

Spiritual Healing in the Torah

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha

Parashat Shoftim

What is the Main Character Trait Through which our Forefathers Gained their Greatness?

What is the Difference Between Jewish Mysticism and General Occultism?

Before I became Torah observant, I explored everything occult from astrology to palm reading, as well as Tarot Cards, Eastern Mysticism, and more. It was my attraction to spirituality and mysticism that eventually brought me back to Judaism via the kabbalah. The first class I was drawn to at the yeshiva was Derech Hashem by Ramchal. Learning about soul reincarnation has always intrigued me and I was privileged to study Arizal's book on the subject with my husband. Today I wish I had more time to delve deeper into the secret of Kabbalah, as from all the Torah I've learned, it is Arizal's teachings that bring me the closest to Hashem and spurs me to work on myself the most. As a child, I swallowed all the C.S.Lewis books on Narnia, and I loved to do magic tricks. Yet, I was far from as proficient as my husband who began his professional career during his teens as a birthday party magician. The next generation has been mesmerized by the magical witchcraft of Harry Potter. In EmunaHealing we learn that Narnia, Harry Potter, and the likes are all books connected with witchcraft and the *klipah* (husk) of the *yetzer hara* (negative impulse). Since children especially are sensitive to energy, we must be cautious to carefully screen the books they read. Not only food but also books need to be kosher. Any unkosher book, especially with pictures of crosses or idols, etc., closes the energy fields and distances us from Hashem. It is especially important to avoid having such books in the bedrooms where people sleep. Books about non-Jewish energyhealing like Reiki could also be problematic. We may use our intuition to check book by book to tune into whether it is kosher or not. My teacher Chana Luke told us about a young man, who suddenly became wildly psychotic. It turned out that under his bed there was a stack of all kinds of less than kosher journals. When they removed these journals, he calmed down. Whereas general occultism tempts us to believe in all kinds of spiritual forces which diffuse our focus from the one and only G-d, the Torah-true kabbalistic masters teach us to perceive the underlying unity within our fragmented reality and thereby return us to the path of serving the Almighty one and only G-d.

The Limitations of Occultism and Spiritual Remedies

In *Parashat Shoftim* the Torah denounces all kinds of impure occultism and witchcraft, calling anyone involved with such practice an abomination which Hashem will drive out from Israel. Following the prohibition of these impure practices, the Torah directs us to be Tamim with Hashem our G-d:

ספר דברים פרק יח פסוק י' לא ימצא בך מעביר בנך ובתו באש קיסם קסמים מעובין ומנחש ומכשף: (יא) וחבר חבר ושאל אוב וידעני ודרש אל המתים: (יב) כי תועבת השם כל עשה אלה ובגלל התועבת האלה השם אלהיך מוריש אותם מפניך: (יג) תמים תהיה עם השם אלהיך:

“There shall not be found among you anyone who passes his son or daughter through fire, sorcerers, cloud gazers, diviners of [auspicious] times, witches, one who interprets omens, 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. [You must] be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d” (*Devarim* 18:11-13).

The meaning of the word **תמים/Tamim** is equivocal. Since the Torah contrasts the impure occult

practices with the command to be tamim, it would make sense that the root טָמַם/*tam* means 'pure.' This is how Ramban explains: "You shall be pure with Hashem your G-d" (*Devarim* 18:13). After the warning not to have any magicians, cloud gazers, and witches, the Torah teaches us to believe in our hearts that Hashem alone is Omnipotent from beginning to end. He is the only One who has the power to do and nullify, and therefore we should not listen to cloud gazers, sorcerers, diviners, or witches. We may in no way believe that their words will be fulfilled, but we should decree in our hearts that everything is in the hand of the Supreme One, G-d, the Almighty, Who does a person good, which was not predestined by his constellation and brings evil despite his constellation being good and fine. This is what they said about "go out of your constellation" (Ramban, *Bereishit* 17:1). This principle is vital for our times in which we are so inundated with all kinds of spiritual remedies upon which even Torah observant people rely. Ramban teaches us to realize that whether any of these practices including segulot from the Torah are going to work or not is totally in Hashem's omnipotent hand.

What does it mean to be טָמַם/*Tamim* with Hashem Your G-d?

Rashi explains that "Be tamim with Hashem, your G-d" means to be wholehearted in all the trials in which Hashem tests us (Rashi, *Bereishit* 17:1). When you are טָמַם/*tam* – then you are with Hashem your G-d. "Walk before Hashem whole-heartedly and depend on Him, and do not inquire of the future; rather, accept whatever happens to you with [unadulterated] simplicity, and then, you shall be with Him and become His portion" (Rashi, based on the Sifrei, *Devarim* 18:13). This implies that no matter what difficulty we may face, we must never lose faith. Everything is from Hashem! Since He is the ultimate good, we must wholeheartedly believe that every hardship is beneficial for us. It could be a test to help us grow, or alternatively, suffering comes to atone for any sin we may have committed. The difference between Judaism and other religious beliefs is that their beliefs are based on a variety of terrifying phenomena in nature. As a result of the Gentiles' fears and traumas they resort to means which would foretell them what to expect and to try and take precautions against any disaster that the stars foretell. We, who are convinced that G-d always has our best interests at heart, do not need to be terrified. You may therefore best translate this verse as meaning: "You will be complete i.e., and at ease with Hashem your G-d when you are טָמַם/*Tamim* – on the same wavelength as Hashem your G-d. Any evil in store for you which you would find by consulting your horoscope is not bound to happen anyway. Our patriarch Avraham is the best example of this. He thought that since according to his horoscope he would not have any children, G-d could not give him a meaningful reward. Yet, G-d taught him that he was above the zodiac and not bound by his horoscope (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 156); (Ohr HaChayim, *Devarim* 18:1). Tamim may also imply acquiring the most possible perfection for the human being and knowing Hashem by knowing His ways and becoming like Him as much as possible. This is the final perfection of humans intended by Hashem in the creation, when He said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness" (Sforno, *Bereishit* 17:1). Ba'al Haturim notices that the letter 'Tav' is large, indicating that if you walk whole-heartedly with Hashem, it is considered as if you have fulfilled the entire Torah from 'Alef' to 'Tav' ("from A to Z").

Ready for Passionately Trans-Rational Dedication of Your Life to Hashem

The highest level of emunah is to totally trust Hashem without questioning Him even by a fleeting thought. This was the level of the Jewish people when we said, "We will do and we will hear" (*Shemot* 24:7), without even knowing what we were going to be commanded to do.

We were then called יֹנָתִי יֹנָתִי / *Yonati, Tamati* – “My dove My perfect one” (*Song of Songs* 5:2). When Avraham our father willingly followed Hashem to sacrifice his son Yitzchak, he embodied the highest level of being תָּמִי / *tam*. Although the Akeida (sacrifice of Yitzchak) was against all logic and against Hashem’s prior promises that Yitzchak would be Avraham’s successor, Avraham answered “Hineni! Here I am” – ready to perform Hashem’s will whatever it be. This is as it states, “O G-d, I desired to do Your will” (*Tehillim* 40:9). All Avraham’s desire and the purpose of his life was to align his will with Hashem’s will, to be completely *bitul* (nullified) to Hashem via Gratuitous Passionate Trans-Rational Dedication. Through the greatness of his love for Hashem he dedicated himself to fulfilling Hashem’s will

even when it contradicted human logic. This is the great level of *bitul* through love which is higher than *bitul* through fear. Therefore, the mitzvah to be *tamim* with Hashem is greater than all other mitzvot, as it brings us to be with Hashem as the Sifrei states. Since becoming *tamim* with Hashem implies complete Gratuitous Passionate Trans-Rational Dedication, it is considered as if one has fulfilled the entire Torah from Alef to Tav (*Netivot Shalom, Shoftim* pp.114-115).

EmunaHealing Exercise for Integrating Wholehearted Dedication to Hashem

1. Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and imagine yourself floating on a raft upon the soft waves of your favorite beach. (I always imagine floating on the holy waters of the Kineret).
2. Let yourself go completely and allow your raft to take you in whatever direction the wind blows. Fill your lungs with air and exhale as you let yourself trust completely that Hashem will stir your raft to secure shores.
3. Envision your raft becoming a cradle and you becoming an infant lying peacefully in your cradle as Hashem softly rocks you from side to side. Experience the pleasure of letting go of any control and just giving everything over to Hashem. The waves are soft, and you are comfortable, well-fed, and content. Just breathe into this lovely secure feeling.
4. Let your breathing be in tune with the waves. Take in the fresh sea air from your nostrils and exhale it through your mouth making a soft mmmmmm sound on the out-breath.
5. Recall a hardship that you suffered a long, long time ago, something that has already been resolved. Breathe into it, while remembering how in the end it all worked out for the good. If you try to re-experience the suffering you went through, feel how the pain has lifted now that you are aware of the happy ending of that story. Return to the cradle feeling how Hashem is rocking you softly.
6. Breathe in tune with the waves. Again, take in the fresh sea air from your nostrils and exhale it through your mouth making a soft mmmmmm sound on the out-breath. Now recall a recent hardship that you may still be suffering. Allow yourself to feel the pain, noticing where in the body the pain resides.
7. Breathe into the pain while feeling Hashem rocking you softly on the quiet waves. Make a conscious intention and speak words of trust within your heart. “Hashem everything is from You, and You are only Good, so EVERYTHING is ultimately good and for the good. While tapping into your emunah, envision the pain subsiding, melting into the waves, and disintegrating completely.
8. Are you ready to dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to Hashem’s will whatever it may be? Imagine yourself and your raft attached to a larger boat. Wherever the boat goes, you follow happily and trustfully. You are becoming ready to do whatever Hashem asks of you, no matter how counterintuitive. Despite the odds and the ups and downs of your life, your trust in Hashem just keeps growing stronger and stronger.

Imagining Hashem's greatness and His Omnipotence helps you trust Him more and more and enables you to dedicate your life to serving Hashem.

9. Now, prepare yourself to complete the meditation and return back to regular consciousness, making a resolve for becoming **תם**/*tam* and serving Hashem in an even greater, purer, and more wholehearted way.