

# א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

March 18, 2023



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה:

## “Tachometer Torah”



...read down to the red line

## Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: vaYaq'heil and P'qudei

Consists of: Exodus 38:21-40:38

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of 54

in Exodus: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of 11

## - A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Exodus 39:8-14

Context: *Exodus, second of the Five Books of the Torah, is an account of how God liberated the Israelites from Egypt and entered into a Covenant with us at Mount Sinai, and a record of the legislations they undertook for the conduct of the society they were to establish in the Promised Land.*

Content: *The last third of the Book of Exodus (which these three chapters conclude) deals with specifications for and details of the construction of the Mishkan, our portable national shrine, as well as the accoutrements of the High Priest of Israel. Chief among the latter was the choshen mishpat, a gem-studded breastplate representing the twelve Tribes of Israel.*

39:8] – They had made the breastplate in the same style as the *efod*— of gold wire; deep sky-blue; royal purple; and crimson yarns, together with fine twisted linen. [39:9] - It was square: they made the breastplate [as a rectangular piece] doubled over, so that once folded it was a hand-span long and a hand-span wide.

39:10] - They set in it four tiers of stones. A row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald was the first tier;

39:11] - the second tier— a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst;

39:12] - the third tier— a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal;

39:13a] - and the fourth tier— a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper.

39:13b] - Each was contained in its own mounting, within a frame of gold.

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב  
כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן  
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר רְבוּעַ הָיָה  
כַּפּוּל עָשׂוּ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן זָרֵת אֲרָכּוֹ  
וְזָרֵת רְחִבּוֹ כַּפּוּל

וַיִּמְלְאוּ-בּוֹ אַרְבַּעַת טוּרֵי אֲבָן טוּר  
אֶדָם פְּטֹדָה וּבְרָקֶת הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד

וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נִפְדָּ סַפִּיר וְיָהֶלֶם

וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְשֵׁם שָׁבוּ וְאַחֲלָמָה

וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תַרְשִׁישׁ שֹהַם וְיָשָׁפָה

מוֹסֵבֶת מְשֻׁבָּצֵת זָהָב בְּמִלְאָתָם

- more over

39:14a] - Now these stones **are to correspond to the names of the children of Israel,**

וְהָאֲבָנִים **עַל-** שְׁמֹת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הָנָּה

39:14b] - all twelve of them— one gem corresponding to each name,

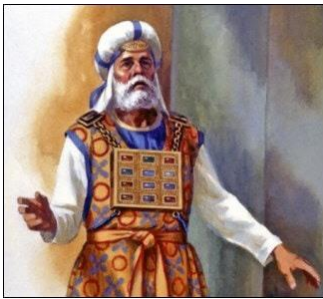
שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂר עַל-שְׁמֹתָם

39:14c] - and each gem seal-cut in intaglio with the respective name of each of the twelve Tribes.

פְּתוּחֵי חֹתָם אִישׁ עַל-שְׁמוֹ לְשָׁנָיִם  
עֶשֶׂר שְׁבֹט

**- Evaluating Project Quality-Control -**

<b>Content, and sequence,</b>	<b>per specified design</b>	<i>T'rumah - Exodus 28:17-20:</i>
אֲדָם פְּטָדָה בְּרִקְתָּ נִפְדָּ סַפִּיר יְהֵלֵם לְשָׁם שְׁבוּ אַחֲלָמָה תִּרְשִׁישׁ שְׁהָם יִשְׁפָּה		
<b>Content, and sequence,</b>	<b>in finished piece</b>	<i>P'gudei - Exodus 39:10-13:</i>
אֲדָם פְּטָדָה בְּרִקְתָּ נִפְדָּ סַפִּיר יְהֵלֵם לְשָׁם שְׁבוּ אַחֲלָמָה תִּרְשִׁישׁ שְׁהָם יִשְׁפָּה		



Which Stone Is Which,  
Depends on  
Whom You Ask



gem	1999 JPS	Septuagint	Vulgate	King James	<i>et. al.</i>
<b>אֲדָם</b>	carnelian	σάρδιον sardonyx	sardius	sardius	<b>ruby</b>
<b>פְּטָדָה</b>	chrysolite	τοπάζιον topaz	topazius	topaz	
<b>בְּרִקְתָּ</b>	emerald	σμάραγδος emerald	zmaragdus	carbuncle	agate, beryl
<b>נִפְדָּ</b>	turquoise	ἄνθραξ anthracite	carbunculus	emerald	<b>garnet</b>
<b>סַפִּיר</b>	sapphire	σάπφειρος sapphire	sapphyrus	sapphire	<i>lapis lazuli</i>
<b>יְהֵלֵם</b>	amethyst	ἰάσπις jasper	iaspis	<b>diamond</b>	onyx, emerald
<b>לְשָׁם</b>	<b>jacinth</b>	λιγύριον ligurion	ligyrius	ligure	<b>opal</b>
<b>שְׁבוּ</b>	agate	ἀγάτης agate	achates	agate	
<b>אַחֲלָמָה</b>	crystal	ἀμέθυστος amethyst	amethystus	<b>amethyst</b>	hematite
<b>תִּרְשִׁישׁ</b>	beryl	χρυσόλιθος chrysolite	chrysolitus	beryl	<b>aquamarine</b>
<b>שְׁהָם</b>	lapis lazuli	βηρύλλιον beryl	onychinus	<b>onyx</b>	
<b>יִשְׁפָּה</b>	jasper	ὄνυχιον onyx	berillus	<b>jasper</b>	

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**Value Hierarchy of the Stones in the Breastplate**

Precious gems		Semi-precious gems		Common stones	
1. diamond	יְהֵלִם	5. aquamarine	תְּרִשִׁישׁ	10. agate	שֹׁבוּ
2. ruby	אַדָּם	6. opal	לְשֵׁם	11. jasper	יָשָׁפָה
3. emerald	בְּרָקֶת	7. topaz	פְּטוּדָה	12. onyx	שֹׁהַם
4. sapphire	סַפִּיר	8. garnet	נִפְדָּ		
		9. amethyst	אַחְלָמָה		

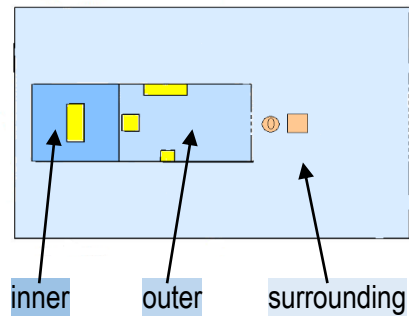
**Hierarchy in the Structure of the Mishkan -**

per specifications in Exodus 25-31,  
and as constructed in Exodus 35-39

- 1) holiest innermost shrine - אֶל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן
  - a. **golden** Ark of the Covenant
- 2) holy outer shrine - לְפָנֵי הַפְּרָקֶת
  - a. **golden** M'norah
  - b. **golden** display Table
  - c. **golden** incense Altar
- 3) structure of the Shrine - אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
  - a. **dyed-wool-and-gold** Parochet curtain
  - b. **dyed-wool-and-gold** entryway curtain
  - c. **gold-plated** wood wall components, secured by **silver** pins

תְּכֵלֶת deep sky-blue  
אַרְגָּמָן royal purple  
תּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי crimson

- 1) covering of the Shrine – מְכֻסָּה לְאֹהֶל
  - a. red-dyed ramskins
  - b. yellow-dyed ramskins
  - c. woven goatskin
- 2) entryway of the Shrine - פֶּתַח אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד
  - a. **brass** sacrificial Altar
  - b. **brass** water dispenser
  - c. **brass** wash-basin
- 3) courtyard surrounding the Shrine – הַחֵיצוֹן
  - a. **silver** caps for the acacia-wood posts
  - b. **brass** pegs for the guy-ropes
  - c. woven linen curtains



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- Hierarchical Associations of the Stones in the Breastplate -

mounting sequence	primacy: decreasing rareness and value	Tribal hierarchy		
		by birth order	by maternity	
1) ruby	diamond	Reuven	Reuven	Lei'ah
2) topaz	ruby	Shim'on	Shim'on	
3) emerald	emerald	Leivi	Judah	
4) garnet	sapphire	Judah	Issachar	Racheil
5) sapphire	aquamarine	Dan	Z'vulun	
6) diamond	opal	Naphtali	Efrayim	
7) opal	topaz	Gad	M'nasheh	Zilpah [L]
8) agate	garnet	Asher	Benjamin	
9) amethyst	amethyst	Issachar	Gad	Bilhah [R]
10) aquamarine	agate	Z'vulun	Asher	
11) onyx	jasper	Joseph	Dan	
12) jasper	onyx	Benjamin	Naphtali	

white = precious gems      light grey = semi-precious      dark grey = common stone

39:10 - וַיִּמְלְאוּ-בּוֹ אַרְבַּעַת טוּרֵי אֲבֹנִים

They set in it four **turs** of stones

3	2	1
6	5	4
9	8	7
12	11	10

if טור signifies "row"

10	7	4	1
11	8	5	2
12	9	6	3

if טור signifies "column"

מאי קא משמע לן      All Of Which Tells Us... What?

A) Owen Wister (1860-1938), *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains* - It was through the Declaration of Independence that we Americans acknowledged **the eternal inequality of man**. For by it we abolished a cut-and-dried aristocracy.

We had seen little men artificially held up in high places, and great men artificially held down in low places, and our own justice-loving hearts abhorred this violence to human nature. Therefore, we decreed that every man should thenceforth have **equal liberty to find his own**

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**level.** By this very decree we acknowledged and gave freedom to true aristocracy, saying, “Let the best man win, whoever he is.”

Let the best man win! That is America’s word. That is true democracy. And true democracy and true aristocracy are one and the same thing.

B) Leivi Yitzchaq Derbarndiger of Berditshev (1740-1809), *Q’dushat Leivi on Exodus 28:29* - Aaron was specifically chosen to be the High Priest, from among all the other Israelites. We must presume that this signaled his being particularly beloved of, and favored by, God.



Human nature is such that the rest of the Israelite community may have construed from this favor granted to Aaron that, by comparison with him, they were unworthy of distinction and that God held them in little regard.

It was in order to obviate such an assumption that the Torah commands the names of each and every one of the Tribes to be inscribed on the breastplate, **to demonstrate clearly that God loved all of them.**

C) Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), *T’rumat Tz’vi on Exodus 28:41* -

The fact that the priestly garments must be **supplied and owned by the nation** makes it clear to us why only a *kohen* dressed in these garments can be regarded as a priest at all.

Only in this manner does the ritual he performs become that service **which the nation was commanded to render** to the Sanctuary of the Law of God.

D) OvadYah S'forno (1475-1550), *on Exodus 28:29* -

וְנָשָׂא אֶת-שְׂמוֹת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְזִכָּרוֹן לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה

“he shall bear the names of the children of Israel. . . as a **remembrance** into the Presence of The Eternal One”

Whenever the High Priest entered the Sanctuary, bearing on his breast the names of Jacob’s twelve sons, God **would remember their righteousness— and, in their merit,** bring blessing upon their offspring.

E) Leah Lewis (1975- ) “The Breastplate of *Anavah*,” *The Mussar Torah Commentary* -



The *חֹשֶׁן choshen*, the “breastplate” worn by the High Priest, was designed to represent the twelve Tribes of Israel. By divine design, all of Israel was given its rightful space.

As a result, this elaborate accessory was, from the outset, **a lesson in the מִידָה middah [ethical attribute] of anavah (עֲנָוָה “humility”)** for the Tribes, lest one try either to dominate the space of the others or to wither into the background. The lesson in *anavah* shone through for the Tribes, as **the stones of the choshen representing them were placed in exactly their rightful spaces.**

At the same time, those instructions were **also a reminder for the High Priest to occupy his rightful space only** and to remain mindful of his role. The mere structure of the *choshen* made it impossible for his hubris to take over. After all, only when he was wearing the jewel-studded piece representing the entire people—its weight literally and figuratively pressing on

**- more over**



his shoulders— was he able to fulfill his sacred duty. By placing the breastplate over his chest, he was reminded of his proper role: a role of service and responsibility to others.



F) Craig Lewis (1980- ) in *The Social Justice Torah Commentary* - The inscription of all the Tribes' names in the breastplate makes a statement: all are equal before God. However, the Torah does not always treat the Tribes as equals. There is even inequality in the various gemstones in the breastplate of the High Priest.

Nonetheless, upon further examination, **we find in the gemstones a subtle yet persuasive argument for equity over simple equality.**

These stones are not equal in value. The amount of lapis lazuli needed to match the value of an emerald would destroy the balance of the breastplate. The twelve stones would then all be different sizes, rendering even rows impossible. Still, by virtue of being on a priestly adornment, each gem is considered beautiful, worthy to shine alongside the other gems.

As sacred objects, they must be kept sparkling: neglecting any of them would be an unpardonable sin. But for proper presentation, **each gem demands its own unique treatment before being displayed**, and ongoing maintenance for each gem is likewise unique. (For example, the cleaning agents used to polish amethyst would cause turquoise to fade).

If all gems were handled uniformly, with the exact same resources in equal quantities, some would shine brightly while others would be dimmed into oblivion.



**12 Tribe Heart Hoshen keychain**

“Pewter, with travel prayer - kabbalah from Israel.”

**Kabbalah Hoshen Stone Magic 12 Tribes Ring**

“Made out of high quality 925 sterling silver, 9-karat gold, and natural gemstones, this ring with twelve magic stones from the High Priest’s Bib is a magnificent piece of jewelry with powerful protective energy and giving the opportunity to communicate with the Higher powers.”

