



Parshas Shoftim 2021, a truth that maintains

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Ruchma Leah Bas Sarah. And loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

Our Parsha outlines the leadership structure for the Jewish nation. We begin with the commandant of appointing judges and law officers to maintain peace and order in each city. Moshe then details specific laws for judges against corruption and perversion of justice. As the Pasuk says (16:20) *“Tzedek Tzedek tirdof – You shall surely pursue justice.”*

Moshe continues and gives over regulations for kings, such as not having many wives or acquiring excessive amounts of wealth. He relates why Kohanim will not inherit any portions in Israel, for G-d is their inheritance. Although they were scheduled by family to work in the Beis Hamikdash, a Kohen always has the right to offer his sacrifices personally.

Moshe then explains rules and regulations against going and listening to sorcery or witchcraft. He describes how to differentiate between a genuine or false Prophet and punishing those who falsely claim that G-d spoke to them.

However, a question comes to mind: During the explanation of the laws against following any form of black magic, Moshe says, *“Tamim Teyah Im Hashem Elokeicha – You must be whole before the Lord your G-d.”* But what exactly does Moshe Rabbeinu mean when he says, *“you must be whole with G-d”*? What attribute, character trait or feeling is Moshe speaking about?!

Rashi (*Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki, the foremost commentary on the Torah*) quotes the Midrash Sifrei (*Devarim 17:3*) that explains two ways to be *“whole with G-d.”*

The first way is to place your complete and total trust in Him. You should not wish or desire to ascertain the future through unholy and unsanctified means. The second way of being “*whole with G-d*” is to live with humility due to G-d’s immense greatness and holiness.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan Kabbalist*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that being “*whole with G-d*” is not just believing in G-d, but rather, living with absolute honesty with your Creator. Moshe Rabbeinu is telling the Jewish nation that being genuine and open with G-d is the most reliable way to have a meaningful relationship with Him.

The Or Hachaim Hakadosh explains that G-d created human beings with good and evil inclinations stemming from our G-dly and animalistic souls. Therefore, our connection with G-d should come from both these opposite and conflicting sides.

Hiding an integral and existing aspect of oneself will lead to a life full of fraud and deception. Yet, **being vulnerable and truthful with G-d about your misdeeds empowers you to be “*whole with G-d.*” To receive and experience a profound level of His holiness and love.**

This lesson is so important during the month of Elul. Since it’s a month set for Teshuva and self-reflection on our past misdeeds. This practice enables us to honestly confess and admit to our wrongdoings on Yom Kippur and begin the new year with a clean slate.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we are honest when dealing with others, but mainly with ourselves. We must be truthful about our faults and shortcomings to identify and change what holds us back from success. Since concealing our flaws forces us to live an artificial life devoid of true meaning. But honesty with others and ourselves begin to close the gaps in our blind spots and makes us “*whole with G-d.*”

***“Honesty is telling the truth to ourselves and others.
Integrity is living that truth.”***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*