

תְּצַוֶּה

TETZAVEH/YOU SHALL COMMAND

Shemot/Exodus 27:20-30:10

The central core of this week's parasha is the detailed instructions concerning the making of the garments for "**Aharon and his sons**" who are assigned to be "**ministering priests**" in the tabernacle:

Shemot/Exodus 28:1 "Now take Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aharon and Aharon's sons: Nadav, Avihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Aharon was the High Priest, and his ministry was a shadow of the heavenly ministry in the true tabernacle which Moshe saw from his vantage point on Mt. Sinai. Moshe saw the eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek:

Hebrews 8:1 Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,² a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which Adonai erected, and not man.

Hebrews 6:19 This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence *behind* the veil,²⁰ where the forerunner has entered for us, Yeshua, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

"**Melchizedek**" is presented in **Bereshith/Genesis 14** without genealogy, as if he was eternal. Therefore, הויהויה swears that the Messiah's priesthood will be according to the same order of Melchizedek, which is everlasting in its essence. While the High Priest Aharon symbolizes the Messiah in His heavenly ministry, Aharon's sons symbolize the Almighty's sons, i.e. His disciples. They have also received a priesthood according to the same eternal order.

The garments to be worn by the priests (kohanim) were meant to bring "**glory and beauty**" to those wearing them. Their garments did not elevate them before men, but rather represented the wearers sense of devotion and service to the Elohim and the people of Israel.

Shemot 28:2 "And you shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, for glory and for beauty...⁴⁰ " For Aharon's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch points out that "**the garments of glory and beauty**" were to become the very being, the skin if you will, of the kohanim themselves. Clothes may or may not make the man, but the sense of honor, duty, and loyalty that the garments of the priests represented certainly defined what was expected of them. One should never wear "**the garments of glory and beauty**" and behave in a fashion that contradicts those values. The garments described served as an outward manifestation

of internal, spiritual preparation. Everything associated with the tabernacle represents “holiness,” for He is a “**Holy Elohim**”:

- A holy place
- A holy people
- Holy implements
- Holy furnishings
- Holy garments
- Holy priesthood

Going back a little in time, recall that before the revelation at Mt. Sinai, יהוה defined His desire for a special relationship with the children of Israel:

Shemot 19:3 And Moshe went up to Elohim, and יהוה called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Ya'acov, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a **special treasure** to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. ⁶ 'And you shall be to Me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation**.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Note יהוה's descriptive phrases for the Israelites:

- Special treasure
- **Kingdom of priests** – mamlechet kohanim (מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים)
- Holy nation

יהוה's desire was for the entire nation to be a “**kingdom of priests/mamlechet kohanim**.” Although the other two terms are mentioned many times throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the term “**mamlechet kohanim** (מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים) never appears again in the Tanakh. Did יהוה somehow change His mind about what He desired His holy nation to become?

According to **Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom**, the answer is that it was originally the task of every single Israelite, as a descendant of Avraham, to be a blessing to all people. The Israelites were to be a light to the nations, a holy family bearing the image of His Name and manifesting the attributes of that Name to the other nations of the world. They were to be a conduit to bring blessing to the whole world, and a “**family of priests**” where each member through the keeping of יהוה's Covenant enjoyed a oneness (reference Yeshua's prayer in **John 17**) with the Source of Life. The light of Israel's life would shine into the darkness that enslaved the rest of the world. Other nations would be attracted to this light, being displayed by this set-apart nation. This was the whole point of being a “**kingdom of priests**.”

When the priesthood was given to Aharon and his sons, it indicated there would be a delay in the Israelites becoming a “**kingdom of priests**.” This status would be reserved for the future as **Isaiah** says:

Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of Adonai יהוה is upon Me, Because יהוה has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of יהוה, And the day of vengeance of our Elohim; To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of יהוה, that He may be glorified." ⁴ And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. ⁵ Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner *Shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers. ⁶ But **you shall be named the priests of יהוה**, They shall call you the servants of our Elohim. You shall eat the riches of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast.

Through Yeshua and those grafted in, the Israelites are able to fulfill their purpose of becoming a **“kingdom of priests.”**

1 Peter 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

Revelation 1:5 and from Messiah Yeshua, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and **priests to His Elohim and Father**, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The most referenced topic Yeshua taught on concerned the **“kingdom.”** But instead of a **“kingdom of priests,”** he spoke of the **“kingdom of Elohim”** or the **“kingdom of heaven.”** It is worth noting that neither of these last two phrases are found in the Hebrew Scriptures, but apparently were developed later by the sages. In the 2nd Temple period, the commandment against taking יהוה’s Name in vain was so strictly interpreted that people used euphemisms to avoid unintentionally misusing His Name. The **“kingdom of heaven”** and the **“kingdom of Elohim”** are interchangeable. Knowing that there is only **ONE kingdom**, could we not say...

Kingdom of Heaven = Kingdom of Elohim = Kingdom of יהוה = Kingdom of Priests

Through His teaching, Yeshua would help the people to understand this divine Kingdom. This Kingdom is not a **“place”** but a **“state of being.”** The manifestation of יהוה’s Kingdom on earth cannot be realized until the constitution (Torah) of His Kingdom is first established within the hearts of those that possess the Kingdom. **“Yeshua”** will reign as **“king”** over this Kingdom:

Hebrews 1:8 But **to the Son** *He says:* **"Your throne, O Yah, is forever and ever;** A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of **Your Kingdom.**

Let's put things in the perspective of the time of Yeshua. The sages' view was that to ensure that the observance of the commandments would not be mechanical, one should first commit oneself to the "**Kingdom of Heaven**" before beginning to observe the Almighty's commandments. How then did one commit himself to the "**Kingdom of Heaven**"? Through confession of the "**Shema**," the declaration that there is but "**one Elohim**," but its **practical expression is in the observance of the commandments**. Yeshua would have been very aware of this teaching...and He in fact voices His agreement with it in His answer to the scribes:

Mark 12:28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "**Which is the first commandment of all?**" ²⁹

Yeshua answered him, "**The first of all the commandments** is: '**Hear, O Israel, יהוה יהוה** our **Elohim, יהוה** is one. ³⁰ 'And you shall love יהוה' your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is* the first commandment. ³¹ "And the second, like *it*, *is* this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

This "**Kingdom**" will be about "**righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**":

Romans 14:17 for the **kingdom of Elohim** is not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**.

"**Righteousness**" defines way of living life. We know this because Sha'ul teaches us that evil behavior is called "**unrighteous**":

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the **unrighteous** will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the **kingdom of Elohim**.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim**.

On the other hand, "**obedience**" results in "**righteousness**":

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of **obedience leading to righteousness**?

Yeshua's emphasis on "**kingdom**" living had to do with the keeping of the commandments of Torah, which has always been the "**will of the Father**":

Matthew 7:21 " Not everyone who says to Me, 'Adonai, Adonai,' shall enter the **kingdom of heaven**, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven**.

I'd like to finish with a few thoughts on the “**garments**” of the priesthood. Aharon, as the High Priest and representative of Yeshua, was clothed in embroidery, gold, and brilliant colors.



Shemot 28:5 " They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine linen...two onyx stones...ruby, topaz, emerald, turquoise, sapphire, diamond, jacinth, agate, amethyst, beryl, onyx, and jasper set in gold filigree...bells of gold...a plate of pure gold engraved with ‘Holy to יהוה’ ...

In contrast, the garments for “**glory and for beauty**” with which the “**sons of Aharon**” were clothed were pure white garments:

Shemot 28:40 " For **Aharon's sons** you shall make **tunics**, and you shall make **sashes** for them. And you shall make **hats** for them, **for glory and beauty**... **42** "And you shall make for them **linen trousers** to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.



Though the priests had special clothes, they were simple clothes of fine, white linen. They were not much compared to garments of the High Priest. Yet they were still “**for glory and beauty.**” Why? Because they represented the “**righteousness of Yeshua**”:

2 Peter 1:1 ... To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the **righteousness of our Elohim and Savior Messiah Yeshua**

Psalms 132:9 Let Your **priests be clothed with righteousness**

If we consider ourselves to be part of His “**kingdom of priests,**” then we should be clothing ourselves in a certain way:

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armor of light.**

Ephesians 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to Yah, in **true righteousness and holiness.**

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Messiah have **put on Messiah.**

Revelation 3:4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who **have not defiled their garments;** and **they shall walk with Me in white,** for they are worthy.

The restored priesthood will wear **clean, white garments**, which is symbolized by “**linen,**” the material of the priest’s garments in the tabernacle:

Ezekiel 44:18 "They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with *anything that causes sweat*.

The **American Standard Version** also translates one of the last verses in the book of the Bible with "garments" in mind:

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.

As a side note, some people get confused with the passage in **Isaiah 64** which tells us that "**all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags**":

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...

Certainly, we don't want to be clothed in "**filthy rags**"!! Whenever we analyze a verse, what is always important is context:

Isaiah 64:5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *Who* remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned -- In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved. ⁶ But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. ⁷ And there is no one who calls on Your Name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.

The prophet **Isaiah** is telling the people that it was their **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**, their **sin** and **Torahlessness** that they saw as right in their own eyes that was considered to be as "**filthy rags**." For while it is not our "**righteousness**" that saves us, "**righteousness**" and "**good works**" are the life that He has in mind for His children:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of Elohim, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which Yah prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

If you are worried that you have rebelled against His Torah and broken His commandments, then repent and start walking towards Him. He who is "**faithful and just will forgive your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness**":

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.

And then, with love, He will clothe you with a beautiful “**garment**,” as pictured for us in the story of the prodigal’s son:



Luke 15:20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the **best robe and put it on him,** and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet.

We must become that set-apart people, that “**kingdom of priests**,” clothed in the “**white garments**” of the Living Torah, Yeshua our Messiah. For these are our “**wedding garments**”:

Matthew 22:11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a **wedding garment?**' And he was speechless. ¹³ "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Revelation 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**" ⁸ And to her it was granted to be **arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

Shabbat Shalom!

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