

“The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic.” (6:3)

Rashi explains that the vestments the Kohen wears must fit according to his body measurements. They should be neither too long, nor too short. Horav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber, z.l., interprets this idea figuratively. Regrettably, sometimes when a person is accorded great honor and “dressed” in royal finery – lauded, praised and esteemed – the raiments are “too long.” They are greater than he actually is. He is not worthy of all the accolades and honor that the community is showering upon him. The individual who is the paragon of virtue and respectability provides a contrast. A man of sterling character, impeccable integrity and brilliant scholarship, truly deserves to be “dressed” up in princely garb, in clothes of distinction. Alas, people do not recognize his true eminence. His distinguished character and erudition are neither perceived nor appropriately valued. He is woefully dressed in garments that are “too short” for his noble stature.

The Torah is indicating to us that the Kohen who ministers before Hashem, who addresses our spiritual needs – the spiritual leader who is our guide and inspiration – must be “dressed” appropriately to reflect his true station in life. We are to revere our leaders commensurate with their worth. We should not compel them to wear clothes that are ill-fitting. In other words, we must accord them the honor they deserve.

Unfortunately, we live in a time when the standard by which our spiritual leadership is measured is an arbitrary one: each individual personally determines who is a scholar, who is G-d-fearing, who is deserving of respect. Perhaps, if the leadership were to be more demanding, people might become less arbitrary and more objective in setting this standard.