

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Tetzaveh

9 Adar, 5778 – February 24, 2018

Compiled from the works of
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Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Tetzaveh

Likkutei Sichos Volume 11, Pages 133 – 138

Rashi in His Own Words

שמות כ"ה, ל': וְנָתַתָּ אֶל חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאֲוִירִים וְאֶת הַתְּמִימִים וְהָיוּ עַל לֵב אַהֲרֹן בְּבֹאוֹ לִפְנֵי ה' וְנִשָּׂא 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, 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 refers to the inscription of the explicit Name of Hashem, which he, (Moshe), would place 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 was the Choshen, because it was impossible for the Kohen Gadol to be missing (any of his eight priestly) garments, but that Name was not inside it. Because of that Name, it was called “judgment,” as it is 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, whether or not to do something. According to the Aggadic Midrash, the Choshen atoned for the perverters of justice-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.” Rashi cites the words “the Urim and the Tumim,” and explains “This is the explicit name (of Hashem) which he, (Moshe),

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. Shemos 28:30.

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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). In the Second Temple there was also a Choshen, because it was impossible for the High Priest to 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 intention is to explain Peshat, the simple meaning of the verse. Nevertheless, here, he seems to add things which are not pertinent to Peshat. He adds a lengthy story about the Choshen during the time of the Second Temple, and a Halacha, a Torah law that the Kohen Gadol was not allowed to serve while lacking any of 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 breastplate was called the Choshen of Judgment because it contained the Divine inscription. That would seem to imply that without the inscription the Choshen was invalid, which would contradict Rashi’s explanation regarding the Choshen in the Second Temple.

The explanation is as follows. In the verse immediately prior to ours⁶ the Torah says “Aharon shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the Choshen of judgment over his heart ...” This appears to show us 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 are not a part of the Choshen, but rather an inscription of G-d’s explicit name which was 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 actually was a part of the Choshen itself! Therefore, Rashi lets us know that during the Second Temple period, although the Urim V’Tumim were not extant, the Choshen was still valid.

Rashi’s Explanation

In this week’s Torah portion, Tetzaveh we are told that “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 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. In the Second

3. The Torah 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. Bamidbar 27:21.

6. Shemos 28:29.

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Temple there was also a Choshen, because it was impossible for the High Priest to be missing (any of his eight) garments. 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 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 means “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. It 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 are seemingly totally irrelevant to Peshat? Firstly, he tells us a lengthy story about the Choshen during the time of the Second Temple. He then adds a Halacha, a Torah law that the Kohen Gadol was not allowed to be lacking any of his eight vestments. He had to be wearing all of them in order for his service to be valid.

We know that Rashi only explains those words from the verse which he cites. Why does he also explain a verse which 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 is explaining a verse which appears further on. That verse specifies “the judgment of the Urim,” which implies that the breastplate was called the Choshen of Judgment because it contained the Divine inscription. That would seem to imply 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 exact same explanations which 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 Choshen is referred to as) 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 many times how precise Rashi is with the words which he chooses, and the order in which he states them. When Rashi cites two different explanations, it’s because in Peshat there is a difficulty with both of them. Nevertheless, the first explanation is closer 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 where the order is reversed, he places the Aggadic explanation before Peshat.

7. Shemos 28:15.

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The Explanation

The explanation is as follows. In the verse immediately prior to 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 appears 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 which was 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 the Urim V’Tumim were not extant, the Choshen was still valid.

This requires explanation. If the Urim V’Tumim had such a strong effect upon 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 being able to judge. However, without the Urim V’Tumim the Choshen still served its function as a valid garment of the High Priest.

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

That is the reason that 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 to Rashi’s problem here. In accordance with the first Rashi on this verse, it explains that the word “judgment” refers to the Urim V’Tumim. However, since the word “judgment” generally does not refer to deciding what course of action to take; rather 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 and introduces it by saying that it is an Aggadic Midrash. This is not the case with verse 28:15 where the Urim V’Tumim were not yet introduced. Therefore, the first and primary explanation is that judgment refers to litigation.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

The difference between the first and second Bais Hamikdosh – Holy Temple, is explained in works of Chassidic philosophy and Kabbalistic works. The Second Temple lacked five spiritual revelations which were present in the first. Seemingly, this makes it apparent that the First Temple had a greater level of G-dly revelation

8. Shemos 28:29.

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than the second. However, this was not the case. The same level of G-dliness permeated both of them. The difference is that in the First Temple the Divinity was diffused to the outside, while in the second it remained within the Temple.

This helps us to 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 make decisions in 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 word נָחָשׁ 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, as a result of our service with Torah and Mitzvos the serpent will be concealed, revealing 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)

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the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיקחי Morris**

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיקחי Morris

* * *

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
Mrs. Chanah bas Reb Shmuel ע"ה Mendelsohn**

Passed away on 7 II Adar, 5752

May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER

Mrs. Brocha bas Reb Tzvi Nechemiah Hacoheh ע"ה Cohen

Passed away on 8 Shevat, 5778

May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Mr. Sholom Moshe Hacoheh ben Tzivia ש' Cohen

For a complete and speedy recovery

* * *

DEDICATED BY

Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar ש' Mars

*

May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

* * *

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

*

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

מרת חנה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה מענדלסאהן

נפטר ביום ז' אדר ב', ה'תשנ"ב

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

מרת ברכה בת ר' צבי נחמי' הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטר ביום ח' שבט, ה'תשע"ח

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

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לזכות

ר' שלום משה הכהן בן צבי' שי' כהן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

* * *

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

*

יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן