



How do the Tzitzit protect us

"This shall be fringes for you, and when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the L-rd to perform them"

(Bamidbar 15:39)

Why is the parashah of tzitzit contiguous to the parashah of the Spies? Also, the mitzvah of tzitzit is contiguous to the parashah of Korach, since Chazal say that Korach mocked the valuable mitzvah. How did he do so? He went and assembled two hundred and fifty heads of Sanhedrin and dressed them in a tallit that is entirely techelet (sky blue wool): They came and stood before Moshe and asked him, "Does a cloak made entirely of blue wool require fringes [tzitzit], or is it exempt?" He replied, "It does require [fringes]." They began laughing at him [saying], "Is it possible that a cloak of another [colored] material, one string of blue wool exempts it [from the obligation of techelet], and this one, which is made entirely of blue wool, should not exempt itself?"

This is very puzzling. After all, the purpose of the mitzvah of tzitzit is to instill fear of Heaven in a person, and to help him remember the mitzvot of Hashem. If so, how is it possible that this valuable mitzvah did not protect Korach and help him perceive his error? Why did Korach mock this mitzvah specifically?

Let us take a look at the benefits of the exalted mitzvah of tzitzit. I heard it said in the name of the Chafetz Chaim, zya"l, that the tallit is like a medal that Hashem gave Am Yisrael. Just like a king of flesh and blood grants one that he appreciates a medal to wear around his neck as a token of his appreciation for his devotion, so too, regarding Am Yisrael. Because they proclaimed: "We will do and we will hear," and they agreed to accept upon themselves the yoke of Torah with devotion, without even knowing what is written in it, Hashem recalls this grace and bestows upon them a medal to place on their bodies, which is the tzitzit, that is a sign of honor and appreciation for their willingness to accept the Torah.

We see that the mitzvah of tzitzit has the potential to remind us from where our sacred soul is derived, and this reminder will cause us to remember all the mitzvot and fulfill them.

Since the mitzvah of tzitzit has the power to turn a person back to the right path, and it has the potential to draw a person close to Hashem and His Torah, I instructed my dear sons, sheyichyu, who are involved in kiruv, of bringing Jewish people back to fold of Judaism, to distribute the tallit katan to any-

one who wants it at the gatherings for the sake of Torah which they conduct, and thank G-d, hundreds of tallitot were distributed only recently. Of course, there were Jewish people in Paris who drove in their cars on Shabbat while wearing their tallit katan... but after a while, when they did a soul-searching, they realized that they could not live a lie, and they ceased desecrating Shabbat. Gradually, they did complete teshuvah, and all in the merit of the tallit katan that they wore, because the mitzvah of tzitzit is so powerful, to the extent that it can cause a person to do teshuvah and draw closer to mitzvah observance.

Also a dead body is wrapped in a tallit during the funeral, and I would like to suggest that the purpose of this is in order to remind those who still live on this earth of the tremendous benefits of the tallit. A person should reflect and perceive the advantage of this holy garment, which has the potential to bring him to Gan Eden and to the life of the World to Come.

One of my close students, who is a senior doctor by profession, told me that he once jumped out the window of his office with self-sacrifice, in order not to stumble in sin. With the mercy of Hashem, he was saved from death. I asked him how he gathered courage to dare jump from such a high place? And he answered me that he was confident that the tallit katan which he wore would be his shield, and this mitzvah would protect him from all harm... Thus we see that the mitzvah of tzitzit protects a person both spiritually and physically.

But it is important to know that not everyone who wears a tallit katan is immediately saved from sin, because first of all he must intend to flee sin and desire to distance himself from it. He is obligated to invest effort and study ethical works in order to acquire fear of Heaven, and fill his heart with the awe of G-d, who commanded him to abstain from sin, and then the mitzvah of tzitzit will stand by him in times of challenge.

Therefore, it is stated regarding the mitzvah of tzitzit, "And you shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes after which you are going astray, so that you shall remember and perform all My commandments." First of all, one must be careful not to wander after his heart's desire and to be careful to guard his eyes from seeing evil, because they are the agents to sin, and his obligation is to conquer his Yetzer Hara. If he does so, the merit of the tallit will assist him to be saved from sin and overcome his evil inclination.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

27 - Rabbi Chananya ben Tradyon One of the Ten Martyrs

28 - Rabbi Avraham Adadi of Tripoli

29 - Rabbi Shlomoh Danah Author of "Shalmei Todah"

30 - Rabbi Yosef Shlush Rabbi of the Moroccan community in Jerusalem

1 - Rabbi Kalman Klonimus Halevi Epstein Author of "Meor v'Shemesh"

2 - Rabbi Yosef ben Walid Author of "Shema Yosef"



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik, Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita



Words of our Sages

Buying My Message

A wealthy gentile asked me to convert him to Judaism so that he could marry a Jewess. He was prepared to pay a fortune in return, an amount that could generously support our institutions.

“Do you honestly think that you can buy your way into Judaism?” I asked. “Are you under the impression that the Torah of the Living G-d is an auction artifact, sold to the highest bidder? Our Torah is acquired by extensive exertion. Why do you think Am Yisrael was found worthy, from among all the nations, of receiving the Torah? It is only because they agreed to toil in it, even before knowing what it entailed.

“Tehillim (147:19-20) states, ‘He relates His word to Jacob, His statutes and judgments to Israel. He did not do so for any other nation, such judgments – they do not know them, Hallelujah!’ Am Yisrael are privileged, due to the fact that they uphold the Torah. Yet they maintain fear of sin.

“Only our nation has an innate sense of distancing ourselves from sin. This stems from fear of Heaven and fear of sin. When a Jew notices a plate with meat sitting near a plate with milk, he instinctively removes one of the plates, out of fear of transgressing Hashem’s word. Similarly, when it comes to performing positive mitzvot, Am Yisrael has a deep desire to do as much as possible. This desire derives from the sanctity with which they are engulfed. This holiness is exclusive to our nation.”

This was my response to the gentile who wanted to buy his way into Judaism. I hope that he bought my message.

Who do the tzitzit protect from sin?

“This shall be fringes for you, and when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord to perform them” (Bamidbar 15:39)

Why is blue specified from all the other colors [for this precept]?

Because blue resembles the color of the sea, and the sea resembles the color of the sky, and the sky resembles the color of [a sapphire, and a sapphire resembles the color of] the Throne of Glory, as it is said, “And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone,” and it is also written, “The likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone” (Menachot 43b).

Rashi explains: “The sky resembles the Throne of Glory, and the techelet reminds us of the One Who sits on the Throne of Glory.” We need to clarify; is it really so, does then every person who sees the sea remember the Creator of the Universe and all the mitzvot that were given on Mount Sinai?

The Maggid of Dubna explained this through a parable:

A poor man was invited to the home of his rich friend. He saw the rich man sitting on a fancy, diamond-studded chair, which had a button on its side. Every time the rich man pressed the button, a waiter appeared carrying a tray filled with expensive food. This repeated itself every time he pressed the button on the side of the chair. More and more servants came holding platters filled with delicacies. The poor person was amazed. When he returned home, he excitedly related to his wife everything he saw. He concluded: “We must try to get this fancy chair with the magic button, and then we too will enjoy all the delicacies.”

This is what the poor couple did. They saved penny by penny until they managed to get a fancy chair similar to the one of the rich man. But to their dismay, when they pressed the button on the side of the chair, nothing happened...!

A wise man who saw what they did, told them: “Fools! Are you trying to be like that rich man? That rich man can afford many servants and all sorts of delicacies. Therefore, every time he presses the button, it signals his servants to bring him trays filled with delicacies. But you do not have anything in your house. What will the button do for you?”

The Maggid of Dubna, zt”l, concluded: “This is the explanation of the verse, “Will a shofar be sounded in the city and the people not quake?” This is referring to people who are preoccupied in the performance of mitzvot, and are G-d fearing and fear sin. For these people the blowing of the shofar is enough for them to begin contemplating the approaching Day of Judgment. But people who do not fear Heaven and are not engaged in the study of Torah, the sounding of the shofar will not help to arouse them from their complacency.

So too regarding tzitzit. It only helps people who fear sin and are filled with mitzvot. Regarding them the Torah states, “When you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the L-rd.” But people who are not G-d fearing, it is clear that the segulah of the tzitzit will not help them to remember the mitzvot of Hashem.

The Haftarah

“And Yehoshua bin Nun sent forth”

(Yehoshua 2)

The connection to the parashah: The parashah relates Moshe’s sending forth spies to scout the Land of Canaan. The haftarah tells of Yehoshua sending forth spies to check out the land, as well.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Lest he begin to disparage

If a man wants to talk with someone about their fellow, and he has reason to believe that this person is not on good terms with that fellow, and ultimately he will begin to disparage him, he is forbidden to talk to him about that fellow.

And regarding lavishing praise upon his fellow, he is forbidden to do so also when it is not in front of his enemies, because even the speaker will begin to disparage the fellow in the end and say that the fellow is truly praiseworthy, besides for some fault he has. Or one of the listeners will comment: Why do you praise him so much? He also has such and such a fault.



Chazak U'Baruch

In the parashah of tzitzit, which we read twice every day, it is stated (Bamidbar 15:39), “and you shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes after which you are going astray.” This pasuk teaches us that not only are we not allowed to commit actual transgressions, but we may not even think about committing transgressions, nor may we contemplate or look at things that arouse the evil inclination, causing us to sin, especially things that project immorality.

In our times, we face difficult challenges that did not exist in the past, with the development of the Internet and smart phones, which enable one to browse through the worst things. Consequently, it is incumbent upon every person to take measures so that he does not stumble. The first thing one must do is to install a proper filter. Some leaders of our times said that the many challenges today are meant to “force” us to achieve a higher level of love for Hashem and a fervent connection to mitzvot, because this is the only way to succeed in overcoming our challenges.

Many ask how it is possible to deal with the challenges in these matters?

Our sages have already taught that contemplation of sin is one of the hardest things to avoid, and it requires a lot of effort and prayer. But they offered a few tips to help one cope: first, of course, is to stay away from anything that leads to evil thoughts. Another tip is to try to be involved with good things, especially the study of Torah, since bad thoughts generally stem from idleness and boredom.

Recently a story was publicized, which was heard from a participant of a daily lecture in a Midrasha in Yerushalayim, about a wondrous miracle that happened to one of their friends. The subject of the story is a traditional Jew, who did not yet observe all 613 mitzvot, but had recently taken upon himself to improve greatly in guarding his eyes, and to be careful not to stumble in looking at immodest scenes.

That week, the man was on line to board the number 78 bus on his way to the Armon Hanatziv neighborhood. As he waited, he noticed that he was standing in front of a woman who conducted herself immodestly. Since he wished to adhere to the mitzvah he had taken upon himself, he decided to shut his eyes completely.

In the process of guarding his eyes, the man missed getting on the bus, and the driver closed his doors and continued on his way. The man was very upset and thought that because he had been so careful to guard himself from sin, he missed the bus and wasted his time. But he did not know that at that precise moment, through Divine Providence, it was orchestrated that in the merit of the mitzvah he would be saved from death.

Shortly afterwards, two blood-thirsty terrorists boarded that bus and carried out a terror attack in which two people were killed and nine others seriously injured. It was only when he heard about the attack on the news that the man realized that by observing the mitzvot, one never loses.

“Even if at times it seems that you missed an opportunity, in the long run one only profits from performing mitzvot. Guarding my eyes saved my life,” the man related to his friends excitedly.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
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The Holy Land is like the holy Shabbat “And it is flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit” (Bamidbar 13:27)

The merits of Eretz Yisroel are so enormous to the extent that Chazal say (Ketubot 110b): One should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are idolaters, but let no one live outside the Land, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are Israelites; for whoever lives in the Land of Israel may be considered to have a G-d, but whoever lives outside the Land may be regarded as one who has no G-d.

I would like to suggest with siyata d'Shemaya that this was the intention of the spies when they declared, “**זבת חלב ודבש** – it is flowing with milk and honey,” since the last letters of the words spell Shabbat. This implies that Eretz Yisrael is considered like the sacred Shabbat, which is entirely holy. Therefore, we refer to Eretz Yisrael as Eretz HaKodesh, just as we say Shabbat Kodesh. Regarding this Chazal state (Pesachim 113a): Three are of those who will inherit the world to come, viz.: he who dwells in Eretz Yisrael... This is because the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael is similar to the kedushah of Shabbat, since they are both reminiscence of the World to Come.

The Spies also declared, “And this is its fruit,” signifying that fortunate are those who uphold the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael and live there, because then he will merit eating from its spiritual fruit and achieve perfection in all the mitzvot. This is as is stated (Sotah 14a): Why did Moshe our teacher yearn to enter the land of Israel... many precepts were commanded to Israel which can only be fulfilled in the land of Israel. I wish to enter the land so that they may all be fulfilled by me.

Even regarding the other mitzvot, one cannot compare observing them in Eretz Yisrael to observing them in the Diasporah, because one achieves far greater perfection of the mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael than in the Diasporah.

So then it seems puzzling; why are the words of the Spies construed as lashon hara and defamation? In essence they spoke the praise and holiness of the Land of Israel. However, Chazal explain (Sotah 35a): “And it is flowing with milk and honey,” Rav Yochanan said in the name of Rav Meir: Any piece of slander, which has not some truth in the beginning, will not endure in the end. Also Rashi writes (Bamidbar 13:27): Any lie in which a little truth is not stated in the beginning cannot be maintained in the end.

Thus their intention in their praise was only to open the ears of Bnei Yisrael to accept their condemnation and slander. The Gemara testifies about them: The Spies only intended to degrade Eretz Yisrael.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The tombstone reminds people to repent

We find in the parashah that Calev ben Yefuneh went to Chevron to prostrate himself on the graves of the patriarchs.

It is told about the Satmar Rebbe, grandson of the “Yetev Lev,” that he was very dedicated to his disciples. He looked after them devotedly.

He invested great efforts in his yeshiva and the boys. Also after they got married, he would inquire about them: if they set fixed times to study Torah; if they prayed fervently; if they conducted their home properly; and the state of the modesty at home.

Before his death he asked to engrave on his tombstone that “he shaped many righteous and sincere disciples” – he was asked why he wished to emphasize this.

The Rebbe thought and said: While I am still alive I can keep an eye on their development, but what will be after I die? Therefore, he asked to have this written, so that when his disciples would visit his grave and see what was engraved on the tombstone, they would try to improve their ways so that they should be considered one of his righteous and sincere disciples...

Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

They Have Eyes, but Cannot See

A few years preceding the Second World War, anti-Semitism began to wreak havoc on the Jews around the world. Governments enacted various laws whose sole purpose was to harm the Jews. For example, whoever was caught with foreign currency in his possession was arrested immediately.

R' Avraham Moyal had on him a large sum of foreign currency at that time. Naturally, he was very afraid. On one of his trips from a distant country back to Morocco, he smuggled sacks full of foreign currency among his luggage. However, the police tracked him down. Trembling, R' Moyal began to pray that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, who was still alive at the time, he would be saved.

The police began to search R' Moyal's luggage, and they even touched his sacks full of foreign currency, but they did not notice anything at all, as it says, “They have eyes but cannot see.”

When he arrived in Mogador, he met Rabbi Chaim Pinto, who told him, “You prayed in the merit of my ancestors, and the tzaddikim saved you from their hands.”

This is another story that R' Avraham Moyal told on this matter:

Once, he was traveling by bus, transporting several crates full of foreign currency. Some people who were jealous of him denounced him to the authorities for smuggling foreign currency, saying that he was about to arrive in Mogador with five crates of money.

Somehow, R' Moyal found out that people had informed on him, and in a flash got off the bus and ran for his life, leaving all the money behind. He reached Mogador in a mysterious manner without getting caught.

Meanwhile, the bus reached its final station in Mogador, and R' Moyal decided to try his luck in retrieving the crates of money. He prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi

Chaim Pinto he should succeed in finding the crates with all his money, even though chances were that the local Arabs riding on the bus had already helped themselves to his treasures.

Moreover, station-workers would routinely board the buses at the terminal and clean them in preparation for the next trip. R' Moyal was sure that the station-workers had already claimed the crates of money for themselves.

Nevertheless, he tried his luck. He arrived at the terminal and found the station-workers cleaning the bus. He inquired if they had already cleaned inside the bus and was told that they had. R' Moyal did not despair. He turned to one of the workers and asked him, “May I get on the bus for a minute? I left something there.”

“What did you leave there?” asked the station-worker. “We already cleaned the bus and there was nothing left inside.”

All the same, R' Moyal got on the bus. He was astonished to find the five crates untouched, lying in the exact spot where he had left them. The station-workers had cleaned the bus thoroughly, but had simply not seen the crates full of money.

Once again the words of the pasuk were fulfilled, “They have eyes but cannot see...”

R' Moyal got off the bus and asked the workers to help him carry all the crates to a car waiting nearby. One of them asked in amazement, “How is it possible that we did not see the crates? We cleaned the entire bus thoroughly. How did we miss them?”

R' Moyal replied in a tone of confidence, “Of course you could not see the crates, because I prayed that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto no one should touch them, and I should get back all the money. These crates hold my livelihood, and I thank Hashem that my treasures were returned to me intact.”