

## **You shall be whole hearted with Hashem, your G-d. (18:13)**

*Rashi* explains this to mean that one should follow Hashem with perfect faith, not being concerned about what will occur in the future (as was the custom in those days to seek out the counsel of diviners and astrologers). This means accepting whatever befalls a person with wholeheartedness and absolute conviction, recognizing it as the will of Hashem. Once, during the Middle Ages (as quoted by *Horav Eli Munk, zl*, in *The Call of the Torah*), a holy man gave a *kemeiah*, amulet, to someone who was anxious about the future. He warned him not to open it for an entire year. Imagine the surprise of the person when, after a year had passed, he opened it to discover, not *Kabbalistic* inscriptions (as was usually the case), but *Rashi's* comment to the above *pasuk*!

*Temimus* is defined as whole/perfect, which intimates that the individual is one hundred percent on board, wholly-committed, no questions asked. After all, whole/perfect implies black and white – not gray. *Horav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, zl*, derives from *Chazal* that while it is certainly enviable to achieve *temimus*, a whole-hearted/perfect absolute “black-white” connection with Hashem, if one maintains a more tenuous relationship, even if it might be somewhat “gray,” he has hope that he will ultimately find spiritual healing and full connection with Hashem.

The *Talmud Chullin* 11a, discusses the concept of *Acharei ha'rabim l'hatos*, “we follow the majority”, and its source in the Torah. Among the proofs is the law of offering an *alyah temimah*, the entire/whole fat tail of a lamb as part of a *Korban Shelamim*, Peace-Offering. This requires that the tail remain intact and not be cut. What about the concern that the segment of the *chut ha'shedrah*, spinal column, in the tail might have been severed prior to the *shechitah*, slaughter, of the lamb – thereby invalidating it (since the animal is now *treif* and unfit for a sacrifice)? This indicates that since the majority of animals do not have this problem, we follow the rule of *rov*, the majority. The *Talmud* suggests that the person split the tail and examine the spinal column. The problem with this is that, once it is cut, the tail is no longer *temimah*, whole. The *Talmud* replies, *heicha d'layif*, as long as the sides of the tail remained joined (the tail is not cut completely in half), there is no problem.

Having said this, *Rav* Teichtal derives that *tamim* applies as long as one has not entirely severed his connection with Hashem. We can still hope that he will return and become “whole” – entirely whole. Perhaps we may add with another form of connection to this idea. The previous generations were rooted in *emunah peshutah*, simple, pure faith in the Almighty. They did not articulate their questions, which I am sure some of them had. They understood their insignificance and, as a result, did not make demands upon the Almighty. They accepted their challenges, lived with adversity and triumphed over the obstacles to their faith – because they were simple and whole. Unfortunately, with changes wrought by modernity and affluence, we have lost sight of the idyllic faith of the past. Those who have maintained somewhat of a connection – still have a chance for return. They are still considered whole.

I heard a powerful thought attributed to the *Sefas Emes*, which is apropos to the concept of

*temimus* with regard to faith in Hashem. We have two *mitzvos* with regard to one's relationship vis-à-vis parents: *Kibbud*, honor; and *yirah*, fear. *Chazal* distinguish between these two in that *kavod*, honor, applies to positive acts of respect, ie. serving a parent. *Yirah* focuses on the prohibitive, ie. *al teishev bimkomo*; do not sit in your father's seat. *Es Hashem Elokecha tira*, we are admonished to fear Hashem. This means, says the *Sefas Emes*, *al teishev bimkomo*; do not sit in His place; do not think that you can question Him, examine His decisions with misgiving. We are puny servants – here today only by virtue of Hashem's kindness. At any moment we may become a scant remembrance. *Al teishev bimkomo*. A Jew who fears Hashem understands what this means.

*Shlomo Hamelech* says, *Holeich ba'tom yeilech betach*, "He who walks in innocence (*temimus*) will walk securely" (*Mishlei* 10:9). He is not naïve – he is innocent. There is a difference. *Horav Chizkiyah Mishkovsky, Shlita*, related the following incident (which he heard from *Horav Greineman*). Prior to *Succos*, everyone turns to the *Esrog* vendor to search for a beautiful set of *Arba Minim*, Four Species. Veritably, not everyone is *halachically* proficient in walking through the many issues concerning *hiddur*, beauty, of the *Arba Minim*. The community of Bnei Brak arranged for thousands of sets to be made available at a reasonable price. While these were not the most beautiful, they were definitely kosher and *mehudar*. There were four *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars, assigned to the large kiosk who were prepared to answer the most difficult questions concerning the beauty of the species.

A Russian (obvious from his visage and clothing) Jew approached one of the *rabbanim* and asked, "Kavod *Horav*. I apologize for burdening his honor with my elementary questions. I am, however, new to this endeavor. Growing up in Russia, religion was non-existent. The government did not allow us to practice our religious observance. Thus, I was unable to learn about and practice any aspect of Judaism. When I arrived in *Eretz Yisrael*, I decided that I would make up for lost time. I have covered much ground in the last three years since my arrival, but the concept of the four species is beyond me. I selected three sets – for myself and my two sons. Could I impose on the *rav* to examine them for their *kashrus* and beauty?"

The *rav* examined the first *esrog*, the accompanying *lulav*, *hadassim* and *aravos*, and was amazed by their unparalleled beauty. This man had really struck gold. His first set was exceptional. His amazement was magnified when the second set that he examined paralleled the first in its unsurpassed beauty. One can only imagine the *rav's* disbelief when the third set that he examined was unrivaled in splendor. How was it possible, he wondered to himself, that this Russian immigrant who conceded that he knew absolutely nothing about the Four Species would pick out the most beautiful sets in the bunch? There was only one way to find out. Ask! He queried the man, "How were you able to pick out such exceptional sets?"

The man's reply should stimulate us to greater devotion and service. "I live with Hashem," the man began. "Prior to coming to the *shuk*, market, I spoke to Him. I said, 'Hashem! You know that I love You. You know the challenges I had to surmount, the adversity over which I had to triumph, before I was able to emigrate to *Eretz Yisrael*. I was not permitted to know who You are! They did

not allow me to learn from You. Had they let me, I would have clung to You with all of my heart. I arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* and I have tried – very much – to learn, to know, to cling to You. Sadly, I know very little. I cannot even select the appropriate *Arba Minim*. I ask You, Hashem, to please select for me the *Arba Minim*.”

Rav Mishokvsky summed up this story: “We have absolutely no idea how much *Hashem Yisborach* loves each and every Jew. That Jew’s *temimus* was so pure and strong, that, as a result, “He” selected the perfect sets of *Arba Minim*.