

Tzitzis: Four Corners

● By Shmuel Silverstein HaKohen

Beor Panecha

part of the K'sod Siach series

BAMIDBAR 15:38

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית

Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes.

Hashem commands the men of Israel to wear a four-cornered garment with fringes on its corners: *tzitzis*.

The Mishnaic spelling of the word, צִיצִית, has a numerical value of 600 (צ = 90, י = 10, ת = 400).

Each tassel, at each of the garment's four corners, has eight threads (when doubled over) and five sets of knots. The sum of all these numbers is 613: the *tzitzis* remind the one who wears them of all the commandments of the Torah, for tradition teaches that the Torah holds 613 mitzvos.

This insight is borne out by Hashem's command that those who wear *tzitzis* look at them, and so be reminded of all the mitzvos of Hashem:

BAMIDBAR 15:39

וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת ה'

Look at it and recall all the commandments of Hashem.

Wearing this holy garment is a physical reminder of all the mitzvos of the Torah.



But did you know that the *tzitzis* hold yet another message, in numbers and in meaning?

It is a reminder of the whole of the six orders of the Mishnah, the *shishah sidrei Mishnah*: the Oral Law. How can this be?

How many corners does the garment have? Four.

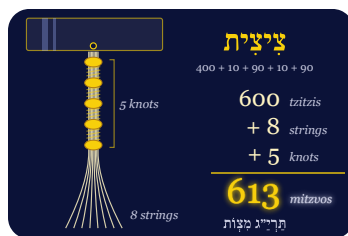
How many degrees are in each corner? Ninety.

How many degrees are in all four corners together? Three hundred sixty.

And how is 360 written most simply in Hebrew letters? Shin, samech: ש"ס.

That is the classic abbreviation for the six orders of the Mishnah, the *shishah sidrei Mishnah*, known simply as *Shas*.

So the one who wears *tzitzis* can be said to carry on his shoulders all the mitzvos of the Torah, and all of *Shas*, ש"ס, the six orders of the Mishnah, as well. BP



$$600 + 8 + 5 = 613$$

צִיצִית · תרי"ג · Bamidbar 15:39



Four corners, 360 degrees

ארבע כנפות · Bamidbar 15:38



360 is Shas

ש"ס · shishah sidrei Mishnah

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