

They shall take the gold. (28:5)

The artisans who fashioned the Bigdei Kehunah, Priestly vestments, were enjoined to collect the gold that was to be the rough material from which these vestments were fashioned. At first glance, it is surprising that men of such distinction should be involved in a task that seems unnecessary. Why could the people who contributed the gold not bring their contribution to the artisans? Since when is there a “pick-up” service? We find a similar idea with regard to the metzora, in which, at every step of the purification process, the Kohen himself must be involved.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, offers a practical explanation, one that appears more apropos with the passing of time, and the growth of Orthodoxy, both from a secular and a religious perspective. The artisans were unique individuals, the nation’s elite, whom Hashem had imbued with the superior wisdom that granted them the ability to create and fashion these vestments. They also had a profound understanding of the depth of meaning behind every aspect of the vestments. This was holy work, and these men were personally selected by Moshe Rabbeinu for the task. The other people who were not selected for this task, or did not possess the extraordinary wisdom necessary for making the vestments, did not entertain the thought that they could contribute toward creation of the vestments. It was simply not their domain. Selecting the materials and bringing them to the artisans, however, was a mundane function that was not reserved especially for the craftsmen. Anyone could have performed this task. Yet, the Torah demands that even this seemingly menial task should also be carried out by the artisans. An important and vital lesson with regard to a Torah community’s leadership can obviously be derived from here.

We live in a time when, Baruch Hashem, we are blessed with baalei batim, laymen, who are quite knowledgeable in Torah and Halachah. They also know their limitations vis-à-vis Torah and Halachah. Therefore, they defer halachic questions and disputes to their Rav/Rosh Yeshivah. What about matters that, at first blush, seem to be mundane in nature? Must the people defer to the spiritual leader in such matters? Rav Moshe says yes. People think that in matters unrelated to Torah scholarship, such as methods for fundraising, synagogue decoration, set up for a Kiddush, etc., and a plethora of personal, business and social issues that one thinks are not germane to Halachah, the Rav need not be consulted. They are wrong. Everything relates to Torah, and, therefore, the Rav must examine everything -- even that which seems to be exclusively in the domain of worldly matters -- must come under the scrutiny of the Torah. Only then can we be assured that the Jewish community will be at peace. Derachecha darkei no’am, “The ways of Torah are pleasant.” Only when we follow the Torah, when it