

Shelach-Ohr Hachaim on Tzitzis
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

The last paragraph in Parshas Shelach tells us about the mitzvah of Tzitzis. The Ohr Hachaim points out that the Torah starts the subject of the mitzvah of Tzitzis by phrasing, speak to Bnai Yisroel AND they should make Tzitzis. The Or Hachaim says the 'and' is telling us that in addition to Tefillin. Tefillin are worn only during the week. The mitzvah of Tzitzis applies every day including Shabbos and Yom Tov when the Tefillin are not worn.

The Ohr Hachaim also says that the Torah states specifically, 'for their generations' because one may think that certain generations may be very holy and pure and will not need reminders of Hashem. Therefore, the Torah stresses that the mitzvah of Tzitzis will apply in all generations.

However, there are two aspects to the mitzvah, the white threads and the blue threads. While the Mishna in Menachos 4:1 tells us that if one has only the white or the blue, then one should use whichever he has and will be credited for that part of the mitzvah. Nevertheless, within these two aspects there is a reference to two different types of generations. The white will be available in all generations since white is the natural color of wool. Blue, however, will only be available for certain generations. The Torah's phrase for their generations is an allusion to this fact.

Moreover, the Ohr Hachaim states that the Tzitzis are a sign of our servitude to Hashem. He brings the parable from the Gemara in Menachos 43 that a king once asked one servant to bring a seal of gold and the other one a seal of cement. Both failed to carry out their mission. The king was angry. The one who was asked to bring a seal of cement was punished more severely because cement is such a commonly found material while the one who was to bring the golden seal could at least claim it was very difficult to find.

Tosofos writes that the white Tzitzis that we wear are compared to the seal of cement which is our sign that we are Hashem's servants. Indeed, the Tzitzis are that sign that all we do in our lives must conform to the will of Hashem Yisborach. The idea four corners that

create the requirement for Tzitzis, according to all opinions, also is a sign that Hashem is the creator of all four corners of the earth.

The source for the blue color, techeiles, is the fish called the chilazon. The Ohr Hachaim concludes his comments on the parsha by stating that the coloring for the blue thread comes specifically from a creature that lives in the sea, conforming to the statement of Chazal that the sea reminds us of the sky which is further reminder of Hashem's presence. The Ohr Hachaim adds that the sea to which Torah is compared as well as the attribute of *rachamim*, mercy, are all alluded to in the same concept of the fish whose eyes are always open and never closed just as the "eyes of Hashem" remain ever-open.