

Handout: Exodus Lesson 14

The Vestments of the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) Exodus 28:1-43

For the glorious adornment of your brother Aaron you shall have sacred vestments made.

1. *Ketonet* (tunic): A tunic made of white linen that reached to the feet. It was woven all of one piece with a boxlike knit. It was worn under the other liturgical vestments next to the skin and was tied with a sash (Ex 28:40; 29:5; 39:27; Lev 6:3/10; 8:7, 13; 16:4).
2. *Me'il* (robe): a one-piece blue garment reaching almost to the feet with only a neck opening. It was similar to a chasuble or a poncho. The Hem of the me'il was of alternating pomegranates and bells. The pomegranates were made of blue, purple, and scarlet wool, and they were alternated with gold bells (Ex 28:31-35; 39:22-26).
3. *Ephod* (priestly ephod): garment with shoulder straps and stones on the shoulders [*avnei shoham* = onyx stones?] with the engraved names of the sons of Israel according to birth order, six on each shoulder, with a tie belt made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet wool and twisted linen (Ex 28:6-14; 39:2-7).
4. *'Abnet* (waistband): A girdle or sash woven of fine linen with embroidery work in blue, purple, and red (Ex 28:4, 40; 39:29).
5. *Choshen/hosen* (breastplate): The breastplate of judgment was a folded pocket worn on the breast with 12 stones in 4 rows of 3, one stone for each of the 12 Tribes of Israel engraved with the name of each tribe and in which the Urim and Tumim [Thummim] were carried. The *choshen* [breastplate] is attached to the Ephod with straps/ties (Ex 28:15-30; 39:8-21).
6. *Misnepet* (head-dress): A turban/ miter made of linen to which the golden head-plate, the symbol of consecration, was attached on the front with an embroidered blue ribbon (Ex 28:37, 40; 39:31).
7. *Tzitz* (head-plate): This item also called the *nezer* (diadem or crown). It was made of pure gold, inscribed with the words "Holy to YHWH" and was tied with a blue ribbon to the miter (Ex 28:36-39; 39:27-31).
8. *Miknasim* (underpants): Breeches made of linen, extending from the waist to the thighs and secured with a cord (Ex 28:42-43; 39:28; Lev 6:3/10).

Four garments were the worn by all priests: the tunic, the breeches, the girdle/sash and a headdress (Ex 28:40-43). An additional four garments were to be only worn by Aaron and succeeding High Priests: the robe, the ephod, the breastplate of judgment, and the golden diadem/head-plate.

The miter/ mitre of the High Priest (*misnepet*: Ex:28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev 8:9; 16:4; Sir 45:12/14; Zec 3:5) was different from the head-dress of the other chief priests (*migba'ah*: Ex 28:40; 29:9; 39:28; Lev 8:13). The priests did not wear sandals on their feet when ministering in the Temple because they were standing on "holy ground" (Ex 3:5; Josh 5:15).