

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוקיך *Dignity in the Face of Uncertainty*

Uncertainty is a fundamental aspect of the human experience.

The essential vulnerability of the most basic elements of our experience, including our health, livelihood, and relationships, contributes toward a generalized sense of anxiety, manifested in vastly different ways by different personality types.

Under these circumstances, it seems most natural for man to attempt to ameliorate his state of anxiety by searching for all kinds of hints or indications regarding what his future holds. One need only to take a brief stroll through Times Square to see the cottage industry of all manner of astrologers, palm readers, and the like, which, I extrapolate simply by virtue of their existence, find paying customers. Closer to home, the often unspoken but potent attraction which is felt towards certain kinds of mystics who trade in predictions concerning the future is yet another expression of the powerful desire to alleviate the anxiety of uncertainty.

In truth, however, much of Sefer Devarim, and in particular, Parshat Shoftim, is devoted towards denouncing, and prohibiting outright, any activity associated with necromancy, soothsaying, or conjuring of the future. What was it about these activities that the Almighty found so objectionable?

The answer lies in one brief verse, all of five words in length, but absolutely laden with meaning and direction for us. The Torah tells us, **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוקיך**, you shall be complete with the Lord your God. Rashi expands on the verse, at once, explicating and illuminating: 'walk with Him in complete faith, and wait for Him, and do not investigate after the future, rather, regarding everything that transpires to you, accept upon yourself, so that you will be His Nation and His portion.'

In summation, the objection to all of these attempts aimed at alleviating human anxiety concerning the future is the attempt itself. Judaism completely and emphatically rejects any attempt by man to bridge the gap between his own knowledge of what is yet to be and that of an omniscient God. The future, we maintain, is the province of God, **הנסתרות לה' אלוקינו**. Quite simply, if God wanted us to know the future, cosmically, and personally, he would have told us.

We are here not to attain some level of false security which results from knowing all that which will transpire in our lives. On the contrary, we are meant to live a life of faithful, loyal service to Him, to utilize the precious resources we have been given to deal honorably with all of the blessings and challenges which God chooses to send our way. For man to truly live well, he must accept as an absolute first principle that his life is measured not by his ability to portend the future, but by the dignity and integrity with which he conducts himself amidst the inevitable uncertainty of his existence, **הנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת**.

