



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

The Third Passage

I would like to share an idea I have, related to the third passage of the SH'MA, which is the five p'sukim at the end of Parshat Sh'lach.

Yes, I am aware that we in Israel read Korach this Shabbat. And it is in Chutz LaAretz that they will read Sh'lach. But, there is a famous connection between the two sedras: the end of Sh'lach speaks of the P'til T'cheilet, the blue-dyed thread that joins the white strings of Tzitzit. Korach, says the Midrash, dressed his people in garments of t'cheilet wool and challenged Moshe's authority by suggesting that Moshe is not necessary as a leader since all the people are holy (because they all stood at Har Sinai when G-d revealed Himself to all of us. A blue thread might be necessary, but do you need a blue thread if the garment is all t'cheilet?

The answer is that even on a garment that is all t'cheilet, white strings must be attached and a P'til T'cheilet must put on the corner-tzitzit.

But that is not the point of this PTDT. I'm just justifying my sharing my idea about the tzitzit portion at the end of Sh'lach. And another thing - it seems from Seder Halbur by the Avudraham,

that originally, it was Sh'lach and Korach that were combined (in Chutz LaAretz) when Shavuot is Friday (and Shabbat), not Chukat and Balak which are combined in Chu"L today.

All besides the point. And here is the point.

The portion of Tzitzit which is the third passage of the SH'MA, in addition to being the end of Sh'vii and the Maftir of Parshat Sh'lach, consists of five p'sukim, 69 words. I would like to divide the parsha into two unequal parts. This first part - from the beginning and into the third pasuk, the first 29 words, deals with the mitzva of tzitzit.

HaShem said to Moshe, saying: Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them - that they shall make for them tzitzit (fringes) on the corners of their (four or more cornered) garments, for the generations, and that they shall put a blue thread on the corner-fringe. UR-ITEM OTO, and they shall see it...

That's the end of my first part. And they shall see it - what's it? Not the point here, as you shall soon see.

The second part of the parsha explodes from one specific mitzva into remembering and doing all of G-d's mitzvot. UZCHARTEM, and you shall remember all the mitzvot of G-d and do them. And you shall not follow the negative temptations of your hearts and minds (although it

mentions eyes, we should realize that the eyes transmit what is seen to the brain, which interprets and understands what is seen)...

This is not only one of the 613 mitzvot, one of the 365 prohibitions of the Torah, it is one of very few mitzvot which are categorized, in today's language, as 24/7. One of the Mitzvot T'midiot.

The Torah continues: In order to remember and do all of My mitzvot and become holy to your G-d.

Then, the concluding pasuk, ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM... I am HaShem your G-d who took you out of Mitzrayim to be your G-d - I am HaShem your G-d. This pasuk can be seen as a restatement of the very first words we heard from G-d, the first pasuk of the Aseret HaDibrot - ANOCHI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM...

All of the above is introduction to the thought I want to share with you. And I warn you in advance, I have no source for the thought, it is mine, from my head (and heart).

Here it is, finally. Take the first part off for the moment and replace it with another mitzva. (Don't do this in your Chumash or Siddur, just figuratively. I think any mitzva will do for this thought; let me choose giving Tz'daka. It is a mitzva to give tz'daka to the needy. So you do the mitzva. And when you look at the coins of bill

that you are giving, remember all the mitzvot and commit yourself to keeping them... remember and do them... be holy to HaShem. And remember that He took us out of Egypt in order to be our G-d.

Same thing for taking a Lulav and Etrog or benching after a meal or making Kiddush or eating matza or davening or learning Torah or doing chessed or refraining from sin...

There are 613 mitzvot in the Torah. The Torah refers to mitzvot in the plural, but sometimes it refers to the body of mitzvot in the singular. KOL HAMITZVA - All the mitzva? All the mitzvot, but they are all parts of a whole.

Even look at the wording of a bracha for a mitzva. Matza at the seder, for example. ...ASHER KID'SHANU - He who sanctifies us with His mitzvot, V'TZIVANU, and commands us, AL ACHILAT MATZA, on the eating of Matza. The bracha could have just said, BARUCH ATA... MELECH HA-OLAM SHE-TZIVANU... Perhaps, the ASHER KID'SHANU B'MITZVOTAV serves to remind us that the specific mitzva we are about to perform, is part of a whole system by which we sanctify ourselves.

I don't usually ask for feedback (although I would appreciate it, in general), but I'd love to hear what you think of my idea. **PTDT**