

Parshat Tetzaveh

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In Parsha Tetzaveh, we learn about one of the most mysterious and compelling items in the Torah: the *choshen mishpat*, the breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol*, the high priest. On the *choshen mishpat* were four rows of precious gems mounted in gold settings. On each of these twelve precious gems the name of one of the twelve tribes was engraved, as well as the names of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov.

The Holy Zohar tells us that included in the breastplate were unusual accoutrements called the *urim vetumim*. On the *urim vetumim* were the forty-two and seventy-two letter names of Hashem. Whenever a Jew needed advice he would go to the *Kohen Gadol* and ask a question about what was bothering him. When he did so, the *urim vetumim*, would light up the letters in a specific sequence in the gems of the *choshen mishpat*, spelling out the answer to the question. The person would be able to see the advice with his own eyes.

Sadly, the *urim vetumim*, the *choshen mishpat*, and all the holy vessels were lost to us during the time of the destruction of the first *Beit Hamikdash*. Today, we can't receive answers in

the same direct manner. It can be so frustrating, even painful, when we have to struggle to make a decision, and when we don't have rock-solid answers and advice. But Reb Noson tells us that we can still get very high-quality advice by looking in to the Torah. The Torah doesn't just mean the Hebrew Bible, the five books of Moses. It also means the rich teachings of Rebbe Nachman as well as many other books, like the Holy Zohar. Reb Noson says that when a Jew looks into the Torah with truth, sincerity, simplicity, the Torah's letters and the Torah's light are going to give him an answer about which path he or she should go on.

Today one of the biggest sufferings people can endure is not knowing which direction to go. It's a constant theme for many of us. We come to a problem and we're not sure which way to head, what choice to make. It can be a legal problem. It can be a material problem such as which doctor to see, or which job to take. It can be a more spiritual problem, like "Which path do I take to serve Hashem?" Whatever the question, if we really delve into the Torah and learn it with pure faith and belief, and if we trust that the answer lies within, eventually we will be directed along the right path.

May you have a day in which the Torah lights up your path.

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