

And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother... from amongst Bnei Yisrael to minister to Me. (28:1)

We wonder why Aharon received the position of *Kohen Gadol*, High Priest, as opposed to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who was clearly the greatest Jew at the time. The *Maggid, zl, m'Dubno* gives a practical reason for this selection. The purpose of the *Kohen Gadol* is *kaparah*. He is the one who atones for the sins of the people and who must execute that service. Such a person must be from among the people – someone who understands them, whose appreciation of the average Jew is profound. One who understands their many foibles and misgivings is able to make sense of their errant behavior and shortcomings. Moshe was a great man, a *Himmel mentch*, a man whose head was in the clouds. He was not as close with the *ha'mone am*, average Jew, like his brother, Aharon. The *Kohen Gadol* was the one who personified *ohev shalom v'rodef shalom*, “loves peace and pursues peace,” [loves people and brings them closer to Torah].

Not all peace is good! The *Tanna* in *Pirkei Avos* 1:12 emphasizes Hillel's dictum, “Be like the disciples of Aharon, love peace and pursue peace, loves people and bring them closer to Torah.” The *Slonimer Rebbe, zl, Horav Avraham*, commented, “Only such peace that ultimately brings Jews closer to Torah may be considered the *shalom* of Aharon. A peace that does not serve as a catalyst for bringing one closer to Torah is a false peace.”

Bringing a Jew closer to a Torah way of life often requires an astute mind, while at other times, a practical, common sense approach will do the trick. Deep down within every Jew's psyche there exists a gravitational pull toward Torah. The problem is that it is covered with layers and layers of fear, indifference, and even resentment. If we can succeed in penetrating this covering, we can draw the individual to his origins, to the Torah.

Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl, was the *posek hador*, *Halachic* decisor, of his generation. He was *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Kol Torah*, where his lectures throughout the years molded and shaped the minds of thousands of students. He was also paradigmatic of Aharon *HaKohen* – kind and sensitive, caring and loving, empathizing with each and every Jew, and always looking for a way to bring Jews closer to Torah.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* would arrive daily at the *Yeshivah* via taxi. A number of times, it was noticed that the taxi would pull up to the curb, but *Rav Shlomo Zalman* did not alight. He remained in the cab, conversing with the driver for a few minutes, often for as long as ten minutes. What could they be talking about? *Rav Shlomo Zalman* was an individual who valued every moment. This was totally out of character.

One of the students was overcome by curiosity, to the point that after the *Rosh Yeshivah* went inside, he flagged over the taxi and asked the driver, “What gives? What were you talking about with the *Rosh Yeshivah*?”

“What?” asked the driver. “What did you call that elderly man? Are you saying that wonderful old man is your *Rosh Yeshivah*? He is learned? I never knew!” After some prodding, the driver shared his story, “We were once traveling to the *yeshivah*, and the gentleman asked me about my background. I replied that I was born near *Yerushalayim*, and I even remember attending an Orthodox school. The gentleman asked me what I had learned in school. I told him that I did not remember much, but I would share with him what I remember from my *Chumash* class. It began with *Bereishis*, Adam and Chavah. Next, I covered Avraham and Sarah, and I continued on. It was clear that the older man was deriving much pleasure from the stories. Regrettably, I remembered only so much. In order to keep up our conversation and make the man feel good, I would ‘prepare’ on *Shabbos* by taking my son’s stories of the Torah and reading them. What can I say? He was actually enjoying these stories!”

What a brilliant way to bring a Jew closer to Torah! This could only have been achieved by an individual who felt another Jew’s pain as his own, who loved each and every Jew as family.

Since the *Kohen Gadol* is supposed to spread good will, reaching out to all Jews with love and caring, he must be respected by the people. One listens to whom one respects. This is one reason why the *Kohen Gadol*’s vestments were outstanding in their beauty. When the *Kohen Gadol* stepped out bedecked in his Priestly vestments, he represented spiritual monarchy. He manifested royalty which, by its very nature, demands respect. For this reason, the people readily accepted his word, which allowed for him to atone for them.

Clothes do not necessarily make the person, but they are an indication of an individual’s nature. When a person dresses royally, he catches the eye of people. They look up to him and are willing to accept his guidance. This is especially true of an inner sanctity that glows from within, and his countenance illuminates without.

It is related that once one of the premier Lithuanian Torah scholars came with a complaint to the *Netziv, zl*, who at the time was the *Volozhiner Rosh Yeshivah* and that generation’s pre-eminent Torah leader. Why is it that a number of the *Admorim, Rebbes*, who had large *chassidic* courts, lived a life of affluence, wearing beautiful, rich garments that reflected glory and royalty, while so many *Roshei Yeshivah* lived in squalor, suffering from abject poverty? The *Netziv* explained that this has been going on for quite some time. One can say that it dated back to the days of Moshe and Aharon’s leadership of the Jewish People. There are two pursuits, missions or purposes in life. There are two ways to serve Hashem. Each and every generation has those who are better suited for one, while others seem to gravitate and revel in the other. Indeed, there are two ways/approaches to reach out to the Jewish People.

One *derech*, approach, is Aharon’s way, whereby one reaches out with love, caring and sensitivity. This approach is best suited if one seeks to reach the common man, the one who is neither necessarily erudite, nor looking for scholarship. He seeks warmth, love, a shoulder to lean on, and a heart that will open up to him. To reach out to the *ha’mone am*, greater community, one’s attire,

speech, and manner must be impressive. This was Aharon's way.

Moshe's approach was the one that required pure Torah dissemination without embellishment: pristine Torah *lomdus*, logical analysis, brilliant lecture and dialogue. This approach does not hinge on impressive externals. One has only to look at the photographs of some of our greatest Torah scholars to notice that clothes did not play a role in their lives. Whether it was a simple hat that served its owner for years in all sorts of climates, or a threadbare *kapoteh*, to them it was all the same.

On the other hand, when *Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl*, who did not normally dress in specific rabbinic attire, travelled to Germany to meet with its rabbinic leadership, he was very particular in selecting his wardrobe. He commissioned a tailor to prepare for him a new *kapoteh*, carefully selecting the material himself. It had to be "stylish" and fit properly. *Rav Chaim* explained that his fastidiousness was due to the German Jews' discriminatory nature and demand concerning resplendent attire. Their idea of how a *Rabbiner* should present himself was quite different than the Eastern European perspective. If, in their eyes, a *Rav* should dress a certain way, it would be a *chillul kavod haTorah*, desecration of the honor due the Torah, to act otherwise.