

And you will see it, and remember all the commandments of Hashem, and perform them, and not explore after your heart and after your eyes. .. So that you may remember and perform all My commandments. (15:39, 40)

Chazal tell us that the numerical equivalent of the word *tzitzis* is 600. The eight threads and the five knots supplement this number to equal 613, the number of *mitzvos* a Jew is enjoined to perform. The *tzitzis*, according to some commentators, are viewed as Hashem's insignia which we, as His servants, wear with pride. The *Sefer Hachinuch* says that by wearing *tzitzis* we are wearing Hashem's emblem. What greater motivation is there for remembering to perform His *mitzvos* than realizing that we are clothed in the uniform of Hashem's servants?

If so, why do we continue to neglect performing *mitzvos*? We see our own *tzitzis* and those of others; yet, we still sin. Why do we not remember the message of the *tzitzis*?

Horav Baruch Sorotzkin, zl, offers an insightful response to this apparent anomaly. If we read the text of the *pasuk*, we assume that one who looks at the *tzitzis* will remember the *mitzvos* and, therefore, will not stray after his heart and eyes. If that is the case, why does the *Torah* immediately follow this *pasuk* with the words, "*So that you remember and perform all My mitzvos*"? Why is it necessary to repeat the idea that one will remember to perform *mitzvos*? The *Torah* is teaching us a fundamental lesson. Only if one is not under the influence of his head and eyes will looking at the *tzitzis* make its impression. One whose life is regulated by the whims of his heart and the impression of his eyes will not be inspired by wearing the king's insignia. Yes, one can and many do perform some of the gravest sins while they are clothed in their *tzitzis*. This epitomizes spiritual hypocrisy. Once the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, takes charge, however, the *tzitzis* becomes nothing more than a garment which we wear to maintain appearances. One must be internally pure, so that his external appearance becomes more than superficial.