

"And divest Aharon of his garments and enrobe Elazar his son with them, and Aharon shall be gathered up and die there." (20:6)

The *Ramban* mentions the *Midrash* which states that various miracles occurred in connection with these garments. This is obvious from the apparent unfeasibility of Moshe divesting Aharon's garments in their proper order. Were not the outer garments over the inner ones? Thus Moshe put Aharon upon the rock and removed his priestly garments, and celestial garments clothed themselves upon him underneath. Thus Elazar upon taking over the mantle of priesthood was able to immediately put on the garments in their proper order. What was the urgency for this miracle? Could not Elazar have momentarily waited for Aharon to remove his vestments, and then don them in the simple and correct order?

Rabbi Chaim Elazary Zt"l explains the symbolism of this miracle as based upon the importance of maintaining an unbroken link in the traditional chain from generation to generation. One of the basic foundations and tenets of our faith is that all our Written Law and Oral Law were transmitted through the generations, handed down from teacher to student, in their entirety. No student may add or subtract one iota from the chain of transmission. When Hashem commanded Moshe to make priestly vestments so that Aharon should wear them, they became consecrated for this holy purpose. They were an inherent part of the sanctity of the priesthood. As Aharon was about to depart this world and hand over his charge to the next generation, it was necessary that this transfer be unbroken by any interval whatsoever. Elazar was to don these vestments from Aharon's body immediately, even if it necessitated the performance of a miracle.

This concept of continuity is poignantly expounded by the *Moresheet Moshe*. To this day the *Bnei Yisroel* are called by a name which has reference to nearly five thousand years of history! Only the descendants of Yaakov are cognizant of their lineage to the very beginning of their family tree. He compares the offspring to the fruit of a tree. Great-grandparents plant the seeds; grandparents are the trees; parents are the branches; and children are the fruits whose growth and development are eagerly and anxiously watched and nurtured. Fruit trees must be cared for. They require watering, pruning, and sunshine, or their branches will decay and their fruit be inferior. Sometimes they require special treatment to keep away various insects that would harm and spoil the fruit. If the children are not nurtured with the water of the wellspring of *Torah*, if they are not afforded the benefits of the protective influence of *mitzvos*, the fruit will rot, and they will fall prey to the poisonous influences of their surroundings. The *Torah* is a tree of life, if it is held up and supported by study and practice. This responsibility is given to the caretakers of the fruits - the parents, and their surrogates - the *Torah* educators.