. The *kohen* also wore a special head covering with the words: "*Kodesh La'A-dona*" or "Holy to the God" written on it.

The *parasha* describes the seven-day process for priests to get ready to serve in the *Mishkan*. They include putting oil on the high priest or *kohen gadol* and touching the blood of a sacrificed animal to the priest's right ear, thumb, big toe, and clothing.

Dvir: Who is not mentioned in this *parasha*? Moshe! *Parashat Tetzaveh* is the only *parasha* since Moshe was born where his name does not appear. He is mentioned - just not by name. God calls him "you," but does not mention his name. During our chanting, see how many times you can hear us say "Aharon".

QUESTIONS

1) **BEN**: In this week's *parasha* we read that Aharon--in order to serve in the *Mishkan* as the *kohen gadol* or High Priest--was anointed with oil. Moshe put oil on his head.

D'VIR: Can you think of any other Torah connections with oil? Why might God have told Moshe to put oil on *Aharon's* head before *Aharon* could serve God as the *kohen gadol* in the *Mishkan*? <Ben picks 3>

BEN: When Ya'akov wakes up from his dream of the angels going up and down, he says that the place where he was sleeping is holy and he hadn't known it. He then stands up the rock that he used as a pillow and pours oil on it. Putting oil on something is a way of recognizing its holiness. Maybe God tells Moshe to put oil on Aharon as a way of recognizing that he is holy and dedicated to God.

D'VIR: Some commentators say that Ya'akov pours oil on the rock so that if he passes it again he can see that it is holy. *Kohanim* have to be recognized as special and connected with God in order to offer sacrifices and speak with God in the *Mishkan*. Maybe putting oil on Aharon is a way for the Israelites to see that he is connected with God.

2) BEN: Another thing that God tells Moshe to do to prepare Aharon to be the *kohen gadol* is to slaughter a bull for a sacrifice and to put some of the blood on Aharon--on his right ear, on his right thumb, and on his right big toe. Why do you think God would have Moshe put blood on Aharon to prepare him to work in the *Mishkan*?

<D'vir picks 3>

D'VIR: One of the important things that he will do as *kohen gadol* is to offer animal as sacrifices. Maybe God tells Moshe to put blood on Aharon as a way of helping him connect with the animals to be sacrificed.

3) D'VIR: What do you think is important about putting blood on those parts of Aharon's body? Why would God tell Moshe to put blood on Aharon's right ear, right thumb, and right big toe?

<D'vir picks 1, Ben picks 2>

BEN: I think that the blood is put on the ear so that Aharon is reminded that it is part of his job to listen to God. Maybe God tells Moshe to put the blood on Aharon's thumb because thumbs are special parts of our bodies that not all animals have that help us pick things up. This reminds us that human beings have powers that are different from other animals. And the big toe helps us balance. Maybe this is God's way of reminding the *kohen gadol* to try to keep balance in his life. Although serving God is important, it is also important for Aharon to spend time with his family.

DVIR: I think that God tells Moshe to put the blood of the bull on Aharon's ear to remind Aharon to listen for people who might want to hurt the Jews. Maybe G-d chooses the thumb because God can't hold things and needs human beings to be God's hands and to do the work that needs to be done in the world. I also think that the big toe is about balance. Even the *kohen gadol* has to be balanced in order to pick things up and to build things and do the work that is needed. If they didn't have balance, they might fall. If someone serves G-d too much and prays all the time then they can't do anything else. God is reminding *Aharon* to balance between serving God and the world.