

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Tetzaveh

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Tetzaveh**

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Rashi in His Own Words

שמות כ"ה, ל': וְנָתַתְּ אֶל חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאוּרִים וְאֶת הַתּוּמִים וְהָיוּ עַל לֵב אַהֲרֹן כְּבָאוּ לִפְנֵי ה' וְנִשְׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת מִשְׁפַּט בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל לְבוֹ לִפְנֵי ה' תְּמִיד:

רש"י ד"ה 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, ועל שם אותו הכתב הוא קרוי משפט, שנאמר (במדבר כ"ז, כ"א) ושאל לו במשפט האורים: **את משפט בני ישראל:** דבר שהם נשפטים ונוכחים על ידו אם לעשות דבר או לא לעשות. ולפי מדרש אגדה שהחשן מכפר על מעוותי הדין, נקרא משפט על שם סליחת המשפט:

Shemos 28:30: You shall place the Urim and the Tumim into the Choshen of judgment so that they will be over Aharon's heart when he comes before the Lord. Aharon will carry the judgment of the Jewish people over his heart before the Lord at all times.

Rashi Heading - the Urim and the Tumim: This (the Urim and Tumim) is the inscription of Hashem's explicit Name. He (Moshe) would place this within the folds of the Choshen, through which it would light up its words (Urim is from the Hebrew word Ohr, which means light) and perfect (Tumim is from the Hebrew word Tam, which means complete, or perfect) its words. In the Second Temple, there still was the Choshen because the Kohen Gadol couldn't be missing (any of his eight priestly) garments, but that Name was not inside it. Because of that Name, it was called "judgment," as said, "And he shall inquire for him through the judgment of the Urim."

The judgment of the children of Israel: (This would solve) any matter about which the Jews are judging and debating. It would instruct us whether or not to do something. According to the Aggadic Midrash, the Choshen atoned for the perverters of justice. Therefore, it was called "judgment" because of its forgiveness for the sins of judgment.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh¹, we are told², "You shall place the Urim and the Tumim into the Choshen - Breastplate of Judgment so that they will be over Aharon's heart when he comes before Hashem."

1. This week's Torah portion describes the four priestly garments which a regular priest – Kohen had to wear while performing his service in the Bais Hamikdosh, and the eight garments which the High Priest – Kohen Gadol was obligated to wear.

2. Our Parshah, Shemos 28:30.

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Rashi cites the words "the Urim and the Tumim" and explains, "This is the explicit Name (of Hashem) which he, (Moshe), would place within the folds of the Choshen³. Through this (the explicit Name of Hashem), it would light up its words (Urim is from the Hebrew word Ohr, which means light) and perfect (Tumim is from the Hebrew word Tam, which means complete, or perfect) the words (which it displayed). There was also a Choshen in the Second Temple because the High Priest couldn't be missing (any of his eight) garments⁴. However, (the explicit) Name (of Hashem) was not inside it. Because of that inscription (of the explicit Name of Hashem), it was called "judgment," as it says⁵, "And he shall ask for him through the judgment of the Urim."

As we have stated many times, Rashi intends to explain Peshat, which is the simple meaning of the verse. Nevertheless, he seems to add things that are not pertinent to Peshat. Rashi adds a lengthy story about the Choshen during the Second Temple period and a Halacha, a Torah law that the Kohen Gadol could not serve while lacking his eight garments. He also explains a verse from much further on. "And he shall ask for him through the judgment of the Urim." Furthermore, that verse specifies "the judgment of the Urim," which implies that the Torah called the breastplate the Choshen of Judgment because it contained the Divine inscription. That would mean that without the inscription, the Choshen was invalid, contradicting Rashi's explanation regarding the Choshen in the Second Temple.

The explanation is as follows. In the verse immediately before ours⁶, the Torah says, "Aharon shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the Choshen of judgment over his heart ..." This implies that the Torah has concluded the discussion of the High Priest's breastplate. However, our verse discusses the Urim V'Tumim, which seems to be a continuation of the discussion of the Choshen. Therefore, Rashi explains that the Urim V'Tumim is not a part of the Choshen but rather an inscription of G-d's Explicit Name placed in its fold. Nonetheless, once Rashi tells us that the Urim V'Tumim caused the letters on the Choshen to light up, it would seem that it was a part of the Choshen itself! Therefore, Rashi informs us that although the Urim V'Tumim were not extant during the Second Temple period, the Choshen was still valid.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh, we are told, "You shall place the Urim V'Tumim into the Choshen of Judgment so that they will be over Aharon's heart when he comes before Hashem." Rashi cites the words "the

3. Our Parshah tells us (28:16) that "it shall be square and doubled." The Choshen's length was double its height, and it was worn folded in the center which made it one half cubit square.

4. If any of these garments were missing, it would invalidate their service.

5. Parshas Pinchas, Bamidbar 27:21.

6. Our Parshah, Shemos 28:29.

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Urim and the Tumim" and explains, "This is the explicit Name (of Hashem) which he, (Moshe), would place within the folds of the Choshen. Through this, it would light up its words (Urim is from the Hebrew word Ohr, which means light) and perfect (Tumim is from the Hebrew word Tam, which means complete or perfect) its words. There was also a Choshen in the Second Temple because the High Priest couldn't be missing (any of his eight) garments. However, Hashem's (explicit) Name () was not inside it. Because of that inscription (of the explicit Name of Hashem), it was called "judgment," as it says, "And he shall ask for him through the judgment of the Urim."

Rashi also comments on the words "the judgment of the Children of Israel" and explains that it refers to "something (i.e., the Choshen) through which they (the Jewish Nation), were judging and debating whether or not to do something. According to the Aggadic Midrash, the Choshen atoned for those that pervert justice and was called 'judgment' because it forgave (sins regarding) judgment."

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

As we have stated numerous times, Rashi's goal is to explain Peshat, the simple meaning of the verse. This being the case, why does he add things to his commentary that seem irrelevant to Peshat? He tells a lengthy story about the Choshen during the Second Temple era. He then adds a Halacha, a Torah law that the Kohen Gadol was not allowed to lack any of his eight vestments, and he had to wear all of them for his service to be valid.

We know that Rashi only explains those words from the verse he cites. Why does he also explain a verse that appears quite a bit further on, "And he shall ask for him through the judgment of the Urim?" The problem is not only why he explains a verse that appears further on. That verse specifies "the judgment of the Urim," which implies that the Torah called the breastplate the Choshen of Judgment because it contained the Divine inscription. That means that without the inscription, it was invalid, which would contradict Rashi's explanation. Rashi is saying that even without the inscription, the Choshen was valid.

Furthermore, Rashi already stated in this portion the same explanations he gives in his second comments on this verse, namely the comments beginning with the words "the judgment of the Children of Israel." Commenting on the words⁷ "a Choshen of Judgment," Rashi says that the Choshen "atones for the perversion of justice. Another interpretation (is that the Torah calls the Choshen) judgment because it clarifies its words." Why does he repeat both explanations in the very same chapter?

Moreover, he does not just repeat them. He reverses the order in which he states them. We have discussed how precise Rashi is with his chosen words and the order in which he says them. Rashi cites two different explanations because, in Peshat, there is a difficulty with each of them. Nevertheless, the first explanation is closer

7. Our Parshah, Shemos 28:15.

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to Peshat than the second. In our verse, Rashi says that the second explanation is an Aggadic Midrash, i.e., it is not the simple explanation of the verse. However, in 28:15, which uses the reverse order, he places the Aggadic explanation before Peshat.

The Explanation

The explanation is as follows. In the verse before ours, the Torah describes the breastplate in detail⁸. The Torah says, "Aharon shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the Choshen of Judgment over his heart ..." This appears to conclude the discussion of the High Priest's breastplate. However, our verse discusses the Urim V'Tumim, which seems to be a continuation of the discussion of the Choshen. Therefore, Rashi explains that the Urim V'Tumim are not the Choshen but rather an inscription of G-d's Explicit Name placed in its fold. Nonetheless, once he tells us that the Urim V'Tumim caused the letters on the Choshen to light up, it would seem to be an integral part of the Choshen itself! Therefore, Rashi lets us know that during the Second Temple period, although they did not have the Urim V'Tumim, the Choshen was still valid.

This requires explanation. If the Urim V'Tumim had such a substantial effect on the Choshen, why is it not considered one of its essential parts? Therefore, Rashi explains the phrase "the judgment of the Urim." The Choshen with the Urim V'Tumim inserted was called the Choshen of Judgment because it had the quality of judging. However, without the Urim V'Tumim, the Choshen was still a suitable garment for the High Priest.

This is the reason for the order of the verses in the Torah. The conclusion of the details of the Choshen is in verse 28:28. Verse 28:29 begins the particulars regarding the Urim V'Tumim, which caused the Choshen to become the Choshen HaMishpot – the Choshen of Judgment.

That is why when Rashi cites the words "the judgment of the Children of Israel," he *first* explains it to mean "something through which they judged and debated" because that is the main explanation for Rashi's problem here. The first Rashi in this verse explains that "judgment" refers to the Urim V'Tumim. However, since the word "judgment" generally does not refer to deciding what course of action to take; instead, it usually refers to litigants and a judge, Rashi adds the explanation that it was called 'judgment' because it forgave (sins regarding) judgment." However, because it does not address the primary issue of the Torah, finishing the discussion of the Choshen and immediately following it by describing the Urim V'Tumim, Rashi uses this as his second explanation. He introduces it by saying that it is an Aggadic Midrash. This is not the case with verse 28:15, in which the Urim V'Tumim was not yet introduced. Therefore, the first and primary explanation is that judgment refers to litigation.

8. Our Parshah, Shemos 28:29.

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A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

Chassidic philosophy and Kabbalistic works explain the difference between the first and second Bais Hamikdosh – Holy Temple. The Second Temple lacked five spiritual revelations, which were present in the first. This makes it apparent that the First Temple had a greater G-dly revelation than the Second. However, this was not the case. The same level of G-dliness permeated both of them. The difference is that the G-dly light was diffused outside the Temple in the First Temple. In the second, it remained within the Temple.

This helps us understand the difference between the Choshen in the First and Second Temple. In the First Bais Hamikdosh, the holiness of the Choshen reached the outside world, allowing it to decide how to tackle the world outside of the Temple. In the Second Temple, this was not the case.

The same is true during the time of exile. The Hebrew word Choshen - חֹשֶׁן contains the same letters as the Hebrew word for serpent – נָחָשׁ - Nachash, referring to the primordial snake, the evil inclination. At the same time, the numeric equivalent of the phrase חֹשֶׁן is the same as the numeric equivalent of the word מְשִׁיחַ - the Messiah, representing redemption, the time when G-dliness will be revealed throughout the world. We were exiled as a result of our sins. This caused the Choshen to be concealed and the serpent to be revealed. However, the snake will be hidden due to our service with Torah and Mitzvos. This will show the presence of the Choshen, the presence of Moshiach, and the presence of G-d throughout the world.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh 5726)

I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**Mrs. Chana (Anna) bas Reb Shmuel ע"ה
Mendelsohn**

Passed away 7 Adar II, 5752

May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיחיו

* * *

IN HONOR OF

the Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim, Aiden Oded, and Zacharya Matan שיחיו Morris**

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

**Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיחיו
Morris**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Mrs. Esther שתחי' Sharabani

May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON

Mr. Gershon (Geri) שי' Bentov

מוקדש לזכות
כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

* * *

לעילוי נשמת
מרת חנה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה
מענדלסאהן
נפטרה ז' אדר שני תשנ"ב
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדבת בני משפחתה שיחיו

* * *

לזכות
חיילי "צבאות השם"
חיים, עזן עודד וזכרי' מתן שיחיו
מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו

מאריס

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מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק
ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר

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נדפס ע"י בנה
ר' גרשון שי' בן טוב