

## **Divine String Symphony (Shelach)**

***A symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything. -  
Gustav Mahler***

The Commandment of 'tzitzit' (the four cornered garment that Jewish men are obliged to wear with fringes at each corner) is both unusual and highly symbolic. The Talmud (Tractate Menachot 43b) famously and cryptically states:

***“Tekhelet (the classically blue fringe amongst the white ones of the tzitzit) is similar to the ocean, and the ocean is similar to the heavens, and the heavens are similar to the Throne of Glory.”***

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the Kli Yakar (1550-1619), on Numbers 15:38, tells how we need to observe the sky and how it doesn't veer one iota from its mission. Not only that, but according to ancient Jewish sources, the sky exults in its mission. He continues that we need to look at the ocean as well. The ocean also does not alter its mission and stays strictly within God's directives. However, the same sources tell us that the ocean is not as happy about it, but rather obeys out of fear of God, while the sky performs its mission out of love of God.

The Kli Yakar then explains the Talmudic statement. The wearing of tzitzit with its strings is meant to make us cognizant of the ocean, which performs its obligations, even if it doesn't like it, but rather out of fear and awe of God. The next level is to think of the sky, which follows God's commands out of love. Once a person reaches that level, he can then attach himself more directly to God and His Throne of Glory and thereby enjoy the symphony of Creation.

May those of us who can wear tzitzit, do so and have the thought processes it is meant to engender. Others will just have to think of the ocean, the sky, and the divine orchestra of the world that surrounds us, without the benefits of tzitzit.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

*Dedication*

*To Israel's wonderful Book Week, which will last for a month.*