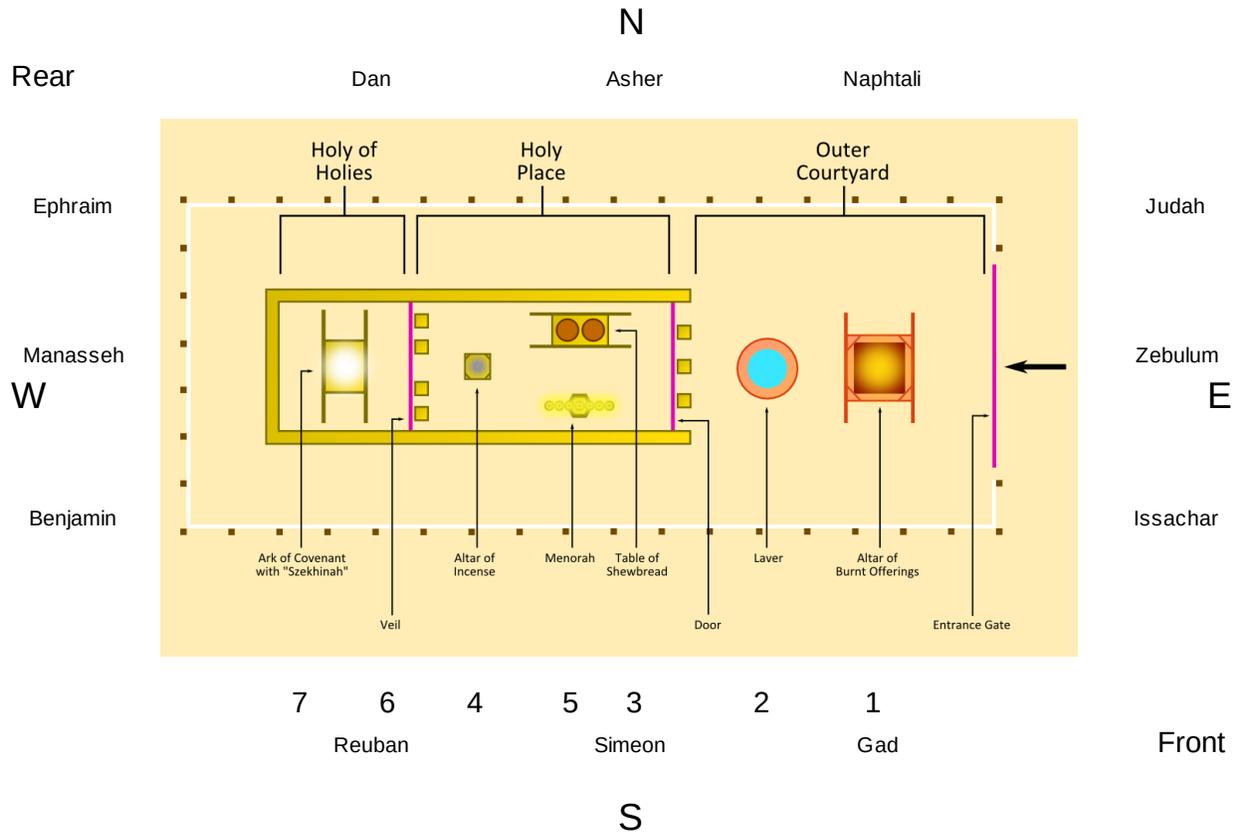


# The Tabernacle And The Temple of God



	<u>Element</u>	<u>Spiritual</u>	<u>Prophetic</u>
1. The Altar of Burnt Offering	Fire	Sacrifice	Entrance to Eden/Light
2. The Laver of Purification	Water	Purification	Flood/Baptism
3. The Table of Shewbread	Earth	Knowledge	Covenant/Instruction/ Organization
4. Altar of Incense	Air	Service	Communion/Ascension
5. The Menorah	Spirit	Submission	Heavenly Assembly
6. The Veil	Silver	Approval	Gate of God
7. The Mercy Seat	Gold	Manifestation	Authority/Dominion

Names of the Tabernacle:

- Beth- בית - House
- Ohel- אהל - Tent
- Mishkan- משכן - Tabernacle
- Qodesh- קדש - Sanctuary
- Ohel ha-Eduth- אהל העדות - Tent of Witness
- Ohel Moed- אהל מועד - Tent of Meeting

We serve the True High Priest, He Who is set at the right hand of the Throne of Majesty in the Heaven of Glory. He is the Minister of the True Sanctuary, and of the True Tabernacle, which the Lord Himself has erected, and not human hands; and, just as every high priest is ordained to offer favors and sacrifices on behalf of the faithful unto God Almighty, so also does our High Priest, the Manifestation of God, offer on our behalf favors and sacrifices unto God Almighty.

If this High Priest, our Heavenly Minister, were upon the earth, He would not be a priest, for there are ministers already serving at the earthly sanctuary, offering favors and sacrifices on behalf of the faithful. This earthly sanctuary is an “Archetype and a shadow of heavenly things” which was commanded by God to be built “according to the pattern” He showed Moses, peace and blessings be upon Him.

Hebrews 8:1-5, paraphrase

According to the Divine Decree which was given to Moses by God the Tabernacle was designed to represent the heavenly journey the soul makes towards its Creator. Each component of the Tabernacle represents a stage which the soul must traverse in this heavenly journey. Each stage is symbolic of some great natural, philosophic, and spiritual truth which is learned as the soul ascends towards its Maker. This is represented both individually and collectively.

The Tabernacle and its surroundings resemble the universe and represents the affinity of the soul with the universe. The relationship of the soul with the universe has a three-fold nature, namely, a material, intellectual, and spiritual station. Within each station there are realities which correspond with our relationship with divinity which the Tabernacle is designed to represent.

The soul enters the Path of Initiation at birth. Along this Path there are clear and defined stages of existence which are traversed on the way to the Great Mystery beyond the Veil, which is death. The journey of life is the unveiling of this mystery which is observed as the soul matures from stage to stage, “Indeed He created you in distinct stages.”<sup>1</sup> Those who are aware of the journey recognize the test and trials encountered, interpret the signs and symbols appropriately according to the will of God, and derive the true essence of life’s episode by entering successfully into the Holy of holies where the Lord Himself is seated.

There are seven distinct stages which each initiate traverses, each stage represented by a certain furnishing found in or around the Tabernacle. At each stage the soul is recreated according to the pattern of the furnishing and the receptivity of the soul with the design. There

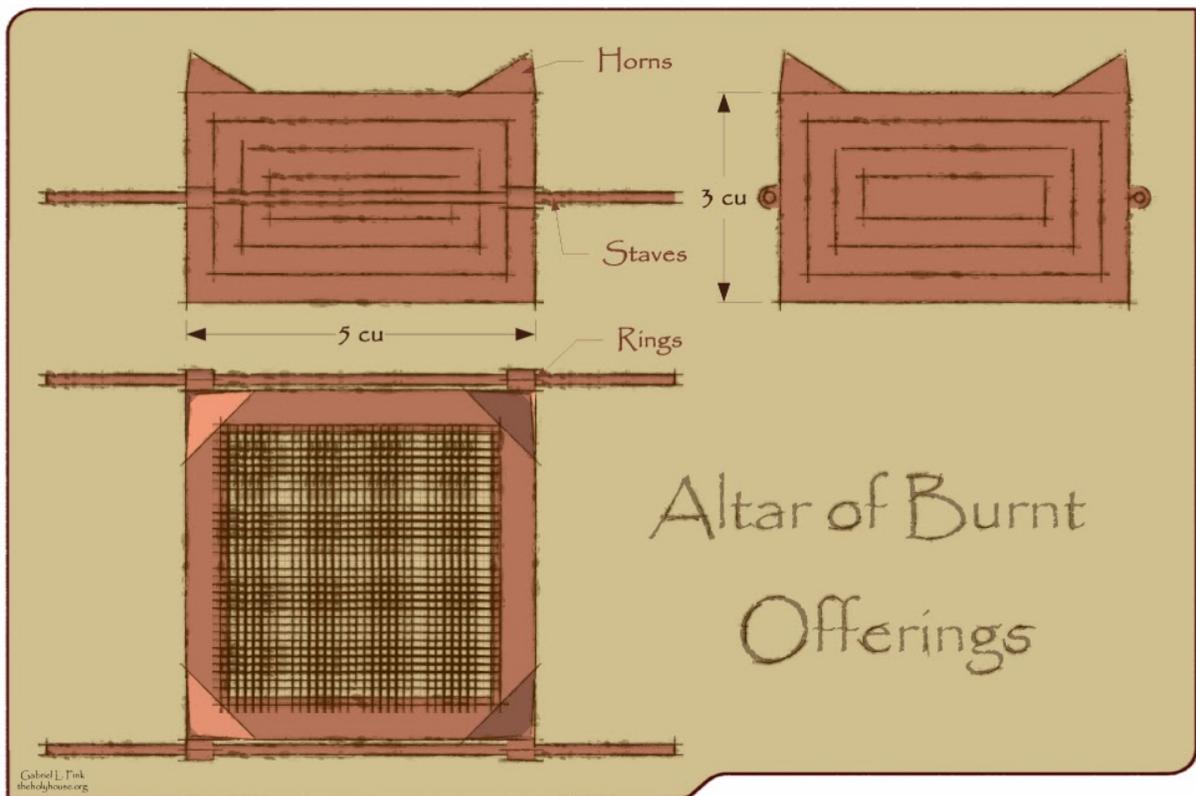
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<sup>1</sup> Qur’an 71:14

are seven days of creation, each with a morning and an evening, and there are seven heavens, each with a corresponding earth, as well as seven layers of hell. The scheme of creation is without doubt represented by the number seven.

The journey begins outside the walls of the Tabernacle. Here the Children of Israel were arranged in ranks according to clans, households, and individuals representing the celestial arrangement of the universe. This celestial arrangement is the conglomeration of constellations, the zodiac, and each of the stars. According to the celestial measurement the constitution of the visible heaven is divided into twelve regions, each region is designated by a constellation. This signifies the year, the cycle of the seasons, and the physical matrix of the universe. Each of these Tribes represents one section of the surrounding universe, a constellation, and from these Tribes the initiates were arrogated and taught the Sacred Mysteries. The stars of the celestial firmament took on terrestrial existence and were born upon the earth through the gate leading to the court of the Tabernacle. Entering through the entrance gate of the Tabernacle represents the commencement of earthly existence. Inside the walls of the Tabernacle were the elements of spiritual enlightenment and guidance on the earth.

### The Altar of Burnt Offering



Inside the entrance gate the first furnishing of the Tabernacle, the Altar of Burnt Offering, is approached upon which is sacrificed all inordinate desires, all selfish purposes; and, as the initiate sacrifices the self, the soul is called to a life worthy of ascending the Path towards God Almighty. The Altar is the place of detachment from worldly desires and the first station of

service in the Path of Initiation. Before proceeding on the Path, the initiate must shed all mundane desires and turn away from all that is false, including those “who claim to be apostles of the Lord, but are liars.”<sup>2</sup> These are the ‘First Works’ that must be performed.

This stage is represented by the offering of a bull without blemish. The bull represents worldliness, stubbornness, and self-service which must be completely burnt upon the Altar in favor of heavenliness, humbleness, and service to God, “It is not its meat or its blood that reaches God, but the reverence from you reaches Him.”<sup>3</sup> The offerings of sheep, goats, fowls, and other offerings of fruits, grains, and vegetables represent the toil and suffering the initiate endures as the work of surrendering unto God is performed. Thus this stage is represented by the ‘Hands’ of the human body.

These are symbols of the Covenant that the initiate has made with God to ascend through the stages of the Divine Experience. Passage for this Path requires certain rites and ceremonies that must be executed in order to obtain healthy spiritual awareness. The purpose of the sacrifice is to establish between the initiate and God the perception of a purposeful relationship on all levels of existence. It represents the healing of the great divide between the lower and higher divine self that exists within each soul. Once the sacrifice is made and the purpose understood by the initiate the Path towards enlightenment may commence, but never before. This is the interpretation for the individual soul, there is yet another for the collective body.

The offerings made at the Spring and Fall Festivals represented, each within their own station, a re-institution and augmentation of the Covenant of God. These Festivals are prophetic allusions for the Days of Visitation and the Appearance of the Lord to offer salvation for His servants in the times of distress. The Appearance of the Lord is also represented by the descent from heaven and entry through the entrance gate, the Prophet born into the world.

On a prophetic level the Altar of Burnt Offering depicts the flaming sword at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Beyond this Altar none may pass except those who have conquered themselves and been granted entrance into Eden, and this sacrifice is the first step toward the re-introduction into Paradise which is acquiescence and submissiveness unto the newly revealed will of God. The offering is the portent of acceptance of this renewed Covenant and the consent by the believers to transcend the preceding Covenant. It is characterized in the narrative of Cain and Abel, the incident of the sacrifice becoming the key element in their disparity. Thus the Antediluvian Age is illustrated through sacrifice and domination.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life,  
Which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

Rev. 2:7

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2:2

<sup>3</sup> Qur'an 22:37- ‘Reverence’ تقوى \ taqwa- Piety, to be God-fearing and devout;

## The Laver



The next stage of spiritual transcendence that the initiate pervades is purification. After offering oneself as a 'Living Sacrifice' for the service of the will of God it is essential to purify the body, mind, and soul of all deficiencies. This 'Purification' occurs at the Laver of Purification which is located midway between the Altar and the Sanctuary. Here the initiate is purified and enters into trials and tribulations that purge and nurture the new born soul. The purpose of the trials and tribulations is for the refinement of character and the building of morals that lead to a virtuous life. The water is either agreeable and sweet, or distasteful and bitter.<sup>4</sup> In these waters the initiate suffers death and is born again. Those who remain faithful, receive the 'crown of life.'

The symbolism of this stage is Baptism. Baptism is the renewal of life and a good conscience toward God. It is the death of the worldly and temporal life which was sacrificed at the Altar, and the resurrection of the spiritual life at the Laver.<sup>5</sup> These two stages, the sacrifice and the purification, are necessary before the initiate may enter into the Sanctuary. The initiate must cleanse the soul from impurities before entering the Tabernacle. The hands, face, and feet

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<sup>4</sup> Ex. 14:21-31; 15:22-27; Qur'an 4:43; 25:53; 55:19-21

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 6:1-13

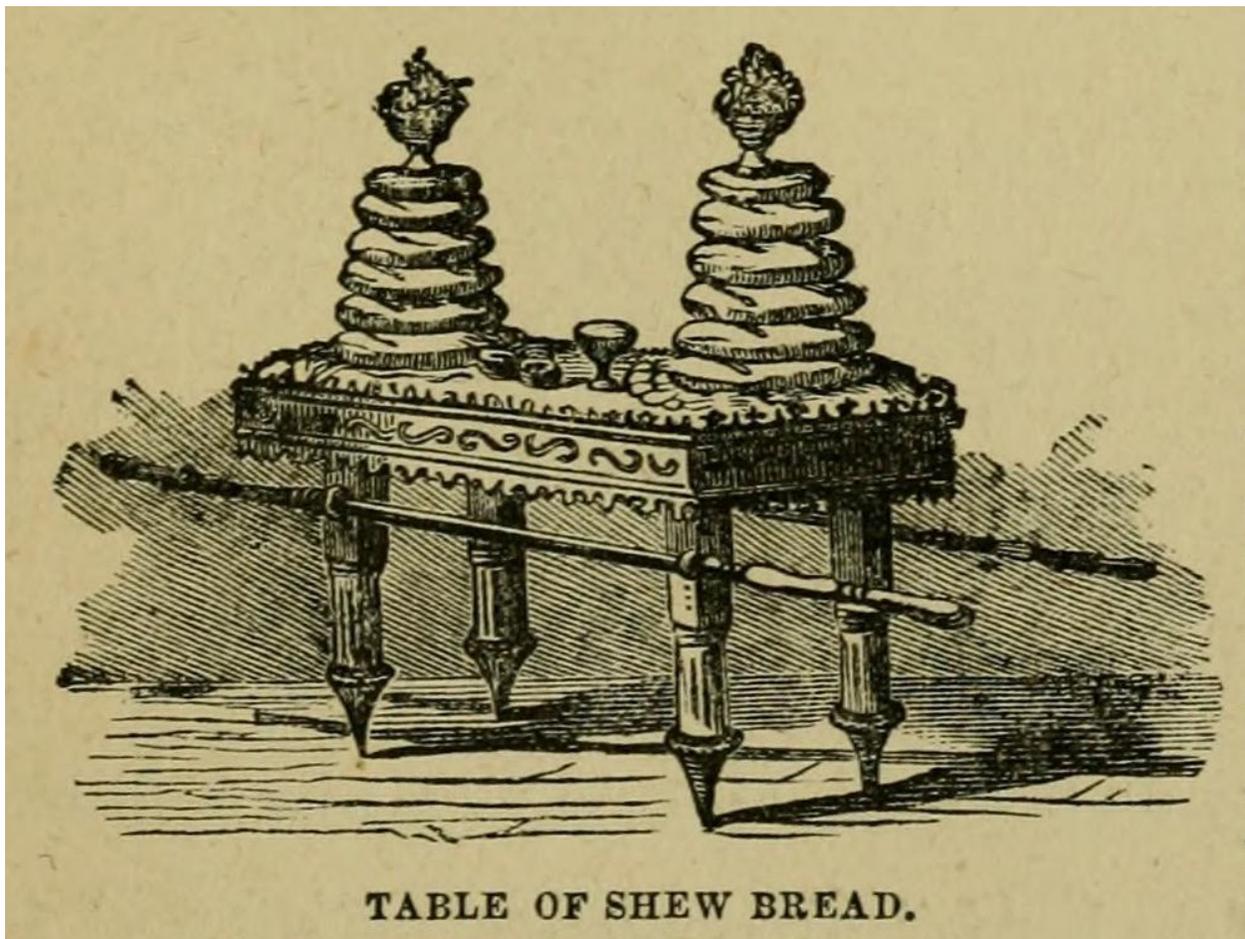
in particular must be cleansed, but also at times full bodily immersion is required. The bodily symbolism of the Laver, however, is the 'Feet'.<sup>6</sup> With feet the initiate emerges from the water and stands tall upon the firm, dry ground of Divine Knowledge.

The prophetic significance of the Laver is characterized by the flood and the cleansing of the earth of wickedness. Peter speaks of the connection between Baptism and the flood and he reveals how the life of the world was renewed by the flood.<sup>7</sup> Thus began the Age of the Patriarchs and the expansion of the Covenant of God. After this purification, Mankind was ready to enter the Sanctuary of God and receive instruction in the Covenant and begin the process of entering into the Presence of God Almighty. Within the Sanctuary are two chambers, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In the outer chamber, the Holy Place, is situated the Table of Shewbread, the Altar of Incense, and the Menorah.

“To him that overcometh shall not be hurt by the Second Death.”

Rev. 2:11

### The Table of Shewbread



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<sup>6</sup> Ex. 31:9; 38:8

<sup>7</sup> 1 Pet. 3:20-21

The third stage of initiation is represented by the Table of Shewbread. The Shewbread is called the *lechem panim*,<sup>8</sup> which literally means 'bread of faces' and is the symbol of the Presence of the Lord. Upon the Table of Shewbread was placed twelve loaves of bread, one for each of the Tribes of Israel symbolizing the whole of the Covenant as the law, and the law as the Instructor leading unto the Presence of God.<sup>9</sup> The Shewbread was renewed every Sabbath Day bringing to remembrance the renewal of the Covenant every week, and with that, the renewal of creation.

Entering into the Sanctuary is entering into the Presence of God. The first stage of entering into His Presence is receiving instruction in mannerisms and behavior, and knowledge is gained. It is symbolized by entering into the service of the Tabernacle, joining the priesthood, and becoming an administrator at the Holy Threshold. Remaining faithful to the Covenant of God is the objective of this stage, and that comes by hearing the Word of God which is the intended symbol of the Shewbread.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is the 'Ears' that are symbolized at this stage.

Prophetically the Table of Shewbread represents the Exodus and the journey the Children of Israel made from slavery unto the Promised Land. The conveyance of the Torah at Mt. Sinai and the instruction in the Covenant of God is the portentous meaning of the Exodus related to the Table of Shewbread. The Twelve Tribes gathered around the exterior of the Tabernacle representing the outer universe. Within the Tabernacle upon the Table were placed twelve loaves of shewbread, one for each Tribe. The Manna that descended from heaven that nourished the Children of Israel is also represented in the bread. The connection between the gathering of the Tribes outside and the placement of the bread upon the Table inside represents the journey that the Children of Israel made from the outer universe into the Tabernacle and into the Presence of God. They are the harvest through which the bread is made.

“To Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden  
Manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the  
Stone a new name written, which no man  
Knoweth saving him that receiveth it.”

Rev. 2:17

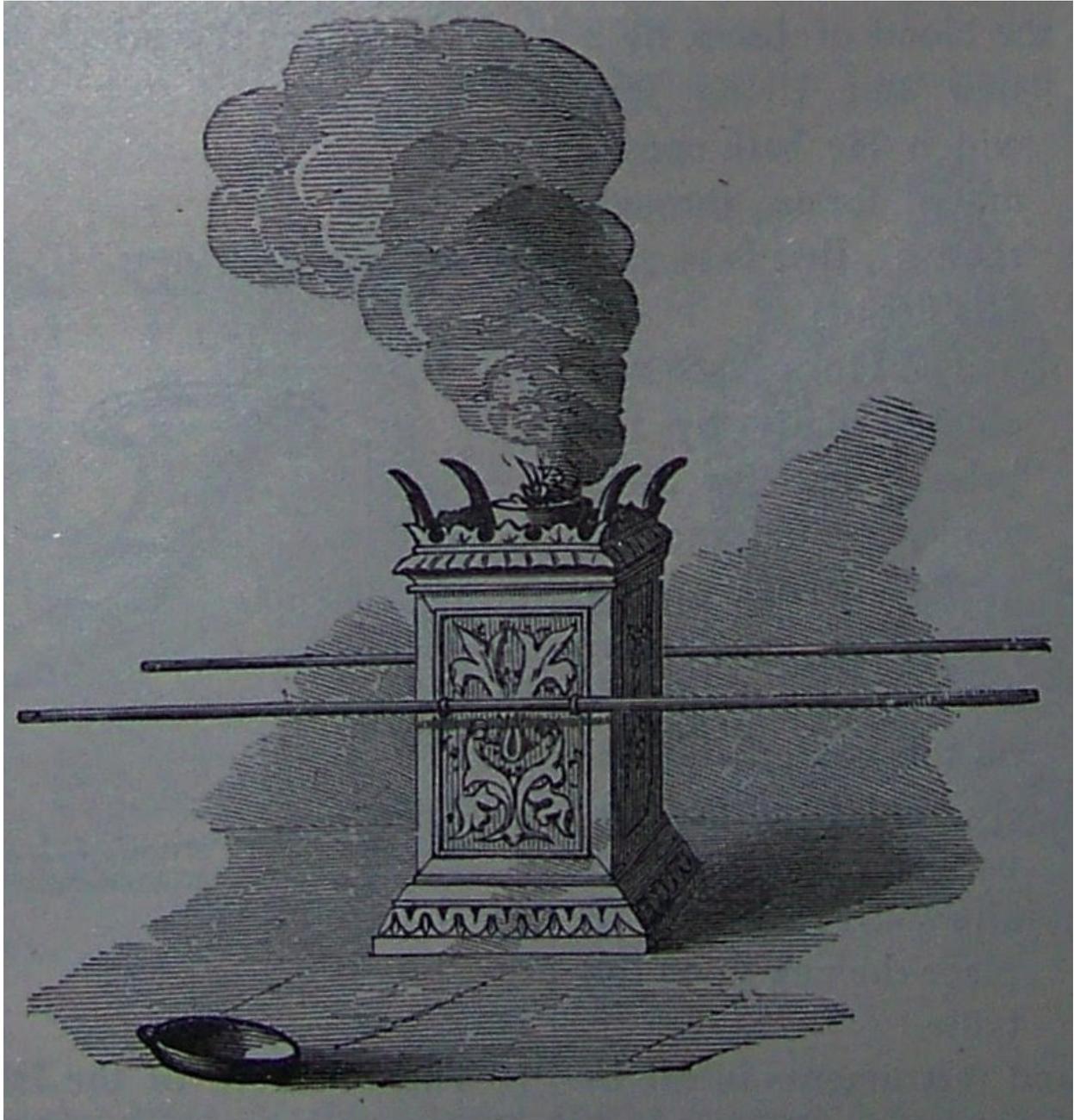
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<sup>8</sup> לחם פנים - Bread of the Presence, lit. bread of faces

<sup>9</sup> Gal. 3:24

<sup>10</sup> Rom. 10:17

## The Altar of Incense



The Altar of Incense is the next furnishing of the Tabernacle of significance to the initiate. Also referred to as the 'Golden Altar', incense was burned upon this Altar at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices. The coals used to burn the incense were taken directly from the Altar of Burnt Offering and the incense could only be burned by those appointed to minister or

pestilence would break out.<sup>11</sup> Coals used for burning certain sin offerings at the Altar of Burnt Offering were also carried to the Altar of Incense and blood smeared on the Horns of the Altar from those sacrifices to make atonement for sin.

The Altar of Incense represents service in the Tabernacle of God and communion with Him on behalf of those outside the Tabernacle. The burning of incense is a symbol of prayer and an offering of a 'sweet-aroma'.<sup>12</sup> The corporeal symbolism of the Altar is the 'Nose' and inhaling the sweet aroma brings joy to the heart. The sweet smoke from the incense arose and filled the inner Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, and hung over the Mercy Seat upon the Ark of the Covenant. The smoke symbolized the cloud that hid the Presence of God from the Children of Israel, protected them, and led them through the wilderness.<sup>13</sup>

The prophetic significance of the Altar of Incense is portrayed in the narrative of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist.<sup>14</sup> Zechariah was the Priest administering the Altar of Incense when visited by an Angel announcing the birth of the Promised One and the ministry of the Messiah. The Ministry of the Messiah consisted of intercession, mediation, and ascension through a cloudy pillar. Thus the announcement of this period was made at the Altar of Incense.

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end,  
to him will I give power over the nations: ‘and he shall rule them  
with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be  
broken to pieces’; even as I received of My Father.

And I will give him the Morning Star.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what  
the Spirit saith unto the Assemblies.”

Rev. 2:26-29

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Chron. 26:16-23

<sup>12</sup> Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5

<sup>13</sup> Lev. 16:12-13; Ex. 14:19-20; 33:9-11; Deut. 31:14-15

<sup>14</sup> Luke 1:5-80

## The Menorah

זרפים שוקרין לו שזרדין בלע יולא כולה באה ונחתכה אחת וזכה בקורתם  
 אתר כלי היוזמות ונפרד הקנים וזיק ואילך: תיעשה הווערה עליו לפי שהו



The Menorah is the next stage in the journey of the initiate and represents the Assembly of God.

