

# תְּצַוֶּה

## TETZAVEH/YOU SHALL COMMAND Shemot/Exodus 27:20-30:10

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The details of the **construction** of the **Tabernacle** occupy more than a **third of Shemot**. The patriarchs, **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** all built **altars** to **identify the locations** where יהוה appeared to them. The **Tabernacle** was יהוה's **idea** and was intended to be the **place** where He would  **dwell** in their **midst**. The **Tabernacle** was the **chosen place of worship** for **all of Israel**:

*Shemot 25:8 "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

The **first letter** (Hebrew reads right to left) of the **first word** (In the beginning) of **Bereshith** (Genesis) is an **enlarged bet** (ב). It appears in the **Torah scrolls** like this:

בְּרֵאשִׁית

The Hebrew letter **bet** (ב) is a **picture** of a **house** and from the **first letter of the Scriptures** we learn that it is the **desire** of our **Creator** to have a **relationship** with those He will create. A **house** is a picture of a **Bridegroom** who **takes a wife** and has a **family**. The **Tabernacle** will become a picture of **that house** that He **desires to dwell** in with His **family**.

The **Tabernacle** was a **large tent, furnished** within as a small apartment with a **table and a lamp**. It was meant to represent יהוה's **home on earth**, a **visible affirmation** that He **accompanied** the people through their **wilderness wanderings**. Hundreds of years later the **Tabernacle** would be replaced by **Solomon's Temple**, but that **structure** was not set up the same as יהוה's "**private apartment**" that **travelled** through the **wilderness with His people**. The **Tabernacle** also mirrors every **individual's personal journey** out of **Egypt** and their **continuing trek** to the **betrothal spot** on **Mount Sinai**.

Let's take a walk, as a **priest**, into the **Tabernacle**. We walk in and first encounter the **Altar** where **sacrifices** are offered. Beyond the **Laver for washing**, we enter a **Holy area** where we notice the **bread** set on the **Table of Showbread**, **fire** from the **Menorah at night**, and **smoke** from the **Incense Altar by day**. All these elements are **pointing** to the **primary vessel**... the **Ark** that houses the **Torah**. It is **behind a curtain**, in the same way that **Mount Sinai** was **cloaked in darkness and clouds**. **Sacrifice, fire, manna, and smoke** are all **visible lessons** for the **children of Israel** – **not just** for those **who left Egypt**, but for **future generations**. The **lessons** from the **desert** are **eternal lessons**.

Today there is **only one vessel** from the **Tabernacle** that has **survived** in **synagogues** and **Messianic congregations**. It is the **Menorah**. In **Revelation**, we see **Yeshua** speaking to His **disciple John** from the **midst of seven Lampstands**...**Menorahs**...which we are told symbolize **seven congregations**:

*Revelation 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,<sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band...<sup>17</sup> And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."<sup>18</sup> "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death..." "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven congregations, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven congregations.*

The **opening words** of our parasha begin with a **command** concerning the **oil** for the **Menorah**:

*Shemot 27:20 " And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. <sup>21</sup> "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aharon and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before יהוה. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.*

The **Menorah** has survived over **3,000 years** as a **symbol** of the **Presence** of the **Father**. What is it about **light** that is so associated with the **Almighty**? **We cannot see light, but we must have light to truly see**. Similarly we know **we cannot see יהוה**, **but we can see wherever He shines His light**:

*Psalm 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.*

**We can't see the Father**, but we can definitely see **Him in action**. We have learned before that **His name יהוה** is a **verb, not a noun**. This is similar to how the **workings of the Spirit** are described by Yeshua:

*John 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

As the **sun rises every morning**, it should **remind** us that our **Creator** called everything into being by **His declaration**:

*Bereshith/Genesis 1:3 Then Elohim said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

**Light**, especially the **light from fire**, works as a **metaphor** for **יהוה** because **fire is not an object**. **Fire** is the **release of energy concealed** in an **object**. This is the **fire of baptism** that **John the Immerser** spoke of:

*Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

And who can forget the **outpouring of the Spirit** in the form of **fire** on **Shavuot**:

*Acts 2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.*

Let's return to the **parasha**. Earlier we read **Shemot 27:20-21**. These are the **first two verses** of our parasha. You may have wondered **why** these **verses are placed here** in the Torah **away from the command to construct the Menorah** and **preceding the command for the priestly garments**. **Parashat Tetzaveh** does **not deal** with the **purposes** or the **functions of any of the other vessels of the Tabernacle**.

The **first thing** that we notice is that the **command to bring the olive oil** is **different** than the **usual form of address**. This is what we **usually see**:

- And you shall make (וַעֲשִׂיתָ)...an Ark
- And you shall make (וַעֲשִׂיתָ)...a Table, etc.

In fact, I find this **phrase (and you shall make)** **22 times** in these few chapters in Shemot. Therefore what we read in **Shemot 27:20** stands out all the more:

*Shemot 27:20 " And you shall command (וְצִוִּיתָ אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) the children of Israel that they bring you (וְבָרִיחֶיךָ אֶל־יְהוָה) pure oil*

Aside from the **repeat** of **this verse** in **Vayikra** (Leviticus), the phrase “**that they bring you**” (וְבָרִיחֶיךָ אֶל־יְהוָה) is found **only one other time** in all of the **Tanakh** (Hebrew Scriptures) and that is in the section on the **red heifer**:

*Bemidbar/Numbers 19:2 "This is the ordinance of the law which יְהוָה has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you (וְבָרִיחֶיךָ אֶל־יְהוָה) a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come.*

Notice in **both commands** that the **children of Israel** are told to **bring something to Moshe** who, if you continue reading, will end up **giving the oil/heifer to the High Priest**. We'll address the significance of the **red heifer** in a little bit.

We are still wondering **about the placement** of this verse in **Shemot**. We have seen that it is the **duty** of the **people** to “**bring to Moshe**” the **oil** for the **lamps**. **Moshe** will not be the **one to tend** to the **lamps** or **light the Menorah**. All this will be done by the **priests**. Yet, despite this, we are told that **Moshe** will have a **special interest** in the matter of the **oil**, for he is **responsible for it**. Earlier we saw how **fire and light** symbolize the **energy** of the **Spirit of יהוה**. **Moshe**, the **Torah** (the **Living Word**), becomes the **essence through which the oil must be distributed**.

There is a very interesting passage in **Jeremiah** that **compares Israel** to a **green olive tree**. The **context** of these verses is in regards to the **destruction of the Temple**. I think it may shed some “**light**” on all of this:

*Jeremiah 11:16 יְהוָה called your name, **Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit**. With the noise of a great tumult **He has kindled fire on it, And its branches are broken.**<sup>17</sup>*

Although **Israel** is **compared** to the “**Green Olive Tree**”, the prophet now speaks of that **tree burning**, with “**its branches broken**”. The **pure olive oil** that is meant to **kindle the light** in the lamps of the **Menorah** is now used in **kindling the flames of destruction**. **Israel** is compared to various trees throughout Scripture. **Why does Jeremiah compare Israel to an olive tree?**

The **olives** are **harvested before they fall** to the ground. They are **removed** from the tree and **beaten**. Then they are **taken to the olive press, ground, and pressed with heavy stones**. This is how the **oil** is obtained. So it is with **Israel**. They are **beaten and oppressed with yokes** until they (we) finally **repent**. Then in their **distress** they become “a **Green Olive Tree, lovely and with good fruit.**”

Another characteristic about **oil** is that when it is **stirred with other fluids, it does not mix**. It always **stands apart**. This is **true** for **Israel**. They **do not mix** with **idol worshippers**. All other **fluids** can be **mixed up** so that you **cannot tell** what is what. But when you **stir oil** with other fluids, the **oil will always remain on top**.

Now back to our verse in **Jeremiah**....the **branches are broken**, the tree has been **burnt**, but **not the roots!** The **tree that originally was intended to light an eternal flame** has gone through the process of **destruction** only to **once more thrive and produce pure oil** for the **light!** And now....who does our parasha tell us is **responsible for that oil?** It is **Moshe!** It is the **Torah!** To begin the **process all over again**, we must begin with the **commandment to RETURN TO MOSHE the pure oil!**

*Shemot 27:20 " And you shall command (וְצִוִּיתָ אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) the children of Israel that they bring you (וְהָיוּ מְבִיאִים לְךָ מִן־הַשֶּׁמֶן הַזֶּה) pure oil*

Moshe is brought the oil by the children of Israel because it is **through him** (Moshe/Torah) that the **oil is maintained**. As we begin our parasha, יהוה tells Moshe that despite the fact that he will be giving the children of Israel many laws and ordinances, **this particular one law** concerning the **oil** must be **clarified**. **ALL of Israel is commanded to bring the oil**. The **duty** does not belong to a **selected group** of people. **Every citizen of Israel** must **bring to Moshe** the **clear olive oil** pressed for the **light**.

Thus **Moshe cannot be circumvented** when it comes to the **oil of Torah** and also the **red heifer sacrifice**. The **red heifer purifies from death** and must be **flawless** and **without blemish**. It **purifies everyone** that has come in **contact with death**. The **sacrifice** is a **reminder** that we are **destined to return to a world** where there is **no death**. **Death** occurs in our world as a **consequence** of the **original sin**. As soon as **man was cut off** from his **roots (oil of Torah)**, **death** became a **reality**. **Yeshua** is our **red heifer sacrifice**. He **fulfilled** every **requirement** of **Moshe (Torah)**. Now following in His footsteps, the children of **Israel** also must **come through Moshe** in order to be the **pure oil** that can be **used in the Menorah** which is the **light** to this **dark world**.

The book of **Romans** gives us further insights into how **Messiah** has **enabled believers**, who **produce oil by keeping Torah**, to be **grafted into this olive tree** who is **Israel**:

*Romans 11:16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the **root is holy**, so are the branches.<sup>17</sup> And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were **grafted in among them**, and with them **became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree**,<sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that **you do not support the root, but the root supports you**.<sup>19</sup> You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."<sup>20</sup> Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.<sup>21</sup> For if Elohim did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of Elohim: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.<sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for Elohim is able to graft them in again.<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

Anything that would **endure** must be **connected to the root** where they are able to **partake of the "fatness of the olive tree"**. **Yeshua** is the **living Word**...He is the **Torah fleshed out**. **Yeshua/Torah** is pure, lasting, and **holy**. Those who **believe in Messiah** and **keep the Torah** are the **branches of the Tree** – whether **natural or grafted in**. That **tree** is meant to **produce olives** which will **give oil for the Menorah** which gives **light** to the **world**. So we've come **full circle**.

Let's totally change directions and find some other interesting insights in our parasha....

Often we have looked at the picture of **sibling rivalry** in Torah. We read of the **relationship** between **Cain and Abel** which ended in **murder**. Next we had **Isaac and his brother, Ishmael** whom **Abraham** was forced to **send away**. Then there was **Jacob and Esau** whose relationship was very **volatile** and although there was **some sort of reconciliation** after 20 years, they **ended up** going their own **separate ways**. Of course we can't forget **Joseph** and the **problems** he had with **his brothers**, although in the **end** there was a **reconciliation**, albeit somewhat **strained**.

Now, however, like a breath of fresh air we have a story of **two brothers** who **work together in perfect harmony** in their **mission of leading the Israelites to freedom**. We watched **Aharon** first **meet up** with his **brother outside of the land**. Keep in mind that these **brothers** had **NOT grown up together**. For the 40 years **Moshe** was in **Egypt**, he lived in the **house of Pharaoh**. Since **Moshe** had **fled to Midian**, it had been an **additional 40 years**. יהוה reminds Moshe:

*Shemot 4:14 .... He said: "Is not Aharon the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.*

From that moment on, they **functioned** as a **team**. They had **different skills**, but the Almighty **guided** and **directed them** that **His will** might be **accomplished**. They worked together in **unity** and are a **perfect example** of what can happen when **brothers** are **echad** (one):

*Psalm 133:1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!*

The **Hebrew people** are **unusual** in that they **recognize three forms of leadership** – the **prophet**, the **priest**, and the **king**. **Moshe** functioned in the position of the **prophet** who in the **name of the Most High** was not afraid to **challenge the Pharaoh** or the **Hebrew people**. **Aharon** functioned in the **position of the priest**. By **contrast**, this was a much **quieter position**. His **role** was that of **servanthood** in the **Sanctuary** as he and his sons **taught** the people the **importance of being set apart and holy**. Isn't it interesting that **we as believers in Messiah** are called to be a **"kingdom of priests"**, not a **"kingdom of prophets"**?

*Revelation 1:6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his Adonai and Father-- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

**Chapter 28** begins with the very **detailed instructions** for the **priestly garments**:

*Shemot 28:1 "Now take Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aharon and Aharon's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.<sup>2</sup> "And you shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, for glory and for beauty.*

We have encountered some **very significant people** in Torah to this point. There was **nothing mentioned** about **Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob** in regard to **garments**. As important as **Moshe** is, he is **never told to wear** anything **special**. These **men** were all **shepherds** and most likely wore very **simple, practical clothing**. What they **wore** is just **not important** enough to **mention**. Instead of giving us an **image**, **Torah** has been **more concerned** with the **message** that we are **"hearing"**. In fact יהוה tells us what is **important to Him**:

*1 Samuel 16:7 But יהוה said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For יהוה does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but יהוה looks at the heart."*

**Yeshua** had some **pretty stern words** to say about **outward appearances** that did not match up with what was on the **inside**:

*Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*

Well, we do find **Yosef** (Joseph) decked out in **royal clothing** in **Egypt**:

**Bereshith 41:41** And Pharaoh said to Yosef, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Yosef's hand; and **he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.** <sup>43</sup> And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt.

There is one more **significant Hebrew** who is **elevated** and **robed in splendor**:

**Esther 6:6** So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" <sup>7</sup> And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, <sup>8</sup> **let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.** <sup>9</sup> "Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!' " <sup>10</sup> Then the king said to Haman, "**Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.**"

It is obvious that in both of these passages, we are being shown the **world's way** of **honoring** a person. In fact, it is interesting that one takes place in **Egypt** and the other in **Babylon**. These are both **cultures** which **worship external symbols of power**. Likewise, it is much too easy to **identify** with **outward appearances** in most of the places where we live today.

Nineteenth century writer **Thomas Carlyle** wrote of **five episodes** in the book of **Bereshith** centered **around clothes**. Note the **connection between** all of these **garments** – in one way or another, they are used to **deceive**:

1. There are **Esau's "best clothes"** that **Jacob** puts on to **steal the blessing**
  - a. The **blind Isaac** is **deceived** when he puts out his hands to feel him
2. There is the **"coat of many colors"** that **Jacob** has made for his favorite son, **Yosef**
  - a. The **brothers stain the coat** in order to **deceive their father** into thinking that Yosef has been killed
3. There are the **clothes of the temple prostitute** that **Tamar** puts on when she removes her "widows garments"
  - a. **Tamar** puts on a **veil** to **hide her identity** and **deceive** her father-in-law
4. There is the **cloak** that **Yosef** leaves in the hand of Potiphar's wife when he flees from her attempt to seduce him
  - a. **Potiphar's wife** uses the robe Yosef left in attempting to **deceive** others that he tried to rape her
5. There were the **special robes of office** that **Yosef** was give as second in command to Pharaoh
  - a. **Yosef** uses his **new appearance** to **hide his identity** from his brothers

The **Hebrew word** normally used for "garment" is **beg'ged** (בְּגָד). The **word** also means "to deceive" or "to betray". The **link with deception** can be seen with the **very first clothes** that are mentioned in **Bereshith**:

**Bereshith 3:7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they **sewed fig leaves together** and made themselves **coverings**.

**Clothes** symbolized the very first "betrayal" of **keeping the commands** of יהוה!! So why then, do we see יהוה making this **command** for **special garments** for the **priests**? To answer this, let's benefit from the **insights** of **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** (emphasis mine):

“The **answer** lies in the analysis given by the nineteenth century sociologist **Max Weber**. Weber was fascinated by the question of **leadership**. What is it that gives some individuals **authority over others**? His most famous insight – it has become part of the language of everyday speech – is that **certain rare figures** have what he called **charisma**. **Charismatic leaders**, by the force of their personality, are able to **exercise influence over others**. They **speak to their fears, their concerns, hopes and dreams**. They **construct a vision that motivates and moves**. They are **transformational**. They do not leave a group or nation as it was before. They **do not** (as some leaders do) merely ‘**keep the show on the road**’ or ‘**keep the ship from sinking**’. They **change the people** with whom they come into contact. They are the **midwives of something new**.

But **charisma begins to die** almost as soon as it is **born**. **Charismatic authority** is **strictly personal**. It is **unique** to the **individual who wields it**, and it can **never be replicated** over time. A **charismatic leader** is an **agent of change, but a group, in order to survive**, needs a form of **leadership** that is **resistant to change**; that is, **instead**, a **vehicle of continuity, tradition and stability**. **Without this, the group will not persist long into the future**. That is why, **after** the appearance in its midst of a **charismatic leader**, the **group** must undergo what Weber called the **routinization of charisma**. This is the **process** whereby a **certain form of authority is vested**, not in an **individual-as-individual** but in an **individual (or group) as bearers-of-an-office**. Thus **charisma** is **handed down** from generation to generation in an **orderly and predictable way**, through **laws of succession**, together with **rules regulating the behavior of the holders of the office** and their relationship to the group as a whole.

The **prime example** of the **routinization of charisma** is contained in **Tetzaveh**, in the **process** through which **Moshe invests priestly authority in Aaron and his sons**. The ‘**priestly vestments**’ are its **visible symbol**. The **cohanim** (priests) are – by virtue of birth and descent, not personal qualities – the **carriers of sacred office**. Their **work is holy**. Their **domain** is the **Tabernacle**, the **physical embodiment of sacred space**. They are charged with **mediating** between the **people and G-d**. **Their clothes mark their office and role**.

Not accidentally, therefore, is **Tetzaveh** the **only parasha** between the beginning of Exodus and the end of Deuteronomy in which the **name of Moses does not appear**. The most important fact about **routinized charisma** is that it **exists when the charismatic leader (i.e. Moses) is no longer there**. We now understand precisely the connection between the parasha of **Tetzaveh** and the **episode of the Golden Calf**. The **Golden Calf** was a **response to the crisis posed by Moses’ absence** (‘This Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt – we don’t know what has become of him’). It **illustrated** the **weakness of charismatic authority: powerful in its presence but debilitating in its absence**. The **Israelites** had to become the people who would **continue to serve G-d after Moses had left them**. That is what the **Tabernacle, the sacrifices and the priesthood** represent: **continuity, the ability to sustain long into the future the experience of Sinai and the presence, in the midst of the people, of G-d**.

A **prophet** needs **no official vestments**. His or her **authority** is **charismatic, personal, spontaneous, unrepeatable**. But a **priest** needs “**priestly vestments**”, to show that in his case the **office is greater than the person**; it **continues from generation to generation**; it **represents stability** and ‘**the persistence of faith**’ through time. The greatness of **Biblical Israel** is that it **never completely routinized charisma**. From **Moses to Malachi prophets** arose to ‘**speak truth to power**’ and **prevent the service** of G-d from becoming merely **routine**. But had there been **only prophets, and no priests**, **Israel** would have **disappeared** long ago. It would have **lacked the essential ability to sustain its mission over time**.

Partly because of the **prophets**, **Biblical Israel** was able to **correct** the **dangers** of the **routinization of charisma**. As the commentators point out in their remarks on the phrase ‘**a kingdom of priests**’, the word **priest** itself means both ‘**a prince**’ and ‘**a servant**’. The **sons of Aaron** may have been **aristocrats** of the

spirit, but they were also **servants**, of both the **people and G-d**. The last of the prophets, **Malachi**, has a wonderful description of the **role of a priest**:

*Malachi 2:6 The Torah of truth was in his mouth, And injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, And turned many away from iniquity.<sup>7</sup> "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the Torah from his mouth; For he is the messenger of יהוה of hosts.*

And in a famous phrase, the book of **Psalms** contains the **prayer**:

*Psalms 132:9 May your priests be clothed with righteousness; may your saints sing for joy."*

It is clear then that the phrase in Tetzaveh, ‘**for glory and for beauty**’ (Shemot 28:2) **does not mean ‘for the glory and beauty of the priest’**. It means ‘**for the glory of G-d and the beauty of His presence**’. The **task of the priest** – and the **message of his clothes** – was to be a ‘**signal of transcendence,**’ to **point in himself to something beyond himself**, to be a **living symbol of the divine presence in the midst of the nation.**” (end of quote)

Wow! That **last paragraph** sums it up so well as it **points to our Messiah** who today **fulfills the role of High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek**. The **priestly garments** worn by **Aharon** and his descendents were truly a **visual display of the glory of the Divine nature of the Messiah** who did **not ask for the honor of the position**, but was **appointed by the Father** to the office of **High Priest**:

*Hebrews 5:4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by Yah, just as Aharon was.<sup>5</sup> So also Messiah did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."<sup>6</sup> As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek";<sup>7</sup> who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,<sup>8</sup> though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.<sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,<sup>10</sup> called by Yah as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"*

Since the **priestly garments** all **point to the Messiah**, it should be no surprise to learn that the **sages** generally **point to the meaning, function, and purpose** of the **garments** as all having something to do with **atonement**. We will focus on the **last of the specific garments** mentioned – the **engraved gold plate**:

*Shemot 28:36 " You shall also make a plate (tzits - תִּצִּיט) of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO יהוה.<sup>37</sup> "And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban.*

Now here is the verse I want us to focus on:

*Shemot 28:38 "So it shall be on Aharon's forehead, and Aharon shall bear (ve'nasa - נָסָא) the iniquity (avon - אָוֹן) of the holy things that the children of Israel consecrate in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before יהוה.*

The term “**ve'nasa avon**” can also mean “**bear the iniquity**” in a **negative context**:



*Vayikra/Leviticus 5:1* 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter -- if he does not tell it, **he bears guilt** (ve'nasa avono - עָוֹן נָשָׂא).

Most of the time, however, this term has the **connotation** of “**carrying the sin**” for another or “**removing the sin and achieving forgiveness**”. We have a perfect example of this in what is called the “**thirteen attributes of mercy**” in **Shemot 34**:

*Shemot 34:6* And יְהוָה passed before him and proclaimed, " יְהוָה, יְהוָה El, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,<sup>7</sup> "keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity** (nosei avon - נָשָׂא עָוֹן) and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Thus we see that the **primary purpose** of the **gold plate** (tzits - יָצִיט) worn on the forehead of the High Priest is **atonement, achieving forgiveness** for a people **less than holy**. We also see the theme of **atonement** in the instructions for wearing the **breastplate** on the **ephod** as Aharon will **bear** (ve'nasa) the **names of the tribes continually** over his **heart**:

*Shemot 28:29* "So Aharon **shall bear** (ve'nasa - נָשָׂא) **the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart**, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before יְהוָה continually.

The “**breastplate of judgment**” consisted of **rows of precious stones**, each representing a **tribe**:

*Shemot 28:17* "And you shall put settings of stones in it, **four rows of stones**: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row;<sup>18</sup> "the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond;<sup>19</sup> "the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst;<sup>20</sup> "and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings.<sup>21</sup> "And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; **they shall be according to the twelve tribes**.

It is so interesting to see that **9 of these 12 stones** are mentioned in **Ezekiel**:

*Ezekiel 28:12* ... "You were the seal of **perfection**, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.<sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of Elohim; Every precious stone was your covering: **The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold...**

The prophet **Ezekiel** is describing for us the **pure state before sin**, in **Eden**. Apparently the **precious stones** set in **gold** on the “**breastplate of judgment**” constituted a **symbolic reenactment** of an **Eden-like state**! By **carrying the names of the tribes of Israel before the Almighty** adorned with the **jewels of Eden**, the **High Priest finds favor for Israel** in the eyes of יְהוָה and **achieves mercy and forgiveness!!**

And of course by now I'm sure you're screaming out...what about **the New Jerusalem** in the book of **Revelation**? Yes, friends, **back to Eden we will go....**

*Revelation 21:10* And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, **the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from Yah**,<sup>11</sup> having the glory of Yah. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal...<sup>19</sup> **The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,**<sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh

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*chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.*<sup>21</sup> *The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*<sup>22</sup> *But I saw no temple in it, for Adonai יהוה Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

The **garments** of the **High Priest** were all about **atonement**. They also **pointed us back** to the **glory of Eden**, which is our **future** because **Yeshua, our High Priest bore** (na'asah - נִשָּׂא) our **sins**:

*1 Peter 2:24 who Himself bore (נִשָּׂא) our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.*

I **never want to forget** what **He has done** for me. I want to show my **appreciation** by doing what the verse says....**living for righteousness. Baruch HaShem!**

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**