



Jewish Values

Parashat Shelach Lecha

(Israel: June 13th / Diaspora: June 20th)

Tzitzit

The well-known *mitzvah* of *tzitzit* is taught to us at the end of this week's *parashah*. G-d instructed us that on a garment with four corners, we must tie a set of eight woollen strands on each of its four corners. These are to act as a constant reminder for us, that when we see them, we will remember and thereby perform all the *mitzvot* that *Hashem* has instructed us. Furthermore, they help ensure that our eyes and heart will not stray after wrong values and ideologies that may entice us. They help us remain completely dedicated and loyal to G-d.

We are privileged to have such a special *mitzvah* that constantly envelopes us, protects us and connects us with *Hashem* and all His *mitzvot*. The numerical value of *tzitzit* (צִיצִית) is 600. Together with its eight strands and five knots, it totals 613, thereby symbolizing the *mitzvot* of *Hashem*, which total 613.

The *Torah* commands us to place the *tzitzit* on "*kanfei bigdechem*," the corners of your garments? What do these *kenafim*, corners, symbolise? *Rashi* (*Shelach* 15:41) explains that these *kenafim* symbolize the *kanfei nesharim*, the eagle's wings, as mentioned in the verse (*Shemot* 19:4), "I (G-d) raised you up and carried you upon eagle's wings, and brought you towards Me." So too, these corners that have *tzitzit*, will act as wings to bring us close to *Hashem*. Additionally, we know that the eagle is the only bird that places its young on top of its back, to protect them from any arrows shot from below. It cares for their safety more than its own, ensuring their safe arrival at their destination. So too, the corners of our



garments, which have *tzitzit* on them, protect us and ensure that we may come closer to *Hashem* – our destination.

How do the corners of our garments, which are adorned with *tzitzit*, bring us closer to *Hashem*? There is a certain rare sea creature, called the *chilazon*, which has blue blood. This blood was used as a dye for some of the strands of our *tzitzit*, which were now called *techelet* – wool with a bluish colour. These strands of *tzitzit* would remind us of the colour of the sea, which in turn reminds us of the colour of the sky. The sky reminds us of the *safir* stone, which in turn, reminds us of the Throne of Honour of *Hashem* Himself. Thus, our *tzitzit* connect us with *Hashem*, and the *kenafim*, corners are likened to the wings of an eagle, as they enable us to soar high and reach *Hashem*. When we do this, *Hashem* in turn is reminded of His Throne, and thereby reminded of the *mitzvah* of *tzitzit* that we are fulfilling, and the special connection between us and Him. Even when the *techelet* is not available, the *mitzvah* is fulfilled with plain woollen strings, without detracting from the relevance of the *mitzvah*.

Let us treasure this *mitzvah* and perform it, wearing an extra garment, even in the summer months. It is worth it!

Shabbat shalom

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