

Tetzaveh Exodus - Shemoth (27.20-30:10)

Upon Mount Sinai, God told Moses the instructions on building a Sanctuary for God out of the heartfelt donations given by the Israelites. The Sanctuary is enclosed and there is an internal partition where there is to be a gold Ark to hold the stone tablets of God's Commandments, a gold bread table and a pure gold menorah with seven lamps for light. God said, "Tell the sons of Israel that they are to provide and use only pure hand crushed olive oil for kindling the lights of the menorah lamps. Aaron and his sons shall arrange for it to burn constantly in God's Presence in the Tent of Appointed Meeting.

Now separate your brother Aaron and his sons from among the Israelites and bring them close to you so that they can become priests to Me. Have talented craftspeople make Aaron dignified beautiful vestments which will help consecrate him to Me. Then take an ephod robe and put two one gemstone on each shoulder and engrave in gold into them the names of six of the tribe. Place the Urim and Thumim in this Breastplate of Judgment so when going before God, all his decisions will be with the Israelites in his heart. Aaron's robe for officiating will be pure turquoise wool with bells of gold all around. In this way, the sound of the bells can be heard when the High Priest comes into the Lord's Sanctuary and when he goes out, so that he may not die. For Aaron's forehead, you shall make a head-plate of pure gold inscribed with: 'Holy to The Lord.' Thus Aaron shall bring forgiveness for sins in which a sacred offering is offered.

Then, for the sons of Israel, along with a "Holy To The Lord" head plate, make them also tunics, sashes and turbans of fine embroidered linen with gold, blue, purple and scarlet threads. These vestments are for the sons of Aaron to give them dignity and glory. Anoint them and invest them with the full authority to serve Me as priests. They are only to wear these sacred vestments in the Sanctuary.

God then told Moses how to conduct the ceremony to initiate and ordain Aaron and his sons as God's official priests. God said, "First prepare a young bull and two rams without blemish and some matzah bread and matzah cakes kneaded with oil. Have Aaron and his sons bathe then dress in their holy garments. Place the anointing oil upon Aaron's head. Aaron will then conduct the offering that clears sin, then the wave offering. Afterwards he will do fire offerings that create smoke and show obedience to God. When that's finished, cook another ram in this holy place for Aaron and his sons to eat.

Every day, for seven days, you are to perform these sacrifices of atonement upon the altar to initiate and ordain Aaron and his sons as priests to Me. Then the altar shall be a holy of holies and all that touches it must be holy. It is there I will set times for Myself to meet with the sons of Israel. I will sanctify Aaron and his sons as My priests. I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel, and I will be their God. They will experience that I, God, am their God, who brought them out from Egypt in order to dwell in their midst.

Make an altar for the incense which Aaron shall make go up in smoke each morning, continually before God. Once a year, Aaron shall make atonement for sins upon this altar. This annual atonement is holy of holies to God."

Questions: 1) How do you feel about your or your rabbi's clothes in the Sanctuary? 2) How do you show obedience to God? 3) Why is the ceremony repeated for seven days? **Illustration Ideas:** The Priests in their special clothes, a sin offering, a fire offering, a wave offering, the holy altar