

Rabbi Meir states that tzitzit with techelet initiate a chain reaction of sight and thought leading up to the Holy Throne. Tzitzit are basically woolen fringes hanging from the four

corners of a garment, but their exalted function is to raise man's sight and perspective from the routine and mundane to the exalted presence of the Creator.

Intelligence

In modern Hebrew, the simpleton is called "rosh katan" (small head – limited intelligence), and the astute, enterprising person is called "rosh gadol" (large head – prodigious intelligence).

HaShem gave His Torah to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov who only 50 days previous escaped 210 years of harsh slavery. They were at the time rosh katan (slave mentalities), but Hashem knew that His chosen nation would in time actualize their innate spiritual potential of "rosh gadol".

Halacha in Israel Today

A Kabbalistic concept: when the Jewish people are in galut (exile), the Shechina (holy spirit of HaShem) is there at their side. This concept refers to a time when the Jewish nation in galut and are discredited, disparaged and in a diminished state in relation to what they were as an independent nation in Eretz Yisrael.

One need not be a professor of history to know that this was our experience during the 2000 years of galut, until we were able to raise up our eyes in pride with the establishment of Medinat Yisrael after the horrific Shoah.

As Am Yisrael goes, so goes the holy Torah. When the Jews are honored and venerated, so is the holy Torah; but when we are degraded, then our Torah and its way of life is disparaged and mocked.

An example:

The Mishna and Talmud are divided into six sections: Zerarim (agricultural laws); Mo'ed (holidays); Nashim (personal status – marriage, divorce, etc.); Nezikin (torts and financial matters); Kodshim (the Temple service), and Taharot (purity vs impurity).

During the 2000 years of galut, the realities of our existence impelled the talmidei chachamim (scholars) of Am Yisrael to withdraw into three of the six sections of the Talmud – Moed, Nashim and Nezikin. They were studied, analyzed and contemplated, while the other three – Zerarim, Kodshim and Taharot – were relegated to the domain of individual gedolim (rabbinic authorities).

With the establishment of the Medina and the new realities of our national renaissance, our talmidei chachamim have rescued the Shechina from its sorry state in the imprisoned and strangling galut. Here in Eretz Yisrael, the Talmud is studied in its entirety, bringing the three neglected sections back to life. Our religious farmers – and there are very many – till the soil, plant and harvest, and set aside the tithes (teruma and ma'asrot), according to the Halachot of the section of Zerarim. There is a renaissance in our yeshivot regarding the study of Kodshim with its accompanying initiatives and its increased interest in the Temple Mount and the future Bet Hamikdash. And the laws of tuma and tahara are studied in a much wider framework.

Contemporary rabbis deal with issues which were never brought to the table in any bet din (religious court) or yeshiva in galut:

- Maintaining a modern army and police with their aircraft, submarines, electronic warfare, communications etc. according to Halacha.
- The vast world of medicine, including human cloning and embryonic stem cell research.
- Shemita and the need to keep our farmers solvent every

7th year when agricultural work is prohibited, including the prohibition of exporting sanctified Shemita produce.

- The problems of conversion and prevention of prohibited marriages.
- The halachic status of civil laws passed by the Knesset.
- Halachic implications of the day when the majority of world Jewry will be in the land.
- Treatment of minorities including religions defined as avoda zara.
- Drafting of yeshiva students for military service in this time of milchemet mitzva.
- Incorporation of Halacha in the Israeli legal system.
- The prohibition against giving hallowed lands to gentiles.
- The inclusion of lands which have been militarily conquered into the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael.
- Capital punishment for terrorists and freeing convicted Arab murderers as ransom for our prisoners.

The list is endless; nevertheless, our poskim are resolving the problems one by one.

The Medina and its Halachic institutions have brought about “techiyat hamaitim” (resurrection, revival), of the formerly neglected other half of our Talmud.

We are enjoying our return to being “rosh gadol”.

Leadership

However, in the context of a nation “rosh gadol” cannot be limited to the bet midrash. “Rosh Gadol” means **leadership**. To sit in the bet midrash while secular Jews determine the future of the holy land is very much “rosh katan”.

Think of a community celebrating the donation of a new sefer Torah. There is a festive kilometer procession complete with sound truck and dancing, and a chupa over the new Torah with

individuals honored to hold the scroll on the way to its new home. At the critical moment when the Torah enters the bet kneset, the rabbi is invited to hold the sefer and lead the congregation while placing the Torah in its holy ark.

Now, how much more so when HaShem is placing His exiled Jewish nation into His Holy Eretz Yisrael, that the procession should be led by Torah scholars not secular political individuals!

What is lacking today among many Torah leaders is the will to achieve “rosh gadol”.

King Shaul lost the monarchy because he was “rosh katan”, David succeeded him as King by virtue of his rare quality of “rosh gadol”. He was uniquely gifted to be a courageous, fierce and determined military leader, but was also sensitive and spiritual to be able to author the Book of Tehillim (Psalms).

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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