

You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, Your G-d. (18:13)

Temimus, simple faith, is not so simple. It takes a special person, whose faith in Hashem is unequivocal, to achieve *temimus*. It requires one: to live a life of acquiescence; to ask no questions; to believe that everything is for the good; to maintain wholesome belief in Hashem that everything that occurs in one's life is Divinely orchestrated. The *tamim* lives only in the moment. The future is completely in the hands of Hashem. *Horav Pinchas Koritzer, zl*, teaches that only two *mitzvos* or observances are to be carried out with Hashem: *temimus*, wholehearted faith; and *tznius*, modesty. (*Hatznea leches im Elokecha*, "And to walk humbly with your G-d" *Michah* 6:8). In regard to these two religious/ethical attributes, it is easy to deceive our fellow human being (and, by extension, ourselves). It is easy to appear to be wholehearted in one's belief. It is easy to put on a show that one is modest. In both cases, the individual acts faithfully and modestly, although, behind closed doors, it could not be further from the truth.

"I want no *kavod*, honor; no accolades; I lead a simple life; everything I do is purely *l'shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven, etc." We have all heard it, and, at first glance, we might even fall for the deceit, until that time that we listen to the person and do not give him the *kavod* that he so passionately relishes and upon which he thrives.

It is easy to appear wholehearted and to act modestly, but only Hashem knows the truth about the person. Therefore, to truly be a wholehearted man of faith, to be modest (not just act modestly), it must be with Hashem – because He knows who you really are. What greater litmus test than interaction with Hashem?

A true *tamim* believes – under all circumstances. In *Yeshivas Ponevez*, there worked a cook who was a Romanian immigrant. His name was *Reb Zalmen*. His life was the *yeshivah*. Day and night, *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* – he never left his "post" in the kitchen, the dining room. He stood there and relished with extreme satisfaction when the *bachurim*, students, would line up to get their portions. He was serving *talmidei chachamim*. He was playing a role in their spiritual growth. Suddenly, one day, *Reb Zalmen* did not show up for work. This went on for two months, until one day, just as suddenly as he had disappeared, he appeared once again, ready to return to work.

"*Reb Zalmen* – where have you been? We missed you." "I appreciate your concern," *Reb Zalmen* began. "There is a reason why I was gone, and there is a reason why I have returned. You know that my life revolves around the *yeshivah*. My domain might be the kitchen, but my life is the *yeshivah*. My wife, *Shoshanah*, became ill and, after undergoing a battery of tests, the doctors said to me, 'Zalmen – *Shoshanah* is gone. Well – not gone yet, but our advice to you is not to give treatment, because it will cause her extreme pain and will not alter the inevitable. You have to get used to the fact that *Shoshanah* is not long for this world.'

"What does one do upon hearing such terrible earth-shattering news? I went to *Rav Shach* (reference to *Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez*). I asked him, '*Rebbe*, I have a

question on the way Hashem “runs things.” The *Rosh Yeshivah* looked at me with sort of a smile on his lips and a twinkle in his eyes. *Rav Shach* is quite aware that I am devoted to my job. I am trustworthy; I take no vacation. Indeed, I go nowhere, because my first and foremost *achrayos*, responsibility, is to the *yeshivah*. We prepare the food, so that the *bachurim* can study Torah. We want them to be healthy students of Torah, so we do everything to see to it that their meals are tasty, nourishing and satisfying. Now, the doctors have informed me that my *Shoshanah* will soon die. Is this right? Where is the *koach*, power, of Torah? This is the least that the *yeshivah* owes me. I do not care about money. I go nowhere. I only need for my wife to be healthy. Is that so much to ask?’

“The *Rosh Yeshivah* closed his eyes. After a few minutes, it seemed to me that he had fallen asleep. So, I said, ‘Fine, I have my answer. I need nothing from the *yeshivah*. I will make it on my own’, and I prepared to leave. As soon as I said this, the *Rosh Yeshivah* opened his eyes and said to me, ‘*Reb Zalmen*, where are you going? Sit down. Tell me, will you continue to work for the *yeshivah*?’ I replied, ‘*Rebbe*, I have nothing else in my life other than the *yeshivah*. The *bachurim* study Torah in the *Bais Hamedrash*, and *Zalmen* and *Shoshanah* work in the kitchen. This is the way it has always been.’ ‘If this is the case,’ *Rav Shach* continued, ‘why worry? Do you think that Hashem will hold back the reward you rightfully deserve for your total devotion to the *yeshivah*? Your wife will be healthy!’

“I became a bit angry, and I asked, ‘How will she be healthy, if the doctors have already despaired for her recovery?’ The *Rosh Yeshivah* said, ‘This is no problem. Take her immediately to the *Kupat Cholim* and turn to the first doctor that you meet. Whatever medication he gives her will work, and she will be healed!’

“This is exactly what happened. Now I and *Shoshanah* have returned to the only life that we know – the *yeshivah*.”

Reb Zalmen is an example of a person whose wholehearted faith in Hashem was unequivocal. He was not a great scholar, but he certainly was not a “simple” Jew. His faith was *peshutah*, simple, but that was the only thing about him that was simple.