



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Shoftim

The Greatness of Being "Wholehearted With Hashem"

Our *parasha* states (18:11), "Or an animal charmer, one who asks Ov or Yidoni, or one who seeks counsel from the dead: (12) For anyone who does these things is an abomination to Hashem, and because of these abominations, Hashem, your G-d, drove the gentile nations out from before you: (13) You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d: For these nations that you are possessing – they listen to astrologers and diviners – but as for you – this is not what Hashem, your G-d, has given you."

Questions:

We must understand why the Torah forbids trying to foretell the future. Isn't man required to take the necessary precautions to ensure that he is not harmed?

A Special Nation

If we contemplate the matter, we will recognize just how much man craves knowing what the future has in store. He simply loves finding various *segulot*, lots, and fortune tellers. It has gotten to the point where these items are in high demand, and many unscrupulous individuals are now able to earn their livelihood by providing such services. Prominent and wealthy Jews are persuaded to contribute generously to any person who is called a *mekubal*, *tzaddik*, or fortune teller. This has resulted in the unfortunate predicament we know find ourselves in, where thieves dress up like fortune tellers and miracle workers, and take advantage of the naïve. Sadly, I know of wicked men who act in such a fashion, and there are always gullible people who will run after any hope for "salvation." When I was in Los Angeles for the sake of the Torah and those who study it, one of the wealthy men there told me the following story: He has an ill daughter, who is wheel-chair bound. One day a charlatan from our city, Elad, approached him and told him that for \$80,000 he would cure his daughter and she would stand on her feet. But of course, we are talking here about a total ignoramus, devoid of Torah knowledge, and a first class thief, who obviously could not bring about any salvation. But what he *did* do was cause this wealthy man to despise Rabbis, thinking that all of them are charlatans. There are countless stories about the scams that these fakers have perpetrated. However, our holy Torah has taught us that man must lead his life differently, and by doing so, he will be spared from their clutches.

Ramban on the Mitzvah of *Tamim Tiheyeh*

The Ramban in his commentary on our *parasha* (18:13), explains that being wholehearted with Hashem means that our hearts should be turned to Hashem alone, believing that He alone does everything and that He alone knows what the future will bring. Earlier in *Parashat Lech Lecha*, on the *pasuk*, "*Ve'heyey tamim...*" the Ramban writes the mitzvah of being *tamim*, wholehearted, with Hashem follows all the various Torah prohibitions of seeking council from sorcerers and the like. He explains that the underlying



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theme of the mitzvah to be wholehearted is to believe that only Hashem's power is unlimited. Only Hashem has the power to do something in the world or to nullify something. One should not listen to the various sorcerers forbidden by the Torah, and he should not believe that their words will come to fruition. He should believe that all is the hand of Hashem alone .

Story About the Steipler

A story is told about a *chatan* who was set to get married on a certain date. Everything was set, but then he was encouraged by one of his relatives to check that the names of him and his *kallah* "matched." In his great naivety, he immediately went to one of the *mekubalim* who always matched up names. When he checked the names, however, he saw that they did not match up. He ruled that they should immediately cancel the wedding, for their marriage would not succeed. The *chatan*, upon hearing this, almost went out of his mind. Suddenly, what he thought was going to be his happiest day had just been predicted to be the destruction of his home. He went before a particular *chacham* and asked him what to do. The *chacham* immediately answered him that he has nothing to fear, for the Torah states, *tamim tiheyeh im Hashem Elokecha*, that one should be totally wholehearted, trusting only in Hashem. He added that it is not our business to involve ourselves in hidden matters, and that Hashem would help him. However, the *chacham* said that nevertheless, he was afraid to rule on the matter, so he suggested that the *chatan* bring the matter before the Steipler Gaon zt"l, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky; whatever he would say is what they would do. Indeed, the *chatan* went together with one of the *chacham's* acquaintances and entered the Steipler's sacred study. The Steipler was hard of hearing and the *chatan* had therefore written the entire matter down on a sheet of paper. But when the Steipler began to read the letter, he began to roar in anger and anguish on the distortion of truth. He spoke against the *mekubal*, who had advised to cancel the *shidduch*, in harsh terms. "What does he want, that they shouldn't get married?" Screamed the Steipler in frustration. The more he read the letter, the angrier he grew, until the Steipler's family members entered and rebuked them for aggravating the Steipler to such a degree. They then asked them to leave. They went outside while the Steipler continued to read the letter – for another 20 minutes! When the Steipler finally calmed down, he called them back inside, and the holy Steipler blessed the *chatan*, guaranteed him that the match would be a successful one and assuaged all of the *chatan's* concerns. He told him that what the *mekubal* said was foolishness and that it is not the way of the Torah to seek this type of guidance. Rather, everything is controlled by Hashem, and He is the only one who decides who will marry who. We must rely only on Hashem, as the Torah states, "Wholehearted shall you be with Hashem, your G-d." Ultimately the marriage was a true success.

Words of Mussar

Commenting on this week's *parasha*, Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch writes (18:13) that an individual must totally give himself over to Hashem wholeheartedly. This type of wholeheartedness is the result of an awareness of Hashem's Unity. This is the purpose of the Jewish Nation; a nation that belongs only to Hashem. Not even the tiniest aspect of our lives should be removed from Hashem. When this is the case, all of the various sorceries described in the earlier *pesukim* are totally non-existent amongst the



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Jewish Nation. Hashem alone is the controller, and only He determines what will be in the future. His Will is the determining factor in what man can and cannot do. One who is wholehearted nullifies himself before Hashem.

Therefore every person must strengthen himself with faith and trust in Hashem. He should place his faith only in Hashem and not run after fortunes tellers. Rather, he should pray to the Creator, for all is in His hands. He will then perform salvations and miracles for us. Amen ve'amen.

Shabbat Shalom and Ketiva Va'chatimah Tovah

Rav Mordechai Malka