

Kehillah #34



THE PERTINENT PARASHA

Temimus: Being Perfect With Hashem

Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer | Rav of Kehillat Ohr Chadash, Ramot, Jerusalem

The Rambam understands the idea of *temimus*, being wholehearted or perfect with Hashem, in terms of rational thought. After listing the various methods of sorcery, necromancy, and witchcraft that the Torah prohibits, he concludes the eleventh chapter of the laws of idolatry (11:16) with the following statement:

An obsession with the future that takes us outside the realm of human experience and into the sphere of supernatural powers will prevent us from “walking with Hashem”

“All the above matters are falsehood and lies [...]. It is not fitting for the Jewish people, who are wise sages, to be drawn into such emptiness, nor to consider that they have any value. [...] The masters of wisdom and those of perfect knowledge

know with clear proof that all these crafts that the Torah forbade are not reflections of wisdom, but rather, emptiness and vanity which attracted the feebleminded and caused them to abandon all the paths of truth. For these reasons, when the Torah warned against all these empty matters, it urged us “Be perfect with Hashem, your G-d.”

According to the Rambam, *temimus* means being perfect in our thought, and therefore deferring the irrational and senseless ways of idolaters, who would deceive gentile nations with their crafts.

The Ramban, however, disagrees. In his opinion (see commentary to Torah, *Devarim* 18:13; *Sefer HaMitzvos*, added mitzvos 8; responsa, no. 283), some of the methods employed to foresee the future – he focuses on astrology – are not vanities and nonsense but rather true and (what we would call) scientific. The Torah prohibits them not for their falsehood, but rather because they distance us from Hashem.





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According to the Ramban – Rashi and the Sefarno write similarly – *temimus* does not refer to our rationalism, but to our relationship with Hashem. In his words, we must know that all things are from Him alone, and not place our trust and conviction in other powers – even those that are true. If we seek to know the future, we should seek it from Him alone, by means of

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prophecy or the *Urim VeTumim*, and not by means outside of His direct connection with us.

The two approaches reflect different perspectives on the core of Judaism, beginning with Avraham Avinu who became *tamim* when he entered the covenant with Hashem. According to the Rambam, our highest calling is rational, banishing from our minds all that contravenes the Divine Image of rational thought. According to the Ramban, our highest calling is relationship – with Hashem, and, by extension, with others, too. We are thus instructed to refrain from everything that can impair our connection to Hashem.

Focussing on the Ramban, what, exactly, does this matter include? It is forbidden to consult the horoscope (*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 179:1*), but, according to one opinion, it is permitted to consult with demons (though not on Shabbos; see *Sanhedrin 101a; Yoreh De'ah 179:16*). Why? The answer is that according to the Ramban, *temimus* is a persuasion, an attitude, a sentiment. It urges us to cling to Hashem and to refrain from anything that places a wedge between Him and Him.

Rashi writes simply that we are forbidden from seeking knowledge of the future – any such endeavor distances us from Hashem. According to the Ramban, the matter is less black-and-white, but the principle is the same: an obsession with the future that takes us outside the realm of human experience and into the sphere of supernatural powers will prevent us from “walking with Hashem” as Avraham Avinu did.

Today, the kinds of craft and worship that distances us from Hashem are different, but the principles remain the same. Obsessions with fixing the future – climate change, equality issues, or the current anti-government movement – can have the same effect. Of course, we need to act for the good, in every way possible. But it must be with Hashem.



Hashkafically Speaking

Elul: The Sefer Torah in the Treasury

Rabbi Dovid Miller | Rosh Kollel RIETS Israel Kollel, Gruss Institute, Yerushalayim

“He shall write for himself this Mishna Torah” (17:18).

It is a mitzvah for every Jew to write a Sefer Torah (*Sefer Hachinuch* 613). In addition to this, the king is instructed to write his own Sefer Torah: “It shall be when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself this Mishna Torah in a book” (17:18). Our Sages derive from the word “Mishnah” that the king must write two Sifrei Torah, one that is placed in his inner chambers and one that “comes out with him and goes in with him.”

What is the meaning of these two Sifrei Torah? What are they needed for?

Following our wedding day, we celebrated *sheva berachos* during the week of *Parashas Shoftim*. At one of the meals, Rabbi Norman Lamm explained that a king has two distinct dimensions, one private and one public. He must serve Hashem in both areas, and for this purpose he must write two Torah scrolls: one goes out with him in public and the other stays at home.

The same, he concluded, is true of marital life. Every couple that

builds its own private home is also part of a broader community. We need to know how to balance our private labor before Hashem and our responsibilities to the public as a whole.

There is much truth in this message. Alongside the time and energy we invest at home, in the education of our children and in fostering an atmosphere of *shalom bayis*, we also need to find a place in which we can contribute to the public. Sometimes, the reverse is true. Those individuals who are constantly occupied with public

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duties must remember that they, too, have children, a family and a home.



Hashkafically Speaking

Yet, it does not seem that this is the reason for the Torah obligation to write two Sifrei Torah. As Rashi notes, the Sefer Torah that “goes out” with the king is also the one that “comes in” with him when he comes home. This understanding is reflected in the wording of the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 21b): the Sefer Torah that goes out with the king when he goes to war is the same Sefer that stays with him when he eats his meal at home, while the second is kept in a safe under lock and key.

So why is there a need for two Sefarim? Why is there a need to keep an extra Sefer in the royal treasury?

I heard from my dear friend Rabbi Yaacov Haber, *shlita*, a simple and meaningful explanation. The Sefer Torah that goes in and out with the king is exposed to the sun and the rain, the cold and the heat. Over time, it is likely to suffer damage. Letters will crack, ink will smudge, parchment will spoil. Therefore, there needs to be a second Sefer so that from time to time the king will use it to proofread his Sefer and ensure it remains correct and precise.

Each of us was once an idealist. Over time, however, it is only

natural that our passion for the old ideals erodes. For example, we enter married life, yeshiva, work, and so on, with plans and hopes. After several years, it turns out that we are far from what we thought and planned. Like the Sefer Torah that goes out with the king, whose letters fade and smudge due to time

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and the elements, so we soften our ideals and postpone their realization due to the pressures of daily life and the trials of the unexpected.

Just as the Torah commands the king to keep an additional Sefer Torah, archived away from harm’s reach, which is used for comparison whenever there’s a need, so we have to check ourselves, preserve our ambitions, plans, and hopes, and renew them from time to time. We need to compare our present situation with our initial aspirations, and strive for recalibration.



Hashkafically Speaking

We have to check ourselves, preserve our ambitions, plans, and hopes, and renew them from time to time. We need to compare our present situation with our initial aspirations, and strive for recalibration.

The time for self-examination is the month of Elul. There is a custom to examine *mezuzos* in the month of Elul, and in the same sense we must examine ourselves. This is the time to take out the undamaged and untainted Sefer Torah from its treasury, consider what Hashem expects of us, and examine where we stand. What of our connection with the Jewish People and Hakadosh Baruch Hu? What of setting more fixed times for Torah

study? What of davening with proper intention, with investing in our children's education, with Shul and our public engagement?

Over Elul, we thus add the aspirational Perek of Tehillim, *LeDavid Hashem Ori Ve'Yishi*, in which we remind ourselves of where we aim to reach: "One thing I have asked of Hashem, that I shall beseech: I will dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life." We are thus challenged to check where we stand in relation to our goals and ambitions.

May Hashem grant that we find time over Elul for contemplation, for examining the Sefer Torah that "comes out and goes in with us", and returning to our aspirations and goals - those recorded in the Sefer Torah kept safely in the treasury.



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MEKOM AVODA

Workplace Ethics & Halacha

Bal Tashchis

Rabbi Asher Meir | Torah and Policy Researcher

Our parsha includes the laws of war, and in particular the prohibition on cutting down fruit trees, which Chazal call “bal tashchis”. The 1611 King James Bible renders the passage from Devarim 20 as follows:

“When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege.”

thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege” to “but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee?”

Interestingly, both understandings follow traditional Jewish commentaries. The King James version follows Ibn Ezra, whereas the JPS translation follows Rashi. Both have the same underlying meaning: since trees are not our enemy, but rather we eat from them, it is wrong to chop them down gratuitously.

The Mishna in *Bava Kama* (90b) relates rather obliquely to this mitzvah: “One who harms himself, although it is forbidden, is exempt [from payment]. But others who harm him are liable. And one who cuts down his own plantings, although it is forbidden, is exempt; but others are liable.” Rashi explains that the relevant prohibition is *bal tashchis*. In the Gemara, Rav gives this rule an exact measure: “A date tree that [customarily] yields one kav [of dates a year] may not be cut down”. If the yield is smaller, the tree is no longer considered a viable

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The 1917 Jewish Publication Society Bible, meant to eliminate anachronisms and Christianisms in the King James Bible, changes “and





MEKOM AVODA

Workplace Ethics & Halacha

fruit tree, and may be cut down, like any non-fruit tree.

The Gemara objects that the Mishna in Sheviis (4:10) gives a different measure: "How much does an olive tree need to bear to prohibit cutting it? A quarter of a kav." The Gemara responds that olives are more valuable and important than dates, so a smaller quantity is sufficient to qualify the tree.

This objection from *Sheviis* is a little surprising. The Mishna there deals primarily with the prohibition of wasting fruit of the Shemitta year, fruit that possesses a special holiness. The Mishna opens with a discussion of what degree of ripeness permits picking the fruit; eating the fruit when it is unripe is considered a wasteful use. Cutting down the tree seemingly involves the same problem: destroying the potential fruits. However, most Rishonim agree that the prohibition of cutting down a fruit tree in this Mishna does indeed refer to *bal tashchis*.

We may suggest that the Mishna is not in fact changing the subject, moving from *kedushas sheviis* to *bal tashchis*; rather, both prohibitions have the same underlying nature.

A general rule applying to various kinds of sanctified produce, such as *teruma*, *sheviis* and *maaser sheini*, is that it is forbidden to degrade all such produce, for instance is causing *tum'a* to *teruma* or using *sheviis* produce for some lesser-than-usual use. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk (stencil, pg. 74) presents a fundamental insight into this rule. He explains that there is not a prohibition per se to degrade these fruits. Rather, these fruits have a designated use, a *nitan* (meaning "given" or "given purpose"). Any other use diverts them from the purpose the Torah designated from them, and it is this diversion that the Torah forbids (Rav Chaim's son, Rav Velvel, elaborated on this topic in his own *Chidushim*, pg. 156).

Perhaps this principle applies equally to fruit trees. Fruit trees were *nitan* (given) for fruit, not for wood. The verses above specify, "thou shalt not destroy the trees," giving the reason "for thou mayest eat of them." Immediately following the creation of mankind in *Bereshis*, we find: "Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." Fruit trees were given to mankind for a specific purpose.



MEKOM AVODA

Workplace Ethics & Halacha



We find in many places in the Talmud that the prohibition of *bal tashchis* applies to everything useful to mankind, although with less stringency. The Rambam in Sefer Hamitzvos (negative commandments 57) opens with the prohibition of cutting down fruit trees, and then adds: "Furthermore, every kind of wastefulness is included in this prohibition".

It follows from this approach that *bal tashchis* is not only a negative obligation, to passively refrain from destroying anything useful in Hashem's world. Rather, it is rooted in an active, positive outlook: Everything that Hashem created has a unique purpose, a unique destiny, perhaps even an aspiration. This purpose is not of course independent of human valuation; on the contrary, another Mishna in *Sheviis* (8:1) specifies that the nitan of some kinds of produce depends on the intention of the user. But ultimately, in a Torah outlook we ideally invest thought into defining our environment and our intentions.

We find a similar insight in the laws of berachos. A *ben or bas Torah* doesn't just bench shehakol on everything. Rather, we are bidden to exert effort into understanding what exactly we

are eating, as well as giving thought to the context of our eating: when is one food subordinate to another, when is an eating "session" over, and so on. Eating is not just a matter of filling our stomachs and enjoying our food; the laws of berachos give a richly textured resolution to our eating (as explained in *Kuzari* III:17).

It is the same for *bal tashchis*, which is a negative prohibition with a positive message. The Torah challenges us to view the world around us – the natural

Everything that Hashem created has a unique purpose, a unique destiny, perhaps even an aspiration.

world, the world of human artifice, and above all the world of human beings – as rich with purpose and destiny. We are called upon to discern this purpose and realize it.



Taking Interest

Banking

Rabbi Shloimy Muller

Talmid of Rav Pinchas Vind shlita, founder of the Beis Horaah L'Inyanei Ribbis

In our first column we discussed why the issur of ribbis is far more relevant in Eretz Yisrael than in the Diaspora. In the coming weeks we will discuss various common scenarios and how to prevent transgressing this issur.

The most obvious minefield of *ribbis* in Eretz Yisrael is banking. When one takes a loan or deposits money in an account which accrues interest, it seems he is doing exactly what the Torah forbids: borrowing or lending with interest. While we may think of a bank as simply safeguarding our money, in reality, by depositing money in an account, we give the bank the right to use the money. This innocuous deposit is really a loan to the bank, payable to the lender at a moment's notice. Yet we see that everyone has accounts and mortgages. How do we do it?

The prevalent *heter* used to allow business with Jewish bank is called a *heter iska*, which almost every bank in Eretz Yisrael has. The basic idea of a *heter iska* is that the money the account holder deposits in the bank (or part of it), is not meant as a loan, rather as capital for the bank to invest (i.e., an *iska*). The bank's investment turns a profit which naturally belongs to the original depositor.

Likewise, when we borrow from a bank, the bank is not giving the lender money to spend at will. The borrower is receiving funds to invest and use to turn a profit, which will then be returned to the rightful owner, (i.e., the bank). (In future installments, we will discuss if

this *heter* covers loans in which the borrower is not actually investing the money.) This model turns the loan into a classic business deal which is totally interest free, because there is no payment for the loan, rather a return of the investor's profit.

It is crucial to understand that the *heter iska* is not a *segulah* or a magic trick that makes the issue of *ribbis* disappear. It is a fully binding legal

Heter iska is not a segulah or a magic trick that makes the issue of ribbis disappear

contract. Theoretically, if the *heter iska* would be found not to be legally binding in court, it wouldn't help, thereby leaving the lender and borrower in violation of *ribbis*. In fact, about 30 years ago, when it appeared that the banks didn't take the *heter iska* with all its implications seriously, most rabbanim in Eretz Yisrael forbade taking loans from the banks.

This being the case, it behooves both





Taking Interest

sides of the deal to have at least a basic understanding of the contract and to know their rights in the deal, thus preventing the deal from being *ribbis*. In the coming columns, we will *b'ezras Hashem* discuss the details of the *heter iska*. This being the case, it behooves both sides of the deal to have at least a basic understanding of the contract and to know their rights in the deal, thus preventing the deal from being *ribbis*. In the coming columns, we will *b'ezras Hashem* discuss the details of the *heter iska*. help, thereby leaving the lender and borrower in violation of *ribbis*. In

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PARASHA AND PARNASSAH

Hold Your Head Up at Work

Rabbi Tzvi Broker | Career Coach and Director of Pilzno Work Inspired

How do you feel at work every day? Would you say you're proud of how you spend your nine-to-five? If you're like most other people, you're spending more or less a third of your day at work. While some people like their jobs more than others, how do you feel about yourself at work on a daily basis?

The *Chasam Sofer* (*Toras Moshe*) in this week's parasha gifts us a new pair of glasses.

Commenting on types of Jews who were exempt from war because of their unfinished vineyard business, the *Chasam Sofer* notes the well-known discussion between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbe Shimon Bar Yochai. Rabbi Yishmael held that one should divide one's time between studying Torah and working for a living, while Rabbi Shimon felt that one should invest all one's time in Torah study. The *Chasam Sofer* explains that beyond the discussion of what kind of effort





PARASHA AND PARNASSAH

(hishtdalus) is appropriate to earn a living, work in *Eretz Yisrael* takes on a different light completely. He explains:

It seems to me that in a time when the nation of Israel is living in its land, it is a mitzvah to be involved in cultivating the land, not because of one's income, but

Our jobs are part of the development of the Jewish people living here and bring honor to Eretz Yisrael.

because of the mitzvah of settling the Eretz Yisrael. Because of this, we find that Boaz was involved in working the land (at the threshing floor) and Elisha was involved in plowing the land. This doesn't just apply to agricultural work in Eretz Yisrael. Rather, *the study of all professions is a mitzvah of settling and honoring Eretz Yisrael, thus avoiding a situation whereby people will say that a shoemaker or builder can't be found in Eretz Yisrael and we must import foreign workers to do this work.*

This worldview gives a whole new perspective and experience of working. In *Eretz Yisrael*, our jobs are part of the development of the Jewish people living here and bring honor to *Eretz Yisrael*. People often fall into a mistaken way of thinking that "if only I worked as a doctor, a Rabbi, a therapist, then I could experience my work daily as something intrinsically meaningful."

The *Chasam sofer* teaches us that every job (yes, even yours!) can be experienced with deep meaning. This upcoming week at work, hold your head up high proudly of having the merit, which so many generations could not enjoy, of living and working in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Tzvi Broker is the Director of Pilzno Work Inspired, an organization bridging the gap between parnassa and avodas Hashem, under the leadership of Rav Yehoshua Gerzi.

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What type of angry are you?

Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

Relationships Coach and author of *The Moderately Anxious Everybody*

I guess it's a bit cheeky assuming you're any type of angry. Maybe you're the tzaddik who has completely

could think of many more. So which kind are you?

And I'm asking this question for a reason.

I know that I'm the electric burner type.

Many years ago, my husband did something to upset me. Or at least I thought he had. He was supposed to be at a certain place at a certain time. I waited and I waited. He showed up an hour late. I was upset.

I asked him where he had been and why he had kept me waiting so long?

He looked at me blankly.

You said you would be here a whole hour ago! You didn't even tell me you'd be late! I've been waiting and worrying!

But I did tell you, he responded. Check your messages.

You know, I thought to myself, it's bad enough being upset with someone for good reason. It's so much worse being upset with someone for no reason. If you're going to be upset, you at least want to know you're right about it.

It's bad enough being upset with someone for good reason. It's so much worse being upset with someone for no reason.

internalized that anger is tantamount to idolatry, in which case this is a false accusation. The good news is that if that's the case, I won't worry about whether you're upset at the accusation, because I already know that nothing angers you!

But sadly, or perhaps just "humanly," most of us do get angered, irritated, triggered, outraged, incensed, or annoyed by something or other. I mean, look how many words there are to describe us, and I'm sure you





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When you're wrong about it, you are now both upset and stupid.

So I reluctantly checked my messages. Lo and behold, we had changed the meeting time. I had even confirmed. I had also just plain forgotten.

And then he said, so you're not upset any more, right?

No, I'm still upset.

But why? You yourself read the messages!

He had a point. I knew he had a point. I would have had the same point had the roles been reversed. But there it was. I was still upset.

How do you explain when you're acting completely irrationally? When you need to justify a position that is wholly unjustifiable?

So I took a deep breath and said,

When you get upset, you're a gas cooker. When the source of heat is off, the anger has gone.

But I'm an electric cooker. Even once the heat has been turned off, it takes me a good hour to cool off. I know you haven't done anything wrong, I know the source of the anger is gone... I just need a cooling off period until I'm safe to approach.

And that's how I discovered I'm the electric stove type.

But it's a really wonderful thing to be able to articulate your pattern. Because usually, when there is an upset, there are two people (at least) involved. The more aware they are of each other's patterns, the less likely they are to get caught in unnecessary further tension and disagreement.

For example, some people don't get angry because of any particular thing that happened. Instead, they get angry when their body has

It's a really wonderful thing to be able to articulate your pattern.

not been tended to. Perhaps they are sleep deprived or maybe food deprived, best known as "hangry."

When you don't know this, you may make the terrible mistake of trying to reason with them. No, no, no. We don't reason with our hangry loved ones. We feed them.

Other people display anger when they get anxious. If you mistake the anxiety for anger, you are guaranteed to mishandle it. But



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if you can see the anger for the anxiety it really is, you'll come at it from a different angle altogether.

(Illustration: You're sitting in traffic on the way to an appointment. The kid screams at you from the back seat for being so irresponsible. You can yell at him for having bad *middos*. Or, you can tell him you've checked Waze and there's no need to panic because you should be there on time. Oh, and please check how you talk to Mummy.)

There are people who feel very guilty when they've done something wrong, but instead of carrying the guilt, they seek to offload it by blaming you. When you know this about them, you can handle it much better by taking the blame, which you know is guilt, with a large pinch of salt. Either way, it isn't anger.

Some, when angry, say things they don't mean at all for about ten minutes, before they resume their sanity. How wonderful if we can learn that they don't mean it (and they actually may not even remember it). How wonderful if they can learn this about themselves, so that they can remove themselves from

the company of others while they outburst!

Of course, the ideal is for all of us to reach a point of refinement so that we don't even get angry.

But as we work on that and in the meantime, being conscious of how (and possibly why) we and our family members express our anger can be a very good step in providing the responses that reduce our chances of making things worse. Beyond

By understanding how our loved ones show their upset, we can play supportive roles in helping them move through it with grace and dignity

that, by understanding how our loved ones show their upset, we can play supportive roles in helping them move through it with grace and dignity.



PARASHA HALACHA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Astrology

Josh and Tammy Kruger

The Story

It was Leora's birthday, and she sat in her room with her three closest friends, opening the gifts that they brought for her.

"Okay, I'm going to open up this one now," Leora said, smiling, and picking up a small gift that was neatly wrapped in newspaper and tied with a black bow.

"That's from me!" called out Maya. "Look at the wrapping paper closely! Try to figure out why I chose it to wrap your gift!"

"Because you ran out of regular wrapping paper?" joked Chana

Maya poked her, "No. Have a look....".

Leora looked at the newspaper and saw the *Astrology* section that Maya had circled with a thick red marker. It was the section that gave special predictions for anyone born on that day.

Leora held it up to show everyone, "It's my birthday prediction! Let's see, according to this I'm going to have an exciting but challenging year with a surprise visitor from my past and receive many wonderful gifts! So funny! Thanks, Maya!".

"I thought it would be cute! I know

that we're not supposed to believe any of these strange *astrology* things, but I couldn't resist!"

"What's the problem with reading the *astrology* page? My aunt reads it every morning and if there's a bad prediction for her sign, she'll sometimes avoid leaving the house!" said Chana.

Leora wondered who was right.

Discussion

Q: What is the connection between our story and the *parsha*?

A: In this week's *parsha* there is a pasuk that says "*Tamim Tiheyeh Im Hashem Elokecha*"

"You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim* 18:13)

The Rambam explains that this means that we should not follow in the way of idolators who use omens and sorcery to predict their future (*Hilchos Avoda Zara*, Chapter 11).

Q: Are there ways that can be used to actually predict the future?

A: It is a matter of debate between the the Rambam and the Ramban. The Rambam argues that there are no ways of truly predicting the future. It is all nonsense, and because it is nonsense, a Jew should certainly not





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be involved in such practices (*Hilchos Avoda Zara*, Chapter 11). The Ramban, on the other hand, indicates that there were certain practices that were actually effective in predicting the future, and involve true wisdom, such as certain types of astrology (*Sefer Hamitzvos*, Omissions of the Rambam, no. 8; *Rashba Meyuchasos*, no. 283). A Jew is still prohibited from using these practices because of the mitzvah of “*Tamim Tiheyeh Im Hashem Elokecha*”. This means that a Jew should have wholehearted trust in G-d, and not investigate what the future is scheduled to bring.

Q: Can you think of an example from Sefer Bereishis where a Jew used astrology?

A: In *Parshas Lech Lecha*, Hashem tells Abraham to look at the stars in the sky (15:5). The Gemara in *Maseches Shabbos* (156a) tells an amazing story. Hashem had come to Avraham that night to tell him that he would have a child. Avraham was confused. He told Hashem that he had

already studied the stars and planets and saw that he could not have a child. What did he see? He saw that the the planet Jupiter was in the west of the sky. Avraham was born at the time of Jupiter and the west was a ‘cold’ area which symbolized inability to have children (Rashi on the Gemara). Hashem replied that this was true, but Avraham should not be worried. Why? Because Hashem simply moved Jupiter to the east part of the sky, an area that symbolizes ‘warmth’ and ability to have children. We learn from this story, that astrology may tell our future, but this future can always be changed by Hashem. Therefore, we should not worry about what the stars and planets tell us. We should worry about serving Hashem and performing his *mitzvos*.

Back to Our Story

The girls discussed the issues above and realized that whether or not a horoscope can predict the future, the important thing is how they behave. They prayed to Hashem that Leora should have a healthy and happy new year, and then brought the yummy leftovers to the nearby shelter



Written in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer
le'ilui neshama of Frumit Bat Yosef, Edith Nusbaum a"h.


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