

From the Kli Yakar Jacob Solomon

The Parsha concludes with the positive commandment that any four-cornered garment must have tzitzit:

"It shall constitute tzitzit for you, that you may see it, and remember to observe all G-d's commandments. You shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes" (15:39).

The words UR-ITEM OTO "you shall see it" refers to the tzitzit (plural) which together make up the entire entity of the four-cornered garment that is suitably fringed. However, the Gemara (Menachot 43b) translates that phrase to mean "you shall see Him", you shall see G-d. By looking at the tzitzit you are reminded of G-d, and the importance of observing His commandments. The Torah links this with: "You shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes", meaning that you should not devote your lifestyle to doing what you want, when you want, and how you want, without asking whether it is indeed what you should be doing.

However, the words UR-ITEM OTO imply that a person is of spiritually high level, spiritually refined. To one person the tzitzit are mere pieces of string tied in a particular way, but to the more informed and spiritually-sensitive, their colors - ocean-turquoise and white - instantly create spiritual associations: the sea, the heavens, and the Throne of Glory

(Menachot 43b). The K'li Yakar emphasizes that all these three entities share the common characteristic of following G-d's laws to the letter. For example, the oceans operate within their own frameworks, borders, and spheres in constantly fulfilling their geographically-defined role in the jig-saw puzzle of the Creation.

It is the color and aura of the techeilet that the Torah has chosen to reinforce a person's requirement to operate within its frameworks, borders, and spheres, through which individuals fulfill their purposes in the Creation. The different colored threads of the tzitzit are designed to associate and evoke the Torah's thinking and behavioral boundaries.

Indeed, psychologists use associated ideas as a means of enquiry. To get to know how a person really sees things, the investigator gives a list of nouns and asks the patient to say the first idea he/she comes up with. For example, on hearing the word "tree", one person will say "green", another "fruit" and a third "dangerous falling branches". The individual's responses say a great deal about the personality and experiences of the individual behind them.

That is what the Torah is saying with the words: UR-ITEM OTO: your experience of G-d and outlook on life should be such a nature that merely observing the tzitzit is enough to keep you on the rails. However, such spiritual levels are not taken for

granted: implied in UR-ITEM OTO is that it is your responsibility to get yourself on such a spiritual level that the tzitzit instantly do carry that idea association for you, without even having to think about it. The text implies that a person must get on that spiritual level so that association is instantaneous. This may well be achieved by regular and purposeful Torah study, doing one's best to keep the mitzvot, and when possible relating to the "still, small voice" of G-d's involvement within one's very own individual life... 🙏