

Parashat Shoftim 5784, 2024:

*Tamim with Hashem*

Rabbi David Etengoff

**ה' יעזור וירחם על אחינו כל בני ישראל, בארץ ישראל ובכל חלקי הארץ**

Our *parasha* contains a compendium of prohibited behaviors associated with human sacrifice and the magic arts:

When you have come to the land Hashem your G-d is giving you, you shall not learn to do like the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who passes his son or daughter through fire [Rashi: *avodat hamolech*], a soothsayer, a diviner of times, one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, a *pithom* sorcerer, a *yido'a* sorcerer, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to Hashem, and because of these abominations, Hashem your G-d is driving them out from before you. (*Sefer Devarim* 18:9-12, this and all Tanach translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*, brackets my own)

In stark contrast to this extensive listing, the Torah presents a terse statement as to how we should encounter the Almighty: “*tamim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha*—You should be wholehearted (*tamim*) with Hashem, your G-d.” (18:13)

The Ramban (1194-1270) maintains that *tamim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha* requires us “to join our very being solely unto Him and believe that He, and He alone, does everything [in this world] and knows the truth concerning the future [for all time].” Therefore, we are to “seek information from Him alone regarding what will be from His prophets or from His righteous ones, that is from the *Urim v'Tumim*, and [we may not] seek this from the astrologers and others of their kind, for no matter what we must not believe them.” (*Hassagote HaRamban, Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Mitzvot the Rambam Did Not Include*, number eight, translations my own) In addition, he cites a

pivotal *pasuk* in *Sefer Yirmiyahu* that magnifies the understanding of our verse: “So says Hashem: ‘Of the way of the nations, you shall not learn, and from the signs of the heavens [Rashi, eclipse of the sun or planets] be not dismayed, for the nations are dismayed from them.’” (10:2, translation, *The Judaica press Complete Tanach*)

In the Ramban’s view, Yirmiyahu’s *nevuah* teaches us that a causal relationship obtains between our degree of closeness to Hashem, as demonstrated by our rejection of “the way of the nations,” and the future that awaits us. Little wonder he opines that *Avraham Avinu* achieved the highest heights of *temimut* when the Almighty commanded him: “*hithalech lifanei v’heyeh tamim*—walk before me and be wholehearted.” (*Sefer Bereishit* 17:1) As a result of his unlimited dedication to the Holy One blessed be He, Avraham was promised descendants who would inherit *Eretz Yisrael*.

May we soon live in *Eretz Yisrael* amid permanent peace and tranquility, and may the stirring words of Yirmiyahu finally be realized with the arrival of *Mashiach Tzidkeinu*: “There shall again be heard... in the cities of Yehudah and in the streets of Yerushalayim... the sound of mirth and the sound of joy, the voice of a bridegroom and the voice of a bride...” (33:10-11) *V’chane yihi ratzon*

Shabbat Shalom

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\*\*\* My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at:  
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\*\*\* I have posted 164 of **Rabbi Soloveitchik's** English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link.