

ועשית בגדי קדש לאהרן אחיך לכבוד ולהפארת:

“Make sacral vestments for your brother, Aaron,  
for dignity and adornment.” —Exodus 28:2

## T'TZAVVEH (“*You command*”)

EXODUS 27:20–30:10

**P**RIESTLY STYLE: MOSES’ MOUNTAINTOP encounter with God continues as the Tabernacle design is further detailed. The Lord reveals specifications for the lights, which Aaron and his sons are to ensure burn night and day. Their priestly uniforms are also described. Aprons made of blue, purple, and crimson linen

yarns will be worn with breastplates engraved with twelve gemstones for the twelve tribes, plus tunics, sashes, and headdresses.

Aaron’s breastplate will also contain “Urim and Thummim,” two mysterious objects that are thought to be “light and perfection.” But his robe is functional as well as ornamental: Bells woven into it will ring out before him and warn off harm, serving as a

reminder that the Tabernacle is a place rife with danger.

### THE CONSECRATION

Aaron’s sons are to be clothed, given turbans, and anointed as priests. Their consecration ceremony will include the offering of a young bull, two unblemished rams, and some unleavened bread and cakes. After Aaron and his sons are washed in front of the Tent

of Meeting and then dressed, the bull will be slaughtered at the entrance and its blood poured on the altar while its organs are burned. One ram will suffer the same fate. The blood of the second is to be dabbed on the priests’ right ears, right thumbs, and right big toes, and then poured against the altar. Afterward, the altar blood is to be splashed on the priests’ clothing, making them holy.

The fat parts of the ram are then to be put onto the palms of the priests, along with the bread and cakes, before being burned as a gift to the Lord. The entire ordination will take seven days.

The daily sacrifice cycle is also outlined: two lambs a day—one in the morning, one at twilight—alongside an altar for burning aromatic incense.



# MARK LAMSTER

## ON THE LINE WITH GOD'S TAILOR

"If we're telling client horror stories, I've got an all-time classic for you."

"Spill."

"Okay. So it's a cold January morning, totally forgettable day, and some guy in a cape and sandals bursts through the door and starts barking at Sheila—he's got a voice like a thunderclap—and it's her first week and she's already in tears before I can get my fabric guy from Hong Kong off the line."

"Oy."

"Oy is right. So I rush over and I'm like, 'Welcome to Murray's Wholesale Fashions, how may I help you?' And the guy looks at me like I'm some kind of cockroach and says, 'I come with an order from the Lord.'"

"No."

"Yes. Now ordinarily I kick a guy like this right out on his *tuchas*, but this one . . . Something seems different. That cape has gold thread running through it, and not the imitation stuff. So somehow I keep it together. 'Okay,' I tell him. 'We're used to demanding clients here at Murray's. But maybe you could start by telling me your name?' And he says, 'Moses.' And I'm like, 'Okay, Moses, what exactly is your Lord looking for?' And it turns out they need to outfit all the priests for their spectacular new temple."

"Gold mine."

"Exactly what I'm thinking. But then he starts telling me about these priestly vestments, which have some very, shall we say, esoteric instructions. Crazy ostentatious. The taste level, if I may be frank, is fresh off the boat."

“Go on.”

“Do you know what an ephod is? No? I didn’t either. Turns out it’s kind of like a smock, but a holy version. So he tells me he needs an ephod, and he needs it to be in linen, and it needs to be gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, with gold-braid shoulder straps, a blue cape, and a pair of onyx stones in gold settings engraved with the tribes of Israel. Oh, and there’s jewels everywhere. Emeralds, sapphires, beryl, agate, jasper, carnelian—and on and on.”

“Oh my God.”

“Exactly. It’s waaaaay too much. So I wonder suggestively if maybe he’d like something a bit more . . . restrained? A more subtle palette? Some cool tones to set off the bling?”

“And?”

“Big mistake. He just gives me a death glare and continues. You can’t imagine. The whole getup is like something drawn from the mind of a six-year-old girl: a train wreck of colors and jewels and every gaudy thing you can imagine. The only thing missing is a pink pony, and he probably has one of those on order. Flat-out bonkers.”

“Maybe someone slipped something into his manna.”

“Who knows? But what can you do? The customer is always right, and we’d make a few extra shekels, so why argue? So I don’t. Then, when he’s finished giving me the whole order, I add up the figures and, let me tell you, it’s a big number. I read it to him and he nods approvingly, looks me straight in the eye, and says, ‘This is for the Lord, so of course there will be no charge.’ Just like that. Matter-of-fact.”

“And what did you do?”

“What am I, *meshugenah*? I told him I’d knock off twenty percent and he can either take it or go wander the desert for another forty years, his choice. So we made the sale. And that’s how I got my place in Boca.”