

אורים ותמים לעומת אבות וידענים

אבנר רמו



Yale University stamp of approval, employed since 1736

In accordance with the view that *Urim and Thummim* could be translated as "Light and Truth", the Latin equivalent *Lux et Veritas* has been used for several university mottoes. *Lux et Veritas* is the motto of Indiana University, and of the University of Montana. Similarly, Northeastern University's motto is *Lux, Veritas, Virtus* (Light, Truth, Virtue).

In the Book of Exodus we read:

וירכסו את-החשן מטבעתו אל-טבעת האפוד בפתיל תכלת, להיות על-חשב האפוד; ולא-יזח החשן מעל האפוד.
ונשא אהרן את-שמות בני-ישראל בחשן המשפט על-לבו-בבאו אל-הקדש: לזכרון לפני-יהוה תמיד.

ונתת אל-חשן המשפט את-האורים ואת-התמים, והיו על-לב אהרן בבאו לפני יהוה;
“And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof to the rings of the ephod with a thread of blue, that it may be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.

And Aaron 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 *YHWH* continually.

And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before *YHWH*” (Ex 28:28-30; see also: Lev 8:8-9).

Although there is no detailed explanation in the Bible about the nature of “the Urim and the Thummim” it appears that they were an integral part of the triad that included also the חשן (*khoshen*) - “breastplate”(?) or “oracle”(?), and the אפוד (*ephod*) - “ephod”(?).

Although, in several biblical accounts we find only the name of one element of this inseparable complex, we may assume that the complete triad was present there.

While in the Book of Exodus we read about **חשן המשפט** - “breastplate of judgment” (Ex 28:29-30), we read in the Book of Numbers: **“ואשאל לו במשפט האורים לפני יהוה ויאמר יהוה - and he shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before YHWH”** (Num 27:21).

Now we read that when David was seeking God’s advice:

**וידע דוד- כי עליו שאול מחריש הרעה; ויאמר אל-אביתר הכהן, הגישה האפוד.
ויאמר דוד, יהוה אלהי ישראל, שמע שמע עבדך כי-מבקש שאול לבוא אל-קעילה-לשחת
לעיר בעבורי.
היסגרני בעלי קעילה בידו הירד שאול, כאשר שמע עבדך-יהוה אלהי ישראל, הגד-נא
לעבדך; ויאמר יהוה, ירד.**

“And David knew that Saul devised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest: Bring hither the ephod.

Then said David: YHWH, the God of Israel, Your servant had surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant had heard? YHWH, the God of Israel, I beseech You, tell Your servant. And YHWH said: He will come down” (1 Sam 23:9-11).

Earlier in the same book we read that when King Saul was seeking God’s advice whether he should further pursue the Philistines:

**ויאמר הכהן, נקרבה הלם אל-האלהים.
וישאל שאול באלהים, הארד אחרי פלשתים, התתנם ביד ישראל; ולא ענהו ביום ההוא.
ויאמר שאול-גשו הלם כל פנות העם; ודעו וראו-במה היתה החטאת הזאת היום.
“Then said the priest: Let us draw near hither to God.
And Saul asked counsel of God: Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel? But He answered him not that day.
And Saul said: Draw nigh hither, all you chiefs of the people; and know and see wherein this sin had been this day”** (1 Sam 14:36-38).

**ויאמר שאול, אל-יהוה אלהי ישראל-הבה תמים; וילכד יונתן ושאול, והעם יצאו.
“Therefore Saul said to YHWH, the God of Israel: Declare the right. And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot; but the people escaped”** (1 Sam 14:41).

However, the content of this narrative suggests that this verse was corrupted by a letter-deletion error that resulted in incorrect division of the letters to words. Based on the reading of:

“Bring the food” (2 Sam 13:10), we suggest the following reading:
**ויאמר שאול, אל-יהוה אלהי ישראל—הבא התמים; וילכד יונתן ושאול, והעם יצאו.
“And Saul said: Bring the Thummim to YHWH the God of Israel. And Jonathan and Saul were entrapped; but the people came out [free].”**

We also read in the Book of Samuel:

**וירא שאול את-מחנה פלשתים; וירא ויחרד לבו מאד.
וישאל שאול ביהוה, ולא ענהו יהוה-גם בחלמות גם באורים, גם בנביאם.
“And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.**

And when Saul inquired of YHWH, YHWH answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets” (1 Sam 28:5-6).

It appears that King Saul felt abandoned by God and in desperation he, about whom we have previously been told: **ושאול הסיר האבות ואת-הידענים—מהארץ** - “**And Saul had put away those that divined by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land**” (1 Sam 28:3), is now seeking to communicate with the dead Prophet Samuel.



Witch of Endor. By Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge 1857

In spite of the warning:

והנפש אשר תפנה אל-האבת ואל-הידענים לזנות אחריהם-ונתתי את-פני בנפש ההוא, והכרתי אתו מקרב עמו.

“And the soul that turns to the ghosts, and to the familiar spirits, to go astray after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people” (Lev 20:6), King Saul the leader of the Israelites who are facing the Philistine enemy, tells his men:

ויאמר שאול לעבדיו, בקשו-לי אשת בעלת-אוב, ואלכה אליה, ואדרשה-בה;

“Then said Saul to his servants: Seek me a woman that divines by a ghost, that I may go to her, and inquire” (1 Sam 28:7).

The verb **דרש** (*darosh*) - “inquire” appears in relation to **אבות** (*ovoth*) also in the Book of Isaiah: **דרשו אל-האבות ואל-הידענים** - “Seek to the ghosts and the familiar spirits” Is 8:19; see also: Is 19:3), but we also find once: **ושאל אוב וידעני, ודרש אל-המתים** - “or one that consults a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer” (Deu 18:11).

The association of **אבות** (*ovoth*) with both these verbs may have confused the Chronicler who wrote:

וימת שאול במעלו אשר מעל ביהוה, על-דבר יהוה אשר לא-שמר; וגם-לשאול באוב, לדרוש.

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against YHWH, because of the word of YHWH, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of a ghost, to inquire thereby” (1 Ch 10:13).

The last word of this verse **לדרוש** (*lidrosh*) - “to inquire” is grammatically disconnected, and may have been added by a scribe who was aware of the two verbs that appear elsewhere in relation to **אבות** (*ovoth*). Alternatively, verse Deu 18:11) suggests that the original version of the Chronicler was: **לשאול באוב, לדרוש אל-המתים** – “to consult the ghost, to inquire with the dead” as actually was done by King Saul.

We are told that when Sheba, the son of Bichri and his followers who revolted against King David, found refuge in the town of Abel Beth-maacah, they were besieged by Joab and the men of Judah. Now we hear the wise woman who called Joab from the town and told him:

ותאמר לאמר: דבר ידברו בראשנה לאמר, שאול ישאלו באבל וכן התמו.

“Then she spoke, saying: They were wont to speak in old time, saying: They shall surely ask counsel at Abel; and so they ended the matter” (2 Sam 20:18).

The Greeks translated this verse as follows:

“And she said saying: A saying they spoke at first saying: When inquired of, one was inquired of in Abel and in Dan if they had abandoned what the faithful of Israel had established. When inquiring they shall inquire in Abel, and likewise if they abandoned it.”

It seems that already when the Septuagint was written, this verse appeared odd and in spite of the translators efforts it remained enigmatic. However, we suggest that this is the result of an erroneous letter-deletion and erroneous division to words, and that instead of

שאול ישאלו באבל וכן התמו (*shaol yishalu beavel vechen hethamu*) we should read:

שאול ישאלו באב לו וכן התמו (*shaol yishalu bov lo vechen hethamu*) - “they surly asked the ghost about him, and they also asked the Thummim.”