

## **Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow. (25:17)**

*Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita*, asks: What is the difference between a *tzaddik*, righteous person, and a *chasid*, pious person? Simply, a *tzaddik* follows *halachah* to the letter of the law. He is meticulous in his observance, never cutting corners, always doing exactly what is expected of him. A *chasid* goes the extra mile. He carries out *mitzvos lifnim meshuras ha'din*, beyond the letter of the law. Not only does he not look for shortcuts, but he also takes the longer, more strenuous route.

The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, offers a powerful distinction between these two approaches toward serving Hashem. A *tzaddik* does not fool others; he is always careful to be considerate of others, never cheating them. The *chasid* goes one step further: he is careful not to cheat even himself! This means that (especially) in areas of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, he will never convince himself that he is *frum*, observant, G-d-fearing. He is always questioning his spiritual integrity, "Am I really observant – or am I observant relative to others?" A scale that is based on the behavior and religious observance of others is flawed.

*Chazal* teach that a person should demand of himself, "When will I reach the spiritual plateau of the *Avos* – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov?" While this should be a primary form of motivation, one who even dreams that he is in the "running" of achieving the *madreigah*, spiritual level, of the Patriarchs is seriously confused. This is an example of fooling oneself.

There is a well-known story (quoted by *Rav Levenstein*) concerning the *Pnei Yehoshua*, who left early in the morning one day for *davening*, bedecked in his *Tallis* and *Tefillin*, when suddenly, a lion stood in front of him. He now understood why the streets were unusually empty. The *Pnei Yehoshua* pulled back his *Tallis*, revealing the *Tefillin Shel Rosh* on his head, and the lion immediately ran. He later explained the reason for his unusual reaction and its effect on the lion, as based on the *pasuk* in *Devarim* 28:10, "Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you." When the lion saw Hashem's Name on the *Tefillin Shel Rosh*, he was filled with awe.

Imagine a person walking on the street wearing *Tallis* and *Tefillin* who confronts a large alley cat that, upon seeing him, runs away. Now, if this person would compare his incident to that of the *Pnei Yehoshua*, he obviously has a problem. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you have *yiraas Shomayim*.