



## Urim V'Tumim

The last *Mishna* in *perek 7* of *Masechet Yoma* itemises the garments that the *Kohanim* wore during their *avodah*. Regular *kohanim* were required to wear four garments – *kutonet*, *michnasayim*, *mitznefet* and *avnet*. A *kohen gadol* would wear an additional four items – *choshen*, *ephod*, *meil* and *tzitz*. The *Mishna* ends by stating that the *kohen* would be required to wear these eight garments while posing questions to the *urim v'tumim*. The *urim v'tumim* would then provide instructions that would have to be followed.

The *Gemara* in *Yoma* (73b) states that the *urim v'tumim* were so named because *urim* comes from the root of 'or' (light) and they enlighten *Bnei Yisrael* with regard to the will of *Hashem* and *tumim* comes from the root of 'tamim' (complete) because this directive will only come when the people are pure and complete.

There are various interpretations as to what the *urim v'tumim* actually were. *Rav Hai Gaon* is of the opinion that the actual stones of the *Choshen* were the *urim v'tumim*. A support for this opinion is found in the *Meor Einaim* who states that there were two sets of stones on the garments of the *kohen gadol* – that of the *choshen* and on the straps of the *ephod*. It is these two sets of stones that are referred to as the *urim* and the *tumim*. Interestingly, the *Ba'alei Hotosfot* have an explanation on the name based on this interpretation. They state that the various divisions of stones placed in the *choshen* allude to the division of *Eretz Yisrael* between the tribes. The reference to this is seen in the *urim* which means 'medinot' (states) and *tumim* meaning boundaries.

The most common explanation of the *urim v'tumim* is that it was a parchment or scroll inscribed with the *shem hameforash* that was placed between the folds of the *choshen*.<sup>1</sup> The *Ramban* maintains that the *urim v'tumim* were inscribed with many holy names of *Hashem*. This is why they are referred to in plural, rather than singular form. The various names referred to as the *urim* would light up a number of letters on the *choshen*. However, these letters would be in no particular order and would require further interpretation from the *Kohen Gadol*. The various names referred to as the *tumim* would 'complete' the answer for the *kohen*, by providing him with the knowledge to associate the letters into a cohesive unit that would

formulate the response. The *Ramban* states that this level of communication from *Hashem* was ranked between the higher level of *nevuah*, and the relatively lower level of *bat kol*.

The *Ramban* also brings the opinion of the *Ibn Ezra* who states that the *urim v'tumim* were made of silver and gold and were made by the artists along with the instruments of the *mishkan*. These ornaments were placed for safekeeping between the folds of the *choshen*, until they were needed, when they were taken out of the folds. The *Ramban* however disagrees. Firstly, there was never any command in the *Torah* to fashion the *urim v'tumim*. This is different from all other *keilim* of artistry, which had *pesukim* detailing their size, dimension and function. Secondly, there was never any detail given by the *Torah* about them having been made. This is different to the other garments and instruments which have *pesukim* outlining that they be made (eg. "vayaas et haephod"; "vayaas et hachoshen"). Rather the *Ramban* states that the *urim v'tumim* were not made of gold and silver or fashioned by artisans. In fact, the *Ramban* writes that they were not made by *Bnei Yisrael* at all. Either it was a *sod* that was passed on to *Moshe* from *Hashem* which he wrote down, or they were made in *shamayim* by *Hashem* himself and passed on to *Moshe*.

There is an important practical difference between the interpretations. The *Ramban* and other *rishonim* who understand that it is the *shemot hakedusha* would hold that the *urim v'tumim* were not included in the items of the *bigdei kehuna*. However, those that understand it as the stones in the *choshen* or as a metal item (*Ibn Ezra*) would see the *urim v'tumim* as an item included in the *bigdei kehuna*. The difference in these opinions would be if a *kohen* was missing the *urim v'tumim* (as was the case in the times of the second temple). The *halacha* states that a *kohen* cannot undertake the *avodah* while lacking any of his prescribed garments (*mechasar begadim*). A possible answer for the latter opinions would be to say that the *urim v'tumim* did exist in those times, however not as it had previously. In the second temple it was only fashioned as an ornament and had no power to provide any response to *Bnei Yisrael*. Therefore it was in use only to complete the quantity of garments required by the *kohen gadol* without having an inherent function.

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<sup>1</sup> The dimensions of the *choshen* were 1 amah long, and a *zeret* (half amah) wide. When folded in 2 (by length) its measurement was a *zeret* by a *zeret*. The *urim v'tumim* were placed between this fold.

**Revision Questions**

יומא ז' א' ח' ט'

- What clothing would the *kohen gadol* wear when he read for the *Torah* on *Yom Kippur*? (א: ז')
- Which *parshiyot* would the *kohen gadol* read from the *Torah* and which would he say by-heart? (א: ז')
- What else was being performed while the *kohen gadol* was reading from the *Torah*? (ז: ב')
- After changing back into the “golden” clothing, how many animals did the *kohen gadol* sacrifice? (ז: ג')
- Why did the *kohen gadol* change again into his “white” clothes? (ז: ד')
- What did the *kohen gadol* do after changing again back into his “gold” clothes? (ז: ד')
- What were the four garments worn by all *kohanim*? (ז: ה')
- How many extra garments did the *kohen gadol* wear and what were they? (ז: ה')
- When would they confer with the *urim ve'tumim*? (ז: ו')
- What is prohibited from doing on *Yom Kippur*? (ח: א')
- Who does *R' Eliezer* exempt from some of these prohibitions? (ח: א')
- How much food has one eaten and how much food has one drunk one *Yom Kippur* if they are *chayav*? (ח: ב')
- Does food and drink combine to make up this measure? (ח: ב')
- How many *korbanot chatat* would one be obligated to bring if they forgot it was *Yom Kippur* and: (ח: ג')
  - Ate and drank?
  - Ate and performed a *melacha*?
- How long before a child's *bar-* or *bat-mitzvah* does one begin teaching them to fast on *Yom Kippur*? (ח: ד')
- How does one determine how much food to feed a sick person if there is no doctor available to consult? (ח: ה')
- Complete the following phrase: (ח: ו')
 

”\_\_\_\_\_ נפשות \_\_\_\_\_”
- What case appears in the next *Mishnah* that is a practical example of the principle described in the previous question? (ח: ז')
- What else is required for *Yom Kippur* to atone? (ח: ח')
- On what sins does *teshuva* instantly atone? (ח: ח')
- How does the *Mishnah* respond regarding a person who says “I will sin and then do *teshuva*”? (ח: ט')
- On which sins does *Yom Kippur* atone and which require further action in the individual part? (ח: ט')
- What does *R' Akiva* learn from the following *p'sukim*:
 

”וּזְרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מִיַּם טְהוֹרִים” (יחזקאל ל"ו: כ"ה)  
 ”מִקּוּהַ יִשְׂרָאֵל” (ירמיה י"ז: ג')

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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
1 <sup>st</sup> January כ"ט כסלו	2 <sup>nd</sup> January ל' כסלו	3 <sup>rd</sup> January א' טבת	4 <sup>th</sup> January ב' טבת	5 <sup>th</sup> January ג' טבת	6 <sup>th</sup> January ד' טבת	7 <sup>th</sup> January ה' טבת
Sukkah 1:1-2	Sukkah 1:3-4	Sukkah 1:5-6	Sukkah 1:7-8	Sukkah 1:9-10	Sukkah 1:11-2:1	Sukkah 2:2-3

