

THIS IS THE THING*

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעֵדָה

זֶה הַדָּבָר

אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת:

And Moses said to the congregation:
This is the thing
that Adonai has commanded to be done.

And Moses said to the congregation—What he had to say was for the ears of all the people, because ultimately he and the priests would be accountable to them. *This is the thing*—The consecration of Aaron and his sons was not to elevate Moses or Aaron, but because the kohen—“which always denotes ‘he works’” (Rashi, Ex. 29:30)—must be consecrated to the burden he will assume. *That Adonai has commanded to be done*—That for the priesthood to succeed, to remain aligned with the divine purpose, Aaron and his successors throughout the generations must assume not the glory of exalted position but the burden of unending service, not to do public performances in the name of God but to serve God and the people with humility.

* Leviticus 8:5 (in Tzav)