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Chumash  
Vort from **Rav Soloveitchik** zt"l: Shlach  
Bamidbar 14:17

ועתה יגדל נא כח אדני

Now, please, let the strength of the Lord be increased.

What precisely does this phrase mean? How can the Omnipotent's strength be magnified?

When Israel sins, God is in a sense "helpless," as Rashi said: "His strength is weakened as a woman (Rashi on Numbers 11:15). Similarly, on the phrase "the Rock of their youth they have forsaken", Rashi comments: – "When He comes to do good for you, you anger him and weaken His strength from being able to do good for you" (Rashi on Deuteronomy 13:18).

On one level, God influences, He forms, He gives, He is the ultimate source. Man is the influenced, the formed, the receiver. Relative to God, man's capabilities are infinitesimal. He is nothing more than receiver, a passive participant. He has only what God gives him; what God does not bestow, he lacks.

Yet if the man-God relationship were indeed so one-sided, what possible role would there be in this world for Torah and mitzvot? What is the purpose of free will? If God exclusively plays the role of giver and man the role of passive receiver, why did God grant man autonomy? Furthermore, God has entered into covenants that serve as contractual obligations between God and the world, as well as between God and the Congregation of Israel. The halakhah states that every proper covenant contains obligations by the signatory parties. Both sides participate – each gives and receives something in return. If the Master of the Universe plays the role of giver exclusively, what is the role of man?

Man must provide "assistance," as it were, to the Master of the Universe, kevayachol. Man must "help" God to reveal His presence in the world. The Shechinah, the Divine presence, indeed resides with us on earth. "For I am Hashem Who dwells with them in their impurity" (Leviticus 16:17). We encounter the Shechina continually. Yet, God is not clearly revealed to us; He is hidden from view: "Behold I come to you in a cloud" (Exodus 19:9). He is indeed close, but He does not reveal Himself. The Hand of God in human events is not revealed; He is hidden from the world. He "dwells

concealed...in the shadow" (Psalms 91:1). Hashem is in close proximity to man, so close that man can almost touch Him, but not everyone can penetrate the cloud to reveal Him.

The obscuring cloud takes on any number of guises. For the physicist, the cloud is a mathematical formula. For the biologist, it is a biochemical reaction. For the physiologist, it is an instinct: for the psychologist, a drive: for the general, the power of his army. The cloud is any manifestation of nature or man that promotes the illusion that the world operates autonomously, concealing the reality that God is responsible for all that occurs on earth.

God can decide to disperse the obscuring clouds, and occasionally in history He chooses to reveal Himself and proclaim: "I am the Lord your God." More often, however, God remains obscure, a God "Whose abode is in transcendence."

It is the job of Man in general, and Israel specifically to disperse the obscuring cloud in all its forms. God on the other hand, is the "King caught in the tresses [of His Beloved]" (Song of Songs 7:6). He is held captive, as it were. He chooses to remain obscure. Instead, Israel has been charged with revealing God and publicizing His Name.

This was God's message when He directed Abraham to "Go forth from your land and your birthplace and from the house of your father to the land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). God is in essence telling Abraham, Your assignment is to make My presence known to the world. You must dissipate the clouds that obscure Me from perception." And just as Abraham was charged with this task, we too must continue this mission, a charge that has only increased in urgency in our present day.

I recall my Chabad melamed's description of God crying in mourning for His Temple during the nine-day mourning period leading up to Tishah B'av. I asked him, "I don't understand: Why does Hashem have to cry? He is Omnipotent! With His word He created the entire world; certainly He can rebuild the Temple!"

As a child I did not comprehend his Rebbe's answer. Many years later I understood that Hashem cannot, kevayachol, act alone. There is no awakening above without a corresponding awakening below. Hashem is indeed Omnipotent, but the task of revealing His Divine presence is the great mission of His people. (Derashot Harav pp. 9-11)

**Rabbi Reisman** – Parshas Shelach 5774

1. The first thought of the week has to do with the last Parsha of Kriyas Shema. The Parsha which ends with this Posuk as is found in 15:41 (אני ירוך אלקיכם). This Parsha which of course appears in Parshas Shelach has a final Posuk which has a redundancy. It starts (אני ירוך אלקיכם) I am Hashem your G-d and it ends (אני ירוך אלקיכם) I am Hashem your G-d to which we add with the word Emes. The question is why such a strange structure in a Posuk, the redundancy, the repeating of the phrase (אני ירוך אלקיכם).

Rav Schwab in Mayan Bais Hashoeva (pg # 329) has an extraordinary explanation. Rav Schwab explains that in serving the Ribbono Shel Olam we have the opportunity to serve HKB"Y in many different instances, in many different situations. There are times of Gilui Shechina, times where the Jewish people served HKB"Y when Hashem's presence was easily felt. There are times of Hester Panim, such as the generation of the Churban, the generation of the Holocaust, the generation of difficulties where there was Hester Panim. Now obviously there are two different ways of serving Hashem. A person has to have the ability to serve Hashem when things go well and the ability to serve Hashem during periods of difficulty.

Explains Rav Schwab, after we say Shema with Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim and (ויהי אם שמע) with Kabbalas Mitzvos. This is after we accept upon ourselves to serve the Ribbono Shel Olam, we mention the Parsha of Tzitzis and end (אני ירוך אלקיכם, אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים) I am Hashem your G-d during a time of Gilui Shechina, at the time of Yetzias Mitzrayim

when HKB”H’s presence was easily felt. (אָנִי יְרֹר אֶלְרִיכָם) I am also Hashem your G-d when there is no Gilui Shechina when you need Emes (וְיִצִיב וְנִבֵּן) you need to remind yourself of HKB”H’s presence. Therefore, the double (אָנִי יְרֹר אֶלְרִיכָם) is an appropriate ending to the Shema, the fundamental tenant of the Jewish belief and it ends with this idea of two types of Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim. Asks Rav Schwab the same thing with Kabbalas Hatorah. At Har Sinai the Jewish people accepted the Torah, there was Gilui Shechinah. HKB”H’s presence was easily felt in the Midbar. After Purim, Kimu V’kiblu Hayehudim, the Jews again were Mikabeil the Torah. The miracle of Purim famously took place during a time of Hester Panim, during a time where one did not sense HKB”H’s presence. Because you need both types of Kabbalah. Ain L’hafsik Bain (אָנִי יְרֹר אֶלְרִיכָם) and Emes V’yatziv. During times of difficulty we don’t make a Hefsek we go straight (אָנִי יְרֹר) and we declare Emes (וְיִצִיב וְנִבֵּן וְיִשָּׁר וְנִתְקַן וְנִתְקַן וְנִתְקַן), we declare in many ways our fundamental belief in HKB”H. This is Rav Schwab’s explanation.

I would add that for many of you listening, probably most of you listening, you have the same type of dual experience. When you are in Yeshiva it is a time of relative Gilui Shechinah, it is a time when you have a good feeling of the incredible Torah that HKB”H has given us, the wisdom of Torah, the depths of Torah, it is a time of a feeling of Gilui a time of feeling of wanting to learn and wanting to become a Talmid Chochom. When you go out to work, you are in the workplace, you are in a different environment, you have to have the wisdom to have a separate (אָנִי יְרֹר אֶלְרִיכָם), a separate Kabbalas Hatorah. A separate dedication to HKB”H, the Torah, and the Mitzvos. You have to recognize that as a separate challenge.

When Yaakov Avinu prepared to go to the house of Lavan he had spent so many years, all his life in the Bais Medrash of Yitzchok Avinu. As he went to Lavan he prepared by going to Shem V’aiver. What did he prepare? He prepared as Rashi says that the entire 14 years he didn’t sleep in a bed. When he was in Yeshiva, he learned well all day and night Seder and then he went into a comfortable bed to sleep. When he was preparing to go out to the workplace, to Lavan, he taught himself to be able to learn when he is exhausted, to be able to learn when he was tired, to be able to go 14 years without sleeping in a bed and then after that to sleeping with a stone under his head. It is a separate Kabbalas Hatorah. When you are out in the world you have to be able to be Mekabeil on yourself the goal of being a Talmid Chochom, of knowing Yedios Hatorah and understanding Torah. By going to a Mishmar, by going late at night, by pushing yourself even when you are tired, and making sure you understand the things that you learn.

<http://www.tekhelet.com/pdf/HistoryMesorahNignaz.pdf>

The following essay is provided, complimentary, to further the knowledge of tekhelet. If you found the essay of interest, please consider purchasing the book in which it is published:

### **Threads of Reason**

#### **A Collection of Essays on Tekhelet**

**by Rabbi Mois Navon**

available at: <https://www.createspace.com/4597533>

**About the Book** This collection of essays is the result of research spanning more than a decade, motivated by nothing more than the desire to reach a clear understanding of the issues surrounding the rediscovery of tekhelet through the Murex trunculus. Is it possible to renew a biblical commandment without a mesorah (tradition)? Must religious objects, like tzitzit, be made from kosher substances? Does one violate the melakhah (Shabbat labor) of trapping when obtaining a snail on Shabbat? Bringing together biology and halakhah, chemistry and aggadah, archeology and theology – and applying careful consideration and logical reason – these essays seek to address the numerous questions that arise in the endeavor to revive this unique commandment. And as tekhelet is a commandment that has been forgotten for over 1300 years, each essay is colored with the

marvel of a lost biblical commandment returned anew to the Jewish people. This collection of essays, then, can be seen as a group of threads – threads of reason – spun into a cord strong enough to bind a new generation in the fulfillment of an ancient commandment.

On History, Mesorah, and Nignaz History Archeological evidence now available suggests that the origins of the purple and blue dye industry can be traced to Crete, dating as far back as 1750 BCE.<sup>1</sup> And on a tablet from Tel el-Amarna, dating to 1500 BCE, the phrase subatu sa takilti – a garment of tekhelet – is listed as one of the precious articles sent to Egypt by Dusratta, King of the Mittani, as dowry to the Egyptian prince who was about to marry his daughter.<sup>2</sup> These finds, among others, indicate that mollusk-based dyeing was in place long before the Jews came out of Egypt (c. 1312 BCE), and that the dyes were very precious, being used to denote royalty.<sup>3</sup> A great number of archeological sites along the northern coast of Israel and extending up to the port city of Sidon attest to a well-developed Murex-based dyeing industry in the region.<sup>4</sup> Fittingly, this region is precisely where the Gemara states that the hillazon fisherman were located – “from the Ladders of Tyre to Haifa” (Shab. 26a). One of the more telling finds from this region is that of a vat, found at Tel Shikmona (just outside of the modern city of Haifa), stained with dyestuff shown to be molecularly equivalent to the dye produced from Murex snails. The finds at these sites date from 1300 BCE to 900 BCE, corresponding to the time Joshua conquered the land from the Canaanites. Now, the Jews wore tekhelet from the time they were commanded to do so on Mount Sinai until foreign rulers became zealous for the royal color and restricted its production and use to the ruling class.<sup>5</sup> Various decrees were promulgated by the Romans, some providing exemption for ritual use, others strictly prohibiting Jewish use (e.g., Constantius 337-362). Documenting life during this period, the Gemara contains numerous references to the ritual use of tekhelet, the latest of which tells of tekhelet being brought from Israel to Babylon in the days of R. Ahai (c. 506). This statement denotes the last positive mention of the use of tekhelet and, as no reference to its discontinuance is recorded, it is safe to assume that tekhelet was available until the redaction of the Gemara (c. 550-570). Chronologically, the next mention of tekhelet in Judaic literature is found in the Midrash Tanhuma (c. 750) which laments, “and now we have no tekhelet, only white.”<sup>6</sup> R. Herzog surmises that it was the Arab conquest of Israel (c. 639) that brought an end to the snail-based dyeing industry among the Jews. R. Herzog’s estimation notwithstanding, R. Gershon Hanokh Leiner, the Radzyner Rebbe, reasons that tekhelet was in use during the times of R. Natronai Gaon (c. 853) and R. Shmuel Hofni Gaon (d. 1013), as they wrote of tekhelet and, according to the Radzyner, they only concerned themselves with rulings that were of practical consequence (halakhah lema’aseh). The Radzyner also makes an argument that perhaps even the Rambam (1135-1204) had tekhelet. This is difficult to accept, however, considering that the Rambam himself states explicitly, “We have no tekhelet at the present day.”<sup>7</sup> The Radzyner does acknowledge that his proposition is only speculation, based on an idea that is not without weakness.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, he places the last use of tekhelet among the Jews at the end of the Gaonic period (1038).<sup>9</sup> Now while the Radzyner Rebbe provides the latest date for tekhelet usage among the Jewish people, 10 R. Yehoshua MiKutna, in his work Yeshuot Malko (Orah Hayyim 2), puts forth the earliest date for the loss of tekhelet. He estimates that tekhelet was lost toward the end of the Amoraic period (c. 474), based on the fact that the Amoraic came to the conclusion that tekhelet was not a sine qua non for the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tzitzit. <sup>11</sup> The importance of this discussion, it should be noted, is not academic but has significant halakhic ramifications concerning the issues of mesorah and nignaz.

**Mesorah** With regard to the issue of mesorah (tradition), the Beit HaLevi wrote responsum on the subject to the Radzyner Rebbe upon the Rebbe’s proposal that he had found the ancient source of tekhelet in a cuttlefish known as Sepia officinalis. <sup>12</sup> There are actually two records of their correspondence: one recorded by the Beit HaLevi’s grandson (R.

Joseph B. Soloveitchik) and the other recorded by the Radzyner himself.<sup>13</sup> The responsum as recorded by R. Soloveitchik indicates that the Beit HaLevi was of the opinion that a mesorah is essential; however, perhaps more telling is the responsum recorded by the Radzyner which reveals why the Beit HaLevi felt a mesorah was necessary. This version of the responsum reads: After he [the Radzyner] has clarified that something had been lost and he rediscovered it, will we be obligated to listen to him and wear it. However, if we say that the fish was in existence, and the [manner of] extracting its dye was known during all the time that has passed since tekhelet stopped [being used] in Israel, and yet our fathers and our forefathers did not wear it, then it is as if we have a tradition and a transmission from our ancestors that this fish and its dye are not the hillazon and the tekhelet, despite its having all the signs which our sages have designated. Only after it has become clear to us that this fish or the dyeing process ceased and was forgotten at any time during all this time, and therefore that the transmission was interrupted, only then will the halakhic evidence serve as proof.<sup>14</sup> From this quote, it is clear that the mitzvah of tzitzit is not in some unique category that demands mesorah, and only mesorah, for its determination – something that would constitute an unparalleled halakhic anomaly.<sup>15</sup> Rather, the Beit HaLevi simply said to the Radzyner, in effect, if this “hillazon” was known to my father and to my grandfather, etc., and yet they didn’t have any mesorah attached to it, why should I now accept it as the genuine hillazon of tekhelet? That is to say, since the *Sepia officinalis* proposed by the Radzyner has always been known,<sup>16</sup> it comes with a known mesorah, albeit a negative one. However, when it comes to the *Murex trunculus* now being proposed as the hillazon, the words of the Beit HaLevi argue in its favor. According to all accounts, the *Murex trunculus* had been lost to the Jewish people from sometime between the years 474 and 1038 (and lost to the non-Jewish world since 1453).<sup>17</sup> It was only rediscovered by the French zoologist Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers in 1857,<sup>18</sup> and only reintroduced to the Jewish world in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> This being the case, the Beit HaLevi would obligate the use of halakhic evidence in the face of a broken mesorah – a break ranging from at least 400 years within the non-Jewish world to more than 1500 years among the Jewish people.<sup>20</sup>

Nignaz In explaining that tekhelet is no longer available, the Midrash, in two distinct places, uses the expression – nignaz – stored away.<sup>21</sup> Some have interpreted this to mean “hidden” to the extent that the mitzvah is simply unattainable by any natural means. Rabbi Yitzhak Luria, the Arizal, mentions the time of this “storing away” in connection with the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE): “For the truth is that at this time, after the destruction of the Temple, we do not have the power to wear tekhelet.”<sup>22</sup> However, by all accounts tekhelet was still in use following the destruction of the Temple, the earliest date given for its loss being 474. Commenting on this conflict, R. Tuckachinsky explains, “Therefore, it is understood that only during the time of the Temple was it found in abundance, following which it was nignaz, not that it was stored away completely, but that it was found less frequently.”<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein the Radvaz explains that “it is possible that the hillazon exists but we do not recognize it or how to trap it.”<sup>24</sup> Given this understanding, it is reasonable to adopt a more interpretative definition of the term nignaz than first supposed. Indeed, the term is translated by the Arukh to mean stored for safekeeping, and not that the item in question had been abolished or vanished.<sup>25</sup> R. Eliyahu Tavger, in his article, “The Meaning of Nignaz in the Writings of the Sages,” brings Talmudic sources that employ the word to refer to a ruler’s storing away of precious items for exclusive royal use.<sup>26</sup> He surmises that the Midrashic statements declaring tekhelet to be nignaz, refer to royal edicts, like those promulgated by the Romans, prohibiting anyone but the royal court from wearing tekhelet. Indeed, the Ramban writes, “Today, no one but kings dares to wear tekhelet” (on Ex. 28:2), thus supporting the notion that kings zealously guarded the use of tekhelet, keeping it as the symbol of royalty – nignaz for the king, but not nignaz out of existence.<sup>27</sup> Conclusion In

conclusion, we have seen that the mitzvah of tekhelet has been lost to the Jewish world for anywhere from 900 to 1500 years.<sup>28</sup> This complete break in continuity provides an opening through which halakhah can then accept evidence to fill the void left by the lack of mesorah. In addition, we learned that tekhelet was still in use even after the term nignaz was employed and therefore, we can rest assured that there is no prohibition, mystical or otherwise, that would prevent us from fulfilling this precious mitzvah, one which the Gemara teaches is “equal to all the mitzvot” (Men. 43b).<sup>29</sup>

1 Baruch Serman, “The Science of Tekhelet,” in *Tekhelet: Renaissance of a Mitzvah* (New York: YU Press, 1996), p. 64. 2 R. Isaac Herzog, “Hebrew Porphyrology,” in *The Royal Purple and The Biblical Blue* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987), p. 44. 3 Appropriately, just as the nations of the world used tekhelet to signify royalty (malkhut), so too did the Jews; but in the case of the Jews, it was – and still is – to signify malkhut shamayim, the Kingship of Heaven. See, for example, Megillat Ester (8:15), Rashi (Shabbat 26a, s.v. uleyogvim), Ramban (Ex. 28:2). 4 R. Herzog, p. 24. Nina Karmon and Ehud Spanier, “Archaeological Evidence of the Purple Dye Industry from Israel,” in *The Royal Purple and The Biblical Blue* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987), pp. 149-157. Israel Ziderman, “Reinstitution of the Mitzvah of Tekhelet in Tzitzit,” *Techumin* 9 (1988), p. 438. 5 The history provided in this paragraph is from R. Herzog, pp. 110-112. 6 Midrash Tanhuma (Shelah 28); Bamidbar Rabbah (17:5). 7 Responsa v. 1, #138; also comm. on Mishnah Menahot 4; Rambam (Hil. Tz. 2:9). 8 “Ein HaTekhelet,” in *Sifrei ha-Tekhelet Radzyn* (Benei Berak: Mishor, 1990), p. 286. 9 “Sefunei Temunei Hol,” in *Sifrei ha-Tekhelet Radzyn* (Benei Berak: Mishor, 1990), pp. 5-7. It should be noted that R. Herzog rejects the notion that the Gaonim had tekhelet; as part of his proof, he brings the words of Mar Sar Shalom Gaon (d. 859) who speaks of tekhelet as a thing of the past (p. 113). 10 It is noteworthy that the absolute latest date given for Murex-based dyeing in the nonJewish world is 1453 upon the fall of Constantinople (R. Herzog, p. 114; Gosta Sandberg, *The Red Dyes* [NC: Lark Books, 1997], p. 30). 11 R. Menachem Burstein, *Ha-Tekhelet* (Jerusalem: Sifriyati, 1988), p. 135. 12 Historical background: In 1887, R. Gershon Hanokh Leiner, the Radzyner Rebbe, pioneered a quest for tekhelet that led to the isolation of a cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*) as the dye’s source. Within a year he had thousands of his Hasidim wearing the new blue, though he faced great opposition from all other quarters of the Jewish world. Subsequent chemical analysis, initiated by R. Herzog, identified the dye as Prussian blue, the color of which derives from the Ferric ferrocyanide added to the mixture, and not from the *Sepia officinalis* extract (R. Herzog, p. 117). This is something the Rebbe himself would not have On History, Mesorah, and Nignaz 23 countenanced, as he writes that the color comes exclusively from the hillazon (“Ein HaTekhelet,” 1:22, p. 288; “Ptil Tekhelet,” p. 168). Nevertheless, though his hillazon was rejected, his three books on the subject (*Sefunei Temunei Hol*, *Ptil Tekhelet*, *Ein HaTekhelet*) still serve as a basis for the halakhic investigation of this subject. 13 Both are quoted in R. Moshe Tendler, “Identifying Tekhelet: Masoret and Yediya,” in *Tekhelet: Renaissance of a Mitzvah* (New York: YU Press, 1996), p. 49. See also R. Burstein, p. 133. 14 Ibid. 15 See R. Chaim Twerski, “Identifying the Chilazon,” *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* XXXIV (Fall 1997). See also R. Tendler, pp. 47-48. 16 “Cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*) has been caught there from ancient times on and holds an important seasonal artisanal fishery in the Balearic Islands (western Mediterranean)” (Keller, S; Valls, M; Quetglas, A; “Life-History, Ecology and Fishery of *Sepia officinalis* in the Western Mediterranean” – see: [http://www.ciac2012brazil.com.br/trabalhos/trabalho\\_aprovado.php?id\\_trabalho=9598&ev=1](http://www.ciac2012brazil.com.br/trabalhos/trabalho_aprovado.php?id_trabalho=9598&ev=1)). 17 See fn. 10. 18 R. Herzog, p. 24. 19 In 1913, R. Isaac Herzog, named the *Murex trunculus* as the most likely candidate as the hillazon of tekhelet (pp. 64, 65, 70). He was, however, prevented from coming out in favor of the *Murex* due to concerns regarding its physical characteristics in comparison with the description in the hillazon baraita (Men. 44a), and more critically, due to the color of the dye which was not pure blue. Regarding the hillazon baraita, the points were not

insurmountable, as explained in my essay, “The Hillazon Baraita” (herein, p. 25). Regarding the final color not being pure blue, this concern would have to wait several decades before a solution would be found. In 1980, Prof. Otto Elsner of the Shenkar College of Fibers in Israel rediscovered the secret of producing a pure blue color from the Murex trunculus snail, thus solving R. Herzog’s most compelling difficulty. Together with Ehud Spanier of Haifa University, he investigated the photo-chemical properties of the Murex trunculus dye and found that when the dye is in a reduced state (the essential stage of vat dyeing), exposure to ultraviolet light transforms the blue-purple colorant (i.e., dibromoindigo) to unadulterated blue (i.e., indigo) – see Otto Elsner and Ehud Spanier, “The Past, Present and Future of Tekhelet,” in *The Royal Purple and The Biblical Blue* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987). In 1985, while writing a book about tzitzit entitled *Kelil Tekhelet*, R. Eliyahu Tavger became convinced that the source of authentic tekhelet had been found. Determined to actualize his newfound knowledge, and after much trial and error, he succeeded in applying the process, *Threads of Reason – A Collection of Essays on Tekhelet* 24 according to halakhah, from beginning to end. He thus became the first person, since the loss of the hillazon, to dye tekhelet for the purpose of tzitzit. In 1991, together with R. Tavger, Ptil Tekhelet was formed to produce and distribute tekhelet strings for tzitzit. 20 That is, there are 404 years from the latest date given for the snail/dye being lost in 1453 to its rediscovery in by Lacaze-Duthiers in 1857, and there are 1511 years from the earliest date given for its loss in 474 to the Jewish world and its rediscovery by R. Tavger in 1985. 21 See fn. 6. Also Sifri Devarim (VeZot Habrakha 354). 22 See Arizal, Pri Etz Hayim (Shaar HaTzitzit, ch. 5). There are some who have seen in these words a nullification of the mitzvah of tekhelet in the present day (see R. Burstein, p. 138, n. 35) and there are those who have understood them as merely a statement on the spiritual status of the Jewish people, but not as an abrogation of the mitzvah (see R. Burstein, p. 139, n. 36). R. Shlomoh Taitelbaum explains that it is preposterous to suppose that the Arizal would nullify a biblical command (Lulaot Tekhelet [Jerusalem: Ptil Tekhelet, 2000], p. 40). In support of his position, he brings the letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rashab who, while interpreting the Ari’s words to imply that we do not wear tekhelet now, nevertheless writes, “the mitzvah is an eternal one, and when we will be able to fulfill it, so we must do.” (p. 52). 23 R. Tuckachinsky, Ir HaKodesh VeHamikdash, vol.5, p. 50. See also R. Taitelbaum (p. 20) for a similar argument. 24 Radvaz (Respona 2:265). 25 R. Taitelbaum, p. 19. 26 Mishnah (Me’ilah 17:2), Tosefta (Pe’ah 4:18), Gemara (San. 104a). 27 It should be noted that at the time of the Ramban (1194-1270) the Jews had long since ceased from wearing tekhelet, though it did continue to be used by the non-Jewish world until 1453. R. Tavger conjectures that the Ramban was referring to the Pope who held himself as the “king of the Gentiles” and who acquired Murex-based blue from Constantinople. Alternatively, the kings and popes used a vegetable based-dye that, nevertheless, symbolized the royal court and was held as the exclusive symbol of royalty. 28 That is, there are 974 years from the latest date given for the snail/dye being lost to the Jewish world in 1038 to its rediscovery by R. Tavger in 1985, and there are 1511 years from the earliest date given for its loss in 474 to the Jewish world and its rediscovery by R. Tavger in 1985. 29 For an in-depth discussion on this expression, see my essay, “Equal to All the Mitzvot in the Torah”, *Chidushei Torah Journal* (5770), <http://www.divreinavon.com/pdf/EqualToAll.pdf>

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**Parsha Shlach: The Spies Have Not Left Us**  
**By: Dr. Joseph Frager**

Of all the failures of Man, the error of the Meraglim (Spies) ranks high on the list. Unfortunately, the Spies have not left us and live on in many forms. Parsha Shlach offers many insights and lessons for Modern Israel. The

bottom line is very simple; strive to be like Caleb Ben Yephuneh and Yehoshua Bin Nun and our future is secure. If our Leaders were like Caleb and Yehoshua then there would be no problems and it would not matter who was President of the United States or Secretary of State. Had all the Meraglim been aligned with Yehoshua and Caleb the Jews would have entered into Eretz Yisrael immediately and not wandered in the Desert for 39 years (the incident with the Spies took place on the 9th of Av in the second year since leaving Egypt-Taanit 29a). Unfortunately, the Spies caused the Nation to err. The Ramban delves deeply into the actual mistakes the Spies made. Essentially they had a job to do and did not do it. Parshat Shlach opens up, “Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, “Send forth for yourself men and let them investigate the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel; one man each from his father’s tribe shall you send every one a leader among them.” The Ramban points out that Moshe himself must have seen the Land of Canaan as Prince of Egypt since “Hebron is only a seven day journey from Egypt”. Moshe knew fully well that the Land was a land “flowing with Milk and Honey”. According to the Ramban he had seen the Land with his own eyes. The only reason he sent distinguished men from each tribe was, “to gladden the people about the Land for it is “a splendor of all Lands, and then they would ascend to it with great enthusiasm.” Moshe was trying to delegate responsibility. He was interested at this point in Nation Building. Otherwise he could have led Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael himself as he had taken them out of Egypt. The Ramban makes it clear that Moshe did not think the Spies would turn on him. He thought they would see exactly what he had seen when he visited the Land of Canaan and give a similar assessment. The Ramban further elucidates that the mission of the Spies was a military one as well. Any Nation that was about to invade another had to gather intelligence in order to figure out the best way to achieve a quick and efficient victory. Should they invade via the South? Should they invade via the East? The answers the Spies gave were not constructive. They did not say for example that it would be best to invade via Jericho as Yehoshua did 39 years later. The Spies said, “Ephes” (everything pivots on this word-it is commonly translated as “however” but it means so much more-it has a very negative connotation), “the people that dwell in the Land are powerful, the cities are fortified and very large and we also saw the offspring of the Giant.” They basically put the ca bash on an invasion. Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshat Shlach (Tape#685-June 3, 2010) brings down the Baal HaAkeida who said that the sin of the Spies was that they added editorial comment to their assessment. Their use of the word “Ephes” deviated from the facts. They said in essence that all of this is for naught for the people of Canaan are too strong. I would go further and like the Ramban, the sin of the Spies was that not only did they editorialize but failed at making constructive statements. They did not offer a Plan A, a plan B or a Plan C. They failed to state what was obvious to Caleb and Yehoshua ,that invasion could be undertaken despite the fortifications. Rabbi Frand brings down the Shalo”h who rejects the notion that the sin of the Spies was their “editorial opinion”. The Shalo”h says that Moshe Rabeinu indeed wanted not only a military opinion but wanted their opinion based upon Torah philosophy. The appropriate report by the Spies would have sounded more like, “Yes, they are strong and yes they are mighty and maybe even by ways of nature we would not be successful against their armies, but we have the Master of the World on our side”. Indeed, Caleb used this approach when contending with the Spies, “Caleb silenced the people toward Moshe and said, “We shall surely ascend and conquer it, for we can subdue it”. (13:30) Moshe had hoped all of those he sent would be unanimous in using Caleb’s approach. After all, these were distinguished Men who had a proven track record of being on the right side of History. Modern Day Israel is testimony of how not to be like the Meraglim. Modern Israel would not have not come into existence if one used the approach of the Spies. Every Israeli Leader knows fully well that Israel is dependent on miracles to survive. Ben Gurion said it best, “In Israel in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles”. The movement to secure, to grow, and expand Judea and Samaria follows the

precepts set out by both Caleb and Yehoshua. The pessimistic, negative philosophy of the Spies in their assessment of Eretz Yisrael is outright rejected. We can, and we shall are more like it. Unfortunately, Modern Day Israel has its share of Spies. They did not learn the lesson of the story of the Meraglim. Thank G-d there are more like Caleb and Yehoshua today than Shammua Ben Zaccur or Shaphat Ben Hori and the rest of the Spies. The Peace Now Movement, J Street, the New Israel Fund, Jewish Voice for Peace, and the architects of the Oslo Accords are still around fomenting trouble. They are outnumbered today but they are causing many problems. They would do well to review Parshat Shlach and finally understand the Sin of the Spies. Our People would have an easier time meeting the challenges ahead if they did. Shabbat Shalom.

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> reply-to: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> date: Thu, Jun 4, 2015 at 10:20 AM subject: Torah Musings

### **Shabbos Guides**

**by R. Gil Student**

#### **I. Shabbos Isn't Simple**

I have a working theory that the complexity of a halakhic topic is inversely proportional to the length of its treatment in the Written Torah. When more will not be enough, less is better. The laws of Shabbos, whose thirty nine categories of labor only begin to describe the Torah's requirements, are only mentioned in general in the Bible, with but a handful of exceptions. Instead, the Oral Torah leads the way.

The *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh*, the nineteenth century concise code of Jewish law (which we discussed here), seems to take a similar approach and only offers highlights of *Hilkhos Shabbos* rather than a comprehensive treatment. However, writers of popular compendia of religious practice have stepped up to fill in the gap. The lamented passing of R. Yehoshua Neuwirth, arguably the author of the greatest such book in the twentieth century, offers us the opportunity to think about the genre and discuss a number of examples published over the past few decades.

To be sure, popular compendia on *Hilkhos Shabbos* are nothing new. A recurring observance of this nature demands intricate familiarity of its guidelines. R. Avraham Danziger, author of the *Chayei Adam*, wrote *Zikhru Toras Moshe* in the late eighteenth century to help older boys learn the laws of Shabbos. This book is an excellent resource for adults, as well. More recently, R. Gedaliah Felder's *Yesodei Yeshurun* (vols. 3-5), published from 1958 to 1965, covers the laws of Shabbos in a popular format, adding important rulings of his own on contemporary issues. I would like to limit our discussion here to R. Neuwirth's *Shemiras Shabbos Ke-Hilkhasah* and a few—certainly not all—similar Hebrew and English books published since.

#### **II. Strict or Lenient?**

Three decisions stand out to me as crucial in writing a popular work on the laws of Shabbos. The first is the level of stringency. Do you want to rule strictly, to prevent the unsophisticated public from making mistakes? Or do you want to rule leniently, because the broader public should not be subject to anything not absolutely required. My own preference is that an author call it like he sees it, but that only pushes the question to the personality of the author: does his training and temperament tilt him toward leniency or stringency?

In evaluating a book, I often find it difficult to decide whether the author is strict, lenient or neither for a few reasons. First, what is mainstream? Sometimes it is cultural, the norm in a particular community which is difficult to determine from a distance. At best, you can compare similar books and determine relative approaches—this book is stricter than the other.

Second, an author can be lenient in one place and strict elsewhere. You have to do a broad comparison of many different rulings to establish a pattern, or lack thereof. Additionally, you have to compare the text to the footnotes. Are the conclusions different, as often happens? Does the author explain why he

is ruling strictly or leniently, based on a local reason or a broad approach? Because of the complexity of this evaluation, I leave it for others with more interest in this particular issue, without discounting its importance.

#### **III. Order and Depth**

A second consideration is the structure of presentation. The *Tur*, followed by *Shulchan Arukh* and commentaries, teaches the laws of Shabbos in rough order of the day. It starts with the laws of Shabbos preparations, proceeds through the order of the evening, onto the morning and afternoon, filling in laws where appropriate and then adding more at the end that had no obvious place. The result is quite confusing. I often tell people that they cannot learn the laws of Shabbos from the *Mishnah Berurah* because, for a novice, the presentation is so confusing. Any commentary to *Shulchan Arukh* must follow this order, although the *Mishnah Berurah* and *Arukh Ha-Shulchan* mitigate the confusion by adding periodic overviews.

Another approach is to teach each of the thirty nine Shabbos labors separately, with proper introductions, overviews and miscellaneous sections. The *Chayei Adam* follows this approach with much success. A third approach is to organize the laws entirely by topic, based on contemporary experience rather than Shabbos chronology or technical labor categories. As we shall see, most guides today follow one of these last two approaches.

The third consideration is depth. A Shabbos guide that teaches detailed law after detailed law can serve as an excellent reference work but makes for dry reading. It is too boring to read from cover to cover. An overview that teaches general principles may oversimplify. Every author must find a balance between comprehensiveness and readability.

#### **IV. Hebrew Shabbos Guides**

R. Yehoshua Neuwirth's *Shemiras Shabbos Ke-Hilkhasah* was a groundbreaking and lasting contribution for a number of reasons. The book follows a topical order and provides overviews of sub-topics followed by comprehensive detail. Written in Modern Hebrew, its footnotes provide ample resources for scholars plus—importantly—a plethora of oral rulings from the important scholar, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, that for decades were unavailable elsewhere. Additionally, R. Neuwirth dealt with many technological issues that arose in the mid- to late-twentieth century. His book was not only accessible to a broad readership but also valuable to scholars, leading it to become a classic that has survived for decades.

In contrast, R. Yaakov Posen's *Kitzur Hilkhos Shabbos*, originally published in 1974, is brief and follows the order of the thirty nine labors. His language is concise but remarkably precise, offering many details to scholars that novices will not even notice. He focuses on applications of the laws to contemporary life (of the 1970s), addressing technological developments as well. This short book seems to have been largely forgotten, despite its sustained value.

#### **V. English Shabbos Guides**

The first detailed English treatment of the Shabbos laws of which I know is R. Shimon Eider's *Halachos of Shabbos*. Similar to R. Neuwirth's Hebrew book, R. Eider's organizes the laws according to topic and contains many otherwise (at the time) unknown rulings by important authorities. Personally, I always found the book boring but an important tool for both laymen and scholars. It has largely been surpassed by newer English books.

R. Simcha Bunim Cohen's six volume series on the laws of Shabbos follows a combination of topical and labor organization. Generally speaking, within each topic the author arranges material by labor. He presents overviews of each subject and then detailed laws. However, unlike R. Neuwirth and R. Eider, R. Cohen provides (to my recollection) very few unpublished rulings of famous authorities. This makes his volumes less valuable to scholars, despite his extensive footnotes. On the other hand, he addresses technology of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. His language is also very readable.

R. Gersion Appel's second volume of his *Concise Code of Jewish Law*, published in 1989, remains unique among English Shabbos guides. This book follows both the labors and topics, somewhat duplicatively. What R.

Appel innovated was a way to be both comprehensive and interesting. His main text is a straightforward explanation of the detailed laws, which can become dry. Unlike other books in this genre, the Concise Code's footnotes are intended for the general public and discuss issues of popular interest. The text has the details and the easily identifiable footnotes contains the highlights, i.e. the practical applications. You can flip through the book and the footnotes will answer many of your questions. Detailed sources are then provided in endnotes.

Another unique aspect of R. Appel's book is his canon of authorities. The books already discussed quote almost exclusively from Ashkenazic Charedi halakhic authorities. R. Neuwirth's selection is somewhat broader. In contrast, R. Appel quotes extensively on R. Yitzchak Herzog and R. Chaim David Halevy (and R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, when available), in addition to standard Charedi scholars like R. Moshe Feinstein, R. Yitzchak Weiss and R. Moshe Stern.

I am happy to say that this book has been revised and updated by R. Daniel Goldstein and is scheduled for republication by OU Press. I have a not insignificant role in this publication.

#### VI. A Different Hebrew Guide

R. Eliezer Melamed has published three volumes of Peninei Halakhah on Shabbos, part of a larger series on Jewish practice. Like some other works, R. Melamed arranges the laws by topic. However, in my opinion, his organization of topics surpasses all others, allowing for extremely easy navigation (he also provides his books for free on his yeshiva's website: [link](#)).

Additionally, unlike the other books mentioned, he has very few footnotes. His book is meant to be a popular guide. Instead of footnotes, he took the unusual step of publishing an additional volume with essays discussing the sources and explaining his line of reasoning at length (he calls it *harchavos*, expansions). This substitution is, in my opinion, a great improvement content-wise on footnotes but it causes logistical difficulties. When I use his book, I have to take two with me off the shelf—one with the text I am using and another with the sources. Significantly, R. Melamed engages extensively with Religious Zionist and Sephardic authorities whose voices are often inexcusably ignored in guidebooks. I believe the text, without the expansions, has been translated into English for publication.

#### VII. Conclusion

I realize that I have only discussed some of the many available books. I selected those that I believe are excellent and with which I am sufficiently familiar to describe them. However, even from this limited selection we can see the ingredients for a successful halakhic guide in a crowded market.

As any educator knows, in order to teach a subject you have to be organized. Writing about a complex topic like the laws of Shabbos requires not just expertise but also organization. You need a successful lesson plan on how you want your readers to learn both the big picture and the details. You also need to balance between speaking to experts and novices. Dayan Posen's book succeeded solely on his excellent pedagogy.

You also need to address contemporary issues. You cannot teach the laws of Shabbos as if we are still living in 18th century Lithuania. And if you provide original material, new rulings by respected authorities or even citations from important but often ignored authorities, you will add enduring value.

(Adapted from a post in June 2013)

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**Thanks to [hamelaket@gmail.com](mailto:hamelaket@gmail.com) and Allen Klein for collecting the following items:**

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subject: **Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein**

#### **SHLACH**

To a great extent the Jewish people have always had an easier time dealing with the study and observance of Torah than with the primacy of the Land of Israel in Jewish life and thought. For various reasons, throughout our history we have always had difficulty dealing with the reality of being an independent, self-governing national entity living within the borders of the country that the Lord assigned to us.

Even before ever entering the Land of Israel, as we read in this week's Torah portion, the Jewish people shied away completely from entering that land and establishing their home there. They preferred living in a trackless desert to having to face the realities of nation building and a problem-laden challenging existence.

Centuries after Jacob and Joseph attempted to remind their descendants that Egypt was not their homeland and that their eventual future lay in their return to the Land of Israel, the Jewish people were still reluctant to revamp the core ideas and values of their tradition and of their ancestors. All later generations of Torah scholars and biblical commentators have attempted to understand what the driving force was that made the Jewish people so resist their entry into the Holy Land.

Though there are many incisive and psychologically penetrating thoughts advanced on this subject, after all is said and done, the question remains a perplexing and disturbing one. Why is it that the generation that saw so many miracles – in fact lived a miraculous existence on a daily basis and pledged themselves and their descendants to live a unique and moral lifestyle, should somehow have balked at entering the Land of Israel. Like most questions that begin with the word “why” there are no easy or convincing answers to this difficult issue.

There is a concept in Jewish thought advanced in the Talmud of “seek out and analyze and study the matter and receive reward for so doing” even if there is no practical answer or solution to the issue involved. The Talmud itself raises this comment regarding the number of cases that appear in the Torah that are so complex and technical as to render them impractical of any rational solution or mode of behavior.

This opinion really teaches us that we should be able to recognize the possibility of such situations occurring even though we cannot attribute cause or practical solutions to the issues involved. Apparently it is sufficient for us to recognize that such a possibility exists and may still exist and not be disheartened or forlorn over that fact.

The mere recognition that somehow these events occur is sufficient enough for us to learn a lesson and continue to persevere in a positive fashion. There are unfortunately many Jews within the Jewish world today who still do not recognize the Land of Israel as being a central tenet of our faith and our existence. It is almost irrational, certainly inexplicable, why after all of the events of the past two centuries of Jewish life this should be so.

And, no matter what causes we will search for, the perplexing question as to why this is so remains. So, all we can do is recognize that this has been a constant problem in Jewish society since the days of Moshe and that basically all we can do is acknowledge the situation while continuing to persevere in building and populating the Land of Israel.

Shabbat shalom  
Rabbi Berel Wein

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**By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Parshas Shelach includes the mitzvah of wearing *techeiles* on our *tzitzis*. Rashi, in the beginning of Parshas Korach, mentions that the followers of Korach donned garments that were completely *techeiles*. Therefore, whether we are in a place that reads Shelach this week or one that reads Korach, it is appropriate to read about:

## Can We Identify the Techeiles?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

When we are commanded about wearing tzitzis, the Torah includes two mitzvahs. In addition to the mitzvah of wearing tzitzis threads on the corners of the garment, there is an additional mitzvah that some of the tzitzis threads should be dyed with a special dye called techeiles. (It is a dispute among the Rishonim how many threads are to be dyed techeiles. That topic we will leave for a different time.) This dye must be made from a species called chilazon (Tosefta Menachos 9:6).

Although the regular use of techeiles stopped over a thousand years ago, there have been a few attempts within the last 130 years to reintroduce the practice of wearing techeiles threads alongside the white threads. This article will present the differing opinions on this question and some of the issues that have been raised.

At the time of the Gemara, the nature of chilazon and its manufacture was still known and practiced (see Menachos 42b). However, some time after the period of the Gemara, the use of techeiles ended. By all indications, techeiles fell into disuse sometime after the period of Rav Achai Gaon, the author of the She'iltos, around 4520 (760). Although I have seen it claimed that by the time, techeiles was no longer worn in his era (The Royal Purple, page 112), Rav Achai mentions some of the halachos of wearing techeiles (see She'ilta 126). Although there is no indication that, in his day, he knew people who were still wearing techeiles, he also makes no mention of the practice no longer existing. The obvious reading is that he knows that some people may still be wearing it.

There is an allusion in the Ramban that, in his day, techeiles was still worn, although it is possible that he was referring to the color and not the source.

It is unclear why the Jewish people stopped using techeiles. Numerous theories have been suggested as to why wearing techeiles ended, but these are all theories with no evidence to support them. The wording used by the midrashim is: "now, we have only white tzitzis, since the techeiles was concealed" (Medrash Tanchuma, Shlach 15; Medrash Rabbah, Shlach 17:5). Some poskim understand that there are halachic or kabbalistic reasons why techeiles should not be worn until Moshiach comes (Shu"t Yeshuos Malko #1-3). According to this opinion, the Medrash means that the source of the techeiles was concealed, and it is to be revealed only at a future time when Hashem wants us to wear it again.

Other poskim disagree and contend that we should still attempt to fulfill the mitzvah of wearing techeiles on the tzitzis. They explain that the Medrash means that techeiles became unavailable. Rav Herzog, zt"l, who followed this approach, speculated that persecution by anti-Semitic governments ended the production of techeiles (The Royal Purple and the Biblical Blue, page 112). Still another possibility is that the knowledge how to produce the techeiles was lost, or that there was no longer availability or access to the chilazon, the source of the techeiles.

The Radziner Rebbe's Research and Conclusion

In 5647 (1887), the Radziner Rebbe, Rav Gershon Henoch Leiner, zt"l, published a small sefer, Sefunei Temunei Chol, wherein he discusses the importance of fulfilling the mitzvah of wearing techeiles, even today. In his opinion, the Medrash quoted above means that techeiles became unavailable, not that we are not permitted to wear techeiles. The Radziner encouraged wearing something that may be techeiles, because one is possibly fulfilling a mitzvah min hatorah. Thus, he contended that if he could identify a species that may be the chilazon, and he could extract a dye from it, then one should wear tzitzis that are dyed this way.

The Radziner, himself, analyzed every place in the Gemara where the word chilazon is mentioned and defined what characteristics would help us identify it. Based on his analysis, he drew up a list of eleven requirements with which one could identify the chilazon. Among other requirements, these included that the chilazon would be located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea; that it must be able to live on land, at least for a brief period of time; that it produces a black ink and that it must have fins, bones, and sinews.

The Radziner concluded that if one located a marine animal that meets all the requirements, one can assume that it is the chilazon.

Having completed his halachic research, the Radziner then began his scientific research to identify the chilazon. He traveled to Naples, Italy, to study marine animals that would meet all the requirements of techeiles. In Italy, he decided that the cuttlefish, which in many languages is called an inkfish, is indeed the chilazon from which one produces techeiles. The cuttlefish meets every one of the Radziner's requirements for chilazon, including that it emits a dark dye, which is the reason why it is called an inkfish. The cuttlefish is not a true fish and is capable of living on land for brief periods of time.

The Radziner then published his second volume on the subject, Pesil Techeiles, in which he announced his discovery of the chilazon and all his proofs why the cuttlefish meets all the requirements of the chilazon. Subsequently, the Radziner published a third volume, Ein HaTecheiles, whose purpose was to respond to all the questions he had been asked regarding his identification of techeiles. The three volumes have been republished together under the title Sifrei Hatecheiles Radzin.

Reaction to the Radziner's Proposal

Although the Radziner took much effort to present his case, most of the Gedolei Yisroel did not support his theory. The primary reason for his publishing Ein HaTecheiles was to refute those who had disagreed with him and to convince others of the validity of his approach. He attempted to get several great poskim to agree with him, particularly, Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spector (the Rav of Kovno and the posek hador at the time), the Beis HaLevi (then the Rav of Brisk), Rav Yehoshua Kutno (author of Yeshuos Malko, the Rav of Kutno and considered one of the poskei hador, particularly among the chassidim), the Maharil Diskin (who had been Rav of Brisk and was living in official retirement in Yerushalayim), and Rav Shmuel Salant (the Rav of Yerushalayim). None of these Rabbonim accepted the Radziner's proposal. Their reasons for rejecting his proposal are significant.

The Brisker Approach

Beis HaLevi wrote that he was convinced that because of mesorah, the inkfish cannot be the source of the techeiles. There are two versions as to why the Beis Halevi objected.

According to this namesake and great-grandson, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik of Yeshiva University and Chief Rabbi of Boston, the Beis Halevi held that when the Torah requires the usage of a specific type or species of item to fulfill a mitzvah, one cannot do so without a mesorah that this is the correct object being referred to. Attempting to identify the type or species on the basis of research, analysis or proofs will not help; nothing can be substituted for mesorah. Thus, no matter how compelling the evidence is that a specific species is the chilazon of techeiles, one will not fulfill the mitzvah of wearing threads dyed with this color without the substantiation of the mesorah (Shiurim Lezeicher Aba Mari, Volume I, page 228). When Eliyahu HaNavi returns as the precursor to the Moshiach, he will identify for us the mesorah he received from his rabbei'im and, thereby, we will be able to identify the proper techeiles.

However, the Radziner quotes that the Beis Halevi disagreed with him for a different reason. According to the Radziner, the Beis Halevi's concern was that since the inkfish was a known species, why would klal Yisroel not have observed techeiles for over a thousand years, if it could have? This proves that inkfish is not the source of the techeiles (Sifrei Hatecheiles Radzin, page 191).

Other Counter Arguments

Rav Yehoshua Kutno and Rav Yitzchok Elchonon disagreed with the Radziner for a different reason. In their opinion, the Medrash quoted above should be understood literally, meaning that techeiles had been placed in genizah until Hashem again wants us to observe this mitzvah. Their assumption is that the species that provides techeiles is not currently available and will become so only when Hashem wants. Rav Yehoshua Kutno suggests several reasons why this happened, reasons that are beyond

the scope of this article.

Others were opposed to wearing techeiles, because of sources in the writings of the Ari and other mekubalim that say that we are not to use techeiles until the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, bimheira beyameinu. The Radziner did not agree with their interpretation of these sources.

An additional objection was raised against the Radziner's position that one should wear questionable techeiles, since one may be fulfilling the mitzvah. This is based on the poskim who contend that one who places blue tzitzis that are dyed with a dye other than techeiles on a white garment does not fulfill the mitzvah. Therefore, it is preferable to wear white tzitzis, if one is uncertain (see Rama, Orach Chayim 9:5).

There were also objections to the Radziner's conclusions on other grounds. Some objected to his choosing a non-kosher species as the source or the techeiles, since there are early poskim who contend that the techeiles must come from a kosher species. Others contend that the color of the Radziner's techeiles was wrong, since Rashi states that techeiles is green.

On the other hand, there were some gedolim who considered the merits of the Radziner's position. The Maharsham wore a talis with the Radziner's techeiles, although apparently he did so only in private. However, in the final result, only the Radziner's own chassidim and some Breslever chassidim wear the techeiles that the Radziner introduced.

#### Rav Herzog's Research

More than twenty years after the Radziner's passing, Rav Herzog (later to become the first Chief Rabbi of Israel) researched the source for the techeiles. This was done as Rav Herzog's doctoral dissertation and is now published under the title, *The Royal Purple and the Biblical Blue*. In his analysis of the halachic issues involved, Rav Herzog accepted most of the Radziner's opinions and interpretations. However, there are some aspects of the Radziner's approach with which Rav Herzog took issue. Whereas the Radziner assumed that every place in the Gemara mentioning chilazon refers to the chilazon that was used in making techeiles, Rav Herzog assumes that the word chilazon means a sea snail, and not necessarily the snail used in making the techeiles. Thus, in Rav Herzog's opinion, not all of the Radziner's requirements in determining the species for the techeiles are accurate (*The Royal Purple...*, page 76). Therefore, Rav Herzog focused on determining, from among the numerous species of sea snails, which ones are the most likely candidates to be the chilazon that was specifically used for producing techeiles dye.

There is one major point of the Radziner's conclusions with which Rav Herzog took issue. Rav Herzog took samples of the dye recommended by the Radziner as techeiles and had them chemically tested. Based on results that he received from laboratories, Rav Herzog concluded that the blue color that results from the Radziner's techeiles is not caused by anything in the cuttlefish ink. The chemists he consulted contended that the color is an artificial dye named Prussian blue, which was created by the chemicals added as part of the processing. Since he could not discern anything in the cuttlefish that causes the blue coloring, Rav Herzog reaches the conclusion that the cuttlefish could not possibly be the source of the techeiles (*The Royal Purple...*, page 116). (There are answers to explain how the Radziner might have responded to this question that are beyond the scope of this article. I believe that there is a website that discusses this.)

Rav Herzog conducted much research on which sea snail is the most likely source for techeiles. However, in his conclusion, he rejects each of these species because they do not meet all the requirements listed by the Gemara and Rambam. Thus, after much scientific and halachic research in his dissertation, Rav Herzog did not have a source of techeiles to recommend. However, in Rav Yechezkel Michel Tukachinski's work, *Ha'ir Hakodesh Vehamidash* (Volume V, page 55), written many years later, he cites Rav Herzog as having decided that one of the species is, indeed, the correct source of the techeiles, although a careful reading of Rav Herzog's article there implies that he was still undecided.

A point to note, is that Rav Herzog's basic assumption, that chilazon must be

a sea snail is based on his extensive background in linguistics. However, this is not a halachic argument. Each of the reasons mentioned by the poskim who disagreed with the Radziner's proposal applies to Rav Herzog's suggestions. We should also note that, in his explanation of the Gemara in Shabbos, which discusses how the techeiles dye is extracted from the chilazon, Rav Herzog took issue with how Rashi explains the Gemara. (The question is whether the word potzei'a in the Gemara means to squeeze the fluid dye out of the chilazon or to smash it.) I will note that Rav Herzog's approach is probably the more obvious way to understand that passage of Gemara, and yet Rashi clearly rejects it. Although Rashi presumably never saw techeiles removed from the chilazon, he obviously had a compelling reason for interpreting the Gemara as he does. Until the era of techiyas hameisim, we will never know whether Rashi had a compelling proof from Chazal, an oral tradition, or ruach hakodesh that told him why he should understand the Gemara this way.

Recently, some have attempted to answer the questions raised by Rav Herzog regarding which sea snail is the source of the techeiles. These researchers have suggested that one of the species of sea snail named *Murex trunculus* may, indeed, be the source for techeiles. Rav Herzog rejected this species as the source for techeiles for several reasons that these researchers feel that they have resolved. Several works have recently been published advocating the wearing of tzitzis dyed with *Murex trunculus* extract, as a fulfillment of the mitzvah of wearing techeiles. One of the reasons cited as strong evidence of *Murex trunculus* being the source of techeiles is that it is rare to find in the marine world anything that will naturally produce a blue dye, and that since this snail is found in the correct geographic location, this should indicate the likelihood of it being the source of the techeiles.

It should be noted that the method currently used to process the dye from the *Murex trunculus* cannot be the correct method of dyeing techeiles threads. This is for the following three reasons:

1. The current method of extracting dye from *Murex trunculus* involves removing a gland from the snail, which would involve the melacha of gozeiz, removing part of a living creature. (According to many poskim, one violates this also by removing part of a creature that has since died.) Clearly, this could not have been the method of removing the dye from chilazon in earlier days, as can be proved from the Gemara (Shabbos 75a), since although the Gemara mentions other prohibitions, it omits mention of this one.
2. Another objection is based on the fact that it can be demonstrated from the Gemara that the removing of the source of the dye from the chilazon kills it, although one would prefer that the chilazon remain alive for as long as possible. However, in the process used to remove the dye from murex, the snail can remain alive for several hours after the process has been completed.
3. A third problem with the current method of using *Murex trunculus* requires an introduction. At the time of the Gemara, there were unscrupulous individuals who sold threads dyed with a coloring called *kla ilan*. This coloring is not kosher as techeiles, and therefore, someone wearing it on his tzitzis would not fulfill the mitzvah of wearing techeiles. According to the Aruch, *kla ilan* is indigo, a vegetable dye that has a blue color. Thus, the Gemara was concerned about someone selling indigo-colored threads as techeiles threads to an unsuspecting buyer. The Gemara describes a test that can be used to check whether the threads are *kla ilan* or techeiles, by testing the threads for colorfastness, whereby *kla ilan* would fade, whereas techeiles would remain fast. However, if the dye produced from *Murex trunculus* is indigo, and the substitute is also indigo, how could a chemical test for colorfastness be used to determine what was the source of the indigo?

We can also note that, in addition to the source quoted above from Rashi, it is quite clear that the Rambam could not identify *Murex trunculus* as the source of the techeiles. The Rambam describes that the "blood" that is the source of the techeiles is black when removed from the chilazon. The gland extract removed from *Murex trunculus* is clear when it is removed and changes color afterwards.

Obviously, I am not the first one to note these difficulties with the process of

extracting dye from *Murex trunculus*. However, the responses I have seen to answer these questions are tenuous. It should also be noted that the descriptions used by Chazal to identify the chilazon are not a very smooth fit to *Murex trunculus*. In conclusion, I personally remain unconvinced that either the inkfish or *Murex trunculus* are the correct sources of techeiles. It is also seems clear to me that the list of prominent poskim who disagreed with the Radziner would all still feel that we do not have access to the true techeiles.

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### ***OU Torah***

#### ***Rabbi Weinreb's Parasha Column, Shelach***

##### ***"History Repeats Itself"***

History repeats itself. I don't know the origin of that cliché, but I do know that our Sages held a similar point of view. "Ma'aseh avot siman labanim." What happened with ancestors is often a pattern that their descendants are destined to follow.

The repetitive nature of historical processes seems to be true in the stories of all nations and cultures. This is why historians such as Arnold Toynbee believed that history is cyclical, and they have been able to demonstrate that certain central issues recur repetitively in the history of the human race.

I remember reading for example, in one of Toynbee's books, of how the lives of many world leaders are characterized by patterns of "withdrawal and return." Thus, for example, Moses went through a period of withdrawal in the desert of Midian and then returned to Egypt to lead his people out of slavery. Similarly, great figures in the history of Greece, of Rome, of medieval Europe, and of modern Western civilization endured periods of their lives when they were in prison or in other forms of voluntary or forced solitude, and were thus in a stage of "withdrawal." They then reemerged on the stage of leadership of their people, thereby entering a stage of "return".

In this week's Torah portion, Parashat Shelach, a pattern is laid down which has been, tragically, repeated all too frequently in the history of our people. I speak of the pattern whereby a major portion of the Jewish leadership is opposed to entering the Land of Israel. Only a small and courageous minority says, "We should go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30)

This week, we read of the episodes of the spies. These men were a select group of talented and presumably pious individuals. They conducted their risky mission as it was assigned to them. They were to explore the Promised Land and determine the nature of its inhabitants and the nature of the terrain. This was, simply put, a preparation for entering the land, conquering it, and settling it once and for all.

But ten of the twelve returned totally discouraged. I would say, literally discouraged; that is, their courage was undone. They said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."

This was only the first, but definitely not the last, time in Jewish history that Jewish leadership was internally torn apart by discord. The event described in this week's Torah portion is but the first precedent of a recurring pattern in which a few heroic visionaries, Joshua and Caleb, can commit not only to enter the land themselves, but to inspire their followers to do so. But these visionaries, alas, are only part of the pattern. The other part are those leaders who are too cowardly, too cautious, or too blind to lead their people to do all that is necessary to enter and to possess the Holy Land. During the Babylonian Exile, only unique individuals like Ezra and Nehemiah were made of the same stuff as Joshua and Caleb. And only a small remnant of the Babylonian Exile followed them and returned to the land. The great majority of Jews and the great majority of the Jewish leaders remained behind in Babylon, ignominiously.

So frequently over the ensuing centuries did history repeat itself. Every so often, a pitifully small group of Jews from Persia and Morocco, from France, from the bastions of Hasidism in the Ukraine or at the prodding of the Gaon of Vilna, follow the path advocated by Joshua and Caleb. Against all odds, they do return to the land. But the vast majority of their brethren, sometimes for practical reasons and sometimes for ideological ones, choose to remain behind in the Diaspora. They follow the path of the other ten spies. Every portion in the Torah has relevance to contemporary Jewish life. This has been the theme of these columns which I have been writing now every week for over seven years. But this week's Torah portion is especially timely.

We live in an age where the ideal of return to Zion, which, after all, is the ideal preached so inspiringly by Joshua and Caleb, is beset by challenges from all sides.

We live in an age where the liberal intellectual community, composed to a great extent of fellow Jews, no longer accepts the ideal of a Jewish homeland for the Jewish people. At the very least, that community is willing to see the Holy Land shared by another people. And there are those of that community who totally delegitimize the notion of a return to Zion.

More troubling to me however are those elements of the observant religious community who are antagonistic to the enterprise of the Jewish people living as a sovereign nation in the land promised to us by the Almighty himself. I know full well that there are legitimate ideological views for or against religious Zionism, and I am certainly cognizant of the faults and flaws of the government of the State of Israel.

But I fail to see how anyone reading this week's Torah portion cannot be impressed by its central messages: We left Egypt with a promise to inherit a specific land flowing with milk and honey. We had the opportunity to enter that land very soon after the Exodus. We failed to appreciate the opportunity and we lost it. True, we didn't lose it entirely, and it was only postponed for forty years; the blink of an eye from the perspective of the millennia of Jewish history.

The tragedy of Parshat Shelach transcends this one incident described there. Rather, the narrative of Parashat Shelach establishes a pattern which is repeated too often during our subsequent history: The conflict between foresight and fear, between courage and cowardice, between true faith and weaker faith, becomes an eternal theme in our history down to this very day. I have come to learn, via the communications I receive from so many of you, dear readers, that you all listen quite attentively to each week's Torah portion. I challenge you, especially this week, to listen attentively to the narrative of the spies. And when it is over, I am quite confident that you will see the message it sends to our generation. It is the message of Joshua and Caleb. It is the message that says to the entire congregation of the children of Israel:

"The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it unto us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is removed from over them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not." (Numbers 14:7-9)

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#### **Two Kinds of Fear – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**

##### **Shelach Lecha - Covenant & Conversation 5776 on Spirituality**

One of the most powerful addresses I ever heard was given by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, on this week's parsha: the story of the spies. For me, it was nothing less than life-changing. He asked the obvious questions. How could ten of the spies have come back with a demoralising, defeatist report? How could they say, we cannot win, the people are stronger than us, their cities are well fortified, they are giants

and we are grasshoppers?

They had seen with their own eyes how God had sent a series of plagues that brought Egypt, the strongest and longest-lived of all the empires of the ancient world, to its knees. They had seen the Egyptian army with its cutting-edge military technology, the horse-drawn chariot, drown in the Reed Sea while the Israelites passed through it on dry land. Egypt was far stronger than the Canaanites, Perrizites, Jebusites and other minor kingdoms that they would have to confront in conquering the land. Nor was this an ancient memory. It had happened not much more than a year before.

What is more, they already knew that, far from being giants confronting grasshoppers, the people of the land were terrified of the Israelites. They had said so themselves in the course of singing the Song at the Sea:

The peoples have heard; they tremble;

Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;

Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;

All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

Terror and dread fall upon them;

Because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone (Ex. 15:14-16)

The people of the land were afraid of the Israelites. Why then were the spies afraid of them?

What is more, continued the Rebbe, the spies were not people plucked at random from among the population. The Torah states that they were “all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.” They were leaders. They were not people given lightly to fear.

The questions are straightforward, but the answer the Rebbe gave was utterly unexpected. The spies were not afraid of failure, he said. They were afraid of success.

What was their situation now? They were eating manna from heaven. They were drinking water from a miraculous well. They were surrounded by Clouds of Glory. They were camped around the Sanctuary. They were in continuous contact with the Shekhinah. Never had a people lived so close to God.

What would be their situation if they entered the land? They would have to fight battles, maintain an army, create an economy, farm the land, worry about whether there would be enough rain to produce a crop, and all the other thousand distractions that come from living in the world. What would happen to their closeness to God? They would be preoccupied with mundane and material pursuits. Here they could spend their entire lives learning Torah, lit by the radiance of the Divine. There they would be no more than one more nation in a world of nations, with the same kind of economic, social and political problems that every nation has to deal with.

The spies were not afraid of failure. They were afraid of success. Their mistake was the mistake of very holy men. They wanted to spend their lives in the closest possible proximity to God. What they did not understand was that God seeks, in the Hasidic phrase, “a dwelling in the lower worlds”. One of the great differences between Judaism and other religions is that while others seek to lift people to heaven, Judaism seeks to bring heaven down to earth.

Much of Torah is about things not conventionally seen as religious at all: labour relations, agriculture, welfare provisions, loans and debts, land ownership and so on. It is not difficult to have an intense religious experience in the desert, or in a monastic retreat, or in an ashram. Most religions have holy places and holy people who live far removed from the stresses and strains of everyday life. There was one such Jewish sect in Qumran, known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there were certainly others. About this there is nothing unusual at all.

But that is not the Jewish project, the Jewish mission. God wanted the Israelites to create a model society where human beings were not treated as slaves, where rulers were not worshipped as demigods, where human dignity was respected, where law was impartially administered to rich and poor alike, where no one was destitute, no one was abandoned to isolation, no one

was above the law and no realm of life was a morality-free zone. That requires a society, and a society needs a land. It requires an economy, an army, fields and flocks, labour and enterprise. All these, in Judaism, become ways of bringing the Shekhinah into the shared spaces of our collective life. The spies feared success, not failure. It was the mistake of deeply religious men. But it was a mistake.

That is the spiritual challenge of the greatest event in two thousand years of Jewish history: the return of Jews to the land and state of Israel. Perhaps never before and never since has there been a political movement accompanied by so many dreams as Zionism. For some it was the fulfillment of prophetic visions, for others the secular achievement of people who had decided to take history into their own hands. Some saw it as a Tolstoy-like reconnection with land and soil, others a Nietzschean assertion of will and power. Some saw it as a refuge from European antisemitism, others as the first flowering of messianic redemption. Every Zionist thinker had his or her version of utopia, and to a remarkable degree they all came to pass.

But Israel always was something simpler and more basic. Jews have known virtually every fate and circumstance between tragedy and triumph in the almost four thousand years of their history, and they have lived in almost every land on earth. But in all that time there only ever was one place where they could do what they were called on to do from the dawn of their history: to build their own society in accord with their highest ideals, a society that would be different from their neighbours and become a role model of how a society, an economy, an educational system and the administration of welfare could become vehicles for bringing the Divine presence down to earth.

It is not difficult to find God in the wilderness, if you do not eat from the labour of your hands and if you rely on God to fight your battles for you. Ten of the spies, according to the Rebbe, sought to live that way forever. But that, suggested the Rebbe, is not what God wants from us. He wants us to engage with the world. He wants us to heal the sick, feed the hungry, fight injustice with all the power of law, and combat ignorance with universal education. He wants us to show what it is to love the neighbour and the stranger, and say, with Rabbi Akiva, “Beloved is humanity because we are each created in God’s image.”

Jewish spirituality lives in the midst of life itself, the life of society and its institutions. To create it we have to battle with two kinds of fear: fear of failure, and fear of success. Fear of failure is common; fear of success is rarer but no less debilitating. Both come from the reluctance to take risks. Faith is the courage to take risks. It is not certainty; it is the ability to live with uncertainty. It is the ability to hear God saying to us as He said to Abraham, “Walk on ahead of Me” (Gen. 17:1).

The Rebbe lived what he taught. He sent emissaries out to virtually every place on earth where there were Jews. In so doing, he transformed Jewish life. He knew he was asking his followers to take risks, by going to places where the whole environment would be challenging in many ways, but he had faith in them and in God and in the Jewish mission whose place is in the public square where we share our faith with others and do so in deeply practical ways.

It is challenging to leave the desert and go out into the world with all its trials and temptations, but that is where God wants us to be, bringing His spirit to the way we run an economy, a welfare system, a judiciary, a health service and an army, healing some of the wounds of the world and bringing, to places often shrouded in darkness, fragments of Divine light.

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<http://torah.org/series/rabbizweig/>

#### **MY WISH IS MY COMMAND – Rav Yochanan Zweig**

They awoke early in the morning and ascended toward the mountaintop saying, "We are ready, we shall go up to the place of which HaShem has spoken - we have sinned" (14:40).

This week's Parsha recounts the tragic story of the twelve spies which led to

the death of an entire generation and left Bnei Yisroel wandering in the desert for forty years. An oft overlooked postscript to this calamitous story is that of the "Mapilim." In summary: The morning after the terrible decree that the entire generation would perish in the desert and not enter Eretz Yisroel, a large group decided that they would show HaShem that really desired to enter Eretz Yisroel. They said "We are ready, we shall go up to the place of which HaShem has spoken - we have sinned."

Upon hearing their plans, Moshe told them explicitly "Do not ascend, it will not succeed. Do not ascend, for HaShem is not in your midst...You have turned away from HaShem and HaShem will not be with you" (14:41-43). Of course, the people were intransigent and attempted to go up to Eretz Yisroel anyway. Just as Moshe had predicted, they were wiped out by the Amalekites and Cananites who dwelled on the mountain.

Bal Shemtov wonders why their admission, "we have sinned," isn't considered teshuvah - repentance. In other words, why were they punished so severely? They seemingly accepted responsibility for their actions, why didn't HaShem accept their contrition and allow them to enter the land?

There is a fundamental misunderstanding of what Bnei Yisroel's transgression was in the episode of the spies. It is commonly understood that they were punished for not trusting in HaShem and believing that the land he was taking them to was truly a wonderful place. While it is true that it was wrong not to trust HaShem, this trust was violated merely by sending the spies. In other words, the very idea that Eretz Yisroel needed their approval was a breach in trust; yet HaShem tolerated this indignity.

Their real transgression, the one that caused the decree of death on the entire generation, was their refusal to go to Eretz Yisroel even after knowing it was what HaShem desired (14:4). So the punishment wasn't due of their lack of faith; rather it was for not listening to HaShem.

Today, we often find individuals who attempt to explain why keeping mitzvos is really better for you - eating pork can cause Trichinosis, Shabbos is a great day to charge the physical and emotional batteries, etc. What gets lost in this apologetic approach to Judaism is that in reality we simply keep the mitzvos because we accepted the Torah and obey HaShem's will. We don't just keep those mitzvos for which we can devise reasons or deduce Hashem's intent; we keep all of them as that is what HaShem desires.

The proof to this understanding is borne out by the end of the story: The next morning they admitted that they made a mistake in listening to the spies who misled them regarding the dangers of Eretz Yisroel. However, they never admitted to the fact that they were wrong in not listening to HaShem in the first place. They assumed they could undo the previous night by showing HaShem that they now agreed with Him by expressing their enthusiasm for Eretz Yisroel. But in reality they missed the point, this wasn't about Eretz Yisroel; this was simply about following HaShem's wishes.

In fact, they immediately repeated their mistake: Moshe explicitly told them that HaShem would not be with them and that they would not succeed. They stubbornly went anyway, feeling that it was more important to show HaShem they now agreed that the right decision was to enter Eretz Yisroel. Once again, they missed the point and didn't listen to HaShem who, through Moshe, told them NOT to go. Sadly, this led to their slaughter at the hands of the Amalekites and Cannanites.

#### **EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE**

"It shall be Tzitzis for you, and you shall see it and remember all of HaShem's mitzvos and perform them" (15:39).

How do the Tzitzis serve to "remind" us of the Torah's mitzvos? Rashi (ad loc) explains that the Gematria (numerical value) of the word Tzitzis is 600. When the number of Tzitzis strings (8) and knots (5) on each corner are added to this figure, the total is 613 - the number of mitzvos in the Torah.

Ramban (ad loc), however, disagrees with Rashi's interpretation, pointing out that the requirement for five knots to be tied on each corner of the Tzitzis is only rabbinic in nature. The Torah itself requires only a single knot to be tied. Ramban argues that the Biblical mitzvah of Tzitzis cannot possibly be based on symbolism rooted in rabbinic law. Indeed, how can Rashi's

explanation be reconciled with this fact?

The mitzvah of Tzitzis is actually a most unusual mitzvah. The obligation to wear Tzitzis is only incurred when a person chooses to wear a four-cornered garment, but there is no inherent requirement to wear such a garment. This makes the mitzvah entirely avoidable, which is most incongruous for a precept that, we are taught, is equivalent in significance to all the other mitzvos of the Torah (Talmud Bavli Menachos 43b).

The explanation for this, however, lies in the very fact that the purpose of Tzitzis is to serve a reminder to perform the Torah's mitzvos. How does something function as a reminder?

Consider the common practice of tying a string around one's finger in order to remind oneself of something; the string acts as a reminder solely because one does not have to wear it. An ordinary garment would not be an effective reminder, since there is nothing unusual about wearing it. The same is true of Tzitzis: Wearing Tzitzis reminds us of the Torah's mitzvos precisely because we are not inherently required to wear them. The fact that we have chosen to wear Tzitzis is itself what creates that reminder.

With this in mind, Rashi's explanation can also be well understood. The Torah requires us to wear Tzitzis as a reminder, but it was left up to Chazal to determine the exact form that the reminder would take. As we have explained, an inherent part of the nature of a reminder is that it is worn by choice; therefore, it is logical for the exact form of the reminder to be determined by Chazal. Once the rabbinic law was instituted that required the Tzitzis to have five knots, then, Chazal were able to associate the manner in which the Tzitzis were made with their inherent function as a reminder of the mitzvos.

Did You Know...

In this week's Parsha we discuss the infamous Meraglim, whose actions directly led to Bnei Yisroel wandering in the desert for forty years. This calamitous event took place on the ninth of Av (Tisha B'Av). Unfortunately, this was the first of the many catastrophes that fell on that fateful day. It is well known that the two worst days in our history, the destruction of the first and second Beis Hamikdash, occurred on this day.

Countless other misfortunes fell on this day, including:

1. During the Bar Kochba revolt in 132 CE (which was crushed by the Roman Emperor Hadrian), the city of Betar - the Jews' last stand against the Romans - was captured and destroyed on Tisha B'Av.
  2. The Beis Hamikdash and its surroundings were plowed under by the Romans 133 CE, and Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city and access was forbidden to Jews.
  3. The First Crusade was declared by Pope Urban II in 1095. 10,000 Jews were killed in first month alone of that Crusade. The first Crusade brought death and destruction to 1.2 million Jews, totally obliterating many communities.
  4. Expulsion of Jews from England in 1290, accompanied by pogroms.
  5. The Jews were expelled from France Tisha B'Av 1306.
  6. King Ferdinand of Spain issued the expulsion decree in 1492, setting Tisha B'Av as the final date by which not a single Jew would be allowed to walk on Spanish soil.
  7. World War I broke out on the eve of Tisha B'Av in 1914 when Germany declared war on Russia. German resentment from the war set the stage for the Holocaust.
  8. Heinrich Himmler formally received approval from the Nazi party for the "final solution" on Tisha B'Av 1941.
  9. The mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka began 9th of Av, 1942.
  10. The deadly bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina which killed 86 and wounded more than 300 other occurred on Tisha B'Av, 1994.
- Interestingly enough, not only is this day of great mourning, but Chazal point out that the ultimate redemption begins on this very day (Talmud Yerushalmi Berachos 2:4 and Eicha Rabba 1:51s) by stating that Moshiach will be (or was) born on Tisha B'Av. In fact, the first day of Pesach always falls out on the same day of the week as Tisha B'Av. What's the connection? Pesach commemorates our very first salvation. Tisha B'Av will one day commemorate our ultimate salvation. Perhaps this is why the Zohar says that in the future Tisha B'Av will be treated as a Yom Tov.

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**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Shlach**

***Is it Really a Mitzva or is it a Disguised Aveyra?***

***Which Heart Is Speaking?***

Parshas Shlach contains one of the most famous incidents in the Torah, an incident that has repercussions until this very day. The parsha begins with: "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, 'Send forth for yourself men, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan (v'yasuru es Eretz Canaan)...'" [Bamidbar 13:1-2]. The parsha ends with the commandment to wear fringes (tzitzit) in which the Torah says "...and you shall not spy after your hearts (v'lo sasuru acharei levavchem) and after your eyes after which you stray." [Bamidbar 15:39].

The irony of using the same word based on the root "tur" at the beginning and the end of the Sedra is not lost on Rashi. In fact, the word "tur" (as in v'yasuru es Eretz Canaan; va'yashuv m'tur ha'Aretz; and v'lo sasuru achrei levavchem) is not a very common Biblical expression. Rashi [15:39] notes the repetitious use of the word in our parsha and comments, "The heart and the eyes are 'spies' for the body, procuring sins for it. The eyes see, the heart desires, and the body commits the sin."

However there are certain difficulties in the pasuk "And you shall not 'spy' after your hearts and after your eyes." The connection between the "spying" at the beginning of the parsha and the "spying" at the end of the parsha is more than mere semantics. Technically speaking, if we were to write this sentence in Modern Hebrew, we would not write v'lo sasuru acharei levavchem (plural); we would write v'lo sasuru acharei libchem (singular). We all know that we have two eyes. Therefore, it is proper to use the expression v'lo sasuru acharei eineichm (plural) regarding straying after our eyes. However, we only have one heart. Therefore, the more correct language should have been v'lo sasur acharei libchem – do not stray after your heart (singular). Why use plural when speaking of heart?

Furthermore, if as Rashi says, "the eyes see and the heart desires" then the sequence of the pasuk is also incorrect. The pasuk should read "Do not stray after your eyes and after your heart" rather than "Do not stray after you heart and after your eyes." All these issues raise the question of what the Torah means.

The Shemen HaTov (from Rabbi Dov Weinberger) in part two of his Torah commentary suggests the following connection between the spies at the beginning of the parsha and the "spies" at the end of the parsha and also provides insight into what the expression "acharei levavchem" really means. Chazal say that when the Torah says (in Krias Shma [Devorim 6:5]) "with all your heart" (b'chol l'vovcha) it is teaching that a person must serve the Almighty with both his good inclination and his evil inclination. It is true that anatomically we have only one heart, but Rabbinic teaching views this anatomical organ as being "two hearts" – our yetzer haTov and our yetzer haRah – the good in us and the evil in us, the part of us that wants to do good and the part of us that wants to do bad.

Normally, we know what is good and what is bad. However, many times the yetzer haRah can disguise himself and present himself in the guise of "I want to do a mitzvah, a good deed". It is a person's obligation to discern and to say that in spite of the fact that this looks like a mitzvah and may smell like a mitzvah in reality it is not a mitzvah. The classic example of that is the Spies. Chazal tell us that the 12 individuals sent on this Spy Mission were the elite of the Jewish people. Yet they stumbled into this terrible sin that caused Klal Yisrael to stay in the Midbar for another 40 years and, as we mentioned before, they literally triggered "mourning for all future generations" (bechiya l'doros).

How did this happen to such great people? The answer is that they thought they were doing a mitzvah by not going into Eretz Yisrael. How so? The Chiddushei HaRim (the Gerer Rebbe) explains that their desire to remain in the Wilderness is analogous to a "son-in-law who lives off the fat of his father in law" (in Yiddish — an eidem auf kest). In Europe, an eidem auf kest meant not that you would send your son-in-law a check every month so

he could sit and learn in Kolel. Rather, your daughter got married and then the young couple came to live in your house. Those were the "good old days" before there was health insurance, before there was car insurance, and before "people needed their space". After your daughter got married, you brought your son-in-law into your house and you promised him "You can live by me 3 years, 5 years, 10 years" – whatever the agreement was – and that is what happened. They moved in with the in-laws and they stayed there. If one got along with his in-laws, he stayed there and it was great. His food was taken care of, his rent was taken care of, and his utility bills were taken care of. What could be better? It was great!

The Chiddushei HaRim writes that many times it was difficult for the father-in-law to break the ties and tell his children "Fine. The 5 years are up. It is time for you to go out now and earn a living on your own, so that you can perpetuate the routine with the next generation." This, the Chiddushei HaRim says was the situation with the Jewish people in the Wilderness. They were eidem auf kest – everything was taken care of. Their clothes were taken care of [Devorim 8:4]; their "utilities" were taken care of [the Well and the Clouds of Glory]; it was like the Garden of Eden in this world – everything was taken care of.

So what did they do all day? If you do not need to worry about making a living and you do not need to drive carpool then what do you do all day? The answer is they sat, they learned, and they devoted their lives entirely to spirituality. When it came time to go into Eretz Yisrael, it was like "Fellows, recess is over!" No more mann from Heaven and water from the Well. They would need to plow and sow. They would need to worry about the crops and worry about the weather. They would need to make a living; they would need to work by the sweat of their brows. The Spies – feeling that they were acting on their 'Yetzer HaTov' – tried to sabotage the Divine Plan: "Who needs Eretz Yisrael? Let's stay in the Wilderness where we can continue to grow spiritually!"

This thought process warped their view of Eretz Yisrael. They came back with a very negative report – that it was a land that consumed its inhabitants [Bamidbar 13:32]. Who did that? It was their evil inclinations disguised as the argument "we want to live a life of spirituality; not one of materialism". This is a classic example of the wolf in sheep's clothing – the Yetzer HaRah is dressed up like the Yetzer Tov. That is how these great people made this mistake.

This is what the Torah means when it says "And you shall not stray after your hearts". One must always be careful to discern which heart is speaking to him. We have two hearts. Sometimes it is very difficult to discern whether we are hearing the Yetzer HaTov or the Yetzer HaRah. Therefore Lo Sasuru acharei levavchem comes first, because you first need to determine which heart is speaking – the "good heart" or the "bad heart". This is one of the greatest challenges of life.

We see from the Spies that this is one challenge that sometimes even great people fail to overcome — the challenge of trying to raise oneself above his own biases, his hidden agenda, and his personal advantage (negius) in choosing between various options. When the Torah says, "Bribes will blind the eyes of the wise" [Devorim 16:19] it does not only refer to monetary bribes. It could be something in our souls, something sub-conscious, that is bribing us. We all have "agendas". One of the hardest challenges in making proper decisions in life is discerning which of our two hearts is talking to us.

There are things which appear like a mitzvah, walk like a mitzvah, and talk like a mitzvah, but they are not mitzvos. In the end, they are aveiros.

May we all merit the wisdom and the fortitude of avoiding the trap of "straying after our hearts and after our eyes".

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