



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Message of the Me'il

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

"You shall make the Me'il of the Ephod entirely out of Ticheles wool" (28:31)

One of the eight special garments that the *Kohen Gadol*, the high priest, would wear was the *Me'il*, a full-length robe that went from his neck down to the floor. The Talmud (Zevachim 88b) teaches us that each of the *Kohen Gadol's* vestments would provide atonement for various sins that may have been committed by the Jewish people. The *Me'il* would atone for the sin of *Lashon Hara*, evil speech.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that various attributes of the *Me'il* remind a person to avoid *Lashon Hara*. For instance, the color of the *Me'il* was *Ticheles*, a blue color which the sages (Sotah 17a) teach is symbolic of the heavens. The heavens are reminiscent of Hashem's Throne of Glory, which would remind a person that the words one utters are heard all the way up in the heavens and are not to be taken lightly.

The *Me'il* also had a double fold on its edges. This symbolizes that a person should doubly seal one's mouth and ears from speaking or listening to evil speech.

Yet another example are the series of alternating golden bells and cloth pomegranates that lined the bottom of the *Me'il*. The bells would chime as the *Kohen Gadol* walked while the pomegranates would not make any sound. This conveys the message that one should know when to speak and also when to be silent. One should use one's mouth liberally when uttering words of Torah and engaging in Mitzvos, but one should remain silent from speaking *Lashon Hara*.

Blessed is the person who can properly control the words that leave their mouth!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

This is what you shall do for them... take a bull... (29, 1)

Rav Anani bar Satheson said, "Why is the Parsha of the priestly garments juxtaposed with the offerings? To teach that just as offerings atone, so too the priestly garments bring atonement. (Eiruchin 16a)

If not for the atonement brought from the priestly garments, B'nei Yisrael would be destroyed. (Yoma 72a)

Because due to the priestly garments, the offerings are able to be brought. (Rashi on that Gemara)

Are the priestly garments enough to atone, or only via the offerings they enable to be brought?

Parsha Riddle

What were the names of the seven maids of Esther?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What connection is there between this month and the month of Av?

Answer: Both months affect our happiness. In Adar we increase our happiness and in Av we diminish it.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Tetzaveh (28:30) contains the instruction to place the mysterious "Urim" and "Tumim" into the Breastplate of Judgment. The Torah does not provide any explanation of what the Urim and Tumim are, and a variety of interpretations are advanced by the commentaries. Ibn Ezra, in an explanation almost as mysterious as the Biblical text itself, seems to understand that the Urim and Tumim had some connection to astrology and / or astronomy, and some have understood him to mean that they were scientific instruments, like the medieval astrolabe (*Meor Einayim, Imrei Binah* ch. 46).

The Rashba explicitly mentions the interpretation of the Urim and Tumim as the astrolabe – in the context of his fiery denunciations of a radical exegetical school that (allegedly) interpreted much of the Bible allegorically (*Shut. Ha-Rashba* 1:416-417). It is most ironic, then, that the Rashba is also the author of the most famous and halachically important discussion of the astrolabe, addressing the permissibility of its use on Shabbos, in which he rules leniently!

It is merely like one of the books of (scientific) wisdom – what difference is there between that which is written and marked on copper tablets with an iron pen, and that which is written in a book. (*ibid.* 4:102)

Although astrolabes are now obsolete, the Rashba's underlying assumption, that reading books of science is permitted on Shabbos, is more relevant today, with the incredible proliferation of books and other literature in our time, than it ever was. The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 307:17) actually cites two opinions on the matter: he initially rules that it is prohibited to study anything other than Torah on Shabbos, and even works of wisdom are prohibited, but subsequently adds that "some allow" this, as well as the use of the astrolabe. The *Mishneh Berurah* (#65) states that the custom is to be lenient, but that the *Eliyahu Rabbah* writes that one who fears Heaven should be stringent and follow the first view.

Some contemporary authorities define "wisdom" quite narrowly, excluding history and fiction from the category, and thus prohibit reading such literature according to all opinions (*The Shabbos Home*, Vol. 1 pp. 57-64; *Orchos Shabbos* Vol. 2 p. 391), although others forbid only secular material "that has no value" and permit that which "has value" (*Peninei Halachah Shabbat* 22:12).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I'm named for the High Priest's garment
2. I'm for the money matters.
3. The lips of the Kohen explain me.
4. I also have "enlighteners."

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Wrapped.
2. On top.
3. One of four and one of eight.
4. I was not black.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Aron (Ark) (Three in one, Covered, Surrounded, I am not the Kohen Gadol)

#2 Menorah (One to seven, Bright idea, Burn, Fiery creation.)

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