



5780 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Shoftim / פרשת שופטים

The *Temimut* of Yerushalayim

During their time in the desert, the Jewish people did not have to agonize about their future. While they might not have known if they would travel or rest on a particular day, their general trajectory towards the Land of Israel was predestined and relayed to them by God on numerous occasions. Once they entered the Land, however, and would be faced with national and individual dilemmas they would face uncertainty about the future. They would therefore be tempted to avoid this anxiety of uncertainty by approaching soothsayers and necromancers and the like to gain knowledge and certainty about how to navigate the forks in their lives. In response to this, the Torah emphatically states: “You should be wholesome (*tamim*) with Hashem your God”¹ and forbids all sorts of divination about the future.

What is the meaning of this word “*tamim*” and in what way does it negate trying to circumventing one’s anxiety about an unknown future? Rav Kook explains as follows:²

Temimut is the upper pool, that is elevated above all social interactions, from every thought of an external need... it is the ultimate happiness... it is the lot of Yaakov, a boundless inheritance...³

What does this mean? Many people feel the need to act in a certain way due to social pressure or some sort of internal coping mechanism. *Temimut*, however, refers to a primal space within the soul that is untouched and unsullied by the trials and travails of this world. A *Tam* is a person who is in touch with the essential purity of his own soul and lets this part of himself guide him. Such a person has no need for divinations or soothsayers to predict the future as he anyway always knows the correct path of life as his own spark of the divine within intuitively guides the proper path.

¹ Devarim 18:3.

² Shemoneh Kevatzim 7:178.

³ The Torah describes Yaakov as an *Ish Tam* (Bereishit 25:27) and the Talmud (Shabbat 119) states that he merited an inheritance without boundaries.



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Perhaps this is the reason that Yaakov, the *Tam* merits a boundless inheritance. Perhaps for the average person it is dangerous to travel far afield and engage the broader world. However, if a person is in touch with his inner soul (*Temimut*) then it is possible to travel anywhere and do anything without compromising on one's core identity. One who is anchored with a strong center is not in danger of diluting his essence or values.

The same lesson is true regarding Yerushalayim. What *Temimut* is regarding the layers of the human psyche, Yerushalayim is regarding geographical space. It is the center of the world, a place that puts us in touch with God and our core spiritual identity and represents our deepest values. As we work on becoming *temimim*, we must also strengthen our relationship with Yerushalayim.

And once we are strongly anchored in Yerushalayim, we can then travel the world and use the light of the Yerushalayim to enlighten the entire globe.