

Parsha Plug: Parshat Tetzaveh

<p>Shemot 28:29-30</p>	<p>שמות כח:כט-ל</p>
<p>29 Thus shall Aharon carry the names of B'nai Yisrael in the choshen of judgment over his heart when he enters the Holy, as a remembrance before the Lord at all times. 30 You shall place the Urim and the Tummim into the choshen of judgment so that they will be over Aharon's heart when he comes before the Lord, and Aharon will carry the judgment of B'nai Yisrael over his heart before the Lord at all times.</p>	<p>כט וְנָשָׂא אֶהָרֶן אֶת־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט עַל־לִבּוֹ בְּבָאֹו אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְזָכְרוֹן לְפָנַי־ה' תָּמִיד: ל וְנָתַתְּ אֶל־תְּשׁוֹן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתֻּמִּים וְהָיוּ עַל־לֵב אֶהָרֶן בְּבָאֹו לְפָנַי ה' וְנָשָׂא אֶהָרֶן אֶת־מִשְׁפָּט בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־לִבּוֹ לְפָנַי ה' תָּמִיד:</p>

<p>Rambam Mishneh Torah Klei HaMikdash 9:6-8</p>	<p>רמב"ם משנה תורה כלי המקדש ט:ו-ח</p>
<p>How was the breastplate made? He would weave a garment that was a work of craft from gold, sky-blue wool, red wool, scarlet, linen, with 28 strands, as we explained. It is a cubit long and zeret wide and it should be folded into two. Thus it was a square a zeret long and a zeret wide. In it should be affixed four rows of stones as described by the Torah. Each stone should be square and set in a setting of gold that encompasses it from below and from the four directions. 7 He should engrave on the stones the names of the tribes according to their order of birth. Thus on the ruby, the name Reuben is engraved and on the jasper, Benjamin is engraved. At the outset, above Reuben, he should write [the names] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and below Benjamin, he should write, ה—שבטי so that all the letters are found there. 8 Four golden rings are made on the four corners of the breastplate. In the two upper rings from which the breastplate is suspended, two golden cords are placed. They are called chains. In the two lower rings that are opposite [the High Priest's] breast are placed two cords of sky-blue wool.</p>	<p>ו כיצד מעשה החושן אורג בגד מעשה חושב מן הזהב והתכלת והארגמן ותולעת השני והשש על שמנה ועשרים חוטין כמו שביארנו ארכו אמה ורחבו זרת וכופלו לשנים נמצא זרת על זרת מרובע וקובע בו ארבעה טורים של אבן המפורשים בתורה כל אבן מהן מרובע ומשוקע בבית של זהב שמקיפו מלמטה ומארבע רוחותיו: ז ומפתח על האבנים שמות השבטים כתולדותם ונמצא כותב על האודם ראובן ועל ישפה בנימין וכותב בתחלה למעלה מראובן אברהם יצחק ויעקב וכותב למטה מבנימין שבטי י—ה כדי שיהיו כל האותיות מצויות שם: ח ועושה על ארבע זויות של חושן ארבע טבעות זהב ונותן בשתי הטבעות של מעלה שהחושן נתלה בהן שתי עבותות הזהב והם הנקראים שרשרות ונותן בשתי טבעות של מטה שהן כנגד הדדים שני פתילי תכלת:</p>

<p>Bechor Shor on Shemot 28:30</p>	<p>בכור שור שמות כח:ל</p>
<p>The borders and the limits allotted to the tribes were written down and placed inside of the choshen, and this is what is meant by “the judgement of B'nai Israel”-- that one tribe is not able to undermine the boundary of the other.</p>	<p>גבולין ומצרין נתונין בתוך החושן וכן לכל שבט ושבת הכתוב באבן תחומו וגבולו נתון כנגדו וזהו משפט בני ישראל שלא יוכל זה לערער על גבול זה כלום.</p>

Yoel S., *The Urim VeTumim*

In the past century, scholars have found a key to partially uncover the mystery of the *Urim VeTumim* in Sam. 14:41. The story in this chapter relates a war that Saul led together with his son Jonathan against the philistines. Saul forbade all the warriors from eating until the war was over. However, Jonathan was very weak and couldn't resist a taste of the honey they'd found amidst the woods. Once Jonathan decried his father's injunction, the war suddenly turned in the Philistines' favor, and Israel suffered fatal losses much to the horror of their leader. Saul decided to cast lots to see who was causing the divine wrath. He placed himself and his son on one side and all of Israel on the other, and he threw lots to see if God was angry at him and his son or at the rest of Israel. In his final preparations he offered a prayer to God that in our text consists of two words (1 Samuel 14:41): וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל, אֶל-ה' אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל-הֲבָה תָּמִים. This awkward sentence is translated by medieval commentators as a prayer that the lots should be perfect and reliable. But when modern scholars studied the translation of this verse in the Septuagint, they noticed that most of the sentence is missing in the Hebrew bible. After a reconstruction based on the Septuagint, the text reads: [למה לא ענית את עבדך היום. אם יש בי ויאמר שאול אל ה' אלקי ישראל: "If the fault is in me or in Jonathan my son, O' God of Israel, give *Urim*, and if the fault lies within your nation Israel, give *Tamim*." Apparently, *Urim* designated fault or bad, (probably based on the word ארור = cursed), and *Tamim* implied good (probably based on the word תם = perfect). Saul wanted to see who is at fault. If *Urim* will be the result then it's a sign that he or his son is guilty, if *Tamim* will be the result, the fault must lie with someone else among the Israeli nation. In light of the reconstructed text, it seems plausible to surmise that when Saul "asked advice from God" he employed the *Urim VeTumim*, as in most other cases where the term וישאל באלקים is used, and the *Urim VeTumim* worked by throwing lots, which were probably two stones or tablets inscribed with the words "*Urim*" and "*Tumim*". Perhaps whichever fell out first, or in proximity to the accused, defined the result.

Rashi on Shemot 28:30	רש"י שמות כח:ל
<p>The Urim and the Tummim: The inscription of the explicit Name, which Moshe would place within the folds of the choshen, through which it would <i>light</i> up its words and <i>perfect</i> its words. The choshen existed during the Second Temple because it was impossible for the Kohen Gadol to be missing any of the garments, but that Name was not inside. The judgment of B'nai Yisrael: The solution about which they are debating, whether or not to do something. According to Midrash Aggada, the choshen atoned for the perverters of justice. It was called "judgment" because of its forgiveness for the sins of judgment.</p>	<p>את האורים ואת התומים: הוא כתב שם המפורש, שהיה נותנו בתוך כפלי החשן, שעל ידו הוא מאיר דבריו ומתמם את דבריו. ובמקדש שני היה החשן, שאי אפשר לכהן גדול להיות מחוסר בגדים, אבל אותו השם לא היה בתוכו. את משפט בני ישראל: דבר שהם נשפטים ונוכחים על ידו אם לעשות דבר או לא לעשות. ולפי מדרש אגדה שהחשן מכפר על מעוטי הדין, נקרא משפט על שם סליחת המשפט:</p>

Masechet Yoma 73a-b	מסכת יומא עג.-:
<p>The Sages taught: How does one consult the <i>Urim VeTummim</i>? The one asking stands with his face toward the one who is asked, and the one who is asked, turns his face toward the Divine Presence, i.e., the <i>Urim VeTummim</i>. The one who asks says his question: "Shall I pursue after this troop?" (I Samuel 30:8)...One does not ask in a loud voice, as it is stated: "And he shall stand before Elazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the <i>Urim</i>" (Numbers 27:21), which implies that the inquiry is to be audible only to the person asking. And he should not think his question in his heart but should enunciate it, as it is stated: "And...who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the <i>Urim</i> before God"(Numbers 27:21), and immediately afterward it states: "By his mouth" (Numbers 27:21). Rather, how shall he inquire? He should do so in the way that Hannah spoke in her prayer, as it is stated: "Now Hannah spoke in her heart" (I Samuel 1:13)...Even though a decree of a prophet can be retracted, as sometimes a dire prophecy is stated as a warning and does not come true, a decree of the <i>Urim VeTummim</i> cannot be retracted. As it is stated: "By the judgment of the <i>Urim</i>" (Numbers 27:21). The use of the term judgment suggests that the decree is as final as a judicial decision...How is it done? How does the <i>Urim VeTummim</i> provide an answer? The names of the twelve tribes were engraved upon the stones of the breastplate. These letters allowed for the answer to be received. Rabbi Yohanan says: The letters of the answer protrude, and the priest then combines those letters to form words in order to ascertain the message. Reish Lakish says: The letters rearrange themselves and join together to form words.</p>	<p>תנו רבנן כיצד שואלין השואל פניו כלפי נשאל והנשאל פניו כלפי שכינה. השואל אומר (שמואל א ל, ה) ארדוף אחרי הגדוד הזה...אין שואלין בקול שנאמר (במדבר כז, כא) ושאל לו ולא מהרהר בלבו שנאמר ושאל לו לפני ה' אלא כדרך שאמרה חנה בתפלתה שנאמר (שמואל א, יג) וחנה היא מדברת על לבה...ואף על פי שגזירת נביא חוזרת גזירת אורים ותומים אינה חוזרת שנאמר (במדבר כז:כא) במשפט האורים...כיצד נעשית רבי יוחנן אומר בולטות ריש לקיש אומר מצטרפות.</p>

Ramban on Shemot 28:30	רמב"ן שמות כח:ל
<p>The <i>Urim veTumim</i> were a secret that God passed on to Moshe, and he wrote them with holiness, or they were made by Heaven...When the letters lit up before the eyes of the kohen, he still did not know their order...[This is the meaning of 'Tumim'] the mind of the kohen became tamim in understanding the message of the letters lit up before his eyes.</p>	<p>הם סוד מסור למשה מפי הגבורה, והוא כתבם בקדושה, או היו מעשה שמים... והנה כאשר האותיות מאירות אל עיני הכהן עדין לא ידע סודן...יהיה לב הכהן תמים בידיעת ענין האותיות שהאירו לעיניו.</p>

Rabbi Yissocher Frand, *Many Can Have 'Urim' But Few Have 'Tumim': Parshas*

Tetzaveh

The Ramba"n gives us an insight into the workings of the Choshen and the Urim V'Tumim: The word Urim means 'lights'. Whenever the Kohen Gadol needed to receive an answer, the letters (of the names of the Tribes, inscribed on the twelve stones of the Breastplate) would illuminate. That was the 'Urim' part. But the letters would be scrambled. It was not as simple as reading out: G-O T-O W-A-R. One needed to break the code — what were the lights of the letters of the Breastplate saying? The Ramba"n explains that there were secondary holy names called the 'Tumim'. These 'Tumim' gave the Kohen Gadol the ability to interpret the 'Urim'. The ability to use the 'Tumim' to interpret the lights of the 'Urim' was a form of Ruach HaKodesh [Divine Inspiration].

The Talmud says [Berachos 31a] that, in fact, there were times when the Kohen could not figure out what the letters were saying. There is a famous Gemara about the High Priest Eli, who misread the letters of the Urim v'Tumim regarding Chana. Eli read the letters appearing on the Breastplate to be Shin-Cof-Reish-Hay (Shikorah — drunken one) when in fact the correct reading was Cof-Shin-Reish-Hay (Kesheira — worthy one). At that precise moment, Eli lacked the power of 'Tumim'.

The Sefer Bais Av mentions that nowadays there are people who are blessed with the power of 'Urim'. What is the power of 'Urim' nowadays? Orah [Light] — This refers to Torah. There are people who are steeped in Torah, have knowledge of Torah and can bring proofs from Torah. But not everyone who has the power of 'Urim' — who looks at the Torah and sees the light of the Torah — has the power of 'Tumim'. It does not immediately follow that most anyone has the power to interpret what the Torah is in fact saying. The people who have the power of the 'Tumim' are a few treasured individuals in each generation. That is a special ability. Many people have Urim. They see the Torah and can proclaim something is HaShem's will and this is "the opinion of Torah" (Da'as Torah). But that is not always the case. To truly perceive Da'as Torah, one needs the power of 'Tumim'. Many times people sincerely and honestly say "This is the 'Urim' — this is what the Torah wants" but sometimes these people do not have the power of 'Tumim'.