

~AGATE (44)

[Hebrew, *shevoh*]

- A precious ornamental stone that is a form of chalcedony, a variety of colored quartz.
- Most agates form as nodules in stratified deposits of silica found in certain rock cavities. The agate layers vary from clear to opaque, and they assume many shades of color because of the presence of microscopic particles of iron salts. The colors appear in combinations of yellow, brown, gray, blue, or black, and these may be attractively distributed in patterns of stripes, bands, or cloudy blends. Agate is slightly harder than steel and can be polished to a high gloss.
- Agate used by the Israelites in the wilderness may have been brought from Egypt. According to Pliny the Elder, red agates veined with white were found in the vicinity of Thebes. Such a red agate may have been the variety that was mounted on the High Priests breastpiece of judgment to represent one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The center stone of the third row on Aaron's breastpiece was an agate Hebrew, *shevoh*', a kind of precious stone.
- And you must make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and beauty. (Exodus 28:2)
- And you must make the breastpiece of judgment with the workmanship of an embroiderer. Like the workmanship of the ephod you will make it. Of gold, blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple and coccus scarlet material and fine twisted linen you will make it. (Exodus 28:15)
- And the third row is leshem stone, **agate** and amethyst. (Exodus 28:19) Footnote
- And the stones should be according to the names of the sons of Israel, the twelve according to their names. With the engravings of a seal they should be, each one according to its name, for the twelve tribes. (Exodus 28:21)
- And the third row was leshem stone, **agate** and amethyst. (Exodus 39:12)

