

Parashah 20

# Tetzaveh

## תצוה

“You are to order”

Exodus 27:20 – 30:10

Torah Together



This *Torah* portion describes the construction of the garments worn by the priests. It also details the ordination ceremony that was to be conducted for Aaron and his sons, the first men appointed by God to serve Him as priests. Finally, the construction of the last furnishing for the inside of the Tabernacle is described, the Altar of Incense. There is a great deal of symbolism to be found in this portion.

### 1. Oil for the Lampstand - 27:20-21

a) What fuel was to be used for the lamps in the tabernacle? Whose job was it to keep these lamps lit? When were they to be lit?

b) What symbolism do you find in the oil for the lamps?

### 2. The Priestly Garments - 28:1-5

Who did God designate to serve as priests? Who was to make their garments? What materials were to be used to make these garments?

### 3. The Ephod - 28:6-14

a) Describe the ephod. Of what materials was it made?

#### Scripture Link:

In ancient times, kings and other leaders were often “anointed with oil” as a part of their ordination process. **Luke 4:18** may provide a better understanding of the symbolic meaning of oil in the Bible.

#### The Aaronic Priesthood

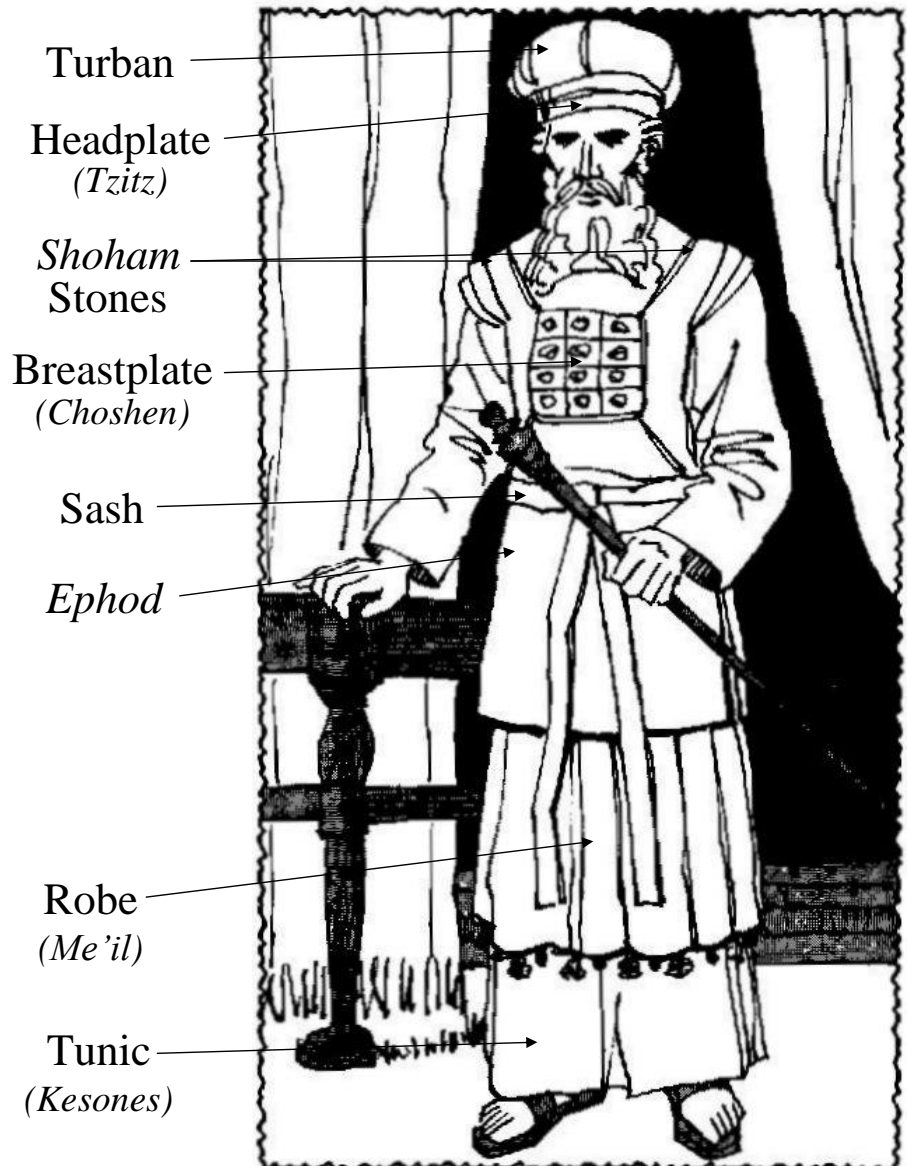
God, in His sovereign will, chose Moses brother, Aaron, to be Israel’s first High Priest (*Cohen Gadol* in Hebrew). Furthermore, God intended that Israel’s priests would always be descendants of Aaron. More information about the Aaronic Priesthood is included in the later books of the *Torah*.

**What's in a Name?**

According to **Exodus 28:9-10**, the *shoham* stones mounted on the shoulder straps of the ephod were engraved with the names of the **twelve sons** of Israel. Thus the names Levi and Joseph would have been included but not Ephraim and Manasseh.

b) What was mounted on the ephod's shoulder straps? Exactly what was engraved on these? According to verse 12, what was the purpose of these two items?

## The High Priest - *Kohen Gadol*



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#### 4. The Breastplate - 28:15-30

a) Describe the breastplate. About what was its size? How was it attached to the ephod? According to verse 15, what was its purpose?

b) What was mounted on the breastplate? What was to be engraved on these? Do you think these were the same words that were engraved on the ephod?

c) What was kept in the breastpiece? What do you know about these items and how they were used?

#### 5. Other Priestly Garments - 28:31-43

a) Describe the robe that the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) wore beneath the ephod. What items decorated the hem of this garment? What was their purpose (verse 35)?

b) Describe the headplate that was to be worn by Aaron. What words were engraved on it? According to verse 38, what was its function?

#### What's in a Name?

According to **Exodus 28:21**, the names engraved on the stones of the breastplate (*chosen*) were those of the **twelve tribes** of Israel. It is believed that these stones were used when inquiring of God concerning the various tribes and that God would indicate a specific tribe through the illumination of that tribe's stone.

#### Light and Perfections

*Urim* and *Thummim* are Hebrew words meaning "lights" and "perfections." Exactly what they were and how they worked has been lost over time. It is believed that these objects, thought to be stones, were consulted by the High Priest whenever a question was to be put before God. It is conjectured that one of these "stones" (the *Urim*) would light up when God was answering the question. The other stone would indicate a 'yes' or a 'no' answer. References to the *Urim* and *Thummim* are found up through the times of David and Solomon, but it is believed that King Josiah hid them (along with other sacred objects from the Temple) when he knew that Jerusalem would soon be conquered by the Babylonians. No record of their existence occurs after this.

c) Under the robe (*me'il*), Aaron wore a tunic of what material? What other garments were made of this material?

“This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants.”  
Exodus 28:43

#### 6. Consecration of the Priests - 29:1-46

a) What things were presented as offerings for Aaron and his sons? What was done to Aaron after he was cleansed and dressed in his priestly garments?

b) Describe the process followed for the first animal sacrificed in the ordination ceremony. What was the purpose of this sacrifice? (See verse 14.)

c) What two animals were sacrificed next? According to verse 18, what parts of the first of these animals were consumed by fire? What was this sacrifice called?

d) Describe the process for the sacrifice of the second of this pair of animals. What symbolism is suggested to you by the actions in verse 20? How was this offering different than the previous one? What was done with this offering before it was burned? What name(s) are given to this type of offering? (See verse 28.) How is it different than the previous two offerings described?

#### Scripture Link:

The ceremony for the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests seems very detailed. This ceremony is described in even more detail in **Leviticus 8**. The entire process (which lasted seven days) may seem very strange to us because we cannot identify with the culture that existed at this time. However, there is much that can be learned by considering God's rules for dealing with sin and restoring communion with Him.

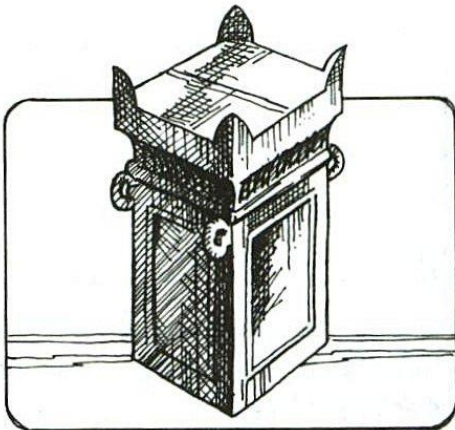
e) Describe the rest of the ordination ceremony. How long did the whole process last?

f) Describe the daily regular sacrifice that God defines in verses 38-43. How long was this sacrifice to continue? Do you see any types and shadows here?

g) The consecration of Aaron and his sons involved cleansing, anointing, and sacrificial offering. How does this compare with the consecration of our new High Priest?

### 7. The Altar of Incense - 30:1-10

Describe the altar of incense. Where was it to be placed? Who was to tend to it and when? What was to be done once a year? What symbolism can you see here? (We'll learn more about this ceremony later.)



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**Scripture Link:**  
Notice that incense was to be burning on this Altar perpetually. For a clue as to the symbolism of this, see **Revelation 5:8 and 8:3**.

## Digging deeper . . . .

1. On the *Shoham* stones on the shoulder straps of the *Ephod* were engraved with the names of the sons of *Israel* (Jacob). On the breastplate, however, were the names of the tribes of *Israel*. Can you see any symbolic meaning in having the names of the sons of *Israel* on the High Priest's shoulders and the names of the tribes of *Israel* on the breastplate?

2. Study the following passages in **Hebrews: 4:14-5:10; 7:23- 8:6; 9:1-14**. What insight do you gain from these passages into the differences between the Aaronic priesthood and the priesthood of *Yeshua* (or the priesthood of believers)?

For further study, see  
**Haftarah** : Ezekiel 43:10-27  
**Brit Hadashah** : Philippians 4:10-20