

## "I am Hashem your G-d who brought you out of Egypt to be your G-d." (15:41)

*Rashi* cites the *Talmud Bava Metzia 61b* which suggests a reason that the *Torah* mentions the exodus from Egypt in conjunction with the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. During *makas bechoros*, smiting of the first born, Hashem distinguished between he who was actually a first born and he who was not. Similarly, in the future He will exact retribution from one who places a *kala ilan*, an indigo dyed wool in his garment and says that it is *techeles*, blue wool. This seems difficult to grasp. Who is the individual trying to deceive? Is he attempting to mislead the public? Do people really care if he wears *techeles* or not? The only person he might be deluding is himself. It seems unlikely that the *Torah* would place emphasis upon not deceiving oneself!

*Horav Moshe Feinstein z.l.* explains that pretense in *mitzvah* observance is wrong. One should not pretend to be more righteous than he really is. If he has no *techeles* and is exempt from the *mitzvah*, he should not pretend to have it. Not only is it wrong to fool others, even if he has no ulterior motives, his overrighteous deeds can have negative effects. *Halacha* admonishes against the use of "*yoharah*," false religious pride. If one is not known to the public as a wise and pious man, it is pure deceit and conceit to put on a sham of religious devotion.

The rationale for the law of *yoharah* is simple. When one who is not proficient and pious in *mitzvah* observance attempts to perform acts which are only expected of the noble and righteous, his motives are suspect. If he would truly be circumspect in all areas of *mitzvah* endeavor, he would surely have adopted a fundamental level of religious observance. The fact that he has not conformed to the basics raise the specters of religious exhibitionism and false pride. Such a person actually denigrates *mitzvos*. Hashem's ordinances are not meant to be vehicles for one's ego trips or the pursuit of one's personal agenda. The value of *mitzvos* should be determined by their intrinsic worth rather than by their extrinsic allure.