

Parashah #20
(Updated 3.07.09)

Tetzaveh ~ תצוה ~ You are to order

Torah: Sh'mot/Exodus 27:20 ~ 30:10

Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 43:10-27

B'rit Hadashah: Philippians 4:10-20

Tetzaveh ~ You Shall Command

As much as last weeks Parashah detailed the *Mishkan/Tabernacle*, so this week's portion details the clothing of the (Ko-hah-neem) *Cohanim/Priests* to be worn in the Holy Temple. I'm talking about a virtual fashion show from the top of their head to the hem of their robe. Forget about the shoes, they were Jewish hillbillies and went barefoot! (No disrespect intended.)

CHAPTER 27

First, let's take a look at **verses 20-21**. It is commanded that pure olive oil is to be used for the *Menorah/Lamp*. There was to be no additive of any kind and no olive sediment in the oil. When I was in Israel, we went to the Garden of (Gaht Sh'mah-neem) *Gat Sh'manim/ Gethsemane*. There were many olive trees in that location and I learned that the purest of oil came from placing very ripe olives into a porous bag, which was hung on a branch or some other object and the weight of the olives pressing against themselves would cause the oil to drip into a vessel. This requirement of absolute purity is fitting since it precedes the selection of *Aharon/Aaron* and his sons as *Cohanim/Priests* because they are also to remain pure and separate from the rest of the nation and are not to allow unauthorized people to take part in the service of the Tabernacle.

We need to remember that (B'nay Isra'el)) *Bnei Israel/Children of Israel* were not yet in the Promised Land and there were no olive trees at this point. Consequently, they had to use oil that had been prepared in (Mitz-rah-yeem) *Mitzrayim/Egypt*. That oil had to be brought to *Moshe/Moses* for his inspection to certify its purity on a continuous basis not just during the initial ceremonies of the Tabernacle.

Verse 20 begins "now you" in the Chumash, which would indicate that *Moshe/Moses* is now to be personally involved in the preparation of the oil; the designation of the *Cohanim/Priests*; and the selection of the wise and talented people who would make the vestments and build the Tabernacle. This same verse indicates that the *Menorah/Lamp* is to be burned continually; however, in the following **verse (21)**, we are told that it is to remain lit from evening to morning. **It was continual in that it was kindled each day**, even on Shabbat.

Just last week, when we were given all the particulars concerning the *Mishkan/Tabernacle*, there was commentary concerning an individual's home could be one's own "temple" and the individual would serve as the priest in that "temple". The reason I am sharing this has to do with a ritual that I remember from visiting in my paternal grandparents home and later when I moved to Branson to care for my elderly father.

Each evening, there was a particular lamp which was turned on as night time was approaching. I had always thought of it as a "night light". Of course, each morning it was turned off. As a child, I had no reason to give it a second thought. Then, when I moved to take care of my dad, I realized that he continued with this "tradition". Again, at that time, I thought nothing of it, only that it was a "night light" in case he needed to get up during the night.

When I began to study Torah and learned that I really do have Hebrew heritage, on both sides of my family, I couldn't help but think more about this "tradition". **It was continual in that it was kindled each day**. Perhaps it was their way of acknowledging their faith without putting themselves in persecutions way. No one in our family ever spoke about our heritage.

CHAPTER 28

According to **verse 1**, it is my understanding that only *Aharon/Aaron* and his four sons, (Nah-dav) *Nadav/Nadab*, (Ah-vee-hu) *Avihu/Abihu*, (El-ah-zahr) *El'azar/Elazar* and (Itah-mahr) *Itamar/Ithamar* were anointed as *Cohanim/Priests* and therefore any children born to them later would automatically be Cohanim. However, according to the Chumash commentary, any current grandsons were not included in this appointment.

The purpose of the Cohen's clothing was for ***kavod veh tifferet/glorry and splendor***; for the glory of G~d and to lend splendor to the high priest (**verse 2**). Torah teaches that the type of clothes we wear speaks volumes about our honor and glory as beings created in the image of HaShem.

One of the commentaries told of an example; that any Torah scholar who goes out in public with a stain on his clothes is subject to divine retribution. Judaism takes a strict stand because clothes don't just cover; they also reveal the inner self. It's true what they say: the clothes make the man or the woman. When we dress dignified, we are treated that way. When I was in Corporate Banking, I was very well versed in the saying "dress for success". If you were interested in advancement, you needed to dress like it! Do you suppose this is where the term "dress for success" originated?

One of the lessons of this week's Parashah is that clothes have the power to communicate and we need to be sensitive to the message we send out.

Holiness permeates the entire theme surrounding the ***Mishkan/Tabernacle*** and the priestly functions. The golden breastplate, containing the 12 precious stones, which represented the Twelve Tribes of Israel, spoke of the "chosen-ness" of the offspring of Abraham. That is why HaShem placed the stones close to the heart of the priest who wore the breastplate, because HaShem wanted each and every man and woman to know that they were created to fellowship with Him. Israel's "chosen-ness" is a picture of this fellowship to the rest of humanity. Just as Aharon and his four appointed sons were the only ones permitted to enter into the Holy Place, our High Priest, Yeshua, is the only one able to approach the Holy Place that is in heaven.

The Vestments Of The High Priest (verses 4-43)

The Cohen had to wear certain vestments while performing the Temple service otherwise any service performed was invalid. These vestments were to set him apart from others when he performed the service. **Verse 4** lists six of the ***High Priest's/Cohen Gadol's*** eight garments.

1. A breastplate
2. A ritual vest
3. A robe
4. A checkered tunic
5. A turban
6. A sash

Those that are omitted are the breeches (**v 42**), because they were worn for modesty instead of a visible garment of honor and the gold Headplate (**v 36**) because it was not a garment, but a symbol of holiness.

- **The Ephod/Apron:** (**Verses 6-12**) ***Aharon/Aaron*** wore this garment over his tunic and robe. Similar to an apron, it was worn on his back and tied in the front between his waist and heart. It extended from below the rib cage to the ground. The shoulder straps were attached to the Ephod in the back and came up, just covering the shoulders in front. On each shoulder rested a precious stone, each engraved with the names of six tribes in the order of their birth** (**verse 10-11**). The Ephod was woven from a multi-stranded thread of white linen and red, blue and purple wool. In addition, a sheet of gold was beaten very thin and narrow thread-like strands were cut from it to be added to the other colors and atoned for idolatry. (The correct pronunciation of the word **Ephod** is **eh-fode**.)

** The birth order of the tribes is as follows. The first six would have been worn on one shoulder . . .

1. Re'uven/Reuben (רובן)
2. Shim'on/Simeon (שמעון)
3. Levi/Levy (לוי)
4. Y'hudah/Judah (יהודה)
5. Dan (דן)

6. Naftali (נפתלי)

. . . the remaining six would have been worn on the other shoulder.

7. Gad (גד)

8. Asher (אשר)

9. Yissakhar/Issachar (יששכר)

10. Z'vulun/Zebulun (זבולון)

11. Yosef/Joseph (יוסף)

12. Binyamin/Benjamin (בנימין)

The Choshen/Breastplate: (Verses 15-30) Worn over the apron, it was woven from linen and three colors of wool, with settings for 12 precious stones arranged in four rows of three. The stones were engraved with each of the names of the Twelve Tribes.

One of the commentaries which I read said that the Breastplate also had the Patriarch's names and the words "tribes of the L~rd" in order to contain all the letters of the **Aleph Bet**. I couldn't find this in Torah so I doubt its authenticity. However, I do find it interesting, should it be true.

The breastplate was connected to the belt of the apron and fastened with blue straps and gold chains. I have always been taught that the **urim** and **tumim** (Say **oo-reem** and **too-meem**) were a couple of stones, which were used for judging. These two Hebrew words mean **lights** and **perfections** respectively and are equal to "perfect knowledge". The breastplate, we are told, atones for corrupt justice.

There are a lot of strange commentaries out there about the urim and tumim. Personally, I prefer the purity of **verse 30**, all by itself. "You are to put the urim and the tumim in the breastplate for judging; they will be over Aharon's heart when he goes into the presence of Adonai. Thus Aharon will always have the means for making decisions for the people of Isra'el over his heart when he is in the presence of Adonai."

- **The Robe/Cloak:** According to **verses 31-35** this item was worn over the tunic, the cloak was a four cornered garment made entirely of died blue wool. It went over the head with a hole in the middle, which was double stitched so it wouldn't tear. On its hem hung golden bells, as well as red, blue and purple ornaments shaped like pomegranates. When the **Cohen Gadol/High Priest** walked, you could hear the bells ringing. This garment atoned for slanderous speech.
- **The Kesones/Tunic:** (**verse 39**) The pure white linen Tunic was worn directly on the skin and was knitted in such a way that there were box-like indentations in the material, which looked like the settings of jewels. It extended from the neck to the toes with sleeves to the wrist, modestly covering the entire body. Tradition indicates that not even a bandage would be permitted between his skin and his vestments. The Talmud indicates this garment atones for murder.
- **The Belt/Sash:** (**verse 39**) Worn over the tunic, it was very long and made of the above-mentioned colors. It was wrapped many times around the body, near the heart and atones for evil thoughts, according to the Talmud.
- **The Turban:** (**verse 39**) Atones for haughtiness and is made of white linen, wrapped around the head many times. One of the commentaries indicated that the turban of the regular priest came to a point, while the High Priest's turban was flat on top. Scripturally, I didn't find anything to back this up. Oh well . . .!!!!
- **The Gold Plate/Tzitz:** (**verses 36-38**) Was a gold plate that rested on the forehead of the High Priest and was worn over the turban, but with enough space for the Tefillin. It was fastened to the turban and tied to the back of the head with blue straps. We are told the headplate atones for brazenness. It was engraved with the words "**Kadosh I'Adonai/Holy to G~d**".

- **The Pants:** Made of pure white linen, reaching from the waist to the thighs, are not mentioned in the list of garments called “honor and glory” because their purpose is for “common decency” (**verse 42**) and represent atonement for adultery.

A regular **Cohen/priest** wore four garments: Tunic; Turban; Belt; Pants.

On Yom Kippur, before entering the Holy of Holies, the High Priest changed into an all-white linen tunic, turban, belt and pants. The reason he wore no gold had to do with it being a reminder of the sin of the Golden Calf, a display of idolatry that is inappropriate to “mention” in the Holy of Holies.

THE COLORS

The five colors used for the **Cohanim/priests** robes are repeated several times throughout this section. In addition, they are the same colors used to make the Tabernacle. Consequently, they connect the priest to the Tabernacle making him an intimate part of it. There are various interpretations of the colors and I present one of them below.

- **Gold** is the purest of all metals and is often used in connection with royalty. I believe it is to show that the **Cohen Gadol/High Priest** is to picture the priesthood as royal.
- **Blue**, which is considered to represent heaven is also the same color as the **tzitzit/fringes** which the Holy One tells us to wear on the four corners of our garments; however, there is no indication that the **Cohen Gadol/High Priest** had tzitzit sown into his clothing. The blue thread reminded **Bnei Israel/Children of Israel** to follow the Covenant, to follow Torah.
- **Purple** is a combination of blue and scarlet and is another color of royalty.
- **Scarlet** is a color that is used to remind us of our human nature. It is the color of blood and by wearing this color, the **Cohen Gadol/High Priest** was representing man before the **Kadosh Echad/Holy One**.
- **White** always represents purity.

Symbolism Of The Garments ~ Based on Rabbi Hirsch

- Gold symbolizes purity of the heart.
- Linen represents the vegetable aspect of man ~ totally sensuous.
- Red wool corresponds to the animal aspect ~ slightly higher.
- Blue wool conveys the Heavenly ~ spirituality.
- Purple wool is a combination of blue and red, symbolizing that man is both physical (animal) and spiritual (G~dly).

The regular priest represents man striving to reach G~d. The tunic has box stitches like the setting of a ring to imply his readiness to reach the final goal. The belt's function is girding oneself in preparation (as at the Exodus when the Jews ate the Passover sacrifice with their belts on, ready to travel.) The turbans came to a point, as if to proclaim: “I'm on my way up!”

The High Priest represents humanity's highest spiritual level. His turban is flat ~ i.e. “I reached the top!” This is only symbolic and doesn't mean the High Priests were “infallible”. In the First Temple, they were great men . . .

. . . however, in the Second Temple there was a period when the position was sold by the Roman governor to the highest bidder. Of course, when these unscrupulous men entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, they died on the spot and had to be dragged out by a rope tied around their waists. In spite of this, they still vied for the honor and privilege of being in G~d's presence.

Pay close attention to the fact that during the Second Temple, the position was **SOLD** by the Roman governor.

- First of all, the **Cohen Gadol** would **NOT** have had a rope tied to himself period!
- Secondly, there was no one else around when he entered the Holy of Holies.

This is how nasty rumors get started!!!

White linen represents the purely physical aspect, which must be pure and untarnished. Therefore . . .

- the pants “atoned” (the collective responsibility) for sexual transgressions, i.e. adultery;
- the turban atoned for conceited thoughts and haughtiness;
- the tunic covered the entire body and atoned for murder.

These were all made of white linen. The first step to perfection, the vegetable aspect must be pure. This corresponds to the outer courtyard of the Tabernacle that was surrounded with curtains of white linen.

The belt and apron also contained . . .

- red wool (animal aspect)
- purple wool (human aspect)
- blue wool (G~dly aspect)

. . . corresponding to the covering of the Tabernacle which contained all these colors. In addition, since this is the human manifestation of these concepts, it also contained a strip of gold to stress the purity of heart required to serve HaShem properly. The belt atoned for immoral or evil thoughts and the apron for idolatrous intentions.

What was the goal of all the colors? The totally blue cloak represented being totally immersed in spirituality. There were pomegranates on the bottom of the cloak, teaching that we eat the “fruits” of our efforts down here in this world (besides the principle which remains for the [Oh-lahm Hah-bah] **Olam Ha-ba/World to Come**). Also on the bottom of the cloak were gold (purity) bells, as we proclaim our beliefs for all to hear.

The Talmud says that the cloak atoned for evil gossip or slanderous speech, which is why its collar was double-stitched, hinting of the two barriers’ teeth and lips, that protect the tongue. Also, the bells made noise, hinting to the atonement of sins done by speech.

Now we come to the breastplate and the Jewish people. We unite with all the various tribes of Israel (something like Friday night at the Western Wall!). Every tribe is a precious stone that contributes to the nation as a whole. The straps that fasten the breastplate are blue (heavenly), and the chains that hold it are gold (purity). The breastplate atoned for misjudgments of the courts, in other words, corrupt justice.

Finally, we arrive at the Holy of Holies, the gold plate on the High Priest’s forehead, atoned for misguided chutzpah or brazenness. It is secured over the turban with (heavenly) blue straps, is made of solid gold (purity), and is inscribed “Holy to HaShem”. This represents the essence of the highest spiritual level.

CHAPTER 29

In **Sh’mot/Exodus 29**, we are given very specific instructions as to the consecration process for the **Cohanim/Priests**, which is to last seven days, the number of spiritual perfection and completeness. The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash indicated that it began on the 23rd of Adar, climaxing on the first of Nissan.

One of the commentaries which I read, indicated in **verse 1** that the young bull to be sacrificed was to atone for Aaron’s involvement in the Golden Calf ordeal. The two rams were for his sons, Elazar and Itamar. As we will learn later, HaShem was aware of the future actions of Avihu and Nadab so there was no offering for them.

In **Ephesians 2:13** we read, “But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah’s blood.” In Hebrew, there is a play on words, which I found interesting. The Hebrew word for **sacrifice** is **korban** and the Hebrew word for **near** is **karov**. The people had to take their offering to the priest at the altar. The sacrifice brought the people near to their G~d and it brought G~d near to His people. Further, because of the **sacrifice/korban** of Yeshua, we have been brought **near/karov** to our Holy G~d. This blood sacrifice thing started in **B’resheet/Genesis 3:21** with the shedding of blood in order for HaShem to cover Adam and Eve with animal skins and ever since then, there has been a “scarlet thread” running through the entire Bible.

Whoever said that we are not under the sacrificial system anymore?! Of course we are!!! We are under the blood sacrifice of the Spotless Lamb of G~d!

There are three types of bread or **matzah** mentioned in **verse 2**.

- One is made without oil
- One is mixed with oil and
- One is spread with oil

I know that oil represents the anointing of the ***Ruach HaKodesh/the Holy Spirit*** and I can't help but think the three kinds of matzah have something to do with the triune nature of HaShem. However, I am sure there is more than what I have right now. If you have some insights into this passage, please share it!

Of course, **verse 4**, refers to a mikveh, which we know takes place when there is a change in ones life or ministry. Doesn't this parallel when Yeshua went into the **Yarden/Jordan** River and was "mikvehed" just prior to beginning His ministry? (**Mattityahu/Matthew 3:13 & 14**)

According to **verse 7** with regard to anointing with oil, obviously, "a little dab" won't do ya! It seems so very clear to me. "You shall take the anointment oil and pour it on his head." However, due to the turban and the gold head plate, there are several commentaries concerning just how and where the oil was applied. I do remember the first time, shortly after I began my Messianic walk, that oil was poured on my head. It was quite an incredible, spiritual experience!!!

The different Consecration offerings are:

- A young bull (**verse 10**) which was offered, according to **verse 14**, as a sin offering
- One ram (**verse 15**) was offered whole as a burnt offering
- A second ram (**verse 19**) along with the bread was a wave offering, made by fire

The blood from the second ram was used to consecrate the Cohanim by placing some of it on their right ear, right thumb, and right big toe (**verse 20**). We are told that . . .

- through the ear, one hears and understands
- through the hand, one acts
- through the feet, one moves about.

All three are consecrated to show that the Cohen dedicates **ALL** of his being to the service of HaShem.

The (tah-meed) tamid-offering is outlined in **verses 38-46**. The Hebrew word (tah-meed) **tamid** means **always**. This was a perpetual offering, every day. A young bull was offered for a sin offering, two lambs, a year old; one in the morning and one at dusk along with the appropriate oil and libation offerings. A side note concerning the word **tamid/always** is the fact that, in some translations, it appears 35 times in the Torah; eight times in **Sh'mot/Exodus** and seven of those times in this parashah!

CHAPTER 30

Again, in **verses 1-5**, we have specific directions; this time for the construction of the **Altar of Incense**. This is the last piece of Tabernacle furniture and is called

- "the Incense Altar",
- "the Golden Altar"; as well as
- "the Inner Altar".

Remember in **27:21**, we were told that the Menorah was to be lit continually? Here is the rest of the explanation about it burning continually. Continually does mean seven days a week, even on Shabbat. However, here in **verse 7**, we see that Aharon is to burn fragrant incense twice a day; once every morning when he is preparing the lamps and again in the evening when he lights the lamps.

Yechezk'el/Ezekiel was a priest like Jeremiah and Zechariah and his name means **G~d strengthens**. We are told his name is most appropriate because his task was to strengthen and encourage the exiled remnant of Israel which was still in Babylon. About **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel**, Rabbi Hertz wrote: "He is at once a priest and prophet, preacher and writer, inspirer of the nation and pastor of individual souls."

Commentary from the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash shares at the beginning of this book, that **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel** was shown how the (Sheh-key-nah) **Shechinah/Presence of G~d**, was withdrawing from the Temple, leaving it an empty shell and prone to destruction by Babylon's army. However, we are told, HaShem removes His Presence from places, not from His people. Throughout **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel's** sad task of warning the wayward nation of their consequences, HaShem told him that Israel would remain His people, that He would share their exile, and that He would bring them home again. In the latter chapters of the book, **Yechezk'el** saw the vision, the architecture, the dimensions, and the vision of the Shechinah's return – the same Shechinah whose departure he had witnessed twenty years earlier.

Our Haftarah begins with **Yechezk'el's** vision of the Altar, where the Children of Israel, upon their return, would bring the offerings that signify their closeness to HaShem. The passage includes a description of the offerings that would "cleanse" the Altar, preparing it for its holy task. Consequently, this is an excellent companion to Tetzaveh, with its instructions for the Tabernacle and the Cohanim, with the procedure of offerings that would consecrate them and the Altar.

Comments from First Fruits of Zion concerning this haftarah are very interesting, as well. As they mentioned, it is fun to compare the Torah portion with the haftarah. We know from the Torah portion that Moshe gave Israel the instructions he received from HaShem concerning the building of the Mishkan. Then, at the end of the parashah, he tells them about the Cohanim, including their clothing and their functions. In essence, the same thing happens in the haftarah. Instead of it taking place in the **Mishkan/Tabernacle**, or even the First and Second Temples, Ezekiel is predicting the establishment of the Third Temple where these services will be performed.

FFOZ went on to say that there will be four purposes for the Third Temple:

- A place for HaShem to dwell
- A place for people to repent
- A place for sin to be atoned
- A place for sinners to be accepted

Tetzaveh ~ תצוה ~ You are to order
B'rit Hadashah: Philippians 4:10-20

I believe we find the parallel to our Parashah in **verse 18**. The "sacrifice" causing "a fragrant aroma" here, being the "offerings" of financial support to Sha'ul's work for the kingdom of HaShem.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 65