



Temimut Torah -

The Law of the LORD is Perfect

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נַפְשׁ:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.

– Psalm 19:7



According to Jewish midrash, before you were born, the LORD called your soul to appear before Him and said, “After you are born, become a *tzaddik* (righteous person); don’t become a *rasha* (wicked person).” Then He brought you into the world, but tested you by means of the *yetzer hara* -- the natural inclination to be selfish and bad. You therefore entered the world incomplete, lacking the wholeness and integrity that could only be obtained by submitting yourself to His righteous will.

This verse says that the Torah of the LORD is *temimah*, an adjective that means faultless, whole or complete (*temimut* is the state of being *tam*, meaning unblemished or defect-free). The Jewish scribal arts maintain that if a Torah scroll has a single blemished or missing letter, it is no longer *temimut* and therefore *posul* (unfit) for use in services. Animal sacrifices offered at the *mishkan* (Tabernacle) were required to be *temimah* (Lev. 4:32), as was the red heifer (Num. 19:2).



When applied to the human soul, *temimut* means wholly committed to the paths of righteousness. Therefore Noah was called *ish tamim b'dorotav* -- “a blameless person in his generation” (Gen. 6:9); Job was described as *tam v'yashar* -- “blameless and upright” (Job 1:8; 2:3); and Abraham was instructed to walk before God and “be *tamim*” -- blameless (Gen. 17:1). Indeed all Israel was told, *tamim tiheyu im Adonai Elohekha* -- “you must be wholehearted with the LORD your God” (Deut. 18:13), indicating the uncompromised devotion that is required to be in a sanctified relationship with Him. Those permitted to dwell with the Lord in His holy mountain are *tamim*, doing what is right, and acknowledging the truth in their hearts (Psalm 15:1-2).

Psalm 119 begins, “Happy are those who are blameless (*tamim*) in their way, who walk in the Torah of the Lord.” For those of us who are sinful, broken, and incomplete, the Torah of the Lord is indeed *temimut*, providing all we need to have our souls turned back to the way of true righteousness, soundness, and integrity.



Transliteration:

נֶפֶשׁ	נְשִׁיבָת	תְּמִימָה	תּוֹרַת	יְהוָה	תּוֹרַת
(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(1)	(2) (1)	
na-fesh	me-shi-vat	te-mi-mah	Adonai	to-rat	
the soul	converting	perfect	The law of the LORD (is)		

Torat Adonai temimah, meshivat nafesh.