

עץ חיים

ETZ HAYIM

TORAH AND COMMENTARY

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²⁰You shall further instruct the Israelites to bring you clear oil of beaten olives for lighting,

וְאֵתָהּ תְצַוֶּה | אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ
אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ בְּתִית לְמָאוֹר לְהַעֲלֹת

THE TABERNACLE, PART 1: INSTRUCTIONS (continued)

THE OIL FOR LIGHTING (27:20–21)

“Oil for lighting” the *m'norah* is first listed in 25:6, but the kind of oil is not specified. Here the text specifies the fuel to be used in the *m'norah* to provide illumination.

20. to bring you The Israelites had no facilities in the wilderness for acquiring olives and extracting oil. The same is true for many of the other objects listed in this chapter. That is why many scholars view the description of the tabernacle here as the presentation of a later idealization.

clear oil of beaten olives The oil and other

items mentioned in 25:6 constituted a one-time donation for the construction of the tabernacle. The instruction in this verse presents an ongoing obligation. The text specifies oil extracted from olives because oil used in the tabernacle had to be “clear,” or so refined as to be free of dregs. This distinguished it from oil made from other sources, including sesame seed, flax, and animal fats, which were used in the ancient Near East.

regularly The Hebrew words *ner tamid* can refer to a lamp that burns without interruption or to one that is regularly kindled. Verse 21 and Lev. 24:3 explicitly state that the lamps are to burn from evening until morning.

This *parashah* continues the theme of furnishing the tabernacle as the place that will represent God’s presence in the midst of the Israelite camp. It then describes the role and the investiture of Aaron and his sons as *kohanim*, ministering priests in the tabernacle. This *parashah* is the only one in the last four books of the Torah in which Moses neither is named nor is speaking. Noting this literary curiosity, some commentators explain it as Moses’ generously stepping aside to let the spotlight fall on Aaron and his priestly functions. Others point out that the traditional date of Moses’ death, the 7th of *Adar*, always falls during the week in which *T'tzavveh* is read; they see his absence from the Torah reading, like his virtual absence from the *Haggadah*, as part of an effort to ensure that no cult of Moses worship would ever arise.

CHAPTER 27

The first section of the *parashah* deals with the lighting of the *m'norah*. This tradition is reflected in today’s Eternal Light, the only commanded practice associated with the ancient tabernacle that is still with us (see *Halakhah l'Ma'aseh*, below). Why has light been such a

favorite symbol of God? Perhaps because light itself cannot be seen. We become aware of its presence when it enables us to see other things. Similarly, we cannot see God, but we become aware of God’s presence when we see the beauty of the world, when we experience love and the goodness of our fellow human beings. Similarly, fire has been used to symbolize God’s presence. Like light, fire is not an object. It is the process of liberating the energy hidden in a log of wood or a lump of coal, even as God becomes real in our lives in the process of liberating the potential energy in each of us to be good, generous, and self-controlled. If light is the symbol of God, then fire—the product of human technology—represents human efforts to bring the reality of God into our world.

20. clear oil of beaten olives That which fuels the *m'norah* must be pure, uncontaminated by jealousy, selfishness, pride, or greed. Why olive oil? In antiquity as today, the olive branch was a sign of peace. Olive trees mature slowly, so only when there was an extended time of peace, with agriculture left undisturbed, could the olive tree produce its fruit. “Even as the oil of the olive does not mix with

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

27:20. kindling lamps regularly Or “to cause a lamp to burn continually.” This is the source for the Eternal Light (*Ner Tamid*) that hangs above the Ark in the synagogue, one of many symbols identifying the synagogue as a miniature sanctuary (*mikdash m'at*).

for kindling lamps regularly. ²¹Aaron and his sons shall set them up in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain which is over [the Ark of] the Pact, [to burn] from evening to morning before the LORD. It shall be a due from the Israelites for all time, throughout the ages.

נֹר תָּמִיד: ²¹ בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד מִחוּץ לַפְּרֹכֶת
אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדוּת יַעֲרֹף אֹתוֹ אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו
יַעֲרֹב עַד־בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם
לְדֹרֹתָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ס

28 You shall bring forward your brother Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites,

כח וְאֶתְּהָה הַקָּרֵב אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־אֶהְרֹן
אֶחָיֶךָ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֹתוֹ מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

21. Aaron and his sons This verse preserves the tradition that any priest of Aaron’s lineage may perform the ritual of lighting the lamps. In other biblical passages, however (Exod. 30:7–8; Lev. 24:3; Num. 8:1–3) the duty of attending to the lamps seems to be the exclusive prerogative of Aaron, i.e., the High Priest.

Tent of Meeting The place where God communicates with Moses.

outside the curtain That is, in the Holy Place.

a due Provision of the oil is now to become a permanent public obligation.

THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE PRIESTLY VESTMENTS (28:1–43)

A sanctuary requires officiating priests. God orders Moses to appoint Aaron and his sons to fill this role. The office is to be hereditary. Just as sacred space must be separated from profane space, so the occupants of the sacred office must be distinguishable from all others. Hence special

attire—the insignia of office—is ordained for Aaron, the archetypal High Priest, and his sons, the priests of lower rank, when officiating inside the tabernacle. The ceremonial clothing of the High Priest is the main concern of this chapter. The garments of ordinary priests are detailed only in verses 40 and 42. No mention is made of footwear, because the priests officiated barefoot.

THE HIGH PRIEST (vv. 1–39)

The attire of the High Priest is colorful, distinguished by the prominent use of gold, except on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when he performed his duties clothed in white linen garments.

1. You shall bring forward You shall induct into office. Until now, Moses has acted as chief officiant; hence he is the one who is to “bring forward”—to the Tent of Meeting, once it is erected—the newly appointed chief priest.

Nadab and Abihu Aaron’s four sons are first listed in 6:23. We read of them accompanying

other liquids with which it comes in contact, so has the people Israel kept its own identity when it has come in contact with other nations” (Exod. R. 36:1).

CHAPTER 28

This chapter deals with the priestly garments. Again drawing a parallel between the creation of the world and the fashioning of the tabernacle, commentators have noted that God made garments for Adam and Eve after creating the world and that God describes the special garments to be worn by the priests after fashioning the tabernacle. “Just as humans are the only creatures in the universe who do not rest content with their natural skin . . . the sons of Aaron who minister in their priestly office in the House of the Lord do not serve God in their

ordinary, everyday garments” (N. Leibowitz). A uniform simultaneously invests the wearer with special authority (only special people can wear it) and diminishes the person’s personal authority (anyone wearing it acquires the sense of being special). “Without these prescribed garments, the *kohen* is merely an ordinary individual and his ritual act becomes a personal gesture” (Hirsch).

1. Although some people may be bothered by the idea of a hereditary priestly class, which could easily include the unworthy children of a *kohen* and exclude those who would want to serve, it did have advantages. It kept the priesthood free of ambitious outsiders who would seek it for personal advantage, and it permitted children to be trained for a life of service and responsibility from birth. The Sages taught

to serve Me as priests: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron. ²Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment. ³Next you shall instruct all who are skillful, whom I have endowed with the gift of skill, to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as priest. ⁴These are the vestments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash. They shall make those sacral vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me; ⁵they, therefore, shall receive the gold, the blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and the fine linen.

⁶They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted

לְכֹהֲנֵי-לִי אֶהְרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אֶלְעָזָר
וְאִיתָמָר בְּנֵי אֶהְרֹן: ² וְעָשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ
לְאֶהְרֹן אַחֲרָיָה לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: ³ וְאָתָּה
תִּדְבַר אֶל-כָּל-חַכְמֵי-לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלְּאֲתִיו
וְיָחַד חֻכְמָה וְעָשׂוּ אֶת-בְּגָדֵי אֶהְרֹן לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ
לְכֹהֲנֵי-לִי: ⁴ וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ
חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וּמְעִיל וְכֹתֶנֶת תְּשַׁבֵּץ מִצְנַפֶּת
וְאַבְנֵט וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ לְאֶהְרֹן אַחֲרָיָה
וּלְבָנָיו לְכֹהֲנֵי-לִי: ⁵ וְהֵם יִקְחוּ אֶת-הַזָּהָב
וְאֶת-הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת-הָאַרְגָּמָן וְאֶת-תוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת-הַשֵּׁשׁ: ⁶
וְעָשׂוּ אֶת-הָאַפֹּדֶרֶת וְהַזָּהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן
תוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁר מְעֻשָׂה חָשָׁב:

their father and the elders partway up Mount Sinai (24:1–11). The death of Nadab and Abihu is described in Lev. 10:1–2. Eleazar and Ithamar continued to exercise their priestly functions, with Eleazar succeeding to the High Priesthood after Aaron's death (Num. 20:25–28).

2. Make That is, you are responsible for having them made.

sacral vestments So-called either because the High Priest wore them while officiating in the Holy Place or because the vestments were regarded as endowed with sanctity since they were anointed with the sacred oil.

for dignity and adornment As befits the exalted office.

4. Only six of the eight articles of clothing are listed. The other two—the frontlet and the

breeches—are prescribed in verses 36–38 and 42–43.

5. These elements are made of the same materials as the tabernacle fabrics.

they . . . shall receive That is, the skilled craftsmen are to receive these contributions directly from the people.

The Ephod (vv. 6–12)

Following the pattern of the prescriptions for building the tabernacle, the instructions for the priestly vestments begin with the most important item, a long vest—the ephod. Its pre-eminence is indicated by the fact that it uses all five colors. The ephod is mentioned several times in the Bible, on occasion in connection with household gods and also with sculptured and molten images,

that “though the crown of priesthood is limited to the descendants of Aaron and the crown of royalty to the descendants of David, the crown of learning is available to anyone who would earn it” (Gen. R. 34:2).

3. skillful The literal meaning of the phrase translated as “skillful” (*hakhmei lev*) is “wise of heart.” There is a wisdom of the heart, an emotional maturity born of age and experience, that is different from intellectual knowledge and is specially suited to fashioning holiness.

4. The Talmud understands the priestly vestments as designed to protect human beings against the sins to which they are prone. Thus

the breastpiece—called “the breastpiece of judgment” (*mishpat*) in 28:15—was meant to prevent miscarriages of justice. The jacket (*m'il*, similar to the word for betrayal, *ma'al*) would discourage gossip. The ephod (a coat also used to decorate idols, as in Hos. 3:4) would protect them against the danger of succumbing to idolatry. The fringed tunic (the same Hebrew phrase used for Joseph's coat in Gen. 37) would protect against bloodshed (as the brothers nearly killed Joseph). The robe, covering the entire body, would protect them against sins of unchastity; and the headdress, against prideful, arrogant thoughts (BT Zev. 88b).

linen, worked into designs. ⁷It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached; they shall be attached at its two ends. ⁸And the decorated band that is upon it shall be made like it, of one piece with it: of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. ⁹Then take two lazuli stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: ¹⁰six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹On the two stones you shall make seal engravings—the work of a lapidary—of the names of the sons of Israel. Having bordered them with frames of gold, ¹²attach the two stones to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones for remembrance of the Israelite people, whose names Aaron shall carry upon his two shoulder-pieces for remembrance before the LORD.

¹³Then make frames of gold ¹⁴and two chains

all of which are illegitimate in the religion of Israel. The ephod was used to ascertain the divine will, which is particularly pertinent to understanding the function of the ephod as a vestment of the High Priest. The “breastpiece” attached to it (v. 29) served a similar purpose. The biblical description of the priest’s ephod includes four elements: the main body of the garment, two shoulder straps, and a richly decorated band. It is unclear whether the ephod covered the lower and/or upper parts of the body and the back and/or front.

9. engrave on them The technique of miniature engraving on precious stones was highly developed in the ancient Near East. The names of all the tribes engraved on the gems and affixed to the High Priest’s vestments are to serve as a perpetual and humbling reminder to him that he is the representative of the entire community of Israel before God.

12. Aaron the High Priest was to carry the names of Israel’s tribes on his shoulders “like a father carrying a young child on his shoulders to keep the child safe” (*B’er Mayim Hayyim*). Aaron is told to wear the names over his heart (vv. 29–30). When Aaron had to make a deci-

7 שְׁתֵּי כֹתֶפֶת חִבְרֹת יִהְיֶה-לּוֹ אֶל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו וְחָבַר: 8 וְחָשַׁב אֶפְדָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו כְּמַעֲשָׂהוּ מִמֶּנּוּ יִהְיֶה זָהָב תְּבִלַּת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשׁוֹר: 9 וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי אֲבִינֵי-שֹׁהַם וּפְתַחְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 10 שֵׁשָׁה מִשְׁמֹתָם עַל הָאֶבֶן הָאֶחָת וְאֶת-שְׁמוֹת הַשֵּׁשָׁה הַנּוֹתָרִים עַל-הָאֶבֶן הַשְּׁנִית כְּתוּלְדָתָם: 11 מַעֲשֵׂה חֶרֶשׁ אֶבֶן פְּתוּחֵי חֹתָם תִּפְתַּח אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל-שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִסִּבַּת מִשְׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: 12 וְשִׁמְתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל כֹּתֶפֶת הָאֶפֶד אֲבִינֵי זָכָרָן לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁמוֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁתֵּי כֹתְפוֹ לְזָכָרָן: 8

שְׁנֵי 13 וְעָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב: 14 וְשִׁמְתָּ שְׁרָשְׁרוֹת זָהָב טְהוֹר מְגַבְּלוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מַעֲשֵׂה

10. in the order of their birth As recounted in Gen. 30 and 35:16–18.

12. for remembrance These twice-repeated words point to the dual function of the engraved stones: a reminder to the High Priest of his role as the representative of the community and an invocation to God to be mindful of His people Israel, with whom He has entered into a covenant.

The Breastpiece and the Urim and Thummim

(vv. 13–30)

Fastened to the ephod, and made of the same fine multicolored fabric, was a pouch about 9 inches square worn over the breast. Affixed to it were 12 different gemstones, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes of Israel. These stones were arranged in four rows of three. The pouch (Hebrew: *hoshen*) contained the Urim and Thummim, discussed in verse 30.

13–14. These two verses prescribe the means

sion regarding a fellow Israelite, he was to consult not only the rule book but his heart as well. “The heart that rejoiced so unreservedly at his brother’s good fortune (Exod. 4:14) is worthy to wear this emblem before God” (Tanḥ. Sh’mot 27).

of pure gold; braid these like corded work, and fasten the corded chains to the frames.

¹⁵You shall make a breastpiece of decision, worked into a design; make it in the style of the ephod: make it of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. ¹⁶It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width. ¹⁷Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; ¹⁸the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; ¹⁹the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; ²⁰and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings. ²¹The stones shall correspond [in number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names. They shall be engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.

²²On the breastpiece make braided chains of

עֲבֹת וְנִתְּנָה אֶת־שְׂרָשְׁרֹת הָעֲבֹתָת עַל־
הַמְּשַׁבְּצֹת: ס

וְעָשִׂיתָ חֲשׁוֹן מְשֻׁפָּט מֵעֵשֶׂה חָשָׁב ¹⁵
כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶד תַּעֲשֶׂנוּ זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר תַּעֲשֵׂה אֹתוֹ:
¹⁶ רְבֹעַ יִהְיֶה כְּפֹל זֶרֶת אַרְכּוֹ וְזֶרֶת
רְחֹבוֹ: ¹⁷ וּמִלֵּאֵת בּוֹ מִלֵּאֵת אֶבֶן אַרְבַּעַה
טוּרִים אֶבֶן טוּר אָדָם פְּטָדָה וּבְרֻקַּת
הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד: ¹⁸ וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נֹפֶךְ סַפִּיר
וַיָּהֱלֵם: ¹⁹ וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְשֵׁם שָׁבוּ
וְאַחֲלָמָה: ²⁰ וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תַרְשִׁישׁ
וְשֵׁהָם וַיִּשְׁפֹּה מְשַׁבְּצִים זָהָב יִהְיוּ
בְּמִלּוֹאֲתָם: ²¹ וְהָאֲבָנִים תִּהְיוּן עַל־שְׁמֹת
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה עַל־שְׁמֹתָם
פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם אִישׁ עַל־שְׁמוֹ תִּהְיוּן לְשָׁנֵי
עֶשֶׂר שָׁבֵט:

וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֲשׁוֹן שְׂרָשֵׁת גְּבֻלָּת ²²

by which the *hoshen* is to be attached to the ephod. The braiding provides it with great strength.

15. a breastpiece of decision The Hebrew for this term (*hoshen mishpat*) usually has been translated “breastplate of judgment.” It was not a plate, however. All available sources indicate that it was some sort of device for determining divine will.

16. square and doubled By doubling over the piece of cloth, it became a square, taking the form of a pouch.

span Hebrew: *zeret*; the maximum distance between the top of the little finger and the thumb, approximately 9 inches, or half a cubit.

17–20. The 12 stones have not been identified with certainty.

21. The insignia of office symbolize the role of the High Priest as representing the entire community, personifying its historic ideals.

22–28. The instructions for fastening the breastpiece to the ephod and keeping it in position employ the items mentioned in verses 13–14.

17. The 2 stones on the robe (*ephod*) bear the collective names of the tribes, six on each stone (vv. 9–10). Each of the 12 stones on the breastpiece (*hoshen*) bears the name of a single tribe. Religion, like so much of life, oscillates between the poles of individual and collective activity.

Hirsch notes that “the linen (v. 42), representing the vegetative domain, is white, the color of purity. The wool, symbol of the animal world, is dyed red, with a paler purple (*shani*, v. 6) representing the lower, animal stage of life and a darker crimson (*argaman*, v. 6) the human level. Blue, the color of the sky, directs us to the Godliness that has been revealed to us.” A modern thinker expands on

those comments: “Human beings reflect a combination of those four levels. At one time or another, an individual may be living at the lowest level of existence, just getting by. Or an individual may be mobile, not just vegetative, able to impose some order on life. Then there is the individual who lives with full humanity, behaving in a moral and ethical way. Finally, there are those who sense God continually. When the priest wears all the colors together, when the Israelites see all the colors together, they are reminded that the people Israel comprises all these individuals, that the priests serve them all, and that at any time any one of us may be in any one of those four stages.”

corded work in pure gold. ²³Make two rings of gold on the breastpiece, and fasten the two rings at the two ends of the breastpiece, ²⁴attaching the two golden cords to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece. ²⁵Then fasten the two ends of the cords to the two frames, which you shall attach to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at the front. ²⁶Make two rings of gold and attach them to the two ends of the breastpiece, at its inner edge, which faces the ephod. ²⁷And make two other rings of gold and fasten them on the front of the ephod, low on the two shoulder-pieces, close to its seam above the decorated band. ²⁸The breastpiece shall be held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the ephod, so that the breastpiece rests on the decorated band and does not come loose from the ephod. ²⁹Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel on the breastpiece of decision over his heart, when he enters the sanctuary, for remembrance before the LORD at all times. ³⁰Inside the breastpiece of decision you shall place the Urim and Thummim, so that they are over Aaron's heart when he comes before the LORD. Thus Aaron shall carry the instrument of decision for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD at all times.

³¹You shall make the robe of the ephod of

מַעֲשֵׂה עֲבֹת זָהָב טְהוֹר׃ ²³ וַעֲשִׂיתָ עַל-
הַחֹשֶׁן שְׁתֵּי טַבְּעוֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי
הַטַּבְּעוֹת עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן׃ ²⁴ וְנָתַתָּה
אֶת-שְׁתֵּי עֲבֹת הַזָּהָב עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַטַּבְּעוֹת
אֶל-קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן׃ ²⁵ וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי קְצוֹת שְׁתֵּי
הָעֲבֹת תִּתֵּן עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּשַׁבְּצוֹת
וְנָתַתָּה עַל-כַּתְּפוֹת הָאֶפֶד אֶל-מוֹל פָּנָיו׃
²⁶ וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁתֵּי טַבְּעוֹת זָהָב וְשַׂמְתָּ אֹתָם
עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן עַל-שְׁפָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר
אֶל-עֵבֶר הָאֶפֶד בֵּיתָה׃ ²⁷ וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁתֵּי
טַבְּעוֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּה אֹתָם עַל-שְׁתֵּי
כַתְּפוֹת הָאֶפֶד מִלְּמַטָּה מִמוֹל פָּנָיו
לְעַמַּת מַחְבְּרָתוֹ מִמַּעַל לְחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד׃
²⁸ וַיִּרְכָּסוּ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן מִטְּבַעְתּוֹ מִטְּבַעְתּוֹ
אֶל-טַבְּעוֹת הָאֶפֶד בְּפִתְיֵל תִּכְלֹת לְהִיּוֹת
עַל-חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד וְלֹא-יִיּוֹחַ הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל
הָאֶפֶד׃ ²⁹ וְנָשָׂא אֹהֶרֶן אֶת-שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי-
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחֹשֶׁן הַמְּשַׁפֵּט עַל-לְבוֹ בְּבֹאוֹ
אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְזָכְרוֹן לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה תָּמִיד׃
³⁰ וְנָתַתָּ אֶל-חֹשֶׁן הַמְּשַׁפֵּט אֶת-הָאוּרִים
וְאֶת-הַתְּמִיּוֹם וְהָיוּ עַל-לֵב אֹהֶרֶן בְּבֹאוֹ
לְפָנֵי יְהוָה וְנָשָׂא אֹהֶרֶן אֶת-מְשַׁפֵּט בְּנֵי-
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-לְבוֹ לְפָנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד׃ ח
וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת-מַעֲוֵל הָאֶפֶד כְּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת׃ ³¹ שלישי

30. Urim and Thummim It is clear from the association with “the breastpiece of decision” and “the instrument of decision” that these two items constituted a device for determining the will of God in specific matters that were beyond human ability to decide. Although the function of this device is clear, nowhere in the Torah is there a description of it or of the technique employed in its use. (It has been suggested that two sacred lots were drawn out of the *hoshen* in the process of consulting God; see 1 Sam. 14:41–42, 23:6,9–11.) It remained in the exclusive possession of the priest and was used only on behalf of the leader

of the people in matters of vital national importance. This mode of discovering the divine will disappeared from ancient Israel after the age of King David (see Ezra 2:63).

The Robe (vv. 31–35)

Beneath the ephod and the *hoshen* the High Priest is to wear a long robe woven of woolen thread dyed the aristocratic color *r'kheilet* (see Comment to 25:4). It seems to have been ankle length and free flowing, with armholes but no sleeves. The neck opening is reinforced to prevent fraying. The hem of the robe is fringed with tassels of three

29. for remembrance “Remembering is the source of redemption, while forgetting leads to

exile” (Baal Shem Tov). Our identities have been shaped by those who came before us.

pure blue. ³²The opening for the head shall be in the middle of it; the opening shall have a binding of woven work round about—it shall be like the opening of a coat of mail—so that it does not tear. ³³On its hem make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all around the hem, with bells of gold between them all around: ³⁴a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. ³⁵Aaron shall wear it while officiating, so that the sound of it is heard when he comes into the sanctuary before the LORD and when he goes out—that he may not die.

³⁶You shall make a frontlet of pure gold and engrave on it the seal inscription: “Holy to the LORD.” ³⁷Suspend it on a cord of blue, so that it may remain on the headdress; it shall remain

וְהָיָה פִּי־רֵאשׁוֹ בְּתוֹכוֹ שִׁפְּהָ יְהִיָּה לְפִי ³²
 סָבִיב מִעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג כְּפִי תַחְרָא יְהִיָּה־
 לוֹ לֹא יִקְרַע: ³³ וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ רִמְוִי
 תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ
 סָבִיב וּפְעָמָנִי זָהָב בְּתוֹכָם סָבִיב: ³⁴ פְּעָמָן
 זָהָב וְרִמְוִן פְּעָמָן זָהָב וְרִמְוִן עַל־שׁוּלְיֵי
 הַמַּעִיל סָבִיב: ³⁵ וְהָיָה עַל־אֹהֶרֶן לְשֵׁרֶת
 וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ בְּבָאוּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 וּבִצְאָתוֹ וְלֹא יָמוּת: ס
 וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיץ זָהָב טְהוֹר וּפְתִיחַתָּ עָלָיו ³⁶
 פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לִיהוָה: ³⁷ וְשָׂמַתָּ
 אֹתוֹ עַל־פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת וְהָיָה עַל־הַמְצַנֶּפֶת

colors, representing pomegranates, and with gold bells.

31. of pure blue With no admixture of the other two colors listed in 25:4.

32. binding Like a turnover collar.

coat of mail This is probably the leather collar that protected the neck, a feature of the armor worn by Canaanite charioteers.

33. pomegranates The pomegranate was one of the seven characteristic fruits of the land of Israel (see Deut. 8:8).

35. sound of it is heard The specific role of the bells is to announce his approach to the deity.

that he may not die Any deviation from the prescribed rules places the priest in the category of an unauthorized person and invalidates his service. He thus becomes an encroacher (*zar*) in the sacred precincts, a most serious offense.

35. that the sound of it is heard From this we learn that it is forbidden to enter anyone's room without first announcing your presence (Lev. R. 21:8).

36. The gold template marked “Holy to the LORD” was to remind him to direct his thoughts to God when he officiated and to protect him against feelings of excessive pride (BT Zev. 88b). This awareness is reflected today in the practice of wearing *t'fillin* on the forehead and of wrapping a *t'fillin* strap around

The Frontlet (vv. 36–38)

The text now turns to the High Priest's headgear. Once again, it begins with the most important and most sacred element. In this instance, it is the gold plate worn on the forehead over the headdress and bearing the Hebrew inscription *kodesh l'YHVH*, “Holy to the LORD.”

36. Holy to the LORD It is not clear how the Hebrew words were inscribed on the frontlet. In addition to signifying the sacred nature of the office and the person of the High Priest (who is consecrated to God's service all his life), the inscription served to remind God, so to speak, that the High Priest had been assigned to gain atonement for Israel.

37. cord of blue This cord apparently was threaded through holes punched in the frontlet and served to hold it in place.

the arm and hand in a way that spells out God's name *Shaddai* (Almighty). Not only the High Priest is consecrated to God but every Israelite man and woman is. The development of Jewish law and observance has produced numerous instances of obligations and prohibitions that originally were intended only for *kohanim* (priests) democratically extended to all Jews. This is to help us fulfill our mandate to be “a kingdom of priests” (*mamleket kohanim*) (Exod. 19:6).

on the front of the headdress. ³⁸It shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may take away any sin arising from the holy things that the Israelites consecrate, from any of their sacred donations; it shall be on his forehead at all times, to win acceptance for them before the LORD.

³⁹You shall make the fringed tunic of fine linen.

You shall make the headdress of fine linen.

You shall make the sash of embroidered work.

⁴⁰And for Aaron's sons also you shall make tunics, and make sashes for them, and make turbans for them, for dignity and adornment. ⁴¹Put these on your brother Aaron and on his sons as well; anoint them, and ordain them and consecrate them to serve Me as priests.

headdress The Hebrew word *mitznetef* literally means "a turban," a symbol of royalty.

38. It shall be on Aaron's forehead The instruction is repeated later in this same verse with the addition of the Hebrew word *tamid*, "at all times," meaning "whenever the High Priest performs the service."

may take away any sin The High Priest is responsible for any infraction of the rules governing the sacred offerings. Wearing the frontlet inscribed with the words *kodesh l'YHVH*, "Holy to the LORD," helps him concentrate his thoughts on his duties and on his accountability. At the same time, this awareness effectively secures atonement from God for such offenses.

The Tunic (v. 39)

The Hebrew for "tunic" (*kuttonet*) appears often in the Bible. Both men and women wore such clothing, mainly as an ankle-length undergarment, usually next to the skin. Some types of outer tunic were clearly marks of prestige, such as the garment that Jacob gave to Joseph, described in Gen. 37:3. A tunic was standard fashionable dress in the ancient Near East.

The Headdress (v. 39)

See Comment to verse 37.

The Sash (v. 39)

In 39:29 the sash is described as made of "fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns,

אֶל־מוֹל פְּנֵי־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת יִהְיֶה׃ ³⁸ וְהָיָה עַל־
מִצַּח אַהֲרֹן וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־עֹנֵן
הַקְּדוֹשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יִקְדִּישׁוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכָל־
מִתְנַת קְדוֹשֵׁיהֶם וְהָיָה עַל־מִצְחוֹ תָּמִיד
לְרִצּוֹן לָהֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה׃

³⁹ וְשָׂבַצְתָּ הַכְּתָנֶת שֵׁשׁ

וְעָשִׂיתָ מִצְנֶפֶת שֵׁשׁ

וְאַבְנֵט תַעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם׃

⁴⁰ וְלִבְנֵי אַהֲרֹן תַעֲשֶׂה כְתָנֹת וְעָשִׂיתָ לָהֶם
אַבְנֵטִים וּמִגְבָּעוֹת תַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְכָבוֹד
וּלְתַפְאֵרַת׃ ⁴¹ וְהִלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם אֶת־אַהֲרֹן
אֶחָיִךְ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֹתוֹ וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֹתָם
וּמִלֵּאתָ אֶת־יָדָם וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם וְכִהְנֹוּ
לִי׃

done in embroidery." This sash was girded over the tunic.

THE VESTMENTS OF ORDINARY PRIESTS

(vv. 40–43)

Four articles of clothing are mandated.

40. turbans No description is given, but they probably differ from the High Priest's head-dress because a different Hebrew word (*migba-ot*) is used.

41. This verse and the following chapter prescribe how priests are to be officially installed into office once the tabernacle is erected.

Put these That is, the vestments, as they apply, respectively, to Aaron and to his sons.

anoint them The formula for compounding the special aromatic oil for this rite is specified in 30:22–25. It was forbidden to use that oil for any other purpose. The oil was sprinkled on the vestments to be worn by Aaron and by his sons; it also was poured over the head of the High Priest. The tabernacle vessels also were anointed. This ceremony served to bring about the transition from the profane to the sacred. Note that the verb for anoint (*משח*) is used more frequently in the Bible for anointing kings. Individuals or objects that are anointed are set apart for the service of God.

consecrate them This probably does not refer to another distinct ceremony but sums up the consequence of performing all the previously enumerated rituals.

⁴²You shall also make for them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; they shall extend from the hips to the thighs. ⁴³They shall be worn by Aaron and his sons when they enter the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to officiate in the sanctuary, so that they do not incur punishment and die. It shall be a law for all time for him and for his offspring to come.

29 This is what you shall do to them in consecrating them to serve Me as priests: Take a young bull of the herd and two rams without blemish; ²also unleavened bread, unleavened cakes with oil mixed in, and unleavened wafers spread with oil—make these of choice wheat flour. ³Place these in one basket and present them in the basket, along with the bull and the two rams. ⁴Lead Aaron and his sons up to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and wash them with water. ⁵Then take the vestments, and

42. Hebrew: *mikhmasayim* (breeches), a word that occurs in the Bible only in connection with priestly attire. Here they are listed separately, because they clearly are not the sort of vestments worn “for dignity and adornment” (v. 40). This is also because, to avoid unseemliness, the priest put them on by himself; others helped him into the vestments.

to cover their nakedness See Comment to 20:23.

43. This instruction probably refers to all of the vestments together, not only to the last item.

INSTALLATION OF THE PRIESTS (29:1–46)

Moses is to preside over the installation of the priests, during which he will act as the sole priest. The installation rituals, lasting seven days, comprise animal sacrifices, meal offerings, washing the body, robing, and anointing. The installation is reported and described in Lev. 8–9, where it includes purification, preparation, and ordination.

ANIMALS AND MATERIALS (vv. 1–3)

First these are listed (as in 25:1–7) and then their functions are specified.

וַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם מִכְנָסֵי-בָד לְכִסּוֹת בֶּשֶׂר עֲרוּהָ מִמַּתְנִים וְעַד-יְרֵכֵיהֶם יְהִיוּ: וְהָיוּ עַל-אֲהֶרֶן וְעַל-בָּנָיו בְּבֹאֵם אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֹו בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׁרֶת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא-יִשָּׂאוּ עֹון וּמָתוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לֹו וְלִזְרָעוֹ אַחֲרָיו: ס

כט וְזֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְקֹדֶשׁ אֹתָם לְכַהֵן לִי לֶקַח פֶּר אֶחָד בֶּן-בֶּקָר וְאֵילִם שְׁנַיִם תְּמִימִם: וְלַחֵם מִצּוֹת וְחֻלֹּת מִצַּת בְּלוֹלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מִצּוֹת מְשֻׁחִים בְּשֶׁמֶן סֹלֶת חֻטִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: וְנָתַתָּ אוֹתָם עַל-סֹל אֶחָד וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֹתָם בֶּסֶל וְאֶת-הַפָּר וְאֵת שְׁנֵי הָאֵילִם: וְאֶת-אֲהֶרֶן וְאֶת-בָּנָיו תִּקְרִיב אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְרַחֲצַתָּ אֹתָם בַּמַּיִם: וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת-הַבְּגָדִים וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּ

1. to them To Aaron and his sons.

without blemish Literally, “whole.” This requirement applies to all three animals.

2. The grain offerings are to consist of three varieties of *matzah*: “unleavened bread,” made of choice wheat flour: (a) plain oven baked, (b) with the dough mixed and kneaded with oil, and (c) with oil smeared on top after the baking. The significance of the variations is unknown. These unleavened breads are for use only with the ram of ordination.

3. present Literally, “bring forward,” i.e., to the Tent of Meeting.

THE WASHING (v. 4)

Before Aaron and his sons are dressed in the sacred garments of office for the first time, they must undergo ritual purification by total immersion in water.

THE ROBING AND ANOINTING OF AARON ALONE (vv. 5–7)

The linen breeches are not mentioned for reasons of delicacy, because Aaron puts on this undergarment by himself. It is not known why the order

clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the decorated band of the ephod. ⁶Put the headdress on his head, and place the holy diadem upon the headdress. ⁷Take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him. ⁸Then bring his sons forward; clothe them with tunics ⁹and wind turbans upon them. And gird both Aaron and his sons with sashes. And so they shall have priesthood as their right for all time.

You shall then ordain Aaron and his sons. ¹⁰Lead the bull up to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of the bull. ¹¹Slaughter the bull before the LORD, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, ¹²and take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; then pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ¹³Take all the fat that covers the entrails, the protuberance on the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and turn them into smoke upon the altar. ¹⁴The rest of

אֶת־אֶהְרֹן אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנָתָיִם וְאֶת־הָאֵפֹד וְאֶת־הָאֵפֹד וְאֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן וְאֶפְדָּתָיִם לוֹ בְּחֹשֶׁב הָאֵפֹד: ⁶וְשָׂמַתָּ הַמִּצְנֶפֶת עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־נֹזֶר הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת: ⁷וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וַיִּצְקֶתָ עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ אֹתוֹ: ⁸וְאֶת־בָּנָיו תִּקְרִיב וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּם כֹּהֲנָתָיִם: ⁹וְחָגַרְתָּ אֹתָם אֲבָנֵט אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו וְחָבַשְׁתָּ לָהֶם מִגְבָּעֹת וְהִיְתָה לָהֶם כְּהֵנָה לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם וּמִלֵּאת יָד־אֶהְרֹן וַיִּדְבְּנִיו: ¹⁰וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־הַפָּר לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְסָמַךְ אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַפָּר: ¹¹וְשַׁחַטְתָּ אֶת־הַפָּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ¹²וְלָקַחְתָּ מִדַּם הַפָּר וְנָתַתָּה עַל־קַרְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּאֶצְבָּעְךָ וְאֶת־כָּל־הַדָּם תִּשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוּד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ¹³וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הַחֵלֶב הַמְכַסֶּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת־הַיִּתְרֹת עַל־הַכֶּבֶד וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי הַכְּפָלִיִּת וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵיהֶן וְהִקְטַרְתָּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ¹⁴וְאֶת־בֶּשֶׂר הַפָּר וְאֶת־עֲרוֹ

of robing found here differs from that in Lev. 8:7–9.

7. This verse implies that Aaron alone is to be anointed. Other biblical passages, however, make it clear that ordinary priests were also anointed. The differing texts may reflect different traditions.

THE ROBINING OF AARON AND HIS SONS (vv. 8–9)

The instructions deal in turn with the vestments of the ordinary priests and with the items that are worn by them and by Aaron. For the sake of clarity, the English translation slightly rearranges the order of the clauses in the Hebrew text.

9. *sashes* The sash of the High Priest, described in 28:4,39, is not mentioned in the instructions of 29:5–6.

THE ANIMAL SACRIFICES (vv. 10–26)

Immediately before slaughtering each of the three animals listed in verse 1, the priests are to perform “the laying on of the hands.” The text does not explain how this is to be done, or the meaning

of the ceremony. Originally it may have been a legal, not a ritual, act intended to mark the animal or person for a specific role or fate; at times, too, it served to identify and affirm ownership of the animals to be sacrificed. In a number of places in the Bible, the act seems to signify the transfer of authority.

The Bull of Purification Offering (vv. 10–14)

This is essentially a purificatory and expiatory sacrifice.

12. See Comment to 24:6. The reason for daubing the horns of the altar specifically may be that blood was used to purify holy objects (see v. 20).

13. *protuberance on the liver* The requirement to remove and burn this part is quite likely a reaction against the great importance attached to the liver in ancient Near Eastern divination. Numerous clay models of the liver have been uncovered in Mesopotamia, some divided into 50 sections and inscribed with omens and magical formulas. These models guided the trained priests in divining the intentions of the gods.

the flesh of the bull, its hide, and its dung shall be put to the fire outside the camp; it is a purification offering.

¹⁵Next take the one ram, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the ram's head. ¹⁶Slaughter the ram, and take its blood and dash it against all sides of the altar. ¹⁷Cut up the ram into sections, wash its entrails and legs, and put them with its quarters and its head. ¹⁸Turn all of the ram into smoke upon the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing odor, a gift to the LORD.

¹⁹Then take the other ram, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the ram's head. ²⁰Slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the ridge of Aaron's right ear and on the ridges of his sons' right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet; and dash the rest of the blood against every side of the altar round about. ²¹Take some of the blood that is on the altar and

וְאֶת־פְּרָשׁוֹ תִשְׂרֹף בְּאֵשׁ מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה
חֲטָאת הוּא :

¹⁵ וְאֶת־הָאֵיל הָאֶחָד תִּקַּח וְסָמְכוּ אֹהֲרָן
וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הָאֵיל :
¹⁶ וְשִׁחַטְתָּ אֶת־הָאֵיל וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת־דָּמּוֹ
וְזָרַקְתָּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב : ¹⁷ וְאֶת־הָאֵיל
תִּנְתַּח לַנְּתָחַיו וְרִחַצְתָּ קַרְבּוֹ וּכְרַעָיו
וְנִתַּת עַל־נְתָחָיו וְעַל־רֹאשׁוֹ : ¹⁸ וְהִקְטַרְתָּ
אֶת־כָּל־הָאֵיל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עֲלֵה הוּא לַיהוָה
רִיחַ נִיחֻחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה הוּא :

¹⁹ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת הָאֵיל הַשֵּׁנִי וְסָמְךָ אֹהֲרָן
חַמִּישִׁי וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הָאֵיל :
²⁰ וְשִׁחַטְתָּ אֶת־הָאֵיל וְלִקַּחְתָּ מִדָּמּוֹ
וְנִתַּתָּה עַל־תְּנוּפֹתָ אֶזְרָן אֹהֲרָן וְעַל־תְּנוּפֹתָ
אֶזְרָן בָּנָיו הַיְמָנִית וְעַל־בָּהֶן יָדָם הַיְמָנִית
וְעַל־בָּהֶן רַגְלָם הַיְמָנִית וְזָרַקְתָּ אֶת־הַדָּם
עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב : ²¹ וְלִקַּחְתָּ מִן־הַדָּם

The Ram of Burnt Offering (vv. 15–18)

The first of the rams is to be an *olah* offering, to be consumed completely by fire on the altar.

16. against all sides The blood, which had been collected in a vessel, was dashed against the altar from diagonally opposite corners in such a way that each of the two sprinklings spattered two of the sides, signifying the return of the animal to God.

18. pleasing odor In verses that deal with technical matters involving the sacrificial system, this phrase means that the sacrifice has been accepted by God.

The Ram of Ordination (vv. 19–26)

This ram comes under the category of the *zevah*

sh'lamim, “an offering of well-being” or (according to B. Levine) “a sacred gift of greeting.” That is, the slaughtered ram is only partly burned on the altar. The rest of it belongs to the priests and those who offered it. This offering, which concludes the ceremony of installation, is accompanied by elaborate rites.

20. This daubing of the blood most likely has a purificatory function.

ridge It is uncertain whether the part of the ear denoted by the Hebrew word *t'nukh* refers to the cartilage or to the lobe.

21. As the text explains, and as the description of Lev. 8:30 repeats, this ritual effectuated the consecration of the priests.

CHAPTER 29

20. The Midrash understands the anointing of the ear, thumb, and big toe of the *kohen* (priest) as teaching that a *kohen* must listen to the people, act on their behalf, and go forth among them. Another *midrash* sees the ceremony as helping Aaron atone for his role in the

incident of the Golden Calf. “The ear that heard the words ‘You shall have no other gods beside Me’ and then listened to the people’s demand for a calf; the hands which had pledged to serve God and then fashioned a calf; the feet that climbed Mount Sinai and then hastened to do that which was wrong”—all of these had to be cleansed and rededicated to the service of God.

some of the anointing oil and sprinkle upon Aaron and his vestments, and also upon his sons and his sons' vestments. Thus shall he and his vestments be holy, as well as his sons and his sons' vestments.

²²You shall take from the ram the fat parts—the broad tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the protuberance on the liver, the two kidneys with the fat on them—and the right thigh; for this is a ram of ordination. ²³Add one flat loaf of bread, one cake of oil bread, and one wafer, from the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD. ²⁴Place all these on the palms of Aaron and his sons, and offer them as an elevation offering before the LORD. ²⁵Take them from their hands and turn them into smoke upon the altar with the burnt offering, as a pleasing odor before the LORD; it is a gift to the LORD.

²⁶Then take the breast of Aaron's ram of ordination and offer it as an elevation offering before the LORD; it shall be your portion. ²⁷You shall consecrate the breast that was offered as an elevation offering and the thigh that was offered as a gift offering from the ram of ordination—from that which was Aaron's and from that which was his sons'—²⁸and those parts shall be a due for all time from the Israelites to Aaron and his descendants. For they are a gift; and so shall they be a gift from the Israelites, their gift to the LORD out of their sacrifices of well-being.

²⁹The sacral vestments of Aaron shall pass on

22. for this is a ram of ordination Normally the right thigh of the animal is assigned to the priest and not, as here, offered up in smoke on the altar.

24. elevation offering An offering that undergoes the special ritual of being "raised up."

26. Here, because the installation ceremonies are not quite completed and because Moses serves in the capacity of a priest, he is entitled to that which routinely would be the priest's portion in the future.

אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמִשְׁמֵן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְהַיִּיתָ
עַל-אֶהָרֹן וְעַל-בְּגָדָיו וְעַל-בְּנָיו וְעַל-בְּגָדֵי
בְּנָיו אֹתוֹ וְקֹדֶשׁ הוּא וּבְגָדָיו וּבְנָיו וּבְגָדֵי
בְּנָיו אֹתוֹ:

²²וְלָקַחְתָּ מִן-הָאֵיל הַחֹלֵב וְהָאֵלֶּה
וְאֶת-הַחֹלֵב | הַמְכֹסֶה אֶת-הַקָּרֵב וְאֶת
יִתְרַת הַפֶּבֶל וְאֶת | שְׁתֵּי הַכְּפָלִית וְאֶת-
הַחֹלֵב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵהֶן וְאֶת שֹׁק הַיְמִינִן כִּי
אֵיל מִלְאִים הוּא: ²³וְכָפַר לָחֶם אֶחָת
וְחָלֵת לָחֶם שֶׁמֶן אֶחָת וְרִקִּיק אֶחָד מִסֵּל
הַמִּצּוֹת אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ²⁴וְשַׂמְתָּ הַכֹּל
עַל כַּפֵּי אֶהָרֹן וְעַל כַּפֵּי בְּנָיו וְהִנַּפְתָּ אֹתָם
תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ²⁵וְלָקַחְתָּ אֹתָם מֵיָדָם
וְהִקְטַרְתָּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל-הָעֹלָה לְרִיחַ
נִיחֻיחַ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁה הוּא לִיהוָה:

²⁶וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת-הַחֹזֶה מֵאֵיל הַמִּלְאִים
אֲשֶׁר לְאֶהָרֹן וְהִנַּפְתָּ אֹתוֹ תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה וְהָיָה לָךְ לְמִנְחָה: ²⁷וְקִדְשְׁתָּ אֵת |
חֹזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה וְאֶת שֹׁק הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר
הוֹנֵף וְאֲשֶׁר הוֹרֵם מֵאֵיל הַמִּלְאִים מֵאֲשֶׁר
לְאֶהָרֹן וּמֵאֲשֶׁר לְבְּנָיו: ²⁸וְהָיָה לְאֶהָרֹן
וּלְבְּנָיו לְחֶק-עוֹלָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
כִּי תְרוּמָה הוּא * וְתְרוּמָה יְהִי מֵאֵת
בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזְבְּחֵי שְׁלֵמֵיהֶם תְּרוּמָתָם
לִיהוָה:

²⁹וּבְגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאֶהָרֹן יְהִיו לְבְּנָיו

v. 28. סבירין ומטעין "היא"

THE INSTALLATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS (vv. 27–30)

These verses briefly interrupt the theme of installation to explain that the foregoing applies only to the present inaugural and that different rules will govern the installation of future priests.

28. their gift to the LORD God assigns these parts to the priests.

29–30. The eight garments that are the uniform of the High Priest (as described in 28:3–

to his sons after him, for them to be anointed and ordained in. ³⁰He among his sons who becomes priest in his stead, who enters the Tent of Meeting to officiate within the sanctuary, shall wear them seven days.

³¹You shall take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in the sacred precinct; ³²and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ³³These things shall be eaten only by those for whom expiation was made with them when they were ordained and consecrated; they may not be eaten by a layman, for they are holy. ³⁴And if any of the flesh of ordination, or any of the bread, is left until morning, you shall put what is left to the fire; it shall not be eaten, for it is holy.

³⁵Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, just as I have commanded you. You shall ordain them through seven days, ³⁶and each day you shall prepare a bull as a purification offering for expiation; you shall purify the altar by performing purification upon it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. ³⁷Seven days you shall perform purification for the altar to consecrate it, and the altar shall become most holy; whatever touches the altar shall become consecrated.

³⁸Now this is what you shall offer upon the

אַחֲרָיו לְמִשְׁחָה בָּהֶם וּלְמִלְאֵבָם אֶת־
יָדָם: ³⁰ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יִלְבָּשׁם הַכֹּהֵן
תַּחֲתֵיו מִבְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָבֵא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ:

³¹ וְאֵת אֵיל הַמִּלְאִים תִּקַּח וּבִשְׁלַת אֶת־
בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ: ³² וְאָכַל אַהֲרֹן וּבְנָיו
אֶת־בֶּשֶׂר הָאֵיל וְאֶת־הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר בַּסֵּל
פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ³³ וְאָכְלוּ אֹתָם אֲשֶׁר
כָּפַר בָּהֶם לְמִלֵּא אֶת־יָדָם לְקֹדֶשׁ אֹתָם
וְזָר לֹא־יֹאכַל כִּי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם: ³⁴ וְאִם־יֹוֹתֵר
מִבֶּשֶׂר הַמִּלְאִים וּמִן־הַלֶּחֶם עַד־הַבֶּקֶר
וְשָׂרְפָתָ אֶת־הַנוֹתֵר בָּאֵשׁ לֹא יֹאכַל כִּי־
קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:

³⁵ וְעָשִׂיתָ לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו כָּכָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־
צִוִּיתִי אֹתְכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תְּמַלֵּא יָדָם:
³⁶ וּפָר חֲטָאת תַעֲשֶׂה לְיוֹם עַל־הַכֹּפְרִים
וְחֲטָאת עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּכֹּפֶר עָלָיו וּמִשַּׁחַת
אֹתוֹ לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ: ³⁷ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּכְפֹּר עַל־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְקֹדֶשֶׁת אֹתוֹ וְהָיָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ קֹדֶשׁ
קֹדָשִׁים כָּל־הַנִּגַּע בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ יִקְדָּשׁ: ס

³⁸ וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַעֲשֶׂה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּבָשִׂים ששי

4,42) are to be handed down from father to son and worn for each successor's installation ceremony, which is also to last for seven days.

THE SACRIFICIAL MEAL (vv. 31–34)

Instructions for the installation of Aaron and his sons resume.

31. in the sacred precinct In the enclosed court of the tabernacle.

32–33. The ritual of the *sh'lamim* offering involves a sacrificial meal, as prescribed in Lev. 7:15.

layman Hebrew: *zar*, literally, "strange, alien, removed"; used in describing rituals to refer to an outsider or a person or thing unauthorized to participate in certain religious roles or functions.

A WEEK-LONG OBSERVANCE (vv. 35–37)

These verses appear to mean that the entire in-

stallation ceremony is to be repeated each day for seven days.

36. The altar is assumed to possess a natural impurity, because it is a piece of furniture fashioned by human beings. It must, therefore, be anointed, purged of defilement and consecrated before it can be used for a sacred function.

37. most holy Hebrew: *kodesh kodashim*, literally, "holy of holies"; normally designates the inner sanctum of the tabernacle but is also used, as here, to denote superior holiness.

whatever touches The holiness of the altar is contagious.

THE REGULAR BURNT OFFERING (vv. 38–42)

The repeated mention of the altar in the previous two verses makes this an appropriate occasion for introducing its basic function: to accommodate

altar: two yearling lambs each day, regularly.

³⁹You shall offer the one lamb in the morning, and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight.

⁴⁰There shall be a tenth of a measure of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of beaten oil mixed in, and a libation of a quarter *hin* of wine for one lamb; ⁴¹and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight, repeating with it the grain offering of the morning with its libation—a gift for a pleasing odor to the LORD, ^{42a}a regular burnt offering throughout the generations, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before the LORD.

For there I will meet with you, and there I will speak with you, ⁴³and there I will meet with the Israelites, and it shall be sanctified by My Presence. ⁴⁴I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve Me as priests. ⁴⁵I will abide

בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שְׁנַיִם לַיּוֹם תָּמִיד: ³⁹אֶת־
הַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֶּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ
הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים: ⁴⁰וְעִשְׂוֹן
סֹלֶת בְּלוּל בְּשֶׁמֶן כְּתִית רִבַּע הַהֵינִן וְנִסְף
רְבַעִית הַהֵינִן יַיִן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד: ⁴¹וְאֶת־
הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים כַּמִּנְחַת
הַבֶּקֶר וּכְנִסְכָּהּ תַעֲשֶׂה־לָּהּ לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ
אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: ⁴²עַל־תָּ תָּמִיד לְדֶרְתֵיכֶם
פָּתַח אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר אֶנְעַד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה לְדַבֵּר אֵלַיְךָ שָׁם:
⁴³וְנִעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה לְבָנַי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִקְדַּשׁ
בְּכַבְדִּי: ⁴⁴וְקִדְשְׁתִּי אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־אֹהֶרֶן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֶקְדַּשׁ
לְכַהֵן לִי: ⁴⁵וְשִׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

the daily burnt offering. Twice daily, a lamb was wholly burned on the altar. Called “the regular burnt offering” (*olat ha-tamid*), it was the core of the whole sacrificial system.

40. *hin* A liquid measure of Egyptian origin, approximately 1½ gallons (6 L).

42. *there* This refers back to the Tent of Meeting, not to the entrance.

A SUMMATION (vv. 43–46)

The chapter closes with an emphatic reaffirma-

tion of the religious and spiritual significance of the tabernacle.

43. *it shall be sanctified* That is, the Tent of Meeting. The verb *קדש* means “to set apart,” from that which is mundane, from that which is ugly or impure (see Lev. 19:2).

44. The tabernacle as such and its regimen of rituals possess no innate sanctity. No effective magic derives from them. The sacred status of the priests and the edifice, with its furniture and utensils, flows entirely from the will of God.

42. Until now, holiness was manifest only occasionally and sporadically in the world. Once Israel received the Torah, the world would know holiness on a regular, daily basis. The daily offering (*tamid*) was to represent this (Kook).

44. Aaron is bequeathing not only material goods to his children but is passing on to them an ethical imperative to see themselves as consecrated to the service of God and of the people Israel.

45. The people Israel did not have the power to summon God’s Presence by performing these rituals. It was an act of grace on God’s part to choose to be present in their midst. Nonetheless, in postbiblical times, Jews de-

veloped the belief that by performing a *mitzvah* and reciting a blessing that addresses God directly (“Praised are You, O LORD”), they would feel God’s presence in the moment. The Talmud asks a strange question: If a priest’s body is inside the Tent but his head remains outside, is he considered having entered the Tent and may he perform the service? The answer is that he may not; he must be totally within (BT Zev. 26a). One is tempted to understand the question in spiritual rather than purely physical terms. A person can be physically present at a service but emotionally and spiritually absent. One’s head may be elsewhere. Such a person is not considered a true participant.

among the Israelites, and I will be their God.
⁴⁶And they shall know that I the LORD am their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt that I might abide among them, I the LORD their God.

30 You shall make an altar for burning incense; make it of acacia wood. ²It shall be a cubit long and a cubit wide—it shall be square—and two cubits high, its horns of one piece with it. ³Overlay it with pure gold: its top, its sides round about, and its horns; and make a gold molding for it round about. ⁴And make two gold rings for it under its molding; make them on its two side walls, on opposite sides. They shall serve as holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵Make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

⁶Place it in front of the curtain that is over the Ark of the Pact—in front of the cover that is over the Pact—where I will meet with you. ⁷On it Aaron shall burn aromatic incense: he shall burn it every morning when he tends the lamps, ⁸and Aaron shall burn it at twilight when

וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים: ⁴⁶וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁכְנִי בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: פ

ל וְעָשִׂיתָ מִזְבֵּחַ מִקְטָר קְטֹרֶת עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ: ²אֹמֶה אֶרְכּוֹ וְאֹמֶה רְחִבּוֹ רְבֹועַ יְהִיָּה וְאַמְתִּים קַמְתּוֹ מִמְנוֹ קַרְנָתָיו: ³וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר אֶת־גִּגּוֹ וְאֶת־קִירָתוֹ סָבִיב וְאֶת־קַרְנָתָיו וְעָשִׂיתָ לּוֹ זָר זָהָב סָבִיב: ⁴וְשָׂתִי טְבַעַת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה־לוֹ | מִתַּחַת לְזָרוֹ עַל שְׁתֵּי צַלְעֹתָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל־שְׁנֵי צַדָּיו וְהִיָּה לְבָתִּים לְבָדִים לְשֹׂאת אֹתוֹ בְּהִמָּה: ⁵וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתָם זָהָב:

⁶וְנִתְּתָה אֹתוֹ לְפָנֵי הַפְּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־אֲרֹן הָעֵדוּת לְפָנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֹנֵד לָךְ שָׁמָּה: ⁷וְהִקְטִיר עָלָיו אֶהְרֹן קְטֹרֶת סַמִּים בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר בְּהִיטִיבוֹ אֶת־הַנֵּר יִקְטִירָנָה: ⁸וּבַהֲעֹלֶת אֶהְרֹן

45. I will be their God See Comment to 6:7.

46. they shall know See Comment to 1:8. God's presence is manifest and meaningful to the people Israel through His intervention in the events of history.

AN APPENDIX TO THE INSTRUCTIONS (30:1–38)

This chapter consists of supplementary instructions relating to the construction of the tabernacle and its rituals.

THE INCENSE ALTAR (vv. 1–10)

The use of incense in rites of worship was widespread and had a long history in the ancient world. Given the number of animals slaughtered, incense was used not only to disperse noxious odors but to prevent people from being overcome by the fumes. The cloud of aromatic incense in the tabernacle was later perceived to be a reminder of the invisible Presence of God, as was the cloud that

accompanied the Israelites during the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings. The importance attached to the incense altar is shown by its placement in the Holy Place just outside the curtain that veils the Holy of Holies. It measured 1.5 feet (0.45 m.) square at the top and stood 3 feet (0.9 m.) high. Unlike the Ark and the table, it was embellished with a molding; like them, it was transported by means of poles inserted through rings affixed to its sides.

1. an altar Hebrew: *mizbe-ah*, literally, a “place of slaughter”; applicable only to an altar for animal sacrifice. It is used here for the incense altar because its shape was similar to that of a sacrificial altar.

7–8. These verses seem to indicate that offering incense and tending and lighting the lamps are to be the prerogatives of the High Priest. We know, however, that the daily performance of these rituals was carried out by ordinary priests as well (see M Yoma 4:4; Tamid 6:3).

he lights the lamps—a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout the ages.⁹ You shall not offer alien incense on it, or a burnt offering or a grain offering; neither shall you pour a libation on it.¹⁰ Once a year Aaron shall purge its horns with blood of the purification offering; it shall be purged once a year throughout the ages. It is most holy to the LORD.

אֶת־הַנִּירֹת בֵּין הָעֲרֵבִים יִקְטִירָנָה קֹטֶרֶת
תָּמִיד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: ⁹ לֹא־תַעֲלוּ
עָלָיו קֹטֶרֶת זָרָה וְעֹלָה וּמִנְחָה וְנִסֵּךְ לֹא
תִסְכּוּ עָלָיו: ¹⁰ וְכִפֶּר אֶהְרֹן עַל־קַרְנֹתָיו
אַחַת בְּשָׁנָה מִדָּם חַטָּאת הַכֹּפְרִים אַחַת
בְּשָׁנָה יִכַּפֵּר עָלָיו לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ־
קֹדָשִׁים הוּא לַיהוָה: פ

aromatic incense Hebrew: *k'toret sammim*. The noun *k'toret* derives from a stem meaning “to burn, smoke”; it eventually became the term for the substance that produces the aroma.

tends Literally, “makes good,” i.e., cleans the lamps of refuse and replaces the wicks and the oil.

9. alien incense Hebrew: *k'toret zarab*; See Comment to 29:33. Any incense not precisely

compounded according to the formula of verses 34–36 is invalid.

or a burnt offering It is to be used exclusively for the incense offering.

10. The only exception to the preceding rule occurs on Yom Kippur when the High Priest performs the rites of purification to reconsecrate the altar, as prescribed in Lev. 16:16–19.

הַפְּטָרָה תְּצַוֶּה

HAFTARAH FOR T'TZAVVEH

EZEKIEL 43:10–27

In 587–586 B.C.E., Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple was burned, and most of the population was deported to Babylon. Ezekiel continued to prophesy and offer consolation within this exilic community. Through visions of resurrected bones and apocalyptic wars, he projected the nation's restoration to Zion (Ezek. 35–39). The climax of these prophecies provides a blueprint of the future Temple and its new order of worship as well as a plan for resettlement in the homeland (Ezek. 40–48).

This *haftarah* is one of three *haftarah* selections taken from those chapters. It is a transition between the prophet's vision of God's Presence returning to the Temple (Ezek. 43:1–9) and the presentation of rules for priests in the Temple (Ezek. 44–46). In this *haftarah*, God tells Ezekiel to describe the Temple and the details of its consecration to the nation. Thus Ezekiel, like Moses before him, emerges as the mediator of a new order of worship.

The first three verses of the *haftarah* constitute a prologue that makes national contrition a precondition for learning details of the new Temple's construction. Presumably, just proclaiming the new order and describing the new Temple was thought sufficient to induce repentance and remorse for past sins. The announcement itself would show God's reconciliation with the people (Rashi).

The rest of the *haftarah* describes the altar and its consecration. The prominence of the sacrificial altar in the instructions and in the service points to its central role in priestly religion. It connects heaven and earth through the offerings brought to it by both the penitent and the pious, offerings that are transformed into gifts for God by being consumed there. Divine and human dimensions are aligned, atonement is sought, thanksgiving is

expressed. God's own instruction about the offerings gives the people confidence in their efficacy, which requires the proper purification of both the personnel and the sacral objects involved in the service.

RELATION OF THE *HAFTARAH* TO THE *PARASHAH*

Readers of the *parashah*, with its account of the dedication of the wilderness altar fresh in mind, will sense a symmetry between founding events there with the tabernacle and future events in the new Temple described in the *haftarah*. This is a symmetry of continuity and renewal.

Both the tabernacle (built after the Exodus) and Ezekiel's Temple (to be built after the exile) are sacred sites for God's Presence on earth. It is on earth that the rites of sanctity are performed. These two constructions also mark the arena of divine immanence (indwelling on earth) at the beginning and at the end of the biblical era.

Later generations, in exile and without a Temple, would add their own hopes to Ezekiel's vision of restoration, which symbolized a renewal of time and space yet to come and a hope for purification and atonement before God. According to an old *midrash*, even hopes for the future have a redemptive dimension. God tells the people that when the nation in exile is engaged in "the reading" of the "plan of the Temple" they shall be considered "as if they were [in fact] occupied with the building of the Temple [itself]" (Tanḥ. Tzav 14).

The sanctity and the atoning power of the ancient Temple service were activated in another way as well. Noting that the great altar is called both "altar" (Ezek. 43:13) and "table" (41:22), Yoḥanan and Eleazar both taught: "As long as the Temple existed, the altar provided atonement for

Israel, but now (when the Temple is destroyed) a person's table provides atonement" (BT Ber. 55a). Other Sages focused on spiritual sustenance. Noting the same conjunction of altar and table

in Ezek. 41:22, Simeon taught that when three people sit at a table and discuss Torah, it is "as if they ate from the table of the Presence [of God]" (M Avot 3:3).

43 ¹⁰[Now] you, O mortal, describe the Temple to the House of Israel, and let them measure its design. But let them be ashamed of their iniquities: ¹¹When they are ashamed of all they have done, make known to them the plan of the Temple and its layout, its exits and entrances—its entire plan, and all the laws and instructions pertaining to its entire plan. Write it down before their eyes, that they may faithfully follow its entire plan and all its laws. ¹²Such are the instructions for the Temple on top of the mountain: the entire area of its enclosure shall be most holy. Thus far the instructions for the Temple.

¹³And these are the dimensions of the altar, in cubits where each is a cubit and a handbreadth. The trench shall be a cubit deep and a cubit wide, with a rim one span high around its edge. And the height shall be as follows: ¹⁴From the trench in the ground to the lower ledge, which shall be a cubit wide: 2 cubits; from the lower ledge to the upper ledge, which shall likewise be a cubit wide: 4 cubits; ¹⁵and the height of the altar hearth shall be 4 cubits, with

Ezekiel 43:12. Such are the instructions Literally, "this is the instruction." This conclusion of the Temple blueprint uses a formula common to priestly instructions in the Torah (see Lev. 11:46–47, 14:32,57). Such formulas (as here) routinely refer to the instructions as a *torah* and provide a brief summary of the content of the instruction.

most holy Hebrew: *kodesh kodoshim*, which is used here for the entire Temple area—not just the holiest recess of the Temple. This use underscores the high emphasis on sanctity attributed to Ezekiel's Temple.

13. cubit Hebrew: *amah*. This ancient meas-

מג ¹⁰אתה בן-אדם הגד את-בית-ישראל את-הבית ויפֹלְמוּ מעוֹנוֹתיהֶם ומִדְדוּ את-תְּכֵנִית: ¹¹וְאִם-נִכְלְמוּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ צוֹרֵת הַבַּיִת וּתְכוּנָתוֹ וּמוֹצְאָיו וּמוֹבְאָיו וְכָל-צוּרָתוֹ וְצוּרְתָיו וְאֵת כָּל-חֻקְתָיו וְכָל-צוּרְתֵי צוּרְתָיו וְכָל-תּוֹרָתוֹ תוֹרְתָיו הוֹדַע אוֹתָם וּכְתַב לְעֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת-כָּל-צוּרְתוֹ וְאֶת-כָּל-חֻקְתָיו וְעָשׂוּ אוֹתָם: ¹²זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת עַל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר כָּל-גֹּבְלוֹ סָבִיב | סָבִיב קֹדֶשׁ קֹדְשִׁים הִנֵּה-זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת: ¹³וְאֵלֶּה מִדּוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּאַמּוֹת אַמָּה וּטְפַח וְחִיק הָאֵמָה וְאַמָּה-רֹחַב וּגְבוּלָה אֶל-שְׁפָתָהּ סָבִיב וְרֵת הָאֶחָד וְזֶה גֹב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ¹⁴וּמִחִיק הָאֶרֶץ עַד-הָעוֹרָה הַתְּחוֹנָה שְׁתֵּים אַמּוֹת וְרֹחַב אַמָּה אַחַת וּמִהָעוֹרָה הַקְּטָנָה עַד-הָעוֹרָה הַגְּדוּלָה אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת וְרֹחַב הָאֵמָה: ¹⁵וְהָהָרָאֵל אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת וּמֵהָאֵרָאֵל וּמֵהָאֵרָאֵל וְלִמְעַלָּה הַקְּרָנוֹת אַרְבַּע:

ure of length is based on the forearm and is equal to 18 to 22 inches. The handbreadth is another measure based on the body.

15–16. altar hearth The altar resembles a tower or a mountain, which may explain the depiction of the top-most hearth (*ha-ari-el*) as a "mountain of God" (*har-el*). Possibly this is a punning variation. The meaning of *ari-el* has been debated; possible renderings include "lion of God" and "(fire-)hearth of God." The latter would support the function of the object as a ritual hearth (cf. Targ.). The prophet Isaiah refers to the city of Jerusalem as *ari-el* (29:1ff.,7), presumably as a term for the (altar hearth of the) Temple.

4 horns projecting upward from the hearth: 4 cubits. ¹⁶Now the hearth shall be 12 cubits long and 12 broad, square, with 4 equal sides. ¹⁷Hence, the [upper] base shall be 14 cubits broad, with 4 equal sides. The surrounding rim shall be half a cubit [high], and the surrounding trench shall measure one cubit. And the ramp shall face east.

¹⁸Then he said to me: O mortal, thus said the Lord God: These are the directions for the altar on the day it is erected, so that burnt offerings may be offered up on it and blood dashed against it. ¹⁹You shall give to the levitical priests who are of the stock of Zadok, and so eligible to minister to Me—declares the Lord God—a young bull of the herd for a purification offering. ²⁰You shall take some of its blood and apply it to the four horns [of the altar], to the four corners of the base, and to the surrounding rim; thus you shall purify it and purge it. ²¹Then you shall take the bull of purification offering and burn it in the designated area of the Temple, outside the Sanctuary.

²²On the following day, you shall offer a goat without blemish as a purification offering; and the altar shall be purified [with it] just as it was purified with the bull. ²³When you have completed the ritual of purification, you shall offer a bull of the herd without blemish and a ram of the flock without blemish. ²⁴Offer them to the LORD; let the priests throw salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD.

16 והאראיל והאריאל שתים עשרה ארף בשתים עשרה רחב רבוע אל ארבעת רבעיו: 17 והעזרה ארבע עשרה ארף בארבע עשרה רחב אל ארבעת רבעיה והגבול סביב אותה חצי האמה והחיק לה אמה סביב ומעלתהו פנות קדים:

18 ויאמר אלי בן-אדם כה אמר אדני יהוה אלה חקות המזבח ביום העשותו להעלות עליו עולה ולזרק עליו דם: 19 ונתתה אל-הכהנים הלויים אשר הם מזרע צדוק הקרבים אלי נאם אדני יהוה לשרתני פר בן-בקר לחטאת: 20 ולקחת מדמו ונתתה על-ארבע קרנתיו ואל-ארבע פנות העזרה ואל-הגבול סביב וחסאת אותו וכפרתהו: 21 ולקחת את הפר החטאת ושפרו במפקד הבית מחוץ למקדש:

22 וביום השני תקריב שעיר-עזים תמים לחטאת וחסאו את-המזבח באשר חטאו בפר: 23 בכלותה מחטא תקריב פר בן-בקר תמים ואיל מן-הצאן תמים: 24 והקרבתם לפני יהוה והשליכו הכהנים עליהם מלח והעלו אותם עלה

18–24. The ceremony of consecration deals with expiation and purgation. The emphasis on purification offerings underscores the mood of purification pervading the ritual. Blood rites for decontamination are especially central (v. 20). A new divine address provides directions for the ritual preparation of the altar. Two different purification offerings are required on succeeding days—a bull from the herd, then a goat from the flock—for the rites of purgation and purification. These rites are followed by a concluding burnt offering of a bull and a ram.

19. the stock of Zadok Ezekiel regarded the Zadokite priests as the only legitimate priestly line (see 40:46). All other levitical priests were demoted to gatekeepers and cultic servants (44:9–16). The priest Zadok served David during his reign and supported him during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:24–29,35, 17:15, 19:12). He also sided with Solomon in the struggle for David's throne (against Aviathar, who supported Adoniah for king; see 1 Kings 1:8,32). In preferring the Zadokite line, Ezekiel bypassed the line of Aaron's son Ithamar.

²⁵Every day, for seven days, you shall present a goat of purification offering, as well as a bull of the herd and a ram of the flock; you shall present unblemished ones. ²⁶Seven days they shall purge the altar and purify it; thus shall it be consecrated.

²⁷And when these days are over, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your offerings of well-being on the altar; and I will extend My favor to you—declares the Lord GOD.

לַיהוָה: ²⁵ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁעִיר־
 חֲטָאת לַיּוֹם וּפָר בֶּן־בָּקָר וְאַיִל מִן־הַצֹּאֵן
 תָּמִימִים יַעֲשׂוּ: ²⁶ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יִכַּפְּרוּ
 אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְטָהְרוּ אֹתוֹ וּמִלְאֻ יְדוֹ יָדָיו:
²⁷ וַיִּכְלוּ אֶת־הַיָּמִים ס וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם
 הַשְּׁמִינִי וְהִלָּאָה יַעֲשׂוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים עַל־
 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת־עוֹלוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶת־שְׁלָמֵיכֶם
 וּרְצָאתִי * אֶתְכֶם נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה: ס

v. 27. א' במקום י'

25–27. This pattern of sacrifices differs from that in verses 18–24. The ritual here includes a bull from the herd and a goat from the flock. Both are offered all seven days and serve as purification offerings and for the rites of purgation and cleansing. After this procedure, on the 8th day, the altar would be ready for regular service. A week of consecration agrees with the regulation in Exod. 29:37.

26. shall it be consecrated This ancient idiom (literally, “shall fill its hands”), is usually used to designate the appointment of individuals to a special task (see Exod. 28:41). This is the only place in the Bible where the idiom refers to an object. Ezekiel’s prescription of sacrifices for the seven-day consecration contradicts the laws of the Torah (see Exod. 29:37; Lev. 8:33,35). This is one

of several discrepancies evident between the passage and regulations found in the Torah. For example, 43:22 legislates the use of he-goats as a purification offering for the purging of the altar, but this “did not occur in the tabernacle” (Rashi). Such difficulties almost led the early Sages to withdraw the book of Ezekiel from circulation. Only a legendary tour de force of reconciliation prevented this from occurring (BT Shab. 13b). There are also contradictions between the measurements of the altar described by Ezekiel and the measurements in the Second Temple (as reported in 2 Chron. 4:1; M Middot 3:1). Such matters led Radak to assert that Ezekiel’s vision was intended for the Third Temple at the end of days (see his comment on Ezek. 43:11).