

**"And you shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, for honor and distinction. Any you shall speak to all that are wise hearted... that they make Aharon's garments, to sanctify him that he may serve Me." (28:2,3)**

If one carefully reads the text, it is apparent that Moshe's command to those who were to make the holy vestments was not consistent with Hashem's command to him. Hashem told Moshe that the garments were to be made for "*honor and distinction*." Moshe, however, implored the artisans to make vestments that would sanctify the *kohen* for his duty to serve Hashem. Why is there a disparity between the two directives?

*Horav Yosef Yehudah Leib Bloch, z.l.*, offers the following explanation. The creation of the *bigdei kehunah*, priestly vestments, was by no means a menial task. It required the creative talents of skilled artisans. It was a holy endeavor which obligated the artisans to apply the proper esoteric intentions, inspiring *kedushah* and *taharah*, holiness and purity, into these vestments. Indeed, *Chazal* teach that Betzalel was able to acrostically combine those letters of the *Shem Ha'Meforash*, Ineffable Name, which were used to create Heaven and Earth, in order to make the *Mishkan* and its appurtenances. As an extension of Heavenly *kedushah* and the place in which the *Shechinah* would repose, the *Mishkan* must be invested with the highest level of sanctity. This same idea applied to the priestly vestments. The *bigdei kehunah* must be imbued with the essence of pure holiness. There is no room for any vestige of falsity.

At first glance, the concept of beauty and the sacredness of the vestments seem incongruous. Unfortunately, Man, who is comprised of mundane matter, is influenced by the superficially resplendent. External beauty captivates the human eye and communicates a message --this is impressive, this is important, this is to be valued. In order to enchant the people, so that they acknowledge and give proper respect to the *kohanim*, it was imperative that the *bigdei kehunah* radiate grandeur, magnificence, and sublime nobility.

Nonetheless, despite the importance of external esthetics as a vehicle for inspiring one to delve into the internal essence of a given object, it is still a negative approach to creating or building a Sanctuary. Hashem's concern is that the *bigdei kehunah* be "*for honor and distinction*." The builders, however, are to have one image in mind, to create vestments "*to sanctify him that he may serve Me*." Those people who are involved in *melechtes ha'kodesh*, holy endeavor, must maintain their focus on the sanctity and purity of their endeavor. They are never to deviate from their mission and lose focus of their goal. Their intentions must be concentrated on *kedushah*. Hashem will provide the *tiferes*, beauty.

*Horav Bloch* applied this thesis to the building of a *yeshiva*. At no time is one permitted to build a *Torah* institution through means that are less than honorable. Indeed, to use any misrepresentation

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of fact or other forms of unethical behavior for the purpose of "building" *Torah* is antithetical to *Torah* dictate. Falsehood undermines the integrity of *Torah* institutions and their leaders.