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NEWS & VIEWS

February 14, 2019 | 9 Adar I 5779

Blog Edition

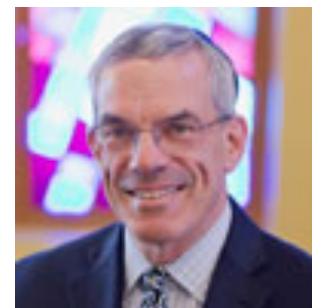


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Giving Up Something of Our Inner Selves

Parashat Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10)

By Rabbi Brian Besser, Rab`10
Rabbi, Congregation Beth Shalom, Bloomington, IN



This week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh, contains an interesting anomaly; it is the only portion in the Torah (after the Book of Genesis) that fails to mention Moses by name. According to the Tur, a medieval commentator, the omission is no accident, but results directly from an earlier episode. When God, in divine wrath, was about to destroy the Israelites for worshipping the Golden Calf, Moses pleaded before God: "Alas! This people is guilty of a great sin... If You will not forgive their sin, then blot me out from Your book which You have written." (Exodus 32:31-32) God acquiesced to Moses's passionate, self-effacing plea, but erased Moses's name anyway—from Tetzaveh!

In Tetzaveh, the focus shifts completely away from Moses onto his older brother Aaron (whose name repeats seven times in the first paragraph). Although Moses has led the people so far, Aaron, not Moses, is to serve as High Priest. Hence, the entire portion proceeds with detailed instructions regarding the priesthood: the lighting of the menorah, the lavish description of the priestly garments, and the intricate ceremony for the priestly investiture.

According to Midrash, Moses was disappointed at being passed over for the priesthood, but his magnanimity prevailed: "Moses told Aaron: God instructed me to appoint you High Priest. Aaron replied: you have labored so hard on the Sanctuary, and I am made High Priest? Moses said: Just as you rejoiced when I rose to greatness, so I now rejoice in your greatness. As you live, even though you have become High Priest, I feel as though I had become High Priest." (Tanchuma Shemini 3)

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EVENTS

Jewish Genealogy: Discover Your Family History

Sponsored by the [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston](#)

Eight Wednesdays, March 6-May 8

7-9:30 p.m.

Hebrew College

[Register](#)

Community Hevra Kadisha Zayin Adar

Commemoration Dinner

Hebrew College President Sharon Cohen Anisfeld will be the featured guest speaker

March 12 | 6-9 pm

Temple Emanuel

Newton, MA

Guests \$20 | Free for Hevra Kadisha members

Dying Well: Multi-Religious End-of-Life Conversations

A daylong conference on religion and its role in end of life care

Sponsored by the Boston Theological Institute Lifelong Learning Consortium

Featuring Rabbi Or Rose &

Rabbi Joel Baron, Rab`14

April 2 | 9am-3pm

Hebrew College

\$10-\$25 | [Register](#)

Torah Godly Play

May 19-20

8 am-3 pm

Hebrew College

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Alternative Realities: Purim & the Possibility of Transformation

Rabbis Ebn Leader, Nehemia Polen & Or Rose

March 18 | 8-10:15 pm

Israeli-American Council of Boston, Newton

[View English flyer](#) | [View Hebrew flyer](#)

\$10 | [Register](#)

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ANNUAL SPRING EVENT - SAVE THE DATE

Hebrew College Live! Jewish Journeys:

Stories in Honor of Our Teachers

May 30 | 6:30 PM

Information coming soon | Questions?

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