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HEMDAT YAMIM

Parashat HaShavua

Korach, 28 Sivan 5780

His Eye Deceived Him

Harav Shaul Yisraeli – based on Siach Shaul, p. 403

What do we learn from the story of Korach? Was it written just to teach what happens as a result of dispute between leaders in Israel? It would seem not, because right after Korach had been “defeated,” we see that the people were still complaining about Moshe, which required another miracle, of the flowering staff, to settle (Bamidbar 17:24). Even then, we do not see that people regretted their old positions. Furthermore, the Torah states that the point was to “lower from over Me the complaints of Bnei Yisrael” (ibid. 20). There was no attempt to totally eliminate them. If the point were just to show Moshe’s primacy, it would not have been necessary to describe the prominence of those who joined Korach. Is it complimentary to Moshe to see how even the most respected people were not confident of his greatness?!

It seems that the greatest lesson was what Rashi (Bamidbar 16:7) pointed out: “What did the wise Korach see that brought him to this silliness? His eye deceived him,” in that he saw that the great Shmuel descended from him. This teaches us to what extent the “eye” can deceive: someone who was wise and great enough to see into the future still made a mistake so grave as to have him lose his whole world in a matter of moments.

A person should not be confident that he has his life under control. A person like Korach, who walked around filled with *miztvot*, wearing *tzitzit* and *tefillin*, and had access to the divine spirit, could make such a deadly mistake. Certainly he and the 250 heads of courts who followed him thought they were coming to save Judaism – a lofty and holy cause.

This can be because it is possible to be what the Ramban (Vayikra 19:2) calls a “disgusting person with the ‘permission’ of the Torah,” but in so doing violate the edict to “be holy” (ibid.). It is interesting that Korach rallied around specifically that *mitzva* of being holy (“for all the congregation are all holy” – Bamidbar 16:3). He mistakenly thought that his approach was that of holiness and thereby he was a builder of Judaism, upon whose shoulders the nation would stand. He acted with the illusion that he was acting for heaven’s sake without realizing that it was the Satan who was pushing him and that his theory was a satanic one that would destroy him.

The divine calculations of what is a *mitzva* and what is an *aveira* are such that only one who has dominion over his evil inclination can discern (see Bava Batra 78b). If there is something wrong with a person’s control over his evil inclination, then his calculation of the *mitzva* is not a valid calculation. Then, one can speak of sanctity and in the name of sanctity, but really be speaking as a disgusting person.

Indeed, the purpose of the *mitzvot* is to discipline a person, so that the disgusting part is removed from his heart. Our religious belief is that only *mitzvot* can accomplish this. However, the *mitzvot* are but a tool [in this regard], and if they are not used [properly], it cannot work even if it is the greatest tool.

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Those who fell in wars for our homeland. May Hashem avenge their blood!



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Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

Do All Tzitzit Knots Need to be Double?

Question: When I tied a pair of *tzitzit*, I tied a double knot to the garment and for the final knot, but for the three knots in between the *chulyot* (subsections of string wrappings), I tied single knots. Is that sufficient?

Answer: The *gemara* (Menachot 39a) posits that the “upper knot” of *tzitzit* is a Torah-level requirement, as we learn from the Torah’s connection between *tzitzit* and *sha’atnez*. Most *Rishonim* (see Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 11; see China D’chayei 8, who cites dissenters) posit that a double knot is needed to connect the *tzitzit* to the garment, as we find that making a simple single knot is not a violation of Shabbat (Shabbat 74b).

There is also a *machloket* what the upper knot is – the part closer to the garment or further away from it (see Mishna Berura 11:66). A relatively strong consensus holds that it is the one further away from the garment, where it also secures the *gedilim* (section containing all of the string wrappings).

According to all opinions, your *tzitzit* fulfill all the Torah-level *mitzva* requirements, based on double knots both for the first and last knots. However, that does make the *tzitzit* fully acceptable. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 11:14), in describing the tying process, instructs to make a double knot in between every *chulya*. The only question is whether this is a full-fledged Rabbinic obligation or a lower-level matter. The practical difference, besides the degree of lacking in the present situation, is whether one may wear the *tzitzit* if he lacks an alternative pair and an opportunity to fix it.

Rava deduces from a *halacha* regarding a ripped string that one is supposed to make a knot between the *chulyot* (Menachot 38b). The *gemara* (ibid. 39a) deflects the proof by suggesting that knots were sometimes made but were not required. Many claim that while *Chazal* expected/preferred for there to be multiple *chulyot* and knots, basic Halacha only requires *chulya* with a minimum of three revolutions of a *tzitzit* string around the others (Mishna Berura 11:65).

The preference of more *chulyot* and/or knots is due to their being reminiscent of a variety of themes and numerical values. We will mention a few (the Mishna Berura 11:65 cites some): There should be seven knots in each *tzitzit* corresponding to the seven firmaments, but we leave out two knots when we do not have *techeilet* (Shut Radbaz 2333) because it is the *techeilet* that reminds of the sky. The *gematria* of *tzitzit* is 600, and when one adds eight strings and our present-day five knots, it comes to 613. 8+5 is also the *gematria* of *echad*. The five knots also remind us of the five books of the Torah. Since the five knots are doubled, it is also reminiscent of the ten *sefirot* (a Kabbalistic concept). None of these numerical significances are absolute requirements, as is true of the number of wrappings (Mishna Berura ibid.), but they are religious/spiritual preferences.

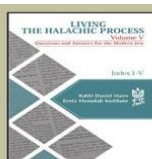
It is also possible that some of the gains of knots in between the *chulyot* do not depend on there being halachic knots. Single knots also are able to hold each *chulya* in place, take up some space, which is important (see Shulchan Aruch and Rama, OC 11:14), and make the different *chulyot*, with their significant number of revolutions, noticeable. The fact that a single knot is more secure than usual when it is in the midst of a *g’dil* that is surrounded by double knots might also give it prominence (see Maaseh Betzalel to Rikanati, Tzitzit 3). Again, despite this, the Shulchan Aruch at least recommends double knots each time.

There is another reason to want at least one of the middle knots to be a full halachic one. Sometimes the top knot starts getting looser, even to the point that it is no longer a halachic knot (see Living the Halachic Process IV, F-3). We are not usually overly concerned about this because the minimum requirements of the *tzitzit* are met when a minimal *gedil* is followed by a double knot. However, in your case, were the top knot to reach that point, there are no fallback knots after the beginning of the *gedil*.

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Ein Ayah

(from the writings of Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, z.t.l.)

Resting on Hashem when Water Does Not Do

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 12:6)

Gemara: Rav Chisda said: The letters *mem* and *samech* in the Tablets stood as a miracle (when chiseled from one side to the other, the middle sections of these letters are not connected to anything and thus should fall).

Ein Ayah: The foundation of miracles, which is a most lofty level, is the power that allows all of the existence, both spiritual and physical, to stand. It represents not having things being connected in an apparatus of cause and effect; rather, what occurs is directly the doing of Hashem, Who created all.

The letter *mem*, hints, due to its similarity, to the word *mayim* (water), which is the first building block of the world. Water is an object which is soft to the touch and heavy things cannot be supported by it [but sink]. The only thing that makes it stand (i.e., *mem* in the Tablets that stood due to a miracle) is the spirit of Hashem, which is His desire. This Spirit is the foundation of everything and is more fundamental than any chain of cause and effect. From here emanates the idea of absolute freedom, which comes from the light of Torah to the world. For whenever people perceive that the closest physical cause to that which transpired is that which brought it about (i.e., Hashem), there is a force that draws them closer to each other.

Things are different when one looks at everything as relying only on the element of the divine desire, represented by the image of the spirit of Hashem hovering over the face of the water (see Bereishit 1:2), giving a place for the whole world to rest upon Him. (This is hinted at by the miraculous letter *samech*, whose similar word means resting upon). Then the world remains in a state of freedom, for there is no limit to the goodness and abundance of light from the Source of All. So we see that the Torah (in whose Tablets the letters of *mem* and *samech* had a miracle) is the source for the essence of miracles in the world of existence. It is through the Torah that Hashem's dominion in the world has been revealed, is revealed, and will be revealed.


There are Two Sides to Existence but One Right Place for Things

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 12:7)

Gemara: Rav Chisda said: The writing on the Tablets was able to be read from the inside and the outside.

Ein Ayah: Everything, in existence in general, has a lofty purpose that only the Master of the Universe knows. The light of Torah does not only appear on all of the internal and primary elements of existence and brings them to their highest level. Rather, the light of Torah even relates to everything that is secondary to other things and reliant upon them. For indeed, there is nothing that does not have its place.

The problem only arises when something does not find its appropriate place and is not properly appreciated. Then something that should be internal can be found externally, i.e., fundamental matters are treated like superficial matters, or in the opposite direction, things that are external are treated as if they are internal. But actually everything should be seen according to its status, with things remaining in their correct position, either on the inside or the outside. Then it is connected to the root of its divine origin, from where the light comes. That is what Rav Chisda means by saying that the words on the Tablets could be read from the inside or the outside.



Tzofnat Yeshayahu - Rabbi Yosef Carmel

The Prophet Yeshayahu performed in one of the most stormy and dramatic periods of the Israeli nation's life, a period of anticipation for the Messiah that was broken by a terrible earthquake, and also caused a spiritual and political upheaval. The light at the end of the tunnel shone again only in the days of Chizkiyah.

"Tzofnat Yeshayahu – from Uziya to Ahaz" introduces us to three kings who stood at this crossroad in our nation's history: Uziya, a king who sought God but was stricken with leprosy because of his sin; Yotam, the most righteous king in the history of our people; And Ahaz, the king who knew God but did not believe in His providence.

In his commentary on the prophecies of Yeshayahu, Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit rabbinical court and a disciple of Rabbi Shaul Israeli zt"l, clings to the words of Hazal, our sages, and to the commentaries of the Rishonim, the great Jewish scholars of the middle ages, and offers a fascinating way to study Tanach. This reading attempts to explain the Divine Plan in this difficult period and to clarify fundamental issues in faith. Tzofnat Yeshayahu reveals to the reader the meaning of the prophecies in the context of the prophet's generation and their relevance to our generation.

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P'ninat Mishpat

Paying Community Taxes – part II

(based on ruling 76111 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

Case: The plaintiff (=pl) is an *aguda* (association) that developed in 2015 from a *kibbutz* association, which had built an expansion for non-*kibbutz* members. The defendants (=def) bought a home in the expansion before 2015 and signed the standard forms obligating themselves to the rules, including paying local taxes/fees. The main claim is about outstanding payments that *def* is claimed to owe *pl*. *Def's* main responses are: they should not be bound by the agreement to *pl* because several of its provisions are *mekape'ach* (unfair or discriminatory); they are not members of *pl*; and they paid in an alternative manner. They also countersued for being overcharged and having deserved benefits withheld. [We will specify these and other claims as we go.]

Ruling: *Def* claim that in response to a charge of 6,000 shekels for public works projects, they requested and carried out to instead give a 9,000 shekels donation (from their *tzedaka* account) to the local shul, which is one such project. *Pl* points out that one of their officials received this request and brought it to the full board, who rejected the idea, and *def* was told of the decision. *Def* argues that this was an improper decision, considering that one can “force someone to not do like the people of Sodom,” as here *pl* gained money, and why should they deprive *def* of getting *pl* the money for a public need through their *tzedaka* account? *Beit din* rejects *def's* claim. Whether the board's decision was ideal or not is not the point, as they made a reasonable decision that payment is made to the proper source and not that everyone can give their payments to whatever they want to in the community.

As the disagreement between the sides heightened, *def* had reserved the social hall for a *bat mitzva*, as members in good standing are entitled. Soon before the event, *def* was informed that because they did not pay dues, they could not use it. *Def* is countersuing for 6,000 shekels for having caused them to frantically look for a new location, including emotional distress, or for seven members of the board to apologize. *Beit din* determines that while *pl* had the right to withhold use of the hall, they did not have a right to inform *def* at the last moment. Therefore, we will require an apology in writing, using a text we are including.

In order to enable the *bat mitzva* to take place, *def* promised that they would pay their debt, but now they refuse and say that they did not mean that which they promised because it was done under pressure. *Beit din* finds that the promise was binding, as the pressure here was not physical but situational pressure and because that which they were being asked to do was something that all members of the community did. The phenomenon of promising something in order to get what one wants and, after receiving it, reneging on the promise is something to be criticized.

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