

TETZAVEH {תִּצַּוְהָ} (You shall Command)

Exodus 27:20-30:10, Ezekiel 43:10-27, Hebrews 13:10-16

A Messianic Jewish Commentary

By Hannah Nesher www.voiceforisrael.net

“Command (tezaveh) the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning.”
(Exodus 27:20)

This study begins with the commandment to the children of Israel to bring the pure olive oil for the light so that the lamp will burn continually in the tent of meeting. I am reminded of the children’s song,

“Give me oil in my lamp, keep it burning, give me oil in my lamp, I pray, give me oil in my lamp keep it burning, burning, burning, keep it burning till the break of day. Sing Hosana, sing Hosana, sing Hosana to the King of Kings....”¹

This oil used for the lamps in the tent of meeting needed to be of a clear, pure quality, pressed from fresh olives – a process which takes several days to produce the necessary oil. It was this special oil which was needed to re-light the lamps in the Holy Temple when the courageous Jewish freedom-fighters (the Maccabees) reclaimed the Temple from the Greek/Syrian forces in the second century BCE.



Oil Lamp (Wikipedia)

At this time, the Temple had been terribly defiled with idols – statues of Greek gods – and even with the blood sacrifices of swine which had desecrated the holiness of the altar of the Lord. The lamps which were commanded to be lit before the Lord continually had also been extinguished.

One of the most important tasks the Maccabees needed to accomplish in order to restore the holiness of the Temple was to re-light the lamps; however, according to legend, only one day’s worth of the precious olive oil could be found.

¹ Give me oil in my Lamp, Artist: Cedarment Kids, Album: Bible Songs, Released: 1993



The miracle of Chanukah which is celebrated each year is that this little bit of olive oil lasted the full eight days necessary to produce more pressed oil for the lamps.

What can we learn from this story? One lesson is the obvious –we are to shine for the glory of the Lord and not allow the contamination and idolatry of the world to snuff out our bright light. The other, however, is more subtle. The olive oil was not only used to light the lamps, but also represented the anointing.

The anointing in Hebrew shares the same root word as Messiah משיח, (Mashiach) The word Messiah is a title in Hebrew that means, {‘The Anointed One’} as in, “**Why do the nations rage...Against the Lord and against His anointed משיחו (M’shichoh).**”

(Psalm 2:1-2) The anointing has everything to do with the flow of the pure olive oil.

A branch from the olive tree has come to symbolize the concept of peace (shalom) ever since the biblical story of Noah when he sent out the dove and it eventually came back with an olive branch in its beak, announcing that God’s wrath had come to end.² The dove is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the gospels at the account of the immersion of Yeshua. When we are walking in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we are going to have peace even in a storm.



Ancient Olive Press

The ancient process of extracting the pure olive oil from the olives is an interesting one. The olives were ‘pressed’ in a heavy stone olive press in order to remove the impurities and bitter juices. At our last congregational retreat at Yad Hashmona (a Messianic moshav/village near Jerusalem), we had the privilege of participating in a tour through their Biblical gardens. Our knowledgeable tour guide showed us a model of an ancient olive press.



Model of ancient olive press at Yad Hashmona Messianic Village

Even today, however, people still make their own olive oil from the olive trees in Israel. I once walked into a friend’s apartment in the Galilee where she had some olives sitting in a bowl under a huge, heavy rock. When I asked what she was doing, she explained that she was pressing

² Genesis 8:11

the bitter liquid out of the olives so that she could use them for eating. This contains an important lesson for us. The bitter juices need to be pressed and squeezed out of us also in order that we can be used by the Lord.

Just as it took the pure olive oil to light the lamps in the ancient Tabernacle, so too do we need the pure oil of the anointing in order to burn brightly for the Lord. If it feels like our light has become dim, then maybe we need to

check if we have allowed seeds of bitterness to take root in our heart? Bitterness will prevent us from enjoying peace – with others, with ourselves, and with God.



“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness...looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” (Hebrews 12:14-15)

This bitterness, if allowed to take root and grow in our hearts, will not only cause trouble; it will also cause many around us to become defiled. God wants to deal with the bitterness in us of which we may even be unaware.

God My Rock (Tsurì)

If our hearts have become hardened - if we feel bitter towards life or other people or even God - we may feel like someone has turned out the light of life. All may seem grey, dull, and gloomy. We may even feel powerless to change the way we feel; but if we will confess our sin of bitterness and choose to forgive those who have wronged us, then we can move back into the flow of the pure anointing oil.



Balanced Rock stands in the Garden of the Gods park in Colorado Springs

Sometimes trials and tribulations come into our lives to ‘press’ and ‘squeeze’ this bitterness out of us. We may wonder, *‘Why do I have all this pressure on me? I feel like I am being crushed by the stress of it all!’* I have, at times, felt that I had a huge weight sitting on my back; and that the oppression of the enemy had become too ‘heavy’ for me to bear.

There are times when we can feel that we have been forgotten and forsaken - even by God, as the Psalmist lamented, **“I will say to God my Rock, Why have You forsaken me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”** (Psalm 42:9)

If we will allow God's heavy 'rock' to sit on us for a while and do its work, we may find that when the uncomfortable time of pressing and squeezing is over (and only God knows when enough is enough), then we will be purified of the defiling bitter juices and can shine again for God's glory.

When I remember that the Lord my God is my Rock and Redeemer, then it is easier for me to submit to His discipline and hope that I will be refined in and through the chastening.



Oil press in the [Israeli settlement Katzin](#).

“My son (or daughter), do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him, for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son (or daughter) whom He receives.” (Hebrews 12:5,6)

No, this is not fun nor pleasant, but if we will endure the chastening with a good attitude, not doubting God's love for us, then it will eventually lead to us becoming more 'grace-filled' - compassionate, and patient with the faults and failings of others.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:11)

I don't know about you, but I thank God for the afterwards! God is a good father and He is training us to be people who walk in peace and righteousness.

COUNT IT ALL JOY!

I am thankful that my children walk in a level of excellence we don't often see in young people. This is a wonderful blessing but can also become a personal challenge for them; because when we are strong and quick and clever, and able to do things with ease that others have difficulty with, we can become impatient with their faults and weaknesses. Sometimes it takes a good trial or two to humble us and make us realize that we too have our areas of weakness and that everyone needs grace and forgiveness.

Being a new driver, it is not uncommon to have a fender bender, so I was not surprised to hear my son Timothy say, *“Mom, don't be mad, but I had a little accident with the car.”* Backing up in

the pouring rain with a fogged up windshield led to a slight collision with a metal post that lay in ambush, hidden behind a bush.

I really couldn't fault him, having driven myself into a metal wire several months prior – and in broad daylight. So because I know that I, too, am someone who makes mistakes, I had a lot of grace with my son (who was quite grateful for it at this point). The next day, however, came another call, “*Mom, I locked the keys in the trunk.*” Oye!



‘No problem’, I thought, I’ll just grab the extra set and take a bus over there to get them out - except I soon found that I didn’t have the extra key. It was then we remembered that when he last drove the car, I had left it running, which meant that he had the extra key somewhere as well. The only problem being that the location of that extra key was also locked inside the car’s glove box. Double oye!

Since there is no Israeli Automobile Association (or at least none that we know of) and all the locksmiths in the area said they don’t deal with cars, my son was really stuck. I did two things – well...actually three. First, I stayed calm and said it’s ok. Second, I called someone in the area to go and help him. And third, I got on my face and begged God to have mercy on us and to help! And He did, PTL!

They managed to slide the glass out of a side window and get into the car to extract the keys. I felt thankful that God helped us through this little mini-crisis, but what I was even more thankful for was the change I saw in my son’s character. He seemed much humbled by these two experiences with the car, much more expressive of gratitude and much more patient with his younger siblings. He came home and thanked me profusely, even though I didn’t do anything but pray, he said, “*That’s a lot Mom!*” And I could see that he meant it.

James told us to count it all joy when we fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of our faith works patience. But we need to let patience have its perfect work, so that we will be complete and whole, lacking nothing in our characters. (James 1:2-4).

WATERS OF MARAH

God is in the business of changing bitter waters into sweet. When the children of Israel came to a pool of water in the wilderness, they were dismayed to find that the waters were too bitter to drink. God told Moses to throw in a tree, and the bitter waters were transformed into sweet water

they could drink. Bitter, in Hebrew, is 'mar' מַר, so the waters were called 'The waters of Marah'. מַרָּה³ Isn't it interesting that it was at the Waters of Marah that the Lord first revealed Himself as Yehovah Rophe, יְהוָה רֹפֵא our Healer!?⁴

Perhaps the Lord knows that the first healing we need is to be healed of the bitterness in our heart and soul which may express itself through our bodies as pain, sickness and disease. There are some who suggest that the spiritual root of many of our physical ailments and emotional problems is bitterness, either toward others or even ourselves.

Just as when the tree was thrown into the water, they became sweet, so too can our bitterness be changed into sweet waters when we look up at the tree on which Yeshua was crucified. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that whoever looked upon it would be healed of its venom, so would the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life.⁵

So the next time we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, instead of despising the trials and looking for the quickest escape route, may we see it as an enormous Rock, the great and infinite God, sitting on us, squeezing out all the yucky, bitter stuff, so that we are going to end up sweet and tasty. Now I feel better....do you?

Olive oil production in Israel is an interesting process.

Several years ago, when we lived in Neve Oved, up north in the Galilee, our Christian Arab neighbors asked if they could come and harvest our olives from the trees on our property. We were happy to oblige, since they were just going to waste left on their own.



Above: Harvesting olives from our olive trees in the Galilee

Left: Hannah & Osnat with harvested olives

The workers came and spread big sheets out under the trees and then using sticks, they beat the branches until the olives fell. These were gathered in the sheets and made into pure olive oil. We were so blessed when they gave us our very own bottles of olive oil from our own trees.

It took a serious beating to get those olives off the branches and sometimes it feels like we are taking a beating in life; but in the end, if we will be patient and not give up hope, we will end up with enough of the pure olive oil to keep our lamps lit until the break of day.

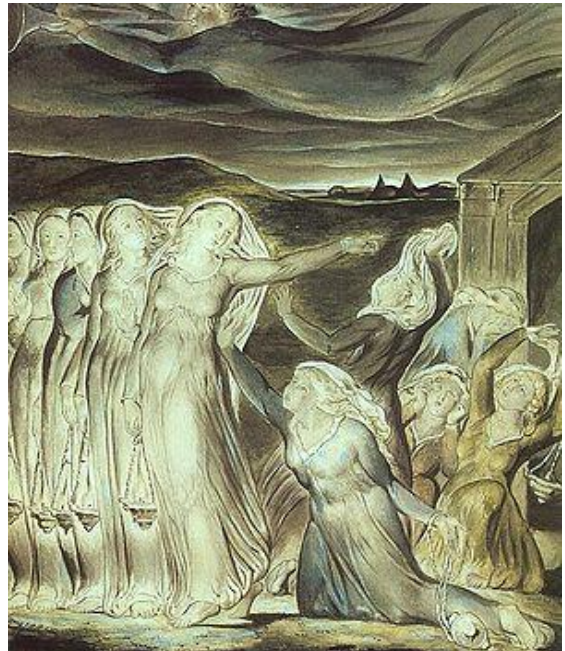


“The path of the righteous is like the shining sun, that shines every brighter unto the perfect day. (Prov. 4:18)

WISE VIRGINS CARRY ENOUGH OIL!

We’re going to need enough oil in our lamps to last us until Yeshua, our bridegroom returns for us. For this, we need to be like **the wise virgins** and not the foolish ones. In Matthew 25, Yeshua tells us a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven which is likened to ten virgins who take their lamps and go to meet the bridegroom.

Five were wise and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took no oil for their lamps, but the wise ones took oil. When the bridegroom was delayed, the foolish ones ran out oil for their lamps and asked for some from the wise virgins.



The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins
(1822) by William Blake, Tate Gallery.

But the wise virgins told them that if they gave away their oil, they would not have enough for themselves. So the foolish virgins had to go buy more oil and were therefore shut out of the wedding feast. They asked to come in but the Lord said, *“I do not know you.”* (Matthew 25:1-13).

There are many lessons in this parable about the oil and the lamps, but one thing that has always struck me about this story is the issue of **boundaries**. Oftentimes, I think that if we are to be *‘good and godly people, worthy ambassadors of the Lord’*, then we must always agree to give whatever others ask of us; but this parable shows us that we must use wisdom, even in our giving, especially if we have a gift of generosity and love to give to others.

A person who lives foolishly and ends up in lack may come to us, asking for what we have. Although Scripture makes it clear that we are to give to the poor and to share with the needy, we must also be careful that we don’t give away so much that we don’t have enough left for ourselves and for our families.

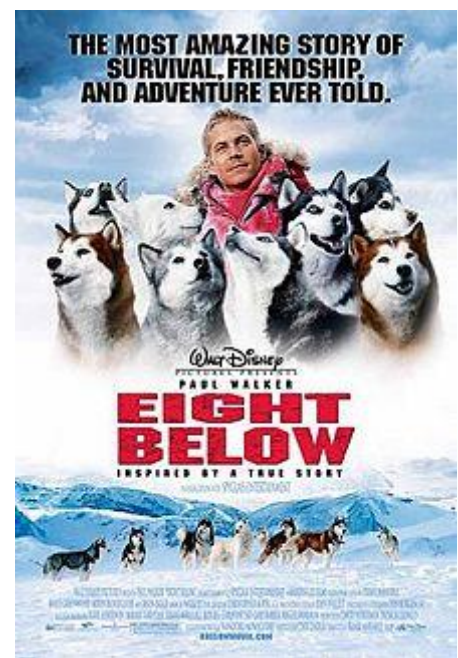
As a dog returns to its vomit, some people continually repeat their folly⁶; and giving in to them at every request can be like pouring water into a leaky bucket. What we really need is to be led by the Holy Spirit and to receive wisdom. We must prepare ourselves that we will have enough ‘oil’ in our lamps to last until Yeshua’s return.

Perhaps, just like at the festival of Chanukah, it will take a miracle for there to be enough oil to last the required time. But even if we have just a little oil, just a little anointing, just enough to light our lamp even a little bit, God can do a miracle and make it last until He comes for us. We need wisdom how to prepare for the time that we must wait, especially if the Bridegroom is delayed.

Survival – When the Bridegroom is Delayed

There is a movie we watched called ‘Eight Below’, about a sled dog team that had to be abandoned in the Arctic. Their owner planned to come right back for them but because of unforeseen complications, his return was delayed. This film shows the plight of the dogs as they struggled to survive until their master returned.

Across the screen, it kept showing the number of days the dogs had been on their own. Not all of them made it. Sadly, some of the dogs did not survive; but amazingly, most of them did! And what a joyful reunion it was when their master returned to rescue them! He gathered all those who survived, who were watching



⁶ Proverbs 26:11

and waiting for his return, onto the aircraft and flew them home to be with him.

Yeshua told us that it would be something like this in the last days. We must be prepared for a time of tribulation that will be coming upon the earth about which Yeshua warned:

“And unless those days were shortened, none would survive; but for the sake of the elect, the days will be shortened.” “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13, 21-22)

We must be like these dogs (sorry for the comparison) who keep watching and waiting, watching and waiting, never giving up hope that our master will come back for us. He will come and save us. The Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and with a shout (tru’ah) and the sound of the shofar.⁷ And he will gather His elect to be with Him forever.

The question remains – how do we prepare to endure until He returns for us? Like Joseph who saved Egypt and like Noah who, being divinely warned prepared an ark for the saving of his household, we too need wisdom to be led by the Holy Spirit. After James talks about remaining joyful in trials, he then goes on immediately to write that we can ask God for wisdom and He will grant it to us.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who give to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting...” (James 1:5&6)

We too can be a wise virgin with enough oil in our lamps to last the distance if we will ask God for wisdom; but there is one condition: we must ask in faith and not doubt; for if we doubt, we become double minded and unstable and will receive nothing from the Lord.⁸

So when we are going through a trial, one of the first things we need to do is pray to God for wisdom about it. *“Lord, please give me wisdom.*

Why am I going through this trial? What do you want to teach me through this? What, if anything, do you want me to do about it?”

There is an anointing of pure olive oil that will flow through wisdom from above. But when we ask, we have to have faith to believe that God has heard our cry and will answer. He will give us the wisdom we need when we need it so that our lamps will be filled with pure oil until that glorious day that He returns for us.



A basic earthen oil lamp

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:16

⁸ James 1:6-8

Filled with a Spirit of Wisdom

God filled certain individuals with a *'spirit of wisdom'* in order to perform specific tasks and fulfill specific purposes for the construction of the Sanctuary. Even those who made the garments for the priests were supernaturally filled with Divine wisdom for this specific purpose.

“And you shall speak to all that are wise-hearted, who I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron’s garments to sanctify him;” (Exodus 28:3)

In other parashot, we have studied what it means in Hebrew to have a *'steadfast (right) heart.'*⁹ We have also studied Solomon’s request for a *'wise heart'*, which in Hebrew actually means a *'heart that hears or listens'* (lev shomeah).

However in this instance, the Hebrew words used are actually *'wise-hearted'*, (hochmei lev) and filled with a *'spirit of wisdom'* (Ru’ach Hochmah).

Whatever gifts we possess are given by God and to be used for His glory and purposes. Those who are gifted in artistic skill, craftsmanship, and design, need just as much wisdom as any profession we consider needing a great deal of wisdom.

The Priestly Garments

The Cohen (priest) was required to wear a special head covering, pants, belt, and shirt – all in white to represent purity. All his garments were designed to display the splendor, beauty and majesty of royalty.

Jewish mystics believed that each of the high priest’s garments atoned for a specific sin: the turban for pride, the cloak for lashon harah (wrongful speech), trousers for adultery, belt for improper thoughts, breastplate for injustice and apron (ephod) for idolatry.

The special garments were to be made for the priests for splendor and glory. **“You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.”** (Exodus 28:2)



The High Priest (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

The words used in Hebrew are *'kavod'* כָּבוֹד (glory) and *'tiferet'* (beauty) תִּפְאֶרֶת .

I sometimes wonder if our appearance matters to the Lord, but it seems to me that it does. Not that we all have to be beautiful to be acceptable; but I think that the Lord wants us, as His ministers and ambassadors, to look our best, to bring Him honor and glory.

⁹ See Tu Bishvat newsletter, Feb 2010 www.voiceforisrael.net

Just as God is beautiful, and just as He creates beautiful creations like flowers and sunsets, He has also created us in His own beautiful image. Being the hypocrite that I sometimes am, however, I confess to writing this Torah commentary dressed in an old rumpled pair of rain pants with three equally rumpled and definitely unbeautiful (is that a word?) and non-splendorous (ditto) layers of frumpy clothing on top. I may even have slept in some of these – for an undisclosed number of days. No, I’m not going to include a photo here! ☺

Why? My excuse is that during the rainy winter season in Israel, the houses can get really cold! Even while I have a portable heater on full blast next to me, my fingers still feel stiff and cold while I type. And since I write from home and usually don’t see too many people besides my own kids most days, I have fallen into this kind of slump in my appearance.

I get up and think, *‘there’s no one to dress up for anyways; no one cares how I look anymore, so why bother?’* This is a terrible attitude, I realize, and it is also simply not true! God cares how we look and how we dress; God cares about beauty and splendor in our garments.

We may read Psalm 45 and see a connection between the oil of anointing and beautiful garments:

“Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions....The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors;...”¹⁰

We are all royal daughter (or sons) of the King. So I think I’m going to try and make at least some kind of effort to look a little more like a royal daughter rather than some kind of poverty-stricken orphan.

When I see how some of the religious women here in Israel dress, I think I could really take a lesson from them and raise my standards at least a little higher. The Orthodox Jewish women are forbidden to wear pants or trousers, so they are usually clothed in modest but beautiful skirts and dresses with their hair covered in colorful, often glittering, sparkly scarves wrapped in styles that make them look truly glorious.

Anyone looking at them would know that they are God-fearing women. I’m sorry to admit that the same would not have been said about me lately. OK, enough with the Jewish guilt complex already! ☺ I’ve confessed my sins; pray that I will be healed and come up even a bit higher on this issue.

Royal daughters arise!



¹⁰ Psalm 45:7,13&14

What is the Torah's lesson here on clothing?

We are all now, Jew and Gentile in Yeshua, a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation. To serve the Lord requires a sense of awe, honor and reverence. This state is more easily achieved with a noble appearance than with a sloppy, casual one.

According to Rabbinic tradition, our clothing must not drag on the ground, and it must be suitable and clean without stains, rips or holes. The Orthodox Jews use their distinctive manner of dress and appearance as a weapon against assimilation, using their attire to prevent them from integration into secular society.



Although the Torah demonstrates that wearing modest and appropriate clothing is important, the Yiddishists of central Europe had a saying, *“Beautiful clothes do not hide the hump on the back.”*

Indeed, what really counts is not how we appear on the outside – whether or not we wear ‘designer clothes’ or not – but the condition of our hearts. Our most beautiful attire will always be the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) **“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.”** (Colossians 3:14)

The Hoshen and Ephod

“And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.” (Exodus 28:4)

The priestly breastplate (called a hoshen in Hebrew) contained the [Urim and Thummim](#), used for divining the will of the Lord. The breastplate was made of embroidered linen and was a square cubit in size and shape. It contained four rows of three precious gems each embedded within the plate and surrounded with gold.



The High Priest (illustration from a Bible card published 1907 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

Each jewel in the priest's breastplate represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel, whose name was engraved upon the stone. The New Testament describes a heavenly city wall in John's vision of the New Jerusalem in which the foundation walls are adorned with precious gems:

"The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst." (Revelation 21:19-20)



The High Priest's Breast Plate (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

With only a very few differences, the list of these gems seems to be based upon the list of jewels in the Priestly Breastplate as described here in the book of Exodus.

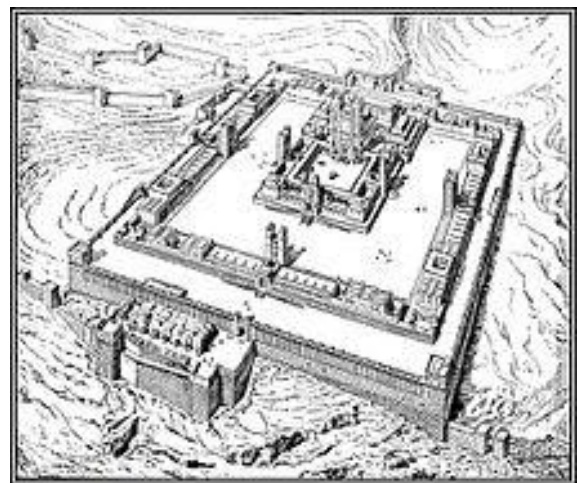
The ephod was also made out of fine linen and was woven out of gold, blue, purple and scarlet threads. Although a priestly garment, it seems that King David wore it as well when he brought back the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

"Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing with the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen." (1 Chronicles 15:27)

"And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod." (2 Samuel 6:14)

Haftarat Tetzaveh - Heavenly Blueprints

In last week's haftarah we read about King Solomon building a Temple for the Lord in Jerusalem. In this week's Haftarah God reveals to Ezekiel the blueprints for a future Temple; but there is a catch - the plan is only revealed once the people have felt guilty and ashamed of their sins that contributed to the destruction of the first one.



"And when they are guilty (ashamed) of (all their sins) that they have done, show them the plan of the Temple." (Ezekiel 43:11)

The visionary Ezekiel Temple plan drawn by the 19th-century French architect and Bible scholar [Charles Chipiez](#)

It seems to me that a lot of Jewish people (and maybe non-Jews also) are just born with this overly sensitive guilty conscience. We sometimes think of feeling guilty as a bad thing, but feeling guilty and ashamed of something wrong we have done can serve a good purpose if it teaches us not to repeat our sins.

“For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin...” (Psalm 38:18)

Once we have truly felt remorse and come to repent of these sins, then we will be ready to hear the plan to build the Temple – God’s blueprint for our lives. When we acknowledge our sins and accept our guilt in the matter, then we can begin to move forward with our lives.

Guilt can be an important emotion that leads us to accept responsibility for our actions in a mature fashion. Rather than trying to shove everything under the carpet, we can take the time to see what we did wrong that may have contributed to the destruction that occurred. If our marriage has failed, rather than blame our spouse for the whole mess, it is good to examine what part we played in its dissolution, in order that we don’t repeat the same mistakes in the future.

We must acknowledge the past and forgive ourselves in order to escape living in regret and finding the grace to move on, believing God for a new beginning. However, if we don’t look squarely at the sins that we have committed, then we may very likely just do one more futile circle around that same familiar mountain in the wilderness, rather than crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land.

Yes, we are to press on; yes, we are to forget the former things, but let us not be so quick to forget the past that we fail to learn the lessons we need to be successful in the future.

Sometimes, however, we feel ashamed even though we have done nothing wrong. A woman who was sexually abused as a child may feel a sense of guilt and shame even though it was someone else’s sin and not her own.

It does not need to be sexual abuse; it could be anyone who did not experience unconditional love and acceptance from their parents, who may grow up feeling a deep sense of shame. They live with a ‘shame based nature’, always feeling like, *“There must be something wrong with me.”*

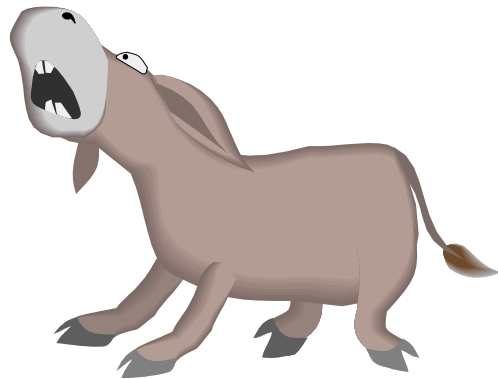
Oftentimes, I think that the problem is with how we correct our children. We may berate them over and over again, saying, *“You should be ashamed of yourself!”* And eventually - they do. Once, I was scolding my children over something they had done wrong and suddenly it hit me that I was not making them feel ashamed about what they had done – but that I was making them feel ashamed of who they are as a person.

For this, I repented and asked their forgiveness. I realized that this had come from my own upbringing with a critical father. When he corrected or rebuked me over something I had done wrong, I never felt bad about what I had done or not done well enough; I felt bad about myself as a whole. It was not that I had made a mistake; it was that I *was* a mistake.

We need healing from this shame-based nature so that we may truly internalize the unconditional love of God. We may know in our heads that God loves us but in our hearts we may still feel that He is angry with us, disappointed or disapproving of us as a person.

When Yeshua died, naked and broken on the cross, rejected and afflicted by His Father in Heaven, He took all this shame, guilt and rejection. As Ezekiel teaches, we need to remember our sins and wrongdoings, feel appropriately guilty over them, and repent; but we are not to bury ourselves under layers and layers of unnecessary or misplaced guilt, shame and condemnation.

I heard a story told about a donkey that fell into a deep and slippery pit from which it could not climb out. The owner heard its pitiful cries but, finding no way to get the donkey out, decided to just bury the poor beast. As he shoveled heaps and heaps of dirt onto the donkey in the pit, the donkey cried piteously; but after a while, the cries stopped. The owner, thinking that the donkey had been buried, was surprised to see him suddenly jump out of the pit into freedom. Instead of being buried by the shovels of dirt, the donkey used each one as a



stepping stone to rise higher and higher until he could finally jump out of the pit. The moral of this story is that when someone tries to throw the dirt of guilt and shame on top of us; when we feel like we are about to be buried under our own sense of condemnation, we can shake it off and use each shovelful to rise higher and higher until it eventually take us out to freedom.

Halleluyah!

“I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit. Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth – Praise to our God.

Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 40: 1-3)

Keep the Light Shining

In discussing the eternal lamp (*ner tamid*) which was to be lit before the Lord in the desert sanctuary, we may also receive revelation of a metaphor to our own personal inner sanctity. The building instructions may serve as a blueprint for our own inner holiness; the '*ner tamid*' - a symbol of keeping ourselves in the light.

How thankful we may be that because of Yeshua we have been delivered from the Kingdom of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of Light. (Colossians 1:12,13)

Although the Sanctuary and the Temple have been destroyed; and the light of the lampstand no longer burns with the oil of the olives, we can keep the Light of Yeshua shining in our hearts.

Like the gems on the breastplate of the Cohen Hagadol (High Priest), we are each a precious gem, being used as ‘living stones’ to build up a spiritual house of God through Yeshua the Messiah.

“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For *this* is contained in Scripture:

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” (1 Peter 2:4-6, Isaiah 28:16)

Closing Prayer:

Todah Adonai (thank you Lord) that You are our Rock and our Redeemer.

We willingly fall upon Your grace and mercy, submitting even to Your chastening and discipline, knowing that You love us endlessly and eternally. We do ask for patience to do its perfect work in our character, that we may be complete and perfect as You are perfect (whole, shalem).

Squeeze out all the bitter juices in us, Lord, that we may be sweet, peaceful, and flow with Your holy anointing oil continually. Help us to shine brightly for your glory – full of splendor and beauty!

Fill us with a spirit of wisdom, that we may use the gifts You have bestowed upon us for Your purposes, Lord, and fulfill our God-given destiny. Thank You, Yeshua, for taking all our guilt and shame upon Yourself.

Thank you that we have forgiveness through Your blood. Heal us of any lingering or misplaced sense of guilt or shame.

And when we find ourselves in a horrible pit again, unable to extricate ourselves from the miry clay, would you hear our cries and rescue us, put a new song in our mouth that we may praise You, God, and that many will be drawn to trust in You through the wonderful things You are doing in our lives. Amen

Tetzaveh Study Questions

1. What was the pure olive oil used for in the Temple and why was it so important to the Jewish people? What did it represent?
2. How does the process of making olive oil relate to our spiritual process of sanctification?
3. What is it that needs to be 'squeezed out' of our hearts? Can you relate to this process?
4. What does the image of God as a 'rock' mean to you personally?
5. What could be the holy purpose of the pressures and trials we go through in life?
6. Do you find it hard at times to set boundaries on how much to give to others?
7. Have you received wisdom on how to prepare for a time of tribulation on earth?
8. Do your clothes reflect splendor and beauty? Are there changes you would like to make in your wardrobe? Do you feel that your outer appearance matters?
9. Has there been a time when you needed to look back and take responsibility for mistakes you have made in the past? Were you able to do this without falling into condemnation?
10. What is something that would cause your light to shine even brighter for Adonai?

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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