

In God We Trust

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תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ.

Be wholehearted with the Lord, your God. (Deut. 18:13)

Rashi explains this command to be wholehearted with God: "Walk with Him wholeheartedly and trust in Him. Do not try to divine the future, but rather accept wholeheartedly everything that befalls you. Then you will be His nation and His Portion."

It is not so simple to be a simple Jew. It is not that easy to be naïve in our cynical world. In times of heresy on one hand and mysticism and magic on the other, the Torah demands that we be simple, upright, and faithful. Rabbi Chaim Navon relates that a woman once called him asking that he pray for her good health. He answered, "Both of us will pray," and she replied, "Thanks to both of you." It took him a few seconds to realize that it hadn't even occurred to her that he had invited her to pray for herself. She was convinced that he and another mysterious partner would both pray on her behalf.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once received a letter from someone telling him about a mystical book of good omens and palm reading. The Rebbe sent him a sharp reply:

"Abandon this path. Completely. If you want a book of charms – choose the Torah, and if you are looking for wisdom – choose the Torah. Why am I telling you this? 'Be wholehearted with the Lord your God.'"

In another, no less pointed letter, the Lubavitcher Rebbe replied to someone who had written to him about good luck charms, facial shapes, fortune tellers, and dream interpreters. Here again, the Rebbe gave clear, unequivocal instructions to abandon these practices and quoted the same verse: "Be wholehearted with the Lord your God." Walk along the straight and simple path that has been trodden for generations, choose the path of keeping the Torah and its commandments. You will have enough to keep you busy along this path.

He added another, surprising reason for keeping away from these practices, saying that they are simply a waste of time. They are not only mistaken but also steal away from the time allocated to a person to fulfill his task in life: "Every person is given a fixed time to fulfill the destiny for which God put him in this world. Every hour and every day that a person wastes on matters that are not his, he is also running away from fulfilling his destiny."