

PARSHAT TERUMAH, EXODUS

26 ³⁰Then set up the Tabernacle according to the manner of it that you were shown on the mountain.

³¹You shall make a *curtain* of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen; *designer's work* it shall be made, with cherubim. ³²Hang it upon four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and having hooks of gold, [set] in four sockets of silver. ³³ And you shall hang the curtain under the clasps and you shall bring there, within the curtain, the Ark of the Covenant, and the curtain shall *divide* for you between the Holy and *the Holy of Holies*. ³⁴Place the cover upon the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. ³⁵Place the table outside the curtain, and the lampstand opposite the table by the south wall of the Tabernacle, and place the table by the north wall. ³⁶You shall make a screen for the entrance of the Tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery. ³⁷Make five posts of acacia wood for the screen and overlay them with gold, their hooks of gold, and cast for them five sockets of bronze.

27 ¹You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide — the altar is to be square — and three cubits high. ²Make its horns on the four corners, the horns to be of one piece with it; and overlay it with bronze. ³Make the *pails* for removing its ashes, as well as its *shovels, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans* — make all its utensils of bronze.

curtain (OJPS translates “veil”; Hebrew *parokhet*); word not used outside of the description of the Tabernacle (Ibn Ezra)

designer's work “refers to weaving, not embroidery” (Rashbam) embroidery being inferior to “worked design” (Ibn Ezra) Rashi believes that the woven *parokhet* was “weaving with two sides, so that the designs on either side did not resemble each other.”

Divide (havdil)—the same word that is central to P’s account of creation—between gradations of sanctity is fundamental to the conception of sacred space put forth here. The 100-cubit length (about 60 feet) of the Tabernacle is divided symmetrically between a western half, or outer court, where there is an altar for burnt offerings, and an eastern half, which constitutes the Holy Place (*maqom qadosh*), in which the lamp stand, the table, and the altar of incense are located, and . . .

the Holy of Holies, a small inner zone, screened by a curtain, , in which the Ark of the Covenant is kept. The verbal construct “X of X” has the idiomatic sense in biblical Hebrew of “the supreme X” (compare “the song of songs, which is Solomon’s”).

bronze (nechoshet); bronze was an alloy of copper and tin, used extensively in Near East as early as 3300 BC. The so-called “Bronze Age” lasted until 1200 BC

3. *pails...shovels...basins...flesh-hooks...fire-pans.*

Biblical narrative is notoriously stingy in providing details of the paraphernalia of everyday life, in marked contrast to Homer. The Priestly writer is an exception: true to his professional interests, he details the items involved in offering sacrifices. Every one of the utensils required for the elaborate procedure of catching the blood of an animal, shoveling up the ashes and residual fat (*deshen*), turning over the meat as it burns, raking off the coals from the fire, is patiently catalogued here.

⁴Make for it a grating of meshwork in bronze; and on the mesh make four copper rings at its four corners.

⁵Set the mesh below, under the ledge of the altar, so that it extends to the middle of the altar. ⁶And make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. ⁷The poles shall be inserted into the rings, so that the poles remain on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. ⁸Make it *hollow*, of boards; as He showed you on the mountain, thus they shall do. ⁹You shall make the enclosure of the Tabernacle: On the *south side*, a hundred cubits of hangings of fine twisted linen for the length of the enclosure on that side — ¹⁰with its twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts to be of silver. ¹¹Again a hundred cubits of hangings for its length along the north side — with its twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts to be of silver.

¹²For the width of the enclosure, on the west side, fifty cubits of hangings, with their ten posts and their ten sockets. ¹³For the width of the enclosure on the front, or east side, fifty cubits: ¹⁴fifteen cubits of hangings on the one flank, with their three posts and their three sockets; ¹⁵fifteen cubits of hangings on the other flank, with their three posts and their three sockets; ¹⁶and for the gate of the enclosure, a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery, with their four posts and their four sockets. ¹⁷All the posts round the enclosure shall be banded with silver and their hooks shall be of silver; their sockets shall be of copper. ¹⁸The length of the enclosure shall be a hundred cubits, and the width fifty throughout; and the height five cubits — [with hangings] of fine twisted linen, and their sockets bronze. ¹⁹So for all the vessels of the Tabernacle in all its service; and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be bronze.

hollow . It is traditionally assumed that, in keeping with the requirement of 20.21, the empty space was filled with earth each time the Israelites encamped, producing an earthen altar on which the sacrifices would be burnt (Tg. Jon.; Rashi; Rashbam).

On the south side Hebrew has two words for “to the south” here נֶגֶב־תֵּימָנָה *negev teymanah*. Negev (“dry arid”) is used to refer to the southern part of Israel; teymanah derives from , *yamin* “right hand, south,” the direction to the right when one faces the rising sun.