

The Garment of Joseph

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"Moroni said unto them: Behold we are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; yea, we are a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces; yea, and now behold, let us remember to keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be cast into prison, or be sold, or be slain. Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. And he said-Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment." (Alma 46:23-24; Nibley Vol. 6, p. 212) Nibley) Captain Moroni later said: "And now who knoweth but what the remnant of the seed of Joseph, which shall perish as his garment, are those who have dissented from us? Yea, and even it shall be ourselves if we do not stand fast in the faith of Christ." (Alma 46:27) Moroni "is plainly reminding his hearers of a tale that is familiar to them all. Yet who in the west has ever known anything about the story that follows...Here the survival of Joseph's garment guarantees and typifies the survival of Joseph." (Nibley Vol. 6, p 218) In this study, other than references to Mormon Scriptures, Ricks, Nibley, Largey, Hunter, Jakman and Dyer, which are clearly LDS authors, all other references are from Non-Mormon sources. This is the more remarkable since their choice of words is their own and were not influenced by any Mormon Doctrine.

TALES OF MUHAMMAD IBEN-IBRAHIM ATH-THA'LABI

"In the tenth century of our era the greatest antiquarian of the Moslem world, Muhammad iben-Ibrahim ath-Tha'labi, collected in Persia a great many old tales and legends about the prophets of Israel." (Nibley Vol. 6, p. 218) Could Tha'labi have obtained his stories and information from various Jewish groups deported into Babylonia and Persia after Lehi had left Jerusalem and it had been conquered and eventually laid waste? In one story "Joseph's brethren bring his torn garment to their father as proof that he is dead, but Jacob after examining the garment ('and there were in the garment of Joseph three marks or tokens when they brought it to his father') declares that the way the cloth is torn shows him that their story is not true." (Nibley Vol. 6, p. 218) The garment is torn in front, not behind, if their story about a bear chasing Joseph down and killing him was true, then the garment would have been torn in the back. Jacob held out a hope that Joseph was still somehow alive. Another story from the collection made by Tha'labi is "the case of 'the vizier' Potiphar, who by examining the tears in Joseph's garment, knew that he was innocent and spared his life, 'for he knew that if he [Joseph] had attacked his

wife the tear would have been in front.' So again his torn garment declared that Joseph should live." (Nibley Vol. 6 p. 219) "Moroni actually quotes Jacob ('Now behold, this was the language of Jacob', Alma 46:26) as saying: 'Now behold, this giveth my soul sorrow; nethertheless, my soul hath joy in my son'."(Alma 46:25; Nibley Vol. 6, p. 221)

Another story transmitted down by Tha'labi was when Joseph had made himself known unto his brethren, to prove to his father when they returned to him he "gave them his garment [qamis, long outer shirt]. According to ad-Dahak that garment was of the weave [pattern, design] of Paradise, and the breath [spirit, odor] of Paradise was in it, so that it never decayed or in any way deteriorated [and that was] a sign [omen]. And Joseph gave them that garment, and it was the very one that had belonged to Abraham, having already had a long history...[when they gave the garment to their father upon their return], Jacob said, 'Behold, I perceive the spirit [breath, odor] of Joseph...[for Jacob] knew that upon all the earth there was no spirit [breath, odor] of Paradise save in that garment alone..' (in Nibley Vol. 6, p. 219)

It is further said that the sorrow of Jacob was so great that his weeping brought on blindness. "as-Sadi says that Judah said to Joseph, 'it was I who took the garment bedaubed with blood to Jacob, and reported to him that the wolf [instead of bear in the other story] had eaten Joseph, so give me this day thy garment that I might tell him [Jacob] that thou are still living, that I might cause him to rejoice now as greatly as I caused him to sorrow them.'" (in Nibley Vol. 6, p. 219) When Judah "brought the garment [to Jacob] he laid it upon his face, so that his sight returned to him [and Jacob could smell the garment]. And ad-Dahak [one of the sources of the stories collected by Tha'labi] says that his sight returned after blindness, and his strength after weakness, and youth after age, and joy after sorrow." (in Nibley Vol. 6, p 220)

Nibley points out: "Note here that there were two remnants of Joseph's garment, one sent by Joseph to his father as a sign that he was still alive (since the garment had not decayed), and the other, torn and smeared with blood, brought by Judah to his father as a sign that Joseph was dead, [which had decayed]." (in Nibley Vol. 6, p. 220) Nibley further points out "that the story told by Moroni as one familiar to all the people actually was one that circulated among the Jews in ancient times and was taken to the East [Cities] by them, being like much early Jewish lore completely lost in the West. It was totally unknown to the world in which Joseph Smith lived." (in Nibley Vol. 6, p. 220)

In the detail in the above quotes and sources, mention was

made in subtle ways to the marks in the garment of Joseph, that the garment had some connection with the garment of Abraham, that it had protective value to the wearer, and so forth. It is some of these details we which to explore with other sources.

THE GARMENT:

There are nine references to Garment in the Book of Mormon, and thirty seven references to Garments. There are two of these that refer literally to articles of clothing (1 Nephi 4:19; Mosiah 12-13) The word is also used metaphorically, as a term to represent a person's soul, which can be soiled or sanctified (2 Nephi 9:44; Alma 46:21-23; Morm. 9:35; Ether 12:38; 1 Ne. 12:11; Alma 13:12; ?Ether 13:10; Mosiah 2:28) as researched by Largey (Large p. 283). Some of these references will be discussed below.

It is apparent to all that sin has a staining effect on one's garments and soul, even dereliction to duty can stain. (Jacob 1:19, Alma 5:22-24). Jacob also points out how we should be "laboring with our might [that] their [sinners] blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day." (Jacob 1:19; 2:2) The D & C discusses aspects of this in detail. (for references see Rick p. 263). All must have their garments cleansed through the Atonement, said the Savior: "Nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end." (3 Ne. 27:19) This subject is dealt with elsewhere by many writers. We have different objectives here.

Captain Moroni may have had the words of Isaiah in mind: "They shall wax old as a garment, and the moth shall eat them up." (2 Ne. 7:9) But the garment of Joseph, to be a symbol forever, did not decay entirely. Even the "Earth shall wax old like a garment." (2 Ne. 8:6) There shall come a time when the great city of Jerusalem shall at the invitation of the Lord: "put on thy beautiful garments." When it is restored to its righteousness and "henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." (2 Ne. 8:24, Isa 52:l, 49:18)

For a further discussion of the Garment of Joseph see Nibley Vol. 6,

pp. 210-213; Vol. 8 pp. 94-95, 249-50, 335), particularly the prophetic vision given to Jacob about the future of his son's descendants. (Nibley Vol. 8, pp. 249, 280, 336) A Hebrew version does not seem to have been available until 1953. Nibley developed the theme in more detail in his Review in *BYU STUDIES*. (Nibley *BYU*, pp. 115-126), which need not be repeated here. But in light of recent and other studies we might look at the Garment of Joseph in a different way, more familiar to the LDS, particularly those who possess the Garment.

MELCHIZEDEK GIVES A SPECIAL GARMENT TO ABRAHAM

"Others again say that Melchizedek (also known as Adoni-Zedek), was Abram's ancestor Shem, (D&C 138:42) and that he now taught Abraham the duties of priesthood, particularly the rules governing shew-bread, wine-libations and burned offerings. He also gave Abram the garments of skin made by God for Adam and Eve...all this Shem did because God had appointed Abram his successor [as a head of a dispensation]." (Graves p. 64) There are several important doctrinal items in this quote: 1. Shem was Abram's ancestor, which he was, and Shem was Melchizedek. (Dyer pp. 285-291) D&C 138: 42 seems to verify this, especially the foot notes and references provided. 2. Abraham was taught by Shem the duties governing the bread and wine. This is essentially the Sacrament. 3. Abraham was given garments made of skin made by God for Adam and Eve. These are priesthood garments, given during the process and ceremony of an eternal endowment. This makes little sense to ancient Jews or modern scholars, or any one not familiar with the Mormon Temple Ceremony, but it certainly makes the skin tingle and the hair stand on end of those Mormons who have been to the Temple and received their endowments, and who possess garments, patterned after the Garment of Skin made by God for Adam and Eve. What was the pattern of the Garment made by Jacob for his son Joseph?

THE ANCIENT SACRAMENT

Let us look at Item 2 above. "It is quite probable that the sacramental beliefs and practices of the pagan rivals of Christianity were adulterated forms of the true doctrine of the Sacrament, just as most other beliefs, were altered forms of the Gospel of Jesus Christ....the pagans' sacraments date many years before the birth of Jesus...That is quite true; but it is probable that in one of the early Gospel dispensations God revealed the ordinance of Sacrament to man even before the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, in anticipation of the sacrifice that Christ would make for mortals. Yet it is true that practically all of the tangible evidence has been lost to history....The Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible, called the Inspired Version, suggest the foregoing conclusions to have been the case. For example, when Father Abraham met the Great High Priest Melchizedek on

a certain occasion the Inspired Version states: 'And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he brake bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the Most High god, and he gave to Abraham'. (see IV Genesis 14:17) What interpretation could be given to this statement of the breaking and blessing of the bread and the blessing of wine by one holding the proper Priesthood and the serving of these substances to a Church member other than the observance of the holy ordinance of the Sacrament?" (Hunter pp. 238-239) The study by Graves was in 1964, nineteen years after Hunter had published his book. The Inspired Version, in this particular item alone, is most uniquely verified as an authentic restoration of doctrine once known among the Jews, but lost to Jews and Christians alike, but correctly restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

BIRTH OF JOSEPH

The Jewish scriptures have more to say than the King James Version about the birth of Joseph. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, "conceived and bare a son and said: 'Elohim hath taken away my reproach' and she called his name Joseph and said 'YHWH [Jehovah] shall add to me another son.'" (Genesis 30:22-24; Maclaurin p. 30) "The variation in use between YHWH and Elohim ...is significant: the use of YHWH is anachronistic for this word was unknown to the patriarchs [Exod. 6:3]." (Maclaurin p. 30) In this Maclaurin is wrong. The invoking of Elohim by Rachel is suggested to have "a magical connotation ...the sentence possibly meant originally 'Elohim hath exorcized my reproach'." (Maclaurin p. 30) However, in the Inspired Version, Joseph Smith changed Exod. 6:3 to read, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, I am the Lord God Almighty; the Lord Jehovah. And was not my name known unto them?" Jehovah was known to the ancients, all the way back to Adam. This is an important restored Doctrine and makes and is extremely important in an historical sense. But until Joseph corrected Exod 6:3, and provided other evidence that the ancient prophets knew Jehovah, (Abraham 2:8), a lot of doctrinal history made no sense. Maclaurin had bought into this error, so has most of Christianity and Judaism.

Being the wife of Jacob who thus had a personal witness of Jehovah, Rachel would have known about Jehovah, and that Christ was the son of God the Father, known by the ancients as Elohim. Dr. R. M. Grant, a specialist in Ancient Documents, "They could have said that the God of the Old Testament was Yahweh, while the Father of Jesus was Elohim. But in transferring the distinction they also transformed it. They ended up with two gods rather than one." (Grant p. 125) The use of Jehovah in an abbreviated form in theophoric names was in use in names found after 1976 in Ebla, which goes back to 2400 BC, "and a knowledge of El, Il, was especially the name for 'God', and had become the name for a specific God... In Eber's [a ruler in Ebla and a descendent of Shem] time 'Ya' was also associated with God [Jehovah]." (Wilson p. 84) Eblaite Personal Names contain a variety of the hypocoristics or abbreviations for Elohim and Jehovah. (Archi, Pagan pp.

269-292) Book of Mormon names also have this theophoric endings to names as many of the studies in this series have shown. This was at a time more than fifteen hundred years before Joseph was born. These discoveries demonstrate that an error had been made in Exod. 6:3, and Joseph had corrected it.

Rachel knew the distinction between the Father Elohim and his son Jehovah. The Jewish records preserved aspects of this; the King James Version did not. Joseph Smith changed the King James Version to conform to what the Ancients really understood. These things need to be understood in the light of what is said about Joseph and his garment at a later date. Whoever compiled and edited Exodus doctrinally confused everybody, especially the Jews, forever after that. It has taken the restoration to put things right again. And now, ancient documentary discoveries actually confirm that the ancients did teach such things as we are now discussing, and Joseph Smith was correct to make the changes he did in the Inspired Version.

Invoking the name Elohim with its magical connotations seems to have been a development recognized by scholars. "-no matter how late the magical uses of the Name developed, the power which that Name later was used to represent was fully recognized both by Joseph himself and by Pharaoh.(Gen. 40:8, 41:16, 25, 28, 32, 39; Maclaurin p. 31) In these scriptures Joseph makes proper attribution to Elohim, and Pharaoh makes the same attribution, in Gen. 41:38) when he says he is looking for a man "in whom the Spirit of God is." (Maclaurin p. 31) Joseph was a Seer, and "had already proved his abilities in this field. (Gen 40). Joseph knew that he possessed this gift (Gen 44:5, 150." (Maclaurin p. 31) "Joseph was a master of dreams. (Gen 37:19) The Spirit of God was with him and in him. Joseph publicly attributed his powers ('Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? (Gen 44:15) to his relationship with ha-Elohim.(f.n. 2, defined as 'ha-Elohim of thy fathers'). There may even be a suggestion that Elohim had given Joseph the power of transmitting the gift of prophecy to others." (Gen 41: 15, 16, 42:18; Maclaurin pp. 31-32) Recall that Joseph had dreams and interpreted them, after he got the garment, no doubt having received the Melchizedek Priesthood at the same time. In those dreams "he saw the preshadowing of his own destiny." (Maclaurin p. 32, Gen 37:5-11, 20)

THE SPECIAL GARMENT MADE FOR JOSEPH

The next relevant passage is found in Genesis 37:2-3, which states that when Joseph was seventeen years old, old enough to receive the priesthood, his father Jacob made him a coat of many colors. It was evidently a priestly garment. "Jacob apparently became devoted to this unusual son of his, much more than to his other children. (Gen 37:3- 5) He had shown this deep regard by making for him a special garment which should perhaps be described as 'an ankle-length garment with long

sleeves'. This garment may have been rather more significant than the usual gift of clothing made by father to son for it plays a big part in Joseph's subsequent fate. Joseph's omen-bearing dreams and interpretations did not begin until he had received the coat, and it is significant that his brother's first action, when they laid hands upon him was to divest him of the coat. The coat was used as the instrument for bearing the news to Joseph's supposed death to Jacob but was not handed to him until it had been dipped in blood of a sacrificial animal." (Maclaurin pp. 32-33; Gen 37:23-33) Is the pointed hat on the purported glyph for Lehi on the Izapa Stela No. 5, indicative of a priesthood Garment? (Jakeman p. 18)

"Blood was regarded in magical practice as a powerful antidote to magical infection; it was smeared on the person or article as a means of purification." (Maclaurin p. 33, f.n. 5) The garment was supposed to provide protection and be a shield, but the brothers only removed it, they did not kill Joseph, though the thought had occurred to them; shades of the Atonement! "The blood of the goat was intended to destroy the coat's capacity to grant the power of divination and so to 'close the eyes' of Jacob, and this in fact was what actually took place." (Maclaurin p. 33) In fact, though, Jacob saw through this subterfuge. Here it might be recalled that when the endowment was first introduced by the Prophet Joseph Smith, 4-5 of May, 1842, the garment was two pieced, ankle and wrist in length, tied by strings.

"The Septuagintal tradition that this was a 'coat of many colours' may be ancient." Maclaurin p. 33) From this tradition the later Christian translations picked upon on this, though the "Hebrew phrase, which is in doubt, consists of two words, one of which is derived through Assyrian from Sumerian GAD 'linen' whilst the others seems to have the meaning 'pieces' [pleats] in Phoenician. Saggs states 'that at Ur clay figures were found, some of which were 'human figures clad in garments composed of a pointed hat, [mitre, Jackman p. 16] and a long robe painted with scales.'" (Maclaurin p. 33) Books available on ancient Sumer, often have pictures of these garments. Why should they look familiar? The Mandaeans also had a familiar garment. (many pictures in Drower)

"What Joseph received from his father is described in the original Hebrew as a 'coat of Pasim'-a garment which is said in the story of Amnon and Tamar (11 Sam 13:18-19) to have been worn by the later and to have been customarily affected [by] the princesses of the blood royal. Now, passim is the plural of a word pas, which normally means 'length, extension.' Literally, therefore the garment was a 'coat of lengths.' The Green Septuagint and some of the other ancient translators took this to mean a garment made of various lengths of different materials-that is, a kind of quilted or patchwork tunic [pleated], and it is from this interpretation that the familiar 'coat of many colors' is derived. What was really intended, however, was a coat which was extra long and extended to the ankles, like the skirted tunica talaris worn by a Catholic priest. It

is not difficult to see how such a garment might have struck Joseph's brethren as somewhat 'sissified' ...while at the same time it could not fail to arouse their envy, just because it was characteristic of royalty." (Gaster p. 216) The story of Hasib Kerimeddin, and the Peruvian myths about the envy and jealous attitudes of older brothers of their younger brother put him in a cistern or hole in the ground, suggest parallels, but how are they linked? (Gaster p. 217) Likewise stories of the ladies of the court enamored with a slave or servant falsely accuses him, but having grabbed his garment from behind only proves his innocence. (Gaster P. 217) There are a lot of such stories.

In the translator's handbook, several different translations are provided. The Revised Standard Version [RSV] states: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. (RSV Gen 37:3) In the English Version, [TEV] it states: "Jacob loved Joseph more than all of his other sons, because he had been born to him when he was old. He made a long robe with full sleeves [or decorated robe] for him. Outside the Mormon Church, few realize this robe is a priesthood robe and it followed Joseph being given the Priesthood, and its significance, as noted above, goes way beyond just a fancy coat.

"The traditional rendering is 'coat of many colors.' Which follows the Septuagint and the Vulgate [Catholic Latin version]. Although the details are not certain, some understand it to have been a garment worn next to the skin, and that covered the arms to the wrists and the legs to the ankles." (Koehler-Baymgartner). In 2 Sam 13:18 it is the garment worn by a princess. By contrast the ordinary garment for males reached only to the knees and did not cover the arms. "Spenser finds support in cuniform inventories that suggest it was 'an ornamental tunic,' that is, a tunic or robe that was decorated by sewing ornaments [marks] into the cloth. ...it was clearly a very special garment that gave Joseph a status not shared by his brothers." (Reyborn p. 848) "In general garments used in the Near East were loose and flowing." (Pfeiffer p. 171) Clearly, Joseph's garment was unusual and different, with elements of the divine associated with it.

The coat "his father gave Joseph was an indication of paternal favor and apparently of Jacob's intentions to make him heir of the birthright. Reuben, the oldest, had forfeited the right by incest (Gen 35:25-30, 49:34; I Chr 5:1-2), Simon and Levi, next in order, were ruled out because of their violence at Shechem (Gen 34:25-30; 49:5-7). Judah the fourth son, was the next heir. Joseph, though eleventh in order, was Jacobs's firstborn by his favorite wife Rachel, [who should have also have been his first wife] and his father's favorite (Gen 37:3), and so Joseph was apparently was Judah's rival." (Unger p. 78) The biblical account of Joseph "is the Bible's most complete type of Christ." (Unger p. 78) The subsequent history of Joseph confirmed the original intentions of Jacob.

THE PATTERN FOR THE GARMENT

"Sumer, the home of magic, represented a magical garment, and it is probably relevant to recall that according to the Biblical account Joseph's great grandfather, himself reputed to be a competent astrologer, [astronomer] had in fact come from this same city Ur. Did Jacob get the pattern from his grandfather?" (Maclaurin p. 34) In fact Jacob did get the pattern from his grandfather Abraham, though instead of making the garment from the skins of animals, he made it with fine linen. And as noted above, the pattern for the garment goes back to that garment made by God for Adam. (Gen 4:27) Were the animals sacrificed for their skins part of the first instructions Adam received in offering a sacrifice? It was not until Adam was queried by an angel at a later date the details of how this was in similitude of the Only Begotten Son was provided. The details are lost from the bible. The truths are restored in the Temple Endowment.

THE DILEMMA OF THE BROTHERS:

"The natural primitive treatment for a hated or feared person was to kill him, but Reuben was unwilling to do this to Joseph; instead, he preferred to cast him into a pit, so that his blood would not rest upon him. Before this was done, the magic cloak was taken from him; when his power had been removed-in so far that he was no longer surrounded by supernatural aura-he was cast into a pit, a natural apotropaic way of putting a magician or one bearing an evil contagion into a place where he can no longer transfer his contagion. Joseph's brethren were faced with a terrible dilemma; if Joseph were slain, his blood could perhaps take vengeance, but if Joseph remained alive then the manna residing in the magic cloak could perhaps make contact with him and transfer supernatural power to him; the only safe procedure was to keep Joseph alive, but in a place where he could do no harm, whilst convincing the power in the cloak that he was dead. Even death did not guarantee complete immunity." (Maclaurin pp. 34-35) "Perhaps Reuben refused to participate in the killing of Joseph because he feared the spirit of a murdered magician." (Maclaurin p. 34) Or perhaps he knew that the blood of Joseph would be on him, and nothing could free him from the stigma of murder, especially since Joseph was clearly a man of the priesthood and favored by God.

"Even death did not guarantee complete immunity, for the bones of a wonder-worker were still contagious, they could still perform miracles, and it may perhaps be on this account that Joseph laid upon a future generation the charge 'God will surely visit you, and ye will carry my bones away hence with you'." (Maclaurin p. 35) The bones were carried out of Egypt and entombed in the shrine at Shechem in Samaria north of Jerusalem, today called Joseph's Tomb, a shrine sacred to the Jews.' It was the first

shrine desecrated by the Palestinians when they initiated the current violence.

Joseph was to eventually enjoy the blessings and privileges of the birthright through the unworthiness of Reuben. (I Ch. 5:1-2)

Only through the restoration by Joseph Smith does one come to an understanding of the Garment of Joseph, and only those LDS Saints or Mormons, who subscribed worthily to enter Temples are provided a complete understanding of what happened anciently and for what purposes and what it is all about.

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