

Torah Portion Preview for T'tzaveh

Shabbat beginning March 3, 2023

T'tzaveh (instruct) gives detailed instructions for outfitting priests with ornate clothing, a seven-day ordination ceremony, and special daily ceremonies. A Google search for "images of Aaron the Priest" locates artistic renderings of the elaborate text. Carol Meyers writes in *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, "the wealth of detail about Aaron and his sons provides a stark portrayal of how males dominated the communal sacred lives of the ancient Israelites." The priestly image was splendid and symbolic with all tribes represented, but with no women, lovers straight or gay, nor children, crippled, ailing, or even well. In an age when grand costumes appear readily on stage, screen, or circus, the portion's descriptive details seem hollow.

Aaron's costume, ordination, and duties were meant to inspire awe, but their very detail reminds us how far we have come and still need to go. What does it take today to engender in us awe of another person? It is not enough just to tolerate our differences. Hints of awe occasionally arise when we fathom the complexity of another's lifelong experiences. Ultimately, when someone introduces us to a whole new way of honoring the magnificence of our human diversity, then awe sets in deeply.