**PARASHAT HASHAVUA**

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**Parashat TETZAVEH**

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**Dedicated in memory of Zvi Kassel,**

**whose *yahrzeit* is the 10 of Adar (February 15th)**

**by Patrice and Danielle Rueff**

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**The *Efod* and the *Choshen***

**Harav Yaakov Medan**

### I. *Efod*

 One of the special garments worn by the High Priest is the *efod.* The Torah mentions two special features of this garment:

1) The *efod* is the base to which the breastplate, the *choshen ha-mishpat*,is connected; the strong connection between the two is reflected in the prohibition to loosen the *choshen* from the *efod.*

2) On the *efod's* shoulder pieces there are two onyx stones, on which are engraved the names of the tribes of Israel:

And you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shall you engrave the two stones, according to the names of the children of Israel; you shall make them to be enclosed in settings of gold. And you shall put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the *efod*, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; and Aharon shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. (*Shemot* 28:9-12)

The onyx stone is also mentioned in the story of the Garden of Eden, together with bdellium (*Bereishit* 2:12). As we have noted elsewhere, there are a number of parallels between the *Mishkan* and the Garden of Eden. It is possible that the bdellium stone alludes to the jar of manna that rested in theHoly of Holies, for "the appearance thereof [of the manna] was as the appearance of bdellium" (*Bamidbar* 11:7), and the onyx stone alludes to the *efod*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

 In any case, the two onyx stones mark the High Priest as the representative of the people of Israel before God, rather than as one who serves based on his own merit. During the Second Temple period, when there were neither the onyx stones nor the stones of the *efod*, the Sadducee High Priests sometimes erred precisely regarding this point.

It is not clear why there is a need for two sets of names of the tribes of Israel, both on the stones of the *choshen* and on the stones of the *efod.* The verses describing the stones of the *efod* and the stones of the *choshen* are also very similar:

And you shall put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the *efod*, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; and Aharon shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. (*Shemot* 28:12)

And Aharon shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. (*Shemot* 28:29)

It may be suggested that the names of tribes of Israel play two roles.

On the two shoulder pieces of the *efod*,the two onyx stones correspond to the two tablets of the testimony.[[2]](#footnote-2) The two tablets contain twelve prohibitions – six on the first tablet ("you shall not have"; "you shall not make"; "you shall not bow"; "you shall not serve"; "you shall not take the name"; and "you shall not do any manner of work") and six on the second tablet ("you shall not murder"; "you shall not commit adultery"; you shall not steal"; you shall not bear false witness"; and twice "you shall not covet"). These correspond to the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on the onyx stones, six on each stone.

The twelve stones on the *choshen* correspond to the twelve stones of the covenant that appear at Mount Sinai, at the crossing of the Jordan, on Mount Eival, and in the story of Eliyahu on Mount Carmel (and according to *Chazal*, *Bereishit Rabba* 68, also in the story of Yaakov at Beit-El). The twelve stones express each individual's personal obligation to the covenant, or at least the obligation of each tribe, as opposed to the obligation of the nation as a whole. The obligation of each tribe is emphasized at the assembly at Arvot Moav (*Devarim* 29). At the same time, the stones express God's commitment to the covenant entered into with each individual member of the nation.

The two onyx stones have a different function. They correspond to the two tablets of the testimony, which serve as two witnesses to the overall covenant with the people. Whereas the two tablets of the covenant are witnesses to the people's commitment to the covenant, the two onyx stones serve as testimony to God's commitment to the people of Israel.

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The meaning of the word *ke-toldotam*, which appears with respect to the writing of the names of the tribes of Israel on the onyx stones, is "in the order of their birth." Nevertheless, this term is open to different interpretations, as we find in the various commentators. We will follow the Rambam, who concludes that the names of the tribes were engraved on the two stones as follows:

On the first stone: Reuven, Levi, Yissachar, Naftali, Gad, Yosef

On the second stone: Shimon, Yehuda, Zevulun, Dan, Asher, Binyamin.

We will explain the Rambam's approach in several stages.

1. The names of tribes are engraved on the stones in the order of their birth, but divided between the two stones: the first tribe on the first stone, the second on the second stone, and then the third tribe back on the first stone.[[3]](#footnote-3) Thus, on the first stone were the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, and eleventh tribes, and corresponding to them on the second stone were the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth tribes.

2. According to the Rambam, the meaning of *ke-toldotam* is not "in the order of their birth to their father," for the births of Yissachar and Zevulun are mentioned in the verses after the birth of the children of the maidservants. Rather, the order is the order of their birth to their mothers. The first six are the children of Leah, who are followed by the children of Bilha, then the children of Zilpa, and finally the children of Rachel. The children of each of the matriarchs appears in the order of their birth to their mother.[[4]](#footnote-4)

3. The name Yosef appears in the form in which it is found in *Tehillim* 81:6: Yehosef.[[5]](#footnote-5) This is so there will be exactly twenty-five letters on each stone.

4. Another noteworthy point in the Rambam's approach, which seems to contradict the simple meaning of the *gemara* in *Sota* (36a), is that the tribe of Yehuda was not advanced, despite its importance.[[6]](#footnote-6)

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According to the exposition of R. Anani, the *efod* atones for the sin of idol worship:

The *efod* procures atonement for idolatry, as it is written: "And without *efod* or *terafim*" (*Hoshea* 3:4). (*Arakhin* 16a)

The verse cited from *Hoshea* (3:4) is one of many that deals with *an efod* used in connection with idol worship or something akin to it. Yet, the atonement procured by the High Priest's *efod* for this sin requires explanation.

The *choshen* itself contained the name of God between its folds, and it expresses the presence of the *Shekhina*. The Torah's insistence on the juxtaposition of the *efod* to the *choshen* – "That the *choshen* not be loosened from the *efod*" (*Shemot* 28:28; 32:21) – may be like the juxtaposition of the prohibition of serving other gods to the commandment of "I am the Lord your God," which expresses the presence of God. These two commandments were proclaimed to Israel by God Himself, and they are read as one.

### II. The *Choshen*

When Yaakov runs away from Esav, he comes upon "the place" in Beit-El, and in the dream of the ladder, God reveals Himself to him and promises to give him the land, to return him to it, and to protect him. In the wake of this, Yaakov takes an oath to accept the Lord as his god.[[7]](#footnote-7) Thus, the revelation of God and the oath that took place in Beit-El merge into a mutual covenant between God and Yaakov. "The stone" – the pillar that was erected there – served as testimony to the covenant that was made there, and it would eventually become the house of God.

 *Chazal* pointed out the contradiction between the taking of a single stone – "And he took the stone that he had put under his head" (*Bereishit* 28:18) – and the statement: "And he took of the stones of the place, and put it under his head" (*Bereishit* 28:11), which was understood as many stones. They understood that they were twelve stones that turned into a single stone, the stone that was erected as a pillar:

R. Yehuda says: He took twelve stones. When they became joined together, he knew that he would give rise to twelve tribes. (*Bereishit Rabba* 68)

It seems that Yaakov's covenant was renewed with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai:

And Moshe wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (*Shemot* 24:4)

The covenant was renewed for the third time when the people of Israel crossed the Jordan with Yehoshua. At that time, they set up twelve stones as a reminder of the miracle of crossing the Jordan and as a sign that God would give them the land and deliver their enemies before them:

And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, did Yehoshua set up in Gilgal. (*Yehoshua* 4:20)

*Chazal* tell us that the Torah was written on these twelve stones when they entered into a covenant with God on Mount Eival. With this covenant, the people of Israel obligated themselves to keep the Torah; because of it they received the land, and with these stones they received the blessings and the curses:

When they were still in the Jordan, Yehoshua said to them: “Let each man take one stone on his shoulder in accordance with the number of the tribes of Israel”… It turns out that there were three types of stones: One that Moshe erected on the bank of the Jordan in Arvot Moav; one that was placed under the feet of the priests; and one that they took with them. R. Yehuda said: They wrote it on the stones of the altar. (Tosefta, *Sota* 8:6)

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The covenant that God made with Israel with the twelve stones was blatantly violated in the days of King Achav:

And Achav made the Ashera; and Achav did yet more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, than all the kings of Israel that were before him. In his days did Chiel the Bethelite build Jericho; with Aviram his firstborn he laid the foundation thereof, and with his youngest son Seguv he set up the gates thereof; according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by the hand of Yehoshua bin Nun. (I *Melakhim* 16:32-34)

The rebuilding of Jericho was intended to flagrantly overturn the covenant that Yehoshua had made with the people at the time of their entry into the land and its miraculous conquest and to forcefully oppose the destruction of Jericho, which expressed the Canaanite culture that prevailed in the country. Eliyahu the prophet attempted to renew the covenant that had been violated:

And Eliyahu took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Yaakov, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying: Israel shall be your name. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. (I *Melakhim* 18:31-34)

### III. The Twelve Stones

Different cases in the Bible point to a pattern that repeats itself time after time: Every time God makes a covenant with the people of Israel – or with its founding father, Yaakov – twelve stones appear as a single unit. The stones are testimony to God's obligation to protect His people, to restore them, and to give them the land of their forefathers, the land of the resting of God's *Shekhina*. On the other hand, these stones are testimony to the parallel commitment on the part of the people of Israel to loyally keep God's path and commandments and to accept Him as their God.

The twelve stones, which correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel, are testimony to this covenant, just as the tablets of the testimony correspond to the stones of the testimony, and similarly the stone that Yehoshua erected at Shekhem. The appearance of these stones as a unified structure expresses Israel's commitment as one people, the people of God, to the covenant. The fact that these are twelve stones expresses that every tribe, and in fact every individual of the people of Israel, is personally bound by this covenant, and cannot evade it on the grounds of "individual freedom," according to which the covenant made with the people of Israel does not relate to him on the personal level.

The dream of the ladder at Beit-El, the covenant at Mount Sinai, the covenant at the time of the crossing of the Jordan, and the covenants at Mount Eival and at Mount Carmel[[8]](#footnote-8) were covenants at particular points in time and in particular places. A covenant of the twelve stones as a constant covenant appears in our *parasha* in the garments of the High Priest, on the *choshen*:

And the stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes. (*Shemot* 28:21)

There are twelve stones on the *choshen* – one stone unique to each tribe – and they all fit into one structure. In addition, according to *Chazal*, the explicit name of God, the Tetragrammaton, lay in a pocket of the *choshen* sewn behind the stones. The combination of the special stones of the tribes of Israel together with the explicit name of God leads to what is described in the verse:

And Aharon shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Tumim; and they shall be upon Aharon's heart, when he goes in before the Lord, for a memorial before the Lord continually… and Aharon shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. (*Shemot* 28:29-30)

The remembrance of the names of the children of Israel "before the Lord continually" expresses God's commitment to the covenant with His people. At the same time, "the judgment of the children of Israel," which Aharon also bears upon his heart expresses Israel's commitment to God. This mutual commitment is borne on the twelve stones that rest on Aharon's heart in the *choshen.*

These twelve stones are a reflection of the twelve stones that Yaakov erected in his covenant with God in Beit-El and of the twelve stones that Moshe erected at Mount Sinai. The continuation of the twelve stones of the *choshen* was in the twelve stones that Yehoshua erected at the time of the crossing of the Jordan and in the very same stones at the time of the covenant at Mount Eival, and in their wake, Eliyahu on Mount Carmel.

### IV. The Urim and the Tumim

In addition to carrying the covenant between God and the tribes of Israel, the *choshen* – the pocket behind the twelve stones – also carried the Urim and the Tumim: “And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Tumim” (*Shemot* 28:30).

The nature of the Urim and the Tumim is not explained in our *parasha*. From other places it seems – at least regarding the Urim – that they are God's way of protecting Israel from their enemies during wartime and of informing them of their impending victory with His help.

Thus, we find regarding Yehoshua at the time of his appointment to lead Israel in the conquest of the land:

And he shall stand before Elazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. (*Bamidbar* 27:21)

 The Urim served in a similar role in the opposite direction, on the day of God's wrath, on the eve of Shaul's severe and painful defeat in the Gilboa in his battle against the Pelishtim:

And when Shaul saw the host of the Pelishtim, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Shaul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. (I *Shemuel* 28:5-6)

Thus, the Urim are the way by which God fulfills His part in the covenant of the twelve stones with His people, and through which He shows them the path to victory and instructs His people when and how to fight.

Here we must clarify the difference between the Urim and prophecy. Prophecy also prepares the nation's leader for war. One example of many:

And when you come near over against the children of Amon, harass them not, nor contend with them; for I will not give you of the land of the children of Amon for a possession… Rise you up, take your journey, and pass over the valley of Arnon; behold, I have given into your hand Sichon the Amorite, king of Cheshbon, and his land; begin to possess it and contend with him in battle. (*Devarim* 2:19-24)

It seems that God has two ways to communicate with His people. The first way is represented by Moshe, the greatest of the prophets; God speaks to him "mouth to mouth" (*Bemidbar* 12:8). The second way is represented by Aharon, the greatest priest; God informs him of His words to His people by way of the Urim in the *choshen*, through "the judgment of the children of Israel" and through the letters of the names of the tribes on the stones of the *choshen.*  The conversation with him passes through the power of the people of Israel, the *Shekhina*, which finds expression in the names of the tribes of Israel. This may be the reason that *Chazal* referred to Moshe as "the agent of the king" and Aharon as "the agent of the lady" (*Zohar, Metzora* 53b and elsewhere) in the covenant between the king and the lady; the king is God, and the lady is the *Shekhina* and she herself is the people of Israel.

### V. The Concubine in Giv'a

We find that when Israel finds favor in God's eyes, God gives instructions through the Urim that are useful in battle, and thus leads Israel to victory. This was the case in the war at Bezek:

And it came to pass after the death of Yehoshua, that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying: “Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” And the Lord said: “Yehuda shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand”… And Yehuda went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizites into their hand; and they smote of them in Bezek ten thousand men. (*Shofetim* 1:1-4)

As we saw in Shaul's war against the Pelishtim in the Gilboa, there are times when God does not answer His people because of His anger directed against the king or the people. But beyond that, we find that sometimes His answer by way of the Urim is misleading and leads to a loss in the war. This is what happened on the first two days of the war that followed the incident of the concubine at Giv'a:

And the children of Israel arose, and went up to Beit-El, and asked counsel of God; and they said: “Who shall go up for us first to battle against the children of Binyamin?” And the Lord said: “Yehuda first”… And the children of Binyamin came forth out of Giv'a and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites on that day twenty and two thousand men. And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves, and set the battle again in array in the place where they set themselves in array the first day. And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until evening; and they asked of the Lord, saying: “Shall I again draw near to battle against the children of Binyamin my brother?” And the Lord said: “Go up against him”… And the children of Israel came near against the children of Binyamin the second day. And Binyamin went forth against them out of Giv'a the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. (*Shofetim* 20:18-25)

How is it possible that the guidance of the Urim led to a defeat? Do the Urim mislead those who inquire of them?

It seems that the answer to this question lies in understanding the basis of the power of the Urim, as we have explained it thus far. The Urim are an expression of God's obligation to deliver Israel from their enemies and to grant them the land of His desire. The expression passes through the power of the people of Israel and the letters of the names of the tribes set in the *choshen*.

But the battle that followed the incident of the concubine at Giv'a was a civil war. The letters of the *yashfeh* stone of the tribe of Binyamin, against whom the rest of the tribes of Israel fought, did not light up when the Israelite asked how to fight against them. Since the letters of one stone did not shine, the answer provided by the Urim was flawed and misleading.

Even King David, when he inquired of the Urim and the Tumim in the battle of Ke'ila regarding whether Shaul would pursue him and whether the people of Ke'ila would hand him over, received a short, pessimistic, and incidental answer:

And David knew that Shaul devised mischief against him; and he said to Evyatar the priest: “Bring the *efod*.” Then said David: “O Lord, the God of Israel, Your servant has surely heard that Shaul seeks to come to Ke'ila, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Ke'ila deliver me up into his hand? Will Shaul come down, as Your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, I beseech You, tell Your servant.” **And** **the Lord said: “He will come down.”** Then said David: “Will the men of Ke'ila deliver up me and my men into the hand of Shaul?” **And the Lord said: “They will deliver you up.”** (I *Shemuel* 23:9-12)

David was being persecuted by Shaul, and justice was on his side, but in the end it was a civil war between him and Shaul. David received an answer of an entirely different character when he inquired by way of the same *efod* regarding the war against Amalek at Tziklag:

And David said to Evyatar the priest, the son of Achimelekh: “I pray you, bring me the *efod*.” And Evyatar brought the *efod* to David. And David inquired of the Lord, saying: “Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?” **And He answered him: “Pursue; for you shall surely overtake them and shall without fail recover all.****”** (I *Shemuel* 30:7-8)

VI. **The Tumim**

 In the previous section, we dealt with the Urim, which express God's obligation to the covenant of the twelve stones, His obligation to protect His people and give them the land. It might be expected then that the Tumim express the obligation of the people to the covenant of the twelve stones. We will content ourselves for now with mention of the initial connection between the Tumim and Israel's obligation to the covenant:

And of Levi he said: Your Tumim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You did prove at Massa, with whom You did strive at the waters of Meriva; who said of his father, and of his mother: I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew he his own children; for they have observed Your word, and keep Your covenant. (*Devarim* 33:8-9)

The Tumim, which are mentioned here in an exceptional manner before the Urim, were given to the tribe of Levi in general, and to Aharon the High Priest in particular, in the wake of their readiness to sacrifice their lives, and even the lives of their close family members, in order to keep God's covenant with them.

The Urim and the Tumim together preserve the covenant of the twelve stones between God and His people.

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We wish to add a note about the essence of the *choshen* from the exposition of R. Anani:

The *choshen* procures atonement for [error in] legal decisions, as it is written: "And you shall make a breastplate of judgment" (*Shemot* 28:15). (*Arakhin* 16a)

The connection between the *choshen* and judgment is reflected in the assignment of the tribal territories that was done by way of the Urim and the Tumim. It would seem that the Tumim also determined the family genealogies, as at the time of the return to Zion:[[9]](#footnote-9)

These sought their register, that is, the genealogy, but it was not found; therefore, were they deemed polluted and put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Tumim. (*Ezra* 2:52-63)

 Thus, the Tumim also determined the territory to be given to each family in the framework of its tribe. It is possible that it is from here that we derive the Tumim's responsibility for the entire judicial system and for atonement for any perversions of justice.

### VII. Judgment

And Aharon shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Tumim; and they shall be upon Aharon's heart when he goes in before the Lord; and Aharon shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. (*Shemot* 28:29-30)

In these two verses, one point is mentioned twice: Aharon bears the names or the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart. The first time this statement appears before the Urim and the Tumim are placed in the breastplate of judgment, and the second time afterwards. The word "judgment" appear three times in these verses. To the three instances of the word "judgment" we must add the word "memorial," which appears in the first verse, for in general it means "judgment." What follows from here is that by way of the breastplate of judgment, the names of the children of Israel are found in judgment before God continually.

What is the meaning of the double appearance of the bearing of the judgment of the children of Israel? It seems that the term "judgment" has two meanings, which might accord with these two appearances. The judgment may be the judgment between the people of Israel and themselves, as what appears from the need to atone for perversions of justice. This accords with what we know from *Chazal* – that the tribal territories of the people of Israel were determined in accordance with the Urim and the Tumim in the breastplate of judgment:

And it was only divided by [the direction] of] the Urim and Tumim, for it is stated: "According to the speaking of the lot" (*Bamidbar* 26:56). How was this done? Elazar was wearing the Urim and the Tumim, while Yehoshua and all Israel stood before him. (*Bava Batra* 122a)

Apparently, the division and allocation of the land was the first judgment that all Israelites needed. It was also the most important financial judgment in Jewish history, because the division of the land into tribal territory and family plots was for all time. This "judgment of the children of Israel" served as a typical model for the comprehensive responsibility of the *choshen* for judgment in Israel.

The second way to explain "the judgment of the children of Israel" does not relate to judgment between man and his fellow, but rather as the verse says: "a memorial before the Lord" – Israel stands for judgment before God for their actions. Again, "memorial" in Scripture relates to judgment,[[10]](#footnote-10) and "a memorial before the Lord" is judgment before Him. It is possible that the clearest expression of this judgment is the wars of Israel against their enemies. In these situations, the judgment of the children of Israel revolves around the question of whether God will shine His face upon them, or God forbid hide His face from them, or even worse, set His face upon them with His attribute of justice. Here the role of the *choshen*, the Urim and the Tumim,finds expression in the decision whether Israel should go out to war and whether they will emerge victorious.

The Urim and the Tumim served in this role in all of Israel's wars. Indeed, in the first instructions given concerning the use of the Urim and the Tumim, it is stated:

And he shall stand before Elazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. (*Bamidbar* 27:21)

The term "shall they go out" in this verse refers to Israel's going out to war.

Another example is found at the beginning of the book of *Shofetim*:

And it came to pass after the death of Yehoshua, that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying: “Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” And the Lord said: “Yehuda shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.” (*Shofetim* 1:1-2)

The Israelites ask God, by way of the Urim and the Tumim, who should go up first to fight against the Canaanites.

The role of the *choshen* is therefore mainly in two realms – judgment and wars. These two duties are imposed also on the king of Israel:

For the entire purpose of appointing a king is to execute justice and wage wars, as it is stated (I *Shemuel* 8:20): "Our king shall judge us, go out before us, and wage our wars." (Rambam, *Hilkhot Melakhim* 4:10)

(Translated by David Strauss)

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1. It is notable that of the twelve stones of the *choshen*, the onyx stone is the stone of Yosef. Perhaps it may be inferred from this that the unique appearance of the onyx on the shoulder pieces of the *efod*, and on it the names of the tribes, alludes to the Yosef's uniqueness as "father of the tribes," and not just as one of the tribes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The tribes are divided into two sets of six at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, but the division there is not the same as the division of the names of the tribes between the onyx stones. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is against the simple meaning of the *gemara* in *Sota* (36a-b). See Radbaz and *Kesef Mishneh*, *Hilkhot Kelei Ha-Mikdash* 9:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This is against the view of Rashi (*Sota* 36a), who counts the sons of the maidservants before Yissachar and Zevulun. In our humble opinion, his position is difficult, as it stands to reason that the births of Gad and Asher almost paralleled the births of Dan and Naftali (a little bit afterward), and so Gad was born before Naftali. For if "in the order of their birth" is precisely the order recorded in the Torah, how were twelve children (including Dina) born in seven years? [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Following the view of R. Yitzchak, but apparently against the conclusion of the *gemara* in *Sota*. Rashi on the Torah, as well as the *Semag*, argues that the added letter is an added *yud* in Binyamin. See *Kesef Mishneh* (ibid.) and at length in Mahari Kurkus (ibid.). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This too is against the plain meaning of the *gemara* in *Sota* (ibid.). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Ramban, *Bereishit* 28:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. According to the Tosefta, we must add to the list the covenant at Arvot Moav before the death of Moshe, where there were also twelve stones. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. My colleague R. Aharon Friedman expanded upon the connection between the Tumim and families with respect to inheritance. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. There are many examples of this. We will limit ourselves to one example: Rosh Hashana is called "*Yom Ha-Zikaron*" because it is a day of judgment, as is evidenced by the fact that the *Zikhranot* on this day deal with judgment: "And about the lands about which it will be said: Which is for the sword, and which for peace… and the people will be remembered for life and for death" – that is to say, to judge them for life or for death. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)