

Peer Into the Future?  
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If you could know your future  
if you could peer around the corner  
to know something or everything  
that is going to happen to you

Would you want to know?

Would you want to know what life has in store for you?

Think about it.

What if there was someone who you decided to visit, maybe a fortune teller--and asked her (or him) to predict your life. . .

Maybe by reading your hand, or coffee grounds, or a Ouija board or a Tarot cards?

What would motivate you?

What level of credibility would you put in this person's discernment to tell you, accurately, about your future given the simple fact that for the most part, the person with whom you are consulting knows nothing about your life experience, nothing about your health, nothing about your family.

How would a person who does not know you serve you?

People have always been fascinated by peering into the future. We have always wondered what the future holds.

Most of us, though, when we think about it, are glad that we are unable to look into our future.

And conferring some kind of magical power on a person to predict gives a lot of ourselves away to someone who in any other part of life we probably would not give the time of day.

Tetzaveh, this week's Torah portion, begins with the words: "Command the Israelites to make. . ."

It then delineates a long, elaborately detailed list of what they are to make, including the clothing for the high priest, for Aaron. Amid the instructions are that Aaron is to have a breastplate with jewels on it representing each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Then we learn about two items without description: *Urim* and *Tummim*.

For a chatty parasha loaded with minute details, the paucity of description of the function of the *Urim* and *Tummim* stands out.

Torah only tells us:

"And you are to put in the breastpiece of Judgment (the *Choshen Mishpat*) the *Urim* and the *Tummim*, that they may be over Aaron's heart, whenever he comes before the presence of YHWH." (Ex. 28:30)

The Hebrew doesn't give us a hint of their purpose.

"*Urim*" is the plural for light.

"*Tummim*" is the plural for *tam* or "simple."

Light...simple.

Whatever the function of the *Urim* and *Tummim*, one wonders if these are, in fact, some kind of ancient Near Eastern amulet-like object for Aaron to have over his heart.

Whatever it may be, the only hint we have is that it is to be placed over Aaron's heart, the seat of intelligence in the Hebrew Bible, where discernment could be found.

Perhaps it is to remind him of his unique role.

That he is to maintain humility in representing the entire community before God.

That he is to have humility in his actions before the community.

Instead of being an amulet to for some kind of mysterious fortune telling or predicting the future, or even knowing the lives of all 600,000 people, it is the opposite:

**a tool for Aaron to use to maintain humility given the heavy mantle that upon him.**

This is another wonderful example for us.

Often time we are quick to judge others for what they say or what they do.

When we do that, we find ourselves reacting without first pausing to ask ourselves:

“Why is this person doing this? What happened to them today? What happened to them recently?”

Why do I rush to judgment of others when I have NO IDEA of what is going on in their lives?”

These are wise words to consider. No doubt that we humans judge too easily. We do not have an *Urim* and *Tummim* draped over our hearts to remind us to practice humility.

It behooves us to think about what may be going on in the other person’s life. When we do that we may not be so quick to judge, or condemn, another’s behaviors.

Perhaps it will allow us to find a bit of humility, a bit of compassion, a bit of sympathy. We can say to ourselves that we are fortunate to not have to live in that person’s being in this moment. We can take a step back to and reflect on our life’s experience to this point.

In so doing, we remember our humility and our ability to shape our lives and the lives of others for good.