

”תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך”

An Explanation of the Baal HaTurim's Comment
regarding the Large "Tav" in ”תמים”

In this week's parsha, parshas Shoftim, it is worthwhile examining one of the most significant pesukim in the entire Torah. Every Jew, throughout his lifetime, is subject to the divine command (Devarim 18, 13): **”תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך”—you shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d.** Rashi provides the following clarification: **”תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך, התהלך עמו בתמימות, ולא תחפור אחר העתידות, אלא כל מה שיבוא עליך קבל בתמימות, ואז תצפה לו, ויהי עמו—walk with Him with sincerity; look ahead to Him; and do not delve into the future; but rather, whatever comes upon you, accept with sincerity. Then you will be with Him and of His portion.**

At first glance, it appears that Rashi has in mind the words of the Mishnah (Sotah 48a). There we learn that since the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash: **”פסקו אנשי אמונה מישראל, שנאמר (תהלים יב-ב): ”הושיעה ה' כי גמר חסיד וגו'”—and there ceased to be people of faith in Yisrael, as it states: ”Save us, O Hashem, for the pious are no more etc.”** The Gemara (ibid. 48b) explains: **”אלו בני אדם שהיו מאמינים בהקב”ה, דתניא רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר, כל מי שיש לו פת בסלו ואומר מה אוכל למחר, למחר, אינו אלא מקטני אמונה”—these are people who put their faith in HKB”H, as was taught in a Baraita: Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: Whoever has bread in his basket, yet says, ”What will I eat tomorrow?”, is but of little faith.** According to Rashi, this is included in the mitzvah of: **”תמים תהיה”—trust in Him sincerely without feeling a need to worry about the future.**

To appreciate the true significance of this mitzvah, let us refer to the words of the Baal HaTurim. As is his method of unraveling the secrets of kedushah, he expounds on the most minute of allusions inherent in the letters of the Torah. Regarding this passuk, he presents a wonderful allusion based on the tradition to inscribe the word **”תמים”** in the sefer Torah with a **ת**—an enlarged letter **”tav.”** The Baal HaTurim explains this phenomenon as follows: **”תמים – תי”ו גדולה, שאם תלך בתמימות, כאילו קיימת מאל”ף ועד תי”ו—the large ”tav” signifies that if you will walk with Him with sincerity, it will be considered as if you fulfilled all of the commandments from ”aleph” to ”tav.”**

Yisrael Received the Torah
in the Merit of Their Sincerity

I was struck by a wonderful idea. I would like to explain the Baal HaTurim's comment based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 88a) concerning Yisrael's unusual declaration **”na'aseh v'nishma”**:

”ההוא צדוקי דחזייה לרבא דקא מעיין בשמעתא, ויתבה אצבעתא ידיה תותי כרעא וקא מייץ בהו, וקא מבען אצבעתיה דמא. אמר ליה עמא פזיזא דקדמיתו פומיכו לאודניכו, אכתי בפחזותיכו קיימיתו, ברישא איבעיא לכו למשמע אי מצייתו קבליתו, ואי לא לא קבליתו. אמר ליה אנן דסגינן בשלימותא כתיב בן (משלי יא-ג) תומת ישרים תנחם, הגך אינשי דסגן בעלילותא כתיב בהו (שם) וסלף בוגדים ישרים.”

A particular Tzadduki saw Rava engrossed in his studies; his fingers were lodged beneath his legs; he was crushing them with his legs, and his fingers oozed blood. He said to him (the Tzadduki to Rava): You are an impetuous people who placed your mouths before your ears (by declaring ”na'aseh” prior to ”nishma,” agreeing to obey the precepts of the Torah before hearing if you could even live up to your rash declaration); you still maintain your impetuous nature. First, you should have heard if the demands of the Torah are something you could live by, and if not, you should not have accepted it. He (Rava) answered him: Regarding us who followed Him wholeheartedly (trusting that he would not require of us anything that was beyond our capabilities), it is written: ”The innocence of the upright will guide them.” Regarding those people who find numerous excuses (for not obeying the precepts of the Torah), it is written: ”But the corruption of the faithless will despoil them.”

It appears that we can explain Rava's response in greater depth based on the passuk (Devarim 33, 2): **”ה' מסיני בא וזרח משעיר למו, Hashem came from Sinai and He shone forth to them from Seir; He appeared from Har Paran, and He came with some of the myriads of the holy. Rashi explains: He presented it to the children of Eisav, so that they would have the opportunity to accept the Torah; but they**

did not want it. He also went to Har Paran and presented it there to the children of Yishmael, so that they would have the opportunity to accept it; but they did not want it.

This sequence of events is described in greater detail in the Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (41). Apparently, when HKB"H took the Torah to the children of Eisav, they inquired as to what was written in it. HKB"H told them (Shemos 20, 13): **"לא תרצח"—you shall not kill.** They immediately refused to receive the Torah, claiming that they did not want to relinquish the berachah Eisav received from Yitzchak (Bereishis 27, 40): **"ועל חרבך תחיה"—you will live by your sword.** He went to the children of Yishmael. They also wanted to know what was written in the Torah before making a commitment. To them HKB"H replied (Shemos 20, 13): **"לא תגנוב"—you shall not steal.** They responded that they were unwilling to abandon the ways of their ancestors, who kidnapped Yosef, ultimately landing him in Mitzrayim, as it states (Bereishis 40, 15): **"כי גנוב גונבתי מארץ העברים"—for I was indeed kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews.** HKB"H visited all the nations of the world offering them the opportunity of receiving the Torah. They all inquired as to its contents. He told them (Shemos 20, 3): **"לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני"—you shall not have any other gods before My Presence.** They all refused the Torah on the grounds that they were unwilling to abandon the beliefs of their ancestors, who worshipped avodah zarah.

The Association between "נעשה ונשמע" and the Mitzvah of "תמים תהיה"

We see from here that the reason the nations of the world were not willing to accept the Torah was because they did not go wholeheartedly with HKB"H; they did not have the faith in Him that if He was willing to give them the Torah, He would most certainly help them fulfill its precepts. Instead, they pondered the future to see if they could abide by the Torah's precepts. This prompted them to ask HKB"H what was written in the Torah. To which HKB"H replied to each nation respectively, citing the particular mitzvah that would be difficult for that nation to comply with. Consequently, they relinquished any claim to the Torah and refused to accept it.

In stark contrast, when HKB"H came to bestow the Torah upon Yisrael at Har Sinai, and sent Moshe Rabeinu to check and see if Yisrael were ready and willing to receive the Torah, they did not make any such inquiries. Instead, they simply declared "na'aseh" prior to "nishma" (Shemos 24, 7): **"כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע"**. In other words, first of all, we accept upon ourselves **"נעשה"**—to do whatever HKB"H commands us to do; and, subsequently, **"ונשמע"**—to discover what HKB"H's will desires of them.

This is the implication of Rava's remark to that Tzadduki: **"Regarding us who followed Him wholeheartedly** (trusting that he would not require of us anything that was beyond our capabilities), **it is written: 'The innocence of the upright will guide them.'**" Rashi explains: **"We went with Him wholeheartedly, like those who act out of love."** We declared "na'aseh" prior to "nishma," without first investigating what is written in it, because we went with Him sincerely and wholeheartedly. We felt confident that if He wanted to give us the Torah, we would most certainly be able to comply with the mitzvos written in it.

From this perspective, it is apparent that the basis of the entire Torah is the mitzvah of: **"תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך"**—not to investigate or dwell on the future. Thus, in the merit of Yisrael's wholeheartedness, they were privileged to receive the Torah. We can now rejoice at having gained a deeper appreciation of the Baal HaTurim's comment: **"The large 'tav' signifies that if you will walk with Him with sincerity, it will be considered as if you fulfilled all of the commandments from 'aleph' to 'tav'."** As we have seen, the entire Torah was given to Yisrael solely on the merit of their sincerity and wholeheartedness. They trusted in HKB"H without delving into the future as the other nations did.

"I recall for you the kindness of your youth . . . your following Me into the Wilderness"

Upon careful consideration, it is apparent that Yisrael inherited this attribute of wholeheartedness from the holy Avos. First Avraham Avinu withstood the trying ordeal of "Akeidas Yitzchak." HKB"H instructed him to sacrifice his son Yitzchak, even though HKB"H had promised him previously (Bereishis 21, 12): **"כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע"—through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours.** Avraham did not inquire as to how HKB"H would fulfill His promise. Rather, he went wholeheartedly to fulfill His Creator's command. He went to sacrifice Yitzchak in keeping with the directive: **"You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d."**

In fact, all of the holy Avos lived their lives in this manner. They served HKB"H wholeheartedly without questioning future events, as HKB"H says to Moshe (Shemos 6, 3): **"וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל"—I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak and to Yaakov as Kel Shakkai; but through My name Hashem I did not become known to them.** Rashi comments: **"It is not written, 'I did not inform them,' but rather, 'I did not become known'; I was not recognized by them in My aspect of truth, because of which I am named Hashem, which implies that I am faithful to uphold My word; for I promised, but I have**

not yet fulfilled. HKB"H promised to give them and their offspring the land; this promise was only fulfilled after they passed away; generations later, their offspring inherited the land. Nevertheless, they did not question the word or veracity of HKB"H.

Thus we see that the holy Avos paved the way for all of Yisrael to serve Hashem wholeheartedly, in keeping with the directive: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך"—to believe in Hashem completely and to follow Him wholeheartedly, even before realizing the fulfillment of HKB"H's promise. Here we can present a nice little allusion. The numerical value of the phrase: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך" is exactly equivalent to the passuk (Tehillim 22, 5): "ב'ך בטח"ו אבותיג'ו: "our fathers trusted in You; they trusted and You delivered them.

Therefore, during the exodus from Mitzrayim, Yisrael displayed the attribute of wholeheartedness that they inherited from the holy Avos. They followed HKB"H into the uncultivated wilderness without any questions. HKB"H describes their exemplary behavior as follows (Yirmiyah 2, 2): "כה אמר ה' זכרתי לך חסד נעוריך אהבת כלולותיך, לכתך אחרי: "במהדבר בארץ לא זרועה"—thus said Hashem: I recall for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me into the Wilderness, into an unsown land. Rashi explains: "What was the "kindness of your youth"? your willingness to follow my agents Moshe and Aharon. From an inhabited land, you went into the midbar, without provisions for the journey, because you trusted in Me." In similar fashion, when HKB"H came to give Yisrael the Torah, they did not question their future ability to live up to its standards and abide by its tenets. Instead, they displayed the attribute of wholeheartedness that they inherited from the holy Avos by proclaiming "na'aseh" prior to "nishma," fulfilling the words of the passuk: "The innocence of the upright will guide them."

"תמים תהיה" Do Not Investigate the Future via Stars and Constellations

Since it is the nature of Torah to be elucidated in seventy different ways, I would like to propose an explanation for the Baal HaTurim's comment. He points out that tradition dictates that the word "תמים" be written with a large "tav," indicating: "That if you walk with Him wholeheartedly, it will be considered as if you fulfilled all of the mitzvot from 'aleph' to 'tav.'" First, let us explain the simple meaning of the mitzvah: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך" based on Rashi's comment: "Walk with Him with sincerity; look ahead to Him; and do not delve into the future." According to the Ramban, "תמים" is a directive not to investigate the future by consulting with astrologers. We should not place our faith in them, but we should

have faith in HKB"H. He alone controls and manages the world; He manipulates the stars and planets as He sees fit.

This explanation of the passuk is evident from the Ramban's commentary on the Torah here. Nevertheless, let us present his holy remarks from his challenges on the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvos. There he lists this mitzvah among the mitzvot aseh omitted by the Rambam:

"מצוה ח, שנצטוונו להיות לבנו תמים עמו יתברך, והוא שנאמר תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך, וענין הצוואה הזאת שנייחד לבכנו אליו לבדו יתברך, ושאמין שהוא לבדו עושה כל והוא היודע אמיתת כל עתיד, וממנו לבדו נדרוש הבאות מנביאיו או מאנשי חסידיו, רוצה לומר אורים ותומים, ולא נדרוש מהוברי שמים ולא מזולתם, ולא נבטח שיבואו דבריהם על כל פנים, אבל אם נשמע דבר מהם נאמר הכל בידי שמים, כי הוא משנה מערכת הכוכבים והמזלות כרצונו... ואמרו באחרון של פסחים (דף קיג): מניין שאין שואלים דבר מן הכלדיים, שנאמר תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך, והכלדיים הם שארית האומה המתעסקת במלאכת הכוכבים הנקראים כלדיב"ש."

Here we are commanded to be sincere and wholehearted with the Almighty. This is the implication of the passuk: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך." The point of this command is that we direct our hearts to Him alone; that we believe that He alone is responsible for all that happens and He knows the truth of all future events; that we seek knowledge of the future only from his prophets or from his special individuals, such as via the Urim V'Tumim. We should not seek this information from astrologers or the like; in any event, we should not rely on their predictions. If we hear a prediction from them, we should say that everything is determined by the Heavenly One. He alters the solar system and constellations as He pleases. . . They said in the end of Pesachim (113b): From where do we derive that we are not to consult stargazers (Chaldeans)? For it says: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך"—you shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d. The Chaldeans were a nation that practiced astrology . . .

Thus, we have an explicit source teaching us that this mitzvah—"תמים תהיה"—instructs us not to investigate the future by means of astrologers or other forms of sorcery practiced by the goyim. Rather, we should believe in HKB"H wholeheartedly that He will guide us as He sees fit. In fact, when we examine the pesukim preceding and following this passuk, it is evident that this is the meaning of this mitzvah. Here are the pesukim we are referring to (Devarim 18, 9):

"כי אתה בא אל הארץ אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך, לא תלמד לעשות כתועבות הגוים ההם, לא ימצא בך מעביר בנו ובתו באש קוסם קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף, וחומר חבר ושואל אוב וידעוני ודורש אל המתים, כי תועבת ה' כל עושה אלה ובגלל התועבות האלה ה' אלקיך מוריש אותם מפניך, תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך, כי הגוים האלה אשר אתה יורש אותם אל מעוננים ואל קסמים ישמעו, ואתה לא תן בך לה' אלקיך."

When you come to the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, you shall not learn to act according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you one who causes his son or daughter to pass through fire; one who practices divinations, a "mi'onain," or one who reads omens or a sorcerer; or an animal charmer, or one who inquires of "ov" or "yidoni," or one who consults the dead. For all who do these are an abomination of Hashem, and because of these abominations, Hashem, your G-d, banishes those nations from before you. 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—not so has Hashem, your G-d, given for you.

Thus, we see quite clearly that the passuk "תמים תהיה" is surrounded by warnings not to practice the abominations of those goyim who inquire of the "ov" and the "yidoni," and consult with the dead (necromancers), in order to gain knowledge of the future. It only stands to reason, therefore, that this passuk also deals with the same subject, as the Gemara (Pesachim ibid.) teaches us—it represents an additional warning not to investigate the future even by means of astrologers and stargazers, such as the Chaldeans.

Abandon Your Horoscope for Yisrael Are Not Controlled by the Constellations

Let us return to the words of the Ramban. He points out that Avraham Avinu was already commanded with regards to the mitzvah of "תמים תהיה"—not to seek guidance from the stars—when HKB"H came to establish a covenant with him and promise him that he would be privileged to have offspring:

"ובמצוה הזאת נצטווה אברהם אבינו, כאשר בא [הקב"ה] לכרות ברית ולתת לו זרע, אמר (בראשית יז-א) התהלך לפני והיה תמים, כי מפני שהיה הוא זכור לטוב יסוד באמונה, והחולק על הכשדים שהיו מייחסים כל הכוחות לשמש ולירח ולכוכבים, והוא ראה שיש עליהם יוצר ומנהיג, צווהו עוד להתהלך לפניו ולהיות תמים עמו, ולא יתן בלבו שיהא בזולתו שום אמת, ולא יסתכל בענינים כלל... אלא יהיה לבדו אליו יתברך, כי הוא המצווה אותם והמסדר סידור מערכתם כרצונו, כענין שאמרו, צא מאצטגנינות שלך וכו'."

When HKB"H came to establish a covenant and give him offspring, He said: "Walk before Me and be 'תמים' (perfect; wholehearted)." Because he was the foundation of the emunah, and opposed the Kasdim, who attributed all power and control to the sun, the moon and the stars. He realized that someone created them and controls them. G-d commanded him additionally to walk before Him and be "תמים" with Him, not to believe in his heart that any other force of truth exists, and not to get involved with them at all... Rather, he should turn only to the Almighty, because He commands them and arranges the solar system as He pleases—as they said: "Abandon your horoscope, etc."

It is apparent, according to the Ramban, that Avraham was already commanded with regards to this mitzvah, when HKB"H said to him: "התהלך לפני והיה תמים"—walk before Me and be "תמים". This agrees wonderfully with the elucidation in the Midrash Tanchuma (Shoftim 10) regarding the passuk that appears immediately after the passuk of "תמים תהיה": "For these nations that you are possessing, they listen to astrologers and diviners; but as for you—not so has Hashem, your G-d, given for you." Let us have a look at the Midrash:

"מדבר באברהם שהיה רואה באיסטרולוגין, שהיה המזל אומר לו שאין אברם ולא שרי מולידין, מה עשה להם הקב"ה... ויוצא אותו החוצה ויאמר הבט נא השמימה, העלה אותו למעלה מוכיפת הרקיע... צא מן המדה אברם אינו מוליד, אברהם מוליד, שרי אינה מולדת, שרה מולדת... אמר לו [הקב"ה], הרי אתה למעלה מן המזל... ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך, מיד והאמין בה'. אמר להם משה [לישראל], מה אברהם הניח את המזל ולא היה עוסק בו, אף אתה לא כן נתן לך ה' אלקיך."

This passuk refers to Avraham. He consulted his horoscope and saw that according to the stars Avram and Sarai were not going to have children. What did HKB"H tell them to do? ... He took them outside and said: "Gaze up toward the heavens"; He elevated him above the canopy of heaven... Forget the prediction that Avram will not bear children—Avraham will bear children—and that Sarai will not bear children—Sarah will bear children... HKB"H said to him: You are beyond the control of the constellations... He said to him: "So shall your offspring be." He immediately believed in Hashem. Moshe said to Yisrael: Avraham abandoned his horoscope and no longer paid attention to it, you should do the same: "Not so has Hashem, your G-d, given for you."

We find a similar passage in the Gemara (Shabbas 156a), alluded to by the Ramban above: שנאמר ויוצא אותו החוצה, "מניין שאין מזל לישראל, שנאמר ויוצא אותו החוצה, אמר אברהם לפני הקב"ה, רבוננו של עולם בן ביתי יורש אותי, אמר לו לאו, כי אם אשר יצא ממעיך, אמר לפניו, רבוננו של עולם נסתכלתי באצטגנינות שלי ואיני ראוי להוליד. From where do we know that the constellations hold no power over Yisrael? As it says: "And He took him outside." Avraham said to HKB"H: Master of the Universe, "my steward inherits me..." He replied to him: No, "only he that shall come forth from within you..." He (Avraham) said before Him: Master of the Universe I have already consulted my horoscope, and I see that I am not fit to bear a son! He (HKB"H) said to him: Abandon your horoscope; for the constellations hold no power over Yisrael!

According to the Midrash, this is the admonition conveyed by the passuk: "ואתה לא כן נתן לך ה' אלקיך"—not so has Hashem, your G-d, given for you. We are not to follow the practices of the goyim, who

investigate the future by means of astrology. Instead, we should follow in the footsteps of Avraham, whom HKB"H elevated along with his offspring above and beyond the control of the solar system and the constellations. Now, this ties in beautifully with the preceding passuk: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך". As we learned from the Gemara in Pesachim, this passuk warns us not to seek out information regarding the future by consulting with stargazers and astrologers, as the nations whom HKB"H drove out of Eretz Yisrael used to do.

Rains of Berachah that Washed Away the False Belief in Astrologers

From all that we have learned, we can begin to comprehend the important message conveyed by this mitzvah: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך". We are not to follow in the ways of the goyim, chas v'shalom, who have become enamored with and dependent on the avodah zarah of predicting the future. They seek out so-called experts who claim to have extensive knowledge regarding the stars and the constellations and how they influence our lives—i.e. the science of astrology. Even if we were able to find such an expert astrologer today, who could accurately foretell the future, it would be prohibited for us as Jews, who believe in Hashem and His Torah, to consult with them.

Furthermore, even if they were to predict the future for us without being asked to do so, we would not be allowed to believe their predictions. On the contrary, we are obligated to fulfill the requirement of: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך"—to believe wholeheartedly that HKB"H is unique and is the sole force operating in the universe. It is He Who determines the movements of the stars as He sees fit. Avraham Avinu was living proof of this fact. He saw in his horoscope that he was incapable of bearing children, and HKB"H confirmed that what he saw was correct. Nevertheless, He said to him: **"Abandon your personal astrological forecast, because Yisrael are beyond the control of the constellations."**

I would like to now share a personal story with you demonstrating the wonders of Hashem's hashgachah. I have been giving classes to "ba'alei teshuvah" for over thirty years at Yeshivas Torah V'Emunah. They yearn with their hearts and souls to draw closer to HKB"H and His Torah. One particular group of these "ba'alei teshuvah" had succeeded very nicely in their efforts, but unfortunately were unable to abandon their misguided belief in astrology—due to the habits they developed prior to performing teshuvah. Therefore, in order to help rid them of this quasi-avodah-zarah, I decided to conduct an exercise with them. I requested that they write down everything that the renowned astrologers

predicted would occur throughout the entire coming year, and we would verify whether or not they were correct.

We checked the predictions on a monthly basis. It became clear to everyone that the vast majority if not all of the predictions missed their targets; they were grossly inaccurate. Now, in Eretz Yisrael, due to our countless sins, there are frequent mishaps. So, on the rare cases that they succeeded in predicting that a certain event would transpire in a particular month, they would exaggerate and publicize their success on the one hand, and seek to conceal their gross failures on the other. Still, to completely eradicate their false belief and dependence on astrology, one final, decisive blow was necessary.

It so happened that there was an extensive drought in Eretz Yisrael, during which there was no significant rainfall. In all of the synagogues and study halls, the appropriate addition requesting rain was included in the Shemoneh Esreh in the berachah of: "ברך עלינו". The students in the class related that a famous astrologer had made a public prediction two days before the class. He claimed that based on what he saw in the stars, he was certain that no rain would fall for at least another week. No sooner did the shiur begin that the skies became dark and full of ominous clouds. Throughout the ensuing shiur, strong rains pounded the ground with a deafening sound. We thanked Hashem for the rains of berachah that washed away once and for all the false belief in astrology.

The Association between the Mitzvah of Milah and the Mitzvah of: "תמים תהיה"

Returning to the words of the Ramban, we find that he reveals a tremendous chiddush to us. When Avraham Avinu was ninety-nine years old, one year prior to the birth of Yitzchak, he was commanded to perform the mitzvah of milah. This would establish a covenant between HKB"H and Avraham and Avraham's future generations, as it is written (Bereishis 17, 1): "ויהי אברם בן תשעים שנה ותשע שנים וירא ה' אל אברם ויאמר אליו אני אל שדי התהלך לפני והיה תמים, ואתנה בריתי ביני ובינך וארכבה" **"When Avram was ninety-nine years old, Hashem appeared to Avram and said to him, 'I am Kel Shakkai; walk before Me and be perfect. I will set My covenant between Me and you, and I will increase you most exceedingly.'"** Thus, we see that HKB"H included in the mitzvah of milah, the mitzvah of: "תמים" **"התהלך לפני והיה תמים"**—conveyed by the directive: "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך".

According to the commentary of the Ramban, we can explain very nicely the association between the covenant that HKB"H established with Avraham and his offspring via the mitzvah of milah and His command: "והיה תמים". This covenant between Yisrael and their Heavenly Father obligates them to cling to

HKB"H wholeheartedly, without investigating the future by means of astrological forecasts. Investigations of that sort constitute a breach of the unique contract that we have with HKB"H. In the merit of that covenant, HKB"H altered Avraham's horoscope, so that he would be able to bear children. Additionally, HKB"H assured him: "כה יהיה זרעך"—that his offspring, as well, would be privileged to have a relationship with HKB"H that would exist above and beyond the predictions and dictates of astrology.

Let us add a tidbit of our own concerning the connection between the mitzvah of milah and the mitzvah of "תמים תהיה", which HKB"H commanded Avraham simultaneously. In Tiferes Yisrael (Chapter 2), the Maharal of Prague explains why the mitzvah of milah is performed on the eighth day. The number seven is related to the laws of nature, which HKB"H created during the seven days of creation. The number eight relates to matters that are beyond the realm of nature.

Thus, when a person fulfills the mitzvah of milah, by removing the "orlah"—the foreskin—that was created naturally, on the eighth day, it indicates that he is entering into a covenant—a "bris"—with HKB"H beyond the realm of nature. In the merit of performing the mitzvah of milah, HKB"H entered into a covenant with Avraham and elevated him above the domain of the solar system. HKB"H indicated this to him by saying: "אברם אינו מוליד" —**Avram cannot bear children but Avraham can.**

This then is the significance of HKB"H's directive to Avraham: "התהלך לפני" —**walk before Me.** Perform the mitzvah of milah; in its merit, you will walk and live above the constraints of nature. Additionally, "והיה תמים" —you will fulfill the mitzvah of עֵם —**ה' אלוקיך** —the command not to investigate the future by means of astrology. After all, in the merit of your milah, you exist with HKB"H above and beyond the realm of the stars and constellations.

Avraham Will Bear Children in the Merit of the Five Books of the Torah

Continuing onward and upward with this line of reasoning, let us address the Baal HaTurim's comment that the large "tav" in "תמים תהיה" comes to teach us that anyone who fulfills this mitzvah will be viewed as if he fulfilled all the mitzvos of the Torah from "aleph" to "tav." Let us present what is written in Amudeha Shivah (Amud Avraham 2) as an explanation for the Midrash's statement: "אברם אינו מוליד, אברהם מוליד" —**Avram will not bear children, but Avraham will bear children.** The Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 216b) explains that HKB"H added the letter 'ה' —**"hei"** —

to Avraham as an allusion to the letter "hei" with which this world was created. The passuk states (Bereishis 2, 4): "אלה תולדות השמים" —**these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created ("בהבראם").** The Midrash (B.R. 12, 10) elucidates the word "בהבראם" as "בה' בראם" — indicating that HKB"H created the universe with the letter "hei." It turns out, therefore, that all of the constellations and stars were created with the letter "hei" and are sustained by the letter "hei."

Based on this fact, the Zohar explains why Yisrael are above the realm of the stars and constellations. As explained, the entire solar system was created with the letter "hei." Therefore, when HKB"H added the letter "hei" to Avraham's name, he was elevated above the realm of the stars and constellations. The Zohar adds another pertinent piece of information. Avraham and his offspring merited this association with the letter "hei"—which possesses a numerical equivalence of five-- in the merit of accepting and observing the Torah, which is comprised of "hei"—five books.

With this understanding, the Amudeha Shivah explains: "אברם אינו מוליד אברהם מוליד" —**Avram will not bear children, but Avraham will bear children.** So long as his name remained Avram, without the letter "hei," it reflected a lack of fulfillment of the five books of the Torah. As a consequence, he could not produce offspring, since he remained under the control and influence of the stars and zodiac signs. Once, however, his name was switched to Avraham, with the addition of the letter "hei," it reflected a fulfillment of the five books of the Torah. As a result, he was connected with the Torah, which was used to create the zodiac signs. Thus, he was able to produce offspring contrary to the dictates of nature and his astrological forecast.

At last we have a very nice interpretation of the Baal HaTurim's comment. The large "tav" in "תמים תהיה" comes to teach us that whoever fulfills this mitzvah will be considered as if he fulfilled all the mitzvos of the Torah from "aleph" to "tav." As we have explained, the point of this mitzvah is that we are not to believe in astrological forecasts, because "ein mazal l'Yisrael"—Yisrael exist above and beyond the realm of influence of the constellations. They achieved this status in the merit of the letter "hei" given to Avraham, alluding to the five books of the Torah. Therefore, whoever believes in Hashem wholeheartedly, without consulting horoscopes and astrological forecasts, is considered to have fulfilled all five books of the Torah from "aleph" to "tav." For, it is solely in the merit of the five books of the Torah that Yisrael have the power to overcome their destinies as predicted by their horoscopes.

Donated by Family Madeb for the Refuah Shelimah of Lea bat Virgini

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com