

IN THE IMAGE OF G-D

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Imagine a time, both past and future, when Yerushalayim is graced by the crowning glory of the Bais Hamikdash.

Throngs of people weave through awakening markets and thoroughfares as we ascend to the gates of the Temple Mount. Towering above us, the walls surrounding the Temple Mount humble and awe us with their majestic size. We enter the main plaza and work our way to the eastern entrance of the Bais Hamikdash. As we approach the gateway, the rising sun crests the horizon and a hushed expectancy grabs each and every one of us. The house of Hashem stands open before us!

The outer Mizbeach is already a bustle of activity as Kohanim carefully bring the various offerings up her ramp. Beyond the rising smoke, the famed Doors of Nikanor stand open as the Leviyim arrange themselves to sing the daily Psalms and songs. To the left, just adjacent to the outer Mizbeach, the Lishkas Hagazis, the seat of the Sanhedrin, remains shrouded in early morning shadows.

As we slowly advance into the main courtyard, the Azarah, a procession of Kohanim all dressed in garments of the finest white linen, gracefully makes its way toward the Doors of Nikanor. Faintly, across the expanse of the Azarah, the delicate tinkle of bells reaches our ears, and we realize that the Kohanim are escorting the Kohain Gadol into the Kodesh that lies beyond the Doors of Nikanor! Dressed in the golden vestments of his office, the Kohain Gadol's dignified step causes the small bells adorning his ankle long vest to sound his approach. We are awestruck! The Kohain Gadol! The great great grandson of Aharon is right before us! The beauty of his appearance and the majesty of his regal bearing seem to shine with an inner light and purity. Suddenly he stops. The Kohanim quietly wait with bowed heads as he greets us with a smile that rivals the warmth of the rising sun. "Welcome my children, welcome! Welcome to the home of Hashem!" With a wave of his hand, he continues up into the Kodesh, as the Leviyim burst forth in song and harmony! What a sight! What an experience! Finally we understand what G-d intended when He said, "Let us make man in our form and in our image!"

Copyright © 1998 by Rabbi Aron Tendler and Project Genesis, Inc.

The author is Rabbi of Shaarey Zedek Congregation, Valley Village, CA.

