



Congregation Beth Israel
Of The Berkshires

CONGREGATION
Shir Ami

SoulSpa 3.20 • P. Tetzaveh
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בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה:

*Barukh Atah Adonai
eloheinu melekh ha'olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.*

Blessed are You, YHVH, our God,
eternal sovereign, who sanctified us
in God's *mitzvot* and commanded us
to busy ourselves in words of Torah.

"To Make A Place for Torah"
(Na'ama Shaked, trans. Melila Hellner)

To make a place in my body for Torah
so that she may enter
and sit in me, a cave
And I will raise up a spring and a tree for her
from so much longing and sweetness so she will stay
And then, my two hands will be as two springs
My forehead will flow illuminating
A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell
and a pomegranate (the most beautiful
words) come and open up in my mouth
A great river breathes in my insides
I am drawn forth weeping

Exodus 29:45-30:10

עלת תמיד לדרתיכם פתח אהל-
מועד לפני יהוה אשר אנועד לכם
שמה לדבר אליך שם: ונעדתני שמה
לבני ישראל ונקדש בכבדי:
וקדשתי את אהל מועד ואת
המזבח ואת אהרן ואת בניו
אקדש לכהן לי: ושכנתי בתוך בני
ישראל והייתי להם לאלהים:
וידעו כי אני יהוה אלהיהם אשר
הוצאתי אתם מארץ מצרים לשכני
בתוכם אני יהוה אלהיהם:

What does it mean for Shekhinah / God to dwell in a literal place where most folks can't go —> kohanim to "spread it around"

ועשית מזבח מקטר קטרת עצי
שטים תעשה אותו: אמה ארכו
ואמה רחבו רבוע יהיה ואמתיים
קמתו ממנו קרנתיו: וצפית אותו
זהב טהור אתגו ואת קירתיו
סביב ואת קרנתיו ועשית לו זר
זהב סביב:

ושתי טבעות זהב תעשה לו מתחת
לארו על שתי צלעותיו תעשה על-שני
צדיו והיה לבתים לבדים לשאת
אתו בהמה: ועשית את הבדים
עצי שטים וצפית אתם זהב:

כ.פ.ר — פ.ר.כ

ונתתה אתו לפני הפרכת אשר
על-ארו העדת לפני הכפרת אשר
על-העדת אשר אנועד לך שמה:
והקטיר עליו אהרן קטרת סמים
בבקר בבקר בהיטיבו את הנרות
יקטירנה: ובהעלת אהרן את
הנרות בין הערבים יקטירנה קטרת
תמיד לפני יהוה לדרתיכם:

לא-תעלו עליו קטרת זרה ועלה
ומנחה ונסוד לא תשכו עליו: וכפר
אהרן על-קרנתיו אחת בשנה מדם
חטאת הכפרים אחת בשנה יכפר
עליו לדרתיכם קדש-קדשים הוא
ליהוה:

k-purim = like Purim?

45-47. [They will make] a regular ascent offering in their generations at the opening of the Tent of Witnessing before YHVH, where I will witness to you and speak with you there. I will make Myself known there to the Children of Israel, and it will be sanctified by My glory. I will sanctify the Tent of Witnessing and the altar, and I will sanctify Aharon and his sons to ^{serve} *kohen* Me. I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and I will be their God – and they will know that I am YHVH their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt to [be] My dwelling among them: I am YHVH their God.

eternal, forever generation to generation

SHEKHINAH

1-3. You will make an altar for burning incense: make it of acacia wood. It will be a square one cubit long and one cubit wide, and two cubits high – its horns of one piece with it. Overlay it with pure gold [and] its top, its sides [all] around, and its horns; make a gold molding for it [all] around. =altar?

architectural similarity to Ark of the Covenant

4-5. Make two gold rings for it under its molding; make them on its two side walls, on opposite sides. They will serve as holders for poles with which to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

6-8. Put it in front of the curtain that is over the Ark of the Witnessing, in front of the cover over the Witnessing where I will make known to you there. Aharon will incense-ify it with aromatic incense each morning: by morning when he tends the lamps he will incense-ify her. And when Aharon lights the lamps at twilight, he will incense-ify her by regular incense offering before YHVH in their generations.

prequel to Nadav and Avihu bringing "strange" incense

9-10. Do not raise on it strange incense, or a burnt offering or a grain offering, and do not pour a libation [offering] on it. Once per year Aharon will *kaper* its horns with blood of the *kippurim* sin offering; *kaper* will be performed on it once per year in their generations. It is Holy of Holies to YHVH.

cover atone

healing of Shekhinah?

DIVINE AROMATHERAPY?

Steinsaltz, Ex. 30:7

וְהִקְטִיר עָלָיו אֶהָרֹן קִטְרֹת סַמִּים, ... בשעה שהוא מנקה ומתקין את הַנִּרְתִּי שְׁדִלְקוּ כָל הַלַּיְלָה, מִשִּׁירֵי הַפְּתִילֹת וְהַפִּיחַ, יִקְטִירָנָה.

Aharon will incense-ify with aromatic spices – When he cleans out the lamps and the prior evening's kindled wicks, prepares new wicks and oil, and then will incense-ify her.

Kli Yakar on Ex. 30:1

צוה אל חי לעשות מזבח הקטרת, המעלה עשן וריח ניחוח לה' לכפר על רוח בני האדם העולה היא למעלה כעשן הקטורת והיא גם היא מקוטרת מור ולבונה של מעשים טובים. ולהורות נתן בלבבנו מ"ש ושחכת ממנה הדק רמז לנשמה דקה מן הדקה שצריכה גם היא כפרה כדי להעלותה אל מקום חוצבה, ומספר אמות מזבח זה יוכיח כי בו נאמר אמה ארכו ואמה רחבו. אמות יחידות לכפר בו על הנשמה שנקראת יחידה כמו שהקב"ה אחד כך היא יחידה, ואמתים קומתו. כי רוח בני האדם היא העולה למעלה למקומה בזולת מקום שיש לה תוך הגוף וזמן הקטרתו בבקר ובערב, כי הנשמה בבקר היא באה בילדותו זמן זריחת שמשו ובערב היא שבה אל אביה כימי נעוריה והלואי שתהא יציאה כביאה בלא חטא, ובא הקטורת בהטיבו את הנרות בבוקר ובערב בהעלות את הנרות, ומראה הערב והבוקר אמת כי הוא מתיחס לנר אלהים נשמת אדם כי הבוקר זמן הטבת **נר אלהים נשמת אדם** להטיב מעשיה ולנקות עצמה מכל חלודת אפר ובערב זמן שקיעת שמשו הוא זמן העלאת הנשמה אל מקום חוצבה ובא הקטרתה זו לכפר על הנשמה כדי שתהא היציאה מן העולם בלא חטא כביאה

The living God commanded to make ^(an) incense altar, which lifts smoke and a pleasing aroma to God to atone for the human spirit that also rises up like incense smoke, and [must be] perfumed with the myrrh and frankincense of **good deeds** (Song of Songs 3:6). For instruction, God put in our hearts (Ex. 30:36), "Grind fine some of the [incense spices]," alluding to the soul that is the finest of the fine, which even so needs atonement to elevate it to its source. The measurements of this altar prove this point: "one cubit long and one cubit wide" – single cubits to atone for the soul that is called "unique." Just as the Holy Blessed One is One, so is the soul unique. "And two cubits in height" – for the human spirit rises from its place [in body] to its place [supernally]. The time of its incense-ing is morning and evening, for the soul enters in the morning which is youth, the time of the rising of her sun, and in the evening she returns to her Parent as in the days of her youth. May her exit be like her entrance: without sin. The incense comes when he cleans the lamps by the morning, and in the evening when he lights the lamps. The appearance of evening and morning is real, for it explains (Prov. 20:27), "**The lamp of God is the human soul.**" Morning is the time to clean God's lamp, the human soul, to improve its deeds and cleanse itself of all rust and ash. And evening, the time of one's sunset, is the time of the soul's ascent to her source. Incense comes to atone for the soul so her departure from the world may be without sin, just like its entrance.

The Women's Torah Commentary

Incense altars were standard items in shrines in the ancient Near East, just as some mechanism for freshening the air was part of every household. This completes the **sensory repertoire** of ... the Tabernacle: sight, taste, sound, and now smell.

Genesis 27:27

וַיְרַח אֶת־רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רְאֵה רִיחַ בְּנֵי כְּרִים שָׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בָּרְכוּ יְהוָה:

[Yitzhak] smelled [Ya'akov's] clothes and blessed him, saying, "The smell of my son is like the smell of the fields that YHVH has blessed."

Rashi, Gen. 27:27

יירח - מלמד שנקנסה עמו ריח ג'יע [Yitzhak] smelled – The scent of Eden entered with him.

Targum Yonatan, Gen. 27:27

וארח נת ריחא דלבושוי וברכי [Yitzhak] smelled [Ya'akov's] clothes and blessed him, ואמר חמון ריחא דברי פריחא saying, "The smell of my son is like the smell of the fragrant דקטורת בוסמניא דעתידא incense to be offered on the mountain of the house of the מתקרבא בטוור בי מקדשא sanctuary, which will be called a field that God blessed and דאתקרי חסל דבריך יתיה ה' that God chose, in which God's Shekhinah will dwell. ואתרעי לאשראה שכנתיה תמן

Shenei Luhot HaBrit, Torah Shebikhtav, Ki Tisa, Torah Ohr 31

וכפר אהרון על קרנותיו, כיון Aharon kaper-ed the altar "horns" (30:10). Since Israel שחטאו ישראל אמר הקב"ה sinned [by a Calf with horns], the Holy Blessed One told למשה לך כפר להם. Moshe, "It is on you to atone by them."

I WILL DWELL

R. Debbie Young-Somers, "Where is God Dwelling?"

ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל והייתי להם לאלהים:
I will dwell (*v'shakhanti*) among the Children of Israel, and I will be their God.

One of the most famous feminine names for God is rooted in this week's portion. The name is Shechinah; we read today variations of a promise that God will dwell among the people (*'shakhanti'*) if they build the Mishkan (the desert version of the Temple, also with the same root as Shekhinah). Throughout Rabbinic literature the Shekhinah is referred to as dwelling in the desert Tabernacle (the aforementioned Mishkan) and in the Temple in Jerusalem. **But without the Temple, can God still dwell with us?**

Pirkei Avot 3:2

רבי חלפתא בן דוסא איש כפר R. Halafta ben Dosa of Kefar Hanania said: When ten sit busy with Torah, Shekhinah resides among them, as in (Ps. 82:1): חנניה אומר, עשרה שיושבין ועוסקין בתורה, שכניה שרויה "God stands in the congregation of God." ... How do we ביניהם, שנאמר אלהים נצב בעדת אל. ... ומנין אפלו שלשה, שנאמר אלו. ... ומנין אפלו בקרב אלהים ישפט. ומנין אפלו שנים, שנאמר אז נדברו יראי ה' איש אל רעהו ויקשב ה' וישמע וגו'. ומנין אפלו אחד, שנאמר בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבא אליך וברכתך:

When ten sit busy with Torah, Shekhinah resides among them, as in (Ps. 82:1): "God stands in the congregation of God." ... How do we know even for three? As in (Ps. 82:1): "In the midst of [three] judges, God judges." How do we know even for two? As in (Mal. 3:16): "Then they who have awe of God spoke one with another, and God hearkened, and heard." How do we know even for one? As in (Ex. 20:21), "In every place I memorialize My Name, I will come to you and bless you."

B.T. Sanhedrin 39a

אמר ליה קיסר לרבן גמליאל: אמריתו כל בי עשרה שכנתא שרוא, כמה שכנתא איכא? קרייה The emperor said to Rabban Gamliel: You say that Shekhinah dwells anywhere there are ten. How many Divine Presences are there?! Rabban Gamliel summoned the servant of the

לְשִׁמְעִיָּה, מָחָא בִּיהַּ בְּאַפְתָּקָא.
 אָמַר לִיה: אַמַּאי עַל שְׁמַשָּׁא
 בְּבִיתִיהָ דְקִיסָר? אָמַר לִיה: שְׁמַשָּׁא
 אַכּוּלֵי עֲלָמָא נִיחָא. וּמָה שְׁמַשָּׁא
 דְחַד מִן אֲלָף אֲלָפֵי רַבּוּא שְׁמַשֵּׁי
 דְקַמֵּי קוּדְשָׁא בְרִידָא הוּא נִיחָא
 אַכּוּלֵי עֲלָמָא, שְׂכִינְתָא דְקוּדְשָׁא
 בְרִידָא הוּא עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה.

emperor and gave him a whack. Rabban Gamliel said to him: Why did you allow the sun to enter the house of the emperor? The servant said: The sun rests upon all the world. Rabban Gamliel said: And if the sun, which is one of ten thousand attendants that are before the Holy Blessed One, rests upon all the world, all the more so does the Shekhinah of the Holy Blessed One rest upon the world.

B.T. Shabbat 12b

אָמַר רַבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה: כִּי הָנָה
 אֲזַלְיָנוּ בְּתַרְיָה דְרַבֵּי אֲלֵעָזָר
 לְשִׁיּוּלֵי בְּתַפְיחָה, זִימְנִין אָמַר:
 "הַמְּקוֹם יִפְקֹדְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם". וְזִימְנִין
 אָמַר לִיה: "רַחֲמָנָא יִדְכָרְיָנְךָ
 לְשָׁלָם".... וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל
 הַשּׂוֹאֵל צְרָכָיו בְּלָשׁוֹן אַרְמִי – אֵין
 מְלַאכֵי הַשְּׂרָת נִזְקָקִין לוֹ, שְׂאִין
 מְלַאכֵי הַשְּׂרָת מְכִירִין בְּלָשׁוֹן
 אַרְמִי! שְׂאִין חוֹלָה דְשְׂכִינָה עִמּוֹ.

R. bar bar Hana said: When we asked R. Elazar about a sick person's health, sometimes he'd say in Hebrew: "May the Omnipresent account you for peace," and sometimes he'd say in Aramaic: "May the all-Merciful account you for peace." ... R. Yohanan said: Anyone who requests that his needs be met in Aramaic, the ministering angels don't hear as they don't recognize Aramaic. **[But] a sick person [doesn't need angels because] Shekhinah is with them.**

B.T. Megillah 29a

רַשְׁבַּ"י אוֹמֵר: בּוֹא וּרְאֵה כְּמָה
 חֲבִיבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֵי הַקּוֹב"ה שְׂבָכָל
 מְקוֹם שְׁגָלוֹ שְׂכִינָה עִמָּהוֹן. גָּלוּ
 לְמִצְרַיִם שְׂכִינָה עִמָּהוֹן, שְׁנֵאמַר:
 "הַנְּגַלְתָּ נְגִלְתִּי לְבֵית אַבְיָד
 בְּהִיוֹתְם בְּמִצְרַיִם וְגו'". גָּלוּ לְבָבֶל
 שְׂכִינָה עִמָּהוֹן, שְׁנֵאמַר: "לְמַעַן כֹּסֵם
 שְׁלַחְתִּי בְבֶלְהָ". וְאַף כִּשְׁהוֹן עֲתִידִין
 לִינְגָל שְׂכִינָה עִמָּהוֹן, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וְשׁוֹב
 ה' אֶלְהֵיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתֶךָ". "וְהַשִּׁיב"
 לֹא נֵאמַר, אֶלָּא "וְשׁוֹב".

R. Shimon bar Yohai says: Come and see how beloved Israel is before the Holy Blessed One. Everywhere they were exiled, Shekhinah went with them. They were exiled to Egypt, and Shekhinah went with them, as in (1 Sam. 2:27), "Did I not reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt?" They were exiled to Babylon, and Shekhinah went with them, as in (Isa. 43:14), "For your sake I was sent to Babylon." So too in the future when they are redeemed, Shekhinah will be with them, as in (Deut. 30:3), "Then YHVH your God will return with your captivity" – not "God will bring you back, but "God will return."

Midrash Tanhuma, Behukotai 3:1

אם בהקפתי תלכו. מה קתיב שם,
 וְנִתַּתִּי מִשְׁכְּנֵי בְּתוֹכְכֶם. אִם תִּקְיָמוּ
 מִצּוֹתַי, מִנִּיחַ אֲנִי אֶת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים
 וְאֶרְדּוּ וְאֶשְׁכַּן בֵּינֵיכֶם, שְׁנִי: וְשְׂכַנְתִּי
 בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. שְׁעַל מְנַת כֹּן
 יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁיַעֲשׂוּ אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן
 וְתִשְׁרָה שְׂכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶם, שְׁנִי: וְיָדְעוּ
 כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי
 אֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם לְשִׁכְנֵי בְּתוֹכָם
 וְאִם יַעֲשׂוּ רְצוֹנִי, אֵין שְׂכִינְתִּי זָזָה
 מִבֵּינֵיהֶן. לְמָה, אָמַר רַבִּי אֲמִי,
 נִתְאַוָּה הַקּוֹב"ה, כְּשֶׁם שְׁיֵשׁ לוֹ דִּירָה
 לְמַעְלָה, שְׁיֵהָא לוֹ כְּדִירָה לְמַטָּה

If you walk in My statutes (Lev. 26:3) – [Here] it is written (Ex. 29:45), "[I took them out of Egypt to be] My dwelling among them." If you fulfill My *mitzvot*, I will depart the supernal realm, descend and dwell among you, as in (Ex. 29:45), "I will dwell amidst the Children of Israel." On this condition did they come forth from Egypt: that they build the Mishkan so Shekhinah could abide among them and (Ex. 29:47) "They will know that I am YHVH their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt to [be] My dwelling among them." If they do My will, My Shekhinah will not move from them. Why? R. Samuel bar Abba said, "The Holy

כִּי־נִן שְׁעָמְדוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אִ"ל הַקַּב"ה,
 לֹא יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם אֱלֹא עַל מְנַת
 שְׁתַּעֲשׂוּ לִי מִשְׁכָּן וְאֶשְׁרָה שְׁכִינָתִי
 בְּיַנְיִכֶם, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ.
 וְכִךְ אָמַר לְשַׁלְמֹה, הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
 אֶתֶּה בּוֹנֶה וְגו', וְשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגו'. אִם שׁוֹב תִּשְׁבוּן אֶתֶם
 וּבְנֵיכֶם מֵאַחֲרַי, וְהִכְרַתִּי אֶת
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה. לָמָּה,
 שֶׁהוּ תִנְאִיִן בְּיַנִּי לְבְנֵיכֶם

Blessed One desired that, just as God has an abode above, so God would have an abode below.... When Israel arose, the Holy Blessed One said to them, "You will not go forth from Egypt except on condition that you make a *mishkan* for Me so My Shekhinah may abide among you," as in (Ex. 25:8), "Make Me a sanctuary [that I may dwell among them]." So too God said to Solomon (1 Kin. 6:12–13), "Of this house [=Temple] you are building, if you walk in My statutes... I will dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel." But (1 Kin. 9:6-7), "If you and your children turn from following Me... then I will cut Israel off from the land." Why? Because those are [the] terms between Me and them.

R. Yaakov Medan, "Tetzaveh: The Meaning of Holiness and the Shekhinah"

What is the *Shekhinah* that rests on earth; and second, as strange as this question may sound, why is it important? To answer the first question, let's return to the verses: "And I will set My mishkan among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk (*vehithalakhti*) among you, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people." ([Vayikra 26:11-12](#)) "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking (*nithalekh*) in the garden toward the cool of the day." ([Bereishit 3:8](#))

The meaning of the presence of the *Shekhinah* is that the declaration "I have set God continually before me" (Ps. [16:8](#)) is not merely the goal of sublime spiritual service, nor the portion of just the especially pious, but a tangible, everyday and realistic feeling: God walks among us, and there is "fullness" in the reality of our lives that stems from [God].

The Women's Torah Commentary

MOST YEARS, this Torah portion is read during the week preceding Purim. The connection between the parashah and Purim is not immediately apparent. *Tetzaveh* is filled with exacting details about the assembly of the priestly garments and the ritual role Aaron and his sons are to perform as anointed priests. The book of Esther is a melodramatic tale of threat, intrigue, and ultimate redemption through plot twists and the reluctant heroism of a beautiful queen.

While the plots and purposes of these texts are vastly different, each in its own way, asks us to confront an absence. *Tetzaveh* is the only parashah from the beginning of the book of Exodus until the end of Deuteronomy where the name of Moses does not appear. And Esther is one of only two books of the Bible where the name of God does not appear. These absences are cause for abundant commentary in each individual case, but the relationship between the two texts seems to receive only passing mention. What insight can this parallel *presence of absence* convey?