



An Important Reminder

"What is that strange looking thing on your belt, Chaim?"

"That is my new electronic gizmo, the latest high-tech wonder, Avi."

"What does it do?"

"Just watch."

Chaim pressed a button and suddenly the little device lit up with bright lights. It began emitting strange noises. "Bing! Bang! Whiz! Wop! Zoom! Ding! Ding!"

"Wow! That sure is impressive, Chaim. What is the point of that big sound and light show?"

"It is a reminder. When I have an important appointment or job to do, I set the time on my machine. When that time arrives, it reminds me in a big way. It can even tell me what to do, or flash the words on the wall."

"Fantastic."

"It is very sophisticated. It has different levels of alarms. An important appointment gets a lot of bells and whistles, while a simple reminder will get a small beep."

"That sounds very practical, Chaim. Use it in good health. I also have an extremely sophisticated memory jogging device."

"Really? How does it work, Avi."

"With string."

"String? That's the oldest trick in the book - tying a string around your finger."

"Not exactly, Chaim. I tie strings on the corners of my clothing."

Chaim thinks for a moment. Strings? On clothing? For a reminder? Suddenly his eyes light up.

"Oh! You mean tzitzis, Avi!"

"Exactly, Chaim."

"Very clever. However, I have a question for you. Why do you say that tzitzis are very sophisticated? They are nothing more than strings."

"They are not just ordinary strings, Chaim. There are many complicated halachos about manufacturing and tying them, down to the tiniest detail. Even the person's thoughts at the time of tying tzitzis must be purely for the sake of the mitzvah. That is one aspect of their sophistication. Another is that they are a reminder for a very important thing: the 613 mitzvos. As the verse states, 'And you shall see them, and you will remember all the mitzvos of Hashem, and you will perform them' (Bamidbar 15:39)."

"How do they remind you?"

"Each one has five knots, which recall the five books of the Chumash. The gematria (numerical value) of the word tzitzis is 608. Add the five knots and you have 613 - the number of mitzvos."

"Fascinating."

"The tzitzis themselves contain five mitzvos, according to the Gemora in Mena-chos 44. Therefore, although a person only has a mitzvah of tzitzis if he is wearing a garment of four corners, the Tur (Orach Chaim 24) advises that it is good and correct to wear a small garment with tzitzis all day, in order to see them and be reminded of all the mitzvos, for that is their main purpose."

"How do you know all of this, Avi?"

"Rav Shmuel Hominer zt"l mentions these points in his sefer Eved HaMelech."

"Does he say anything else?"

"Yes. Looking at the tzitzis all the time brings great benefit to the neshama (soul). There is a complicated calculation which shows that this one mitzvah of tzitzis is equal weight to all 613 mitzvos!"

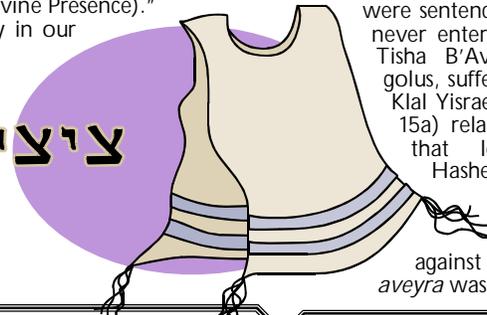
"I am so impressed."

"The Chazon Ish relates that fulfilling the mitzvah of tzitzis binds you eternally to the entire Torah. Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai says that all who are careful with the mitzvah of tzitzis will merit receiving the Shechina (Divine Presence)."

"Amen, speedily in our days!"



ציצית



differences. Rav Shmuel Hominer zt"l explains that Miriam was a tsadekes and a prophetess. She spoke about her dear younger brother Moshe, whom she loved as herself, and whose life she had saved. Miriam only spoke privately to her brother, Aharon. What did she say that was so bad, after all? She equated him to other neviim (prophets). Moshe was so humble, that the words spoken did not offend him at all. Yet, all of these merits did not help Miriam, and she was stricken with tsoraas.

Contrast this with the loshon hora of the meraglim. It was catastrophic. They spoke loshon hora about Eretz Yisrael, the Holy Land that Hashem promised to the Jewish people. They spoke in public, and their evil report reached the entire nation. This weakened their emunah in Hashem, and the people cried the entire night. "(This night) you cried for nothing. Therefore, I will make (this a night) of crying throughout the generations." (gemora Taanis 29a) Which night was it? Tisha B'Av. And so, the Jewish people were sentenced to die in the desert, never entering the promised land. Tisha B'Av became a night of golus, suffering, and mourning for Klal Yisrael. The gemora (Erechin 15a) relates that the generation that left Mitzraim tested Hashem ten times. However, their fate was not sealed until they spoke loshon hora against Eretz Yisrael. This aveyra was truly catastrophic.

Kinderlach . . .

It is important to remember the important things. What could be more important than the 613 mitzvos? Nothing! The mitzvos of the Torah are the greatest thing in the world! Therefore, it is VERY important to learn each and every mitzvah and remember them. Hashem gave us a great and wonderful way to remember the mitzvos - tzitzis! Use them, kinderlach. First learn the mitzvos, then look at your tzitzis. They will remind you of the mitzvos you learned. Then you will do them. Kinderlach, you should have much hatzlacha (success) with all of your mitzvos.

Catastrophe

Why did Hashem put the story of the meraglim (spies) after the story of Miriam in the Torah? This famous question is asked by Rashi at the very beginning of this week's parasha. He answers that Miriam was stricken with tsoraas because she spoke loshon hora about her brother, Moshe. Subsequently, these evil people (the meraglim) saw what happened to her and did not learn a lesson from it. Instead, they spoke loshon hora themselves.

The two events have similarities and

Kinderlach . . .

Now we see the terrible effects of loshon hora. It caused an entire generation to die in golus (outside of Eretz Yisrael). It also caused the very first golus in history. The nachash (snake) spoke loshon hora and ultimately caused Adam and Chava to be expelled from Gan Eden. Our present golus, the result of the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash, was also caused by loshon hora and sinas chinam (senseless hatred). These aveiyros (sins) drive people apart, cause resentment, hatred, and fighting. Hashem removes his Divine Protection from Klal Yisrael, and we are left to the merciless hands of those who hate us. Haven't we had enough of this? Stamp out loshon hora now. Speak only good about your fellow Jews, promote love and unity, and bring Moshiach speedily in our days.

Parasha Questions:

- Whose idea was it to send Meraglim (spies)? (Rashi 13:2)
- Who went to Chevron and what did he do there? (Rashi 13:21)
- What did Calev and Yehoshua do to counteract the spies' report? (14:6-9)
- How did the nation react to Calev and Yehoshua? (14:10)