



פרשת שלח

שבת מברכים תמוז

סיון תשפ"ג

שנת הקהל



HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA

The 10 spies had a positive intention in bringing their slanderous report about Eretz Yisroel. In the desert, free from the distraction of having to work the land, Bnei Yisroel were able to immerse themselves in spirituality and the study of Torah. That would all change when they entered the Land and had to start farming to earn a living.

This is the inner meaning of their claim that it is a land that devours its inhabitants. They feared that the physicality of the land would swallow them up spiritually and they would lose their sensitivity and focus on the service of Hashem.

The spies were mistaken because ultimately Hashem desires a dwelling place within the physical world, that through our engagement with physicality for the sake of Heaven, we elevate our world to become a vessel for G-dliness.

A number of Mitzvos serve to prevent the fear of the spies occurring. Every 7 years, they would stop farming for Shemittah. During this year they would immerse themselves in the study of Torah. And at the end of this year, before going back into the field, they observed the Mitzvah of Hakhel. This served to reinspire them in the Fear of Hashem and the fulfillment of the Mitzvos.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush



In this Edition

What Does Your Heart Desire? **P.1**

Tzitzis Hiddurim of the Alter Rebbe **P.2**

What Does Your Heart Desire?

אם חפץ בנו ה' וְהביא אתנו אֶל האֶרֶץ הזאת

If Hashem desires us, and He will bring us into this Land...

The ten spies came back from Eretz Yisrael with a slanderous report. They described the great and fearful people who inhabited the Land, the fortified cities and the giants who protected them. They concluded that they would not be able to conquer the Land. Their words succeeded in creating a deep fear and panic amongst Klal Yisrael.

Kalev and Yehoshua remained faithful to Moshe Rabbeinu and were not party to the spies slander. They tried to convince Bnei Yisrael that Hashem was with them and that they would surely succeed in conquering Eretz Yisroel. In his appeal to the Jewish people, Kalev said "If Hashem desires us, and He will bring us into the Land."

Kalev's words are difficult to understand. By using the word "if", he seems to suggest that it was not certain that Hashem would bring them into the Land and that it was subject to doubt. Yet on numerous occasions, Hashem had told them that He would bring them into the Land as He had sworn to their ancestors. Hashem is trustworthy on His word and nothing can stand in His way. So why should there be any doubt whether it would happen or not?

The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk presents a novel interpretation of the words of this verse.

In preface, he points out that all of the spies were Tzaddikim. Surely these great individuals would not speak slanderously about the Holy Land, which Hashem had already promised was a good land, flowing with milk and honey.

Chassidus explains that the spies had holy (albeit mistaken) intentions in giving their negative report.

On their tour of Eretz Yisroel, the Meraglim saw the great prosperity of Eretz Yisroel. They saw the giant fruits that grew there witnessed first hand how it was truly a good land, flowing with milk and honey.

But they were afraid that when Bnei Yisroel would enter the land and enjoy this prosperity, it would cause them to forget about Hashem. In the Song of Haazinu, the Torah itself forewarns "And Yeshurun became fat and kicked. You became fat, you became dense, you became corpulent—and it deserted G-d its maker." Seeing themselves as masters of their own wealth, without having to rely on Hashem, they would forget about Him and their Divine mission in the world.

This is why the spies described the Land as "a land that devours its inhabitants" and recounted how they saw "the strong nation who dwell upon it and the children of the giant." They also brought back some of the gigantic fruits. They were trying to warn the people that the great blessing and prosperity of the Land would cause them too to become "great" and "mighty", giants who were strong and secure in their own eyes.

In response, Kalev told the Jewish people that they had nothing to fear and that despite the challenge that the spies feared, they could ensure that their material wealth and success would not devour them and take them away from Hashem. This is the inner meaning of Kalev's words 'אם חפץ בנו ה' - "if Hashem desires us", which, as stated above, were certainly not said as a doubt on Hashem's promises or His strength.

These words could also be read as "if the desire within us is Hashem". If we strengthen ourselves in the fear of Hashem and not get caught up in the pursuit of physical indulgence, there is no reason for fear. If the primary desire within our hearts is for Hashem and His service, He will bring us into the Land and we will be successful.

Kalev continued עלה נעלה וירשנו אותה - "we will surely go up and conquer it". Not only will we not be pulled-down and corrupted, we will raise ourselves spiritually and conquer the temptation for material pleasure, pushing it aside to attain our true desire of serving Hashem. Then we will have nothing to fear.

The Weekly Halacha Analysis

Tzitzis Stringencies from the Alter Rebbe's Siddur

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In addition to the Halachos of Tzitzis recorded by the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe also included laws of Tzitzis in his Siddur. Whilst the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch follow the view of the mainstream Poskim, the rulings of the Siddur contain additional stringencies based on the Halachic Poskim and Kabbalah. Below we present some of these Hiddurim.

Sewn-up Sides

To be obligated in Tzitzis, the garment must be considered as having four corners. According to the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch, if the garment is sewn down the majority of the length of the sides or is tied together with straps, it is no longer considered a four-cornered garment and is not obligated in Tzitzis. If only part of the garment is sewn together and the majority remains open, the garment is obligated in Tzitzis.

If the sides are hooked together or held together with snaps that can easily be undone, the garment technically remains obligated in Tzitzis even if the snaps go down the entire length. Nonetheless, because of Maris Ayin the snaps or hooks should not be placed lower than the halfway point of the Tzitzis.

In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe is more stringent, writing that to be Yotzai according to all opinions, the Tallis Katan should be open completely on both sides. The sides should not even be held together with hooks or snaps and this applies even if the majority of the sides still remain open.

Folds in the Tzitzis While Wearing

According to the Alter Rebbe's ruling in the Siddur, the garment must wrap around the person's body in a manner that the entire measure is completely spread out. If the garment is folded or bunched together, the place of the fold is not counted in the measure of the minimum dimensions of the garment.

Covering one's Chest

The Tallis Katan should completely cover one's chest. If the hole for the neck is wider or has a V-opening, it should be pulled closed with straps (or sewn). This is not a Halachic matter but rather a Kabbalistic stringency based on the writings of the Ariza"l.

Location of the Knot

In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe rules that in addition to the hole, the first knot of the Tzitzis

should also be positioned on the corner of the garment at a minimum of one thumb-breadth from the bottom edge of the garment. This is in fulfillment of the Pasuk "you shall make Gedilim on the four corners". The Gedil begins from the first knot. The string before the first knot is not considered part of the Gedil.

On a Tallis Gadol, this presents the following problem, where the strings are tied to the side of the garment. Even though they are initially tied more than 1 thumb-breadth from the bottom edge of the garment, since the fabric of the Tallis is not stiff, the Tzitzis are liable to slip below this minimum level.

The Alter Rebbe advises that a small hole be made near the (side) edge of the Tallis at the correct height. After tying the Tzitzis through the primary hole with a double knot, the 'winding' string is threaded through this small hole before beginning the windings. This will anchor the Tzitzis in place so that they should not slip down.

The extra hole also ensures that the Tzitzis always hang so that they touch the edge of the garment which is another stringency.

Two holes on the Tallis Katan

On the Tallis Katan, the Alter Rebbe writes that two holes should be made, through which the strings are inserted. This will ensure that the first knot of the Tzitzis will be positioned at least one thumb-breadth from the bottom (and side) of the garment.

This opinion is brought by the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch. However, there he writes that the Halacha does not follow this opinion. In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes that this practise should be followed. (It does not apply to the Tallis Gadol which is worn over one's clothing where having 2 holes appears like showing-off).

(Note: Accordingly, whilst on the Tallis Katan the knot will be 1 thumb-breadth from both the bottom and side edge of the garment, on the Tallis Gadol it will only be 1 thumb-breadth from the bottom edge and not from the side edge).

The strings should be threaded through the two holes so that they are tied (and worn) on the front of the garment and hang down on the front of the garment. The Alter Rebbe writes that this is in fulfillment of the Pasuk *וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ* "and you shall see it", which requires that the entire length of the strings be visible on the outside.

The two holes should be positioned on a diagonal so that the strings hang downwards towards the

bottom hem of the garment and should "touch" the bottom of the corner within one thumb-breadth from the bottom and side edges.

Broken strings

In the Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe presents the 2 main opinions of the Rishonim on the status of the Tzitzis where some of the strings become shortened or severed. The argument applies in a case where 3 or more strings break.

According to the strict opinion (Rabbeinu Tam), as soon as 3 of the 8 ends of the Tzitzis break, the Tzitzis will be Posul, even if part of them remain (but are less than 12 thumb-breadths long). According to the lenient opinion (Rosh), even if all 8 strings were severed, as long as a measure of *עניבה* remains of each of the broken strings, the Tzitzis will be Kosher.

In the Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe rules that Lechatchila we are concerned for the stringent opinion. However, if no other Tzitzis are available, we rely on the lenient opinion which is the primary Halacha.

In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe brings only the stringent opinion, suggesting that one may not rely on the lenient opinion at all.

Sleeping in Tzitzis

In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes that those who are careful with Mitzvos will sleep with Tzitzis on, so that if they sleep into the day (when Tzitzis are required), they will not be "naked" of Mitzvos.

An additional reason is so that one will not have to put on the Tallis Katan in the morning before washing Negel Vasser. This would be problematic according to the teaching of the Zohar that one may not touch their clothing before washing Negel Vasser. (In the Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe writes that the concern is that one would be unable to make the Bracha on the Tzitzis before washing Negel Vasser and because one should not walk 4 Amos without Tzitzis).

(The Tzemach Tzedek adds that if the garment is designated to wear both in the day and night, one fulfills the Mitzvah of Tzitzis even at night—according to some Rishonim).

Additionally, based on the Ariza"l, here is Kabbalistic basis for wearing Tzitzis at night as well as during the day.