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If you hear the sound of a trumpet, this paragraph suggests a direct relationship between the righteousness of our acts and our fate. If we are good, God will be good to us, and vice versa. That theology was questioned throughout the ages and even by biblical writers themselves, most sharply in the Book of Job. Nevertheless, it does speak to a deep human need to see a world as containing a moral balance between good and evil. What is expressed here in concrete terms may be understood more broadly: moral and immoral actions have consequences, both seen and unseen.

Tzitzit. The biblical scholar Israel Knohl, expanding a medieval Jewish comment, suggests that the word *tzitzit* may derive from *tzitz*, a headband worn by the High Priest and tied in back with a *p'til t'khelet*, a “thread of blue.” On it were the words קְדוֹשׁ לָדוֹנָי, “holy before Adoni.” Wearing the *tzitzit* (literally, the “little tzitz”), we are asked to serve God in a holy way, much as the High Priest did; thus the paragraph commands us to be “holy before your God.” The act of wearing *tzitzit* turns us all, metaphorically, into High Priests.

TRUELY. The tradition read the word *emet*, “truly,” as referring both backward and forward: it is the first word of the following paragraph and is also recited as if it were the last word of the preceding paragraph.