Parva is the name of a Persian sorcerer – אבוי מגי. This matter has been explained in several different ways. According to Rashi, Parva is the name of the sorcerer who built the Hall. The author of the Me'iri adds that this sorcerer repented or converted and built the Hall with his own funds. The Geonim write that the sorcerer sought to witness the High Priest’s service in the Holy of Holies and excavated a tunnel in the courtyard for that purpose. According to the Rambam, he was caught and killed, and the hall was named after him to recall the incident and to discourage others from similar attempts. Rabbi Shimon explains that the name of the hall, Parva, was given due to the blood of the bulls.[parin], as he proceeded from the Hall of Parva to slaughter the bulls. The sorcerer was responsible only for the ritual bath atop the hall.

Linen, linen, linen, linen – רבד, רבד, רבד, רבד: The commentaries note that two of the references to linen teach other matters, with regard to both the material itself and the manner in which it is woven. Only two of the mentions of the word remain to teach that it must be choice linen (Tosafot Yeshanin). Others explain that it is from the numerological value of the repeated Hebrew word for linen that the value of the material is derived. The word is spelled בד, dalet, which have a numerical value of two and four, respectively, for a total numerical value of six. The term is mentioned five times in the Torah passage. The total numerical value of these five instances is thirty, which is the total value in maneh of the two sets of garments (Neum Yehuda).

Parva is the name of a Persian sorcerer – אבוי מגי: The Magi were Zoroastrian priests. They were viewed by some outsiders as sorcerers, leading to the use of this term as a general title for a sorcerer.

The Gemara raises an objection. It is stated: “And it shall be that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within” (Ezekiel 44:17). This verse is referring to the Yom Kippur service, as during the year the High Priest performed the service in eight priestly vestments made partially of wool. Two verses later the prophet says: “And when they go forth into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall remove their garments in which they serve, and lay them in the sacred chambers, and they shall put on other garments, so that they do not sanctify the people with their garments” (Ezekiel 44:19).

The Gemara infers: What, doesn’t “other” mean more important than the first set of linen garments? The Gemara rejects this: No, although “other” means different garments, it means garments inferior to them, the first set of linen garments. The High Priest does not don a second set of garments to effect atonement; rather, he dons them in deference to God to remove the spoon and the coal pan from the Holy of Holies.
Rav Huna bar Yehuda, and some say Rav Shmuel bar Yehuda, taught: After the public service concluded, a priest whose mother had made him a priestly tunic may wear it and perform an individual service while wearing it,\(^6\) such as removal of the spoon and the coal pan, which is not a service in and of itself, provided he transfers it to the possession of public.\(^7\) All services performed by the priest must be performed while he is wearing sacred garments owned by the public, as all the Temple vessels are. The Gemara asks: This is obvious; once he transfers it to the possession of the public, it is Temple property like any other vessel that an individual donates to the Temple. What is novel in this statement?

The Gemara answers: Lest you say that the concern is that since he is the one wearing it perhaps he will intend to retain ownership and will not transfer it wholeheartedly; therefore, it teaches us that if he transfers possession to the public, that is not a concern. Apropos this halakha, the Gemara relates: They said about the High Priest Rabbi Yishmael ben Pabi that his mother made him a tunic worth one hundred maneh. He donned it and performed an individual service and transferred possession of it to the public.

And similarly, they said about the High Priest Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum\(^8\) that his mother made him a tunic worth twenty thousand dinars, but his fellow priests did not allow him to wear it because it was transparent and he appeared as one who is naked. The Gemara asks: And could he be seen through a garment made to the specifications of the priestly vestments? Didn’t the Master say: The threads of the priestly vestments were six-fold? Since the clothes were woven from threads that thick, his body could not have been seen through them. Abaye said: It is like wine in a thick glass cup.\(^9\) His flesh could not actually be seen, but since it was very fine linen, it was somewhat translucent and his skin color was discernible.

Apropos the great wealth of Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum, the Gemara cites that which the Sages taught: A poor person, and a wealthy person,\(^a\) and a wicked person\(^a\) come to face judgment before the Heavenly court for their conduct in this world. To the poor person, the members of the court say: Why did you not engage in Torah?\(^a\) If he rationalizes his conduct and says: I was poor and preoccupied with earning enough to pay for my sustenance and that is why I did not engage in Torah study, they say to him: Were you any poorer than Hillel,\(^a\) who was wretchedly poor and nevertheless attempted to study Torah?

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\(^{6}\) The author of the Me’iri explains the passage differently than Rashi does. In his opinion, the Gemara is not actually discussing the High Priest on Yom Kippur and the service that he performs that day. The individual service mentioned in the Gemara is an actual offering brought by an individual, e.g., a vow-offering or a gift-offering. Those offerings may be sacrificed by a priest wearing his own garments, but communal offerings may not. Clearly, the High Priest could not perform the service on Yom Kippur, which is communal, wearing his own garments. That is why the discussion is with regard to a common priest rather than the High Priest, and is closer to the plain understanding of the verses in the book of Ezekiel.

\(^{7}\) Wine in a thick glass cup – See Shulchan Arukh: Even where the wine is not placed directly on the mouth, it is still considered as being consumed through the mouth (See Shulchan Arukh: Yoreh De’ah 1:8).

\(^{a}\) A poor person and a wealthy person – See Sifrei: Despite varying social and financial standings and different temperaments, no one can claim that due to hardship or temptation he has been robbed of his freedom of choice. These incidents illustrate that in all circumstances, one has the freedom to choose to do what is right (Me’iri).

\(^{a}\) Why did you not engage in Torah – See Shulchan Arukh: The Talmud teaches that a person’s ultimate judgment begins with the Torah that he studied or failed to study, and continues with the other mitzvot that he performed or neglected to perform (Tosafot Yeshanim).
Jewish history attitudes have varied with regard to pay

The Old City of Jerusalem in the snow

Service [Shomer] – From the Greek ἀγγαρεία, angarya, meaning forced labor for the government.

They said about Hillel the Elder that each and every day he would work and earn a half-dinar, half of which he would give to the guard of the study hall and half of which he spent for his sustenance and the sustenance of the members of his family. One time he did not find employment to earn a wage, and the guard of the study hall did not allow him to enter. He ascended to the roof, suspended himself, and sat at the edge of the sky-light in order to hear the words of the Torah of the living God from the mouths of Shemaya and Avtalyon, the spiritual leaders of that generation.

The Sages continued and said: That day was Shabbat eve and it was the winter season of Tevet, and snow fell upon him from the sky. When it was dawn, Shemaya said to Avtalyon: Avtalyon, my brother, every day at this hour the study hall is already bright from the sunlight streaming through the sky-light, and today it is dark; is it perhaps a cloudy day? They focused their eyes and saw the image of a man in the sky-light. They ascended and found him covered with snow three cubits high. They extricated him from the snow, and they washed him and smeared oil on him, and they sat him opposite the bonfire to warm him. They said: This man is worthy for us to desecrate Shabbat for him. Saving a life overrides Shabbat in any case; however, this great man is especially deserving. Clearly, poverty is no excuse for the failure to attempt to study Torah.

And if a wealthy man comes before the heavenly court, the members of the court say to him: Why did you not engage in Torah? If he says: I was wealthy and preoccupied with managing my possessions, they say to him: Were you any wealthier than Rabbi Elazar, who was exceedingly wealthy and nevertheless studied Torah? They said about Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum that his father left him an inheritance of one thousand villages on land, and corresponding to them, one thousand ships at sea. And each and every day he takes a leather jug of flour on his shoulder and walks from city to city and from state to state to study Torah from the Torah scholars in each of those places.

One time as he passed through the villages in his estate and his servants found him, did not recognize him, and, thinking he was a resident of the town, they pressed him into service [angarya] for the master of the estate. He said to them: I beseech you; let me be and I will go study Torah. They said: We swear by the life of Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum that we will not let you be. The Gemara comments: And in all his days, he never went and saw all his possessions and his property; rather, he would sit and engage in the study of Torah all day and all night.

And if a wicked man comes to judgment, the members of the court say to him: Why did you not engage in Torah? If he said: I was handsome and preoccupied with my evil inclination, as I had many temptations, they say to him: Were you any more handsome than Joseph, who did not neglect Torah despite his beauty? They said about Joseph the righteous: Each and every day, the wife of Potiphar seduced him with words. In addition, the clothes that she wore to entice him in the morning, she did not wear to entice him in the evening. The clothes that she wore to entice him in the evening, she did not wear to entice him in the morning of the next day.

NOTES

Half-dinar – מפרנס: A half-dinar was a very low wage even for unskilled laborers. According to tradition, Hillel the Elder worked part time chopping wood for that negligible payment.

I beseech you let me be – בָּאֵם: He did not reveal his true identity because he feared that they would not believe him, and he did not want to waste time that he could be devoting to Torah study proving his identity to them (Maharsha).

He never went and saw – חבר: This explains why his servants did not recognize him (Rav Yaakov Emden).
The Gemara elaborates: Had he submitted to her to lie with her in this world, it would have been decreed in Heaven that he would be with her in the World-to-Come. Therefore, he refused. Consequently, Hillel obligates the poor to study Torah. Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum obligates the wealthy, and Joseph obligates the wicked. For each category of people, there is a role model who overcame his preoccupations and temptations to study Torah.

The Gemara states that when the High Priest recites his confession, the bull stands between the Entrance Hall and the altar with its head facing to the south and its face to the west. And the priest stands to the east of the bull, and his face points to the west. And the priest places his two hands on the bull and confesses.

And this is what he would say in his confession: Please, God, I have sinned, I have done wrong, and I have rebelled before You, I and my family. Please, God, grant atonement, please, for the sins, and for the wrongs, and for the rebellions that I have sinned, and done wrong, and rebelled before You, I and my family, as it is written in the Torah of Moses your servant: “For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:30). And the priests and the people who were in the courtyard respond after he recites the name of God: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time.

HALAKHA

The High Priest comes and stands next to his bull, and his bull was standing between the Entrance Hall and the altar with its head facing to the south and its face to the west. And the priest stands to the east of the bull, and his face points to the west. And the priest places his two hands on the bull and confesses.

GEMARA

The Gemara states that when the High Priest recites his confession, the bull stands between the Entrance Hall and the Sanctuary and the altar, and elsewhere (41b) it is stated that the bull is slaughtered at the place where the confession is recited. Apparently, the place where the confession is recited must be considered north. The Gemara clarifies: About whom did you learn that he said that the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar is considered north and is therefore a valid location for slaughtering offerings of the most sacred order, based on verse written with regard to the burnt-offering: “On the side of the altar northward” (Leviticus 1:1)?

NOTES

Chamber of the knives – בית נשף חרב: This chamber was where the knives for slaughtering were stored. Each priestly watch had its own compartment in which it stored its knives.

What is the north – כיוון צפון: The following areas are considered north: From the northern wall of the courtyard to the eastern wall, sixty and a half cubits, and from the Entrance Hall to the eastern wall of the courtyard, seventy-six cubits. The offerings of the most sacred order are slaughtered in that area. The Rambam rules in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, as the rulings are in accordance with his opinion in disputes with his colleagues (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 5:16).