

# Diamonds and Gemstones in World Religions

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Several mention of gemstones such as diamonds can be easily retrieved from the Bible. Such mentions testify that diamonds and gemstones existed since the creation of the world.

It is common to find different types of gemstones, as in the Book of Exodus (Old Testament) where 12 different types of stones appear, to symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel.

**Book of Exodus 28:15** - “And thou shalt make a breastplate of judgment...”

**Book of Exodus 28:21** - “And the stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes.”

A table of gemstones according to twelve tribes

<p><b>Topaz</b></p>  <p><b>Asher</b></p>	<p><b>Opal</b></p>  <p><b>Dan</b></p>	<p><b>Garnet</b></p>  <p><b>judah</b></p>	<p><b>Ruby</b></p>  <p><b>reuben</b></p>
<p><b>Onyx</b></p>  <p><b>Josef</b></p>	<p><b>Agate</b></p>  <p><b>Naftali</b></p>	<p><b>Sapphire</b></p>  <p><b>Issaschar</b></p>	<p><b>Imperial Topaz</b></p>  <p><b>Simeon</b></p>
<p><b>Jasper</b></p>  <p><b>Benjamin</b></p>	<p><b>Amethyst</b></p>  <p><b>Gad</b></p>	<p><b>Diamond</b></p>  <p><b>Zebulun</b></p>	<p><b>Emerald</b></p>  <p><b>Levi</b></p>

Diamonds and gemstones in the Bible were used to make women jewellery, crowns for kings, as well as treasures, troves, decorative symbols and state garments of ministers. Examples can be found when reading about the garments of priests, the Ephod, the robes and the Breastplate that were encrusted with gemstones.

**Book of Exodus 35:27** - “And the rulers brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the Ephod, and for the breastplate”.

### The Ephod.

The High Priest wore 8 priesthood-clothing garments, a lower priest would wear four garments but the high priest added 4 more garments (zizith, a coat, the Ephod and the breastplate on which the gemstones were inlaid). On the Ephod were two stones of the same kind placed on the shoulders, and each stone was engraved with six of the twelve tribes.

**Book of Exodus 28:9-10** - “And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth.”



### The Breastplate.

The Breastplate was one of the high priest's eight garments. The breastplate was composed of 4 columns of gemstones and three gems were inlaid in every column.

Twelve gemstones, each stone represents a tribe, and its name engraved on the stones. Also the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were engraved as well as the words: Shivtei Yeshuron.

**Citation (Book of Exodus 28:15):** ”And thou shalt make a breastplate of judgment”.

Another use of gemstones in the Bible is in proverbial tales. The use of gemstones in a proverbial tale is because everyone would agree on their high value and prestige.

**Proverbs 3:15** “She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou can desire are not to be compared unto her”.

**Proverbs 8:11** “For wisdom is better than rubies, and all things desirable are not to be compared unto her”.

**Job 28:16-19** “It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it; neither shall the exchange thereof be vessels of fine

gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; yea, the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold”.

**Proverbs 31:10** “A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies”.

Other references to diamonds and gemstones in the Bible:

When queen Sheba came to visit King Solomon:

**1 Kings 10:2** She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind.

King David in building the 2<sup>nd</sup> house of God:

**1 Chronicles 29:8** And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, in the care of Jehi'el the Gershonite.

In Ezekiel's prophecy:

**Ezekiel 28:13** - You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, topaz, and jasper, chrysolite, beryl, and onyx, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald; and wrought in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared.

**Corinthians 3:12** Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

**Revelation 4:3** And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.

**Revelation 9:17** And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the colour of fire and of sapphire and of sulphur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulphur issued from their mouths.

The heavenly Jerusalem in John's Revelation:

**Revelation 21:20** The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass.<sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,<sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.<sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

We can easily find many references to gemstones in other world religions as well:

## **Hinduism**

**Bhagavad Gita:** When a diamond is set in a golden ring, it looks very nice. The gold is glorified and at the same time the diamond is glorified. The Lord and the living entity eternally glitter. And when a living entity becomes inclined to the service of the Supreme Lord he looks like gold.

**Nectar of Devotion:** Krishna always looked beautiful in His incompatible helmet, his earrings made of diamonds, His necklace of pearls, His bangles, His garments and the beautiful rings on His fingers.

Krishna's palace:

**Krishna Book:** The chairs and other furniture were made of ivory, bedecked with gold and diamonds, and jewelled lamps dissipated the darkness within the palace.

Krishna's description:

**Sri Brahma Samhita:** Like a diamond the central supporting figure of self luminous Krishna stands as the transcendental source of all potencies.

### **Buddhism:**

**The Diamond Sutra:** The Lord Buddha replied: "Subhuti, this Scripture shall be known as THE DIAMOND SCRIPTURE, because, by it's Transcendent Wisdom all sentient life shall reach the other shore. By this name you shall reverently regard it, always remembering that what is referred to as Transcendental Wisdom is only a name, --Prajna Paramita transcends all wisdom."

**Samsara and Nirvana:** If we liberate our souls from our petty selves, wish no ill to others, and become clear as a crystal diamond reflecting the light of truth, what a radiant picture will appear in us mirroring things as they are, without the admixture of burning desires, without the distortion of erroneous illusion, without the agitation of clinging and unrest.

### **Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch:**

"To free the mind from all improprieties is the Sila of Mind-essence;  
To free the mind from all perturbations is the Dhyana of Mind-essence.  
That which neither increases nor decreases is the 'diamond' of Mind-essence.  
'Going' and 'coming' are only phases of Samadhi."