

## You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

*Tiferes*, beauty/splendor, is a term that is most often defined subjectively. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Thus, beauty/splendor is a term that may have various meanings, dependent upon the individual's sensitivity to – and perception of – what connotes beauty. The fact that the Torah equates the *Bigdei Kehunah* with *kavod*, glory/dignity, implies that the beauty of the Priestly vestments was not necessarily a fashion show, artistic beauty, but rather, dignified splendor, a beauty that inspires, a beauty that catalyzes thoughtfulness. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore his Priestly vestments, he inspired the people who viewed him as a king dressed in the clothing of a monarch. The *Kohen Gadol*, having achieved the pinnacle of spirituality, was truly a spiritual monarch, an individual who represented the finest that Torah has to offer. His attire matched his essence – dignified splendor.

How different is the Torah's perspective on beauty! The Greek culture extolled beauty, but it was a base form of beauty that promoted desire. Its culture focused on the body – not the spirit. Understandably, its appreciation of beauty coincided with its view on that which was significant and meaningful to them.

Our understanding of beauty is quite different. The words of the *Neviim*, Prophets, are replete with references to the importance of Jewish children, especially their role in the survival of *Klal Yisrael*. They are our future; they are our legacy; they are our beauty/splendor. The special love that Hashem has for *Yiddishe Kinder*, Jewish children, is underscored a number of times throughout *Tanach*. One especially poignant and telling example is to be found in a *pasuk* in *Eichah* (1:5,6), "Her young children have gone into captivity before the enemy. Gone from the daughter of *Tzion* is all her splendor." *Chazal* (*Midrash Eichah*) define splendor as the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence. Rabbi Yehudah says, "Come and see how beloved are the children before Hashem. When the *Sanhedrin HaGadol*, Great *Sanhedrin*, was exiled, Hashem's *Shechinah* did not accompany it. When the *Kohanim* were sent into exile, Hashem's *Shechinah* did not accompany them. It remained in *Tzion*. When the children, however, were exiled, then the *Shechinah* left with them. Thus, the departure of *Tzion's* splendor coincided with the departure of the *Shechinah*.

The *Midrash* suggests another definition for the word splendor. The children themselves comprise *Klal Yisrael's* splendor. The *shainkeit*, beauty of *Klal Yisrael*, is its children, its legacy, its future. Jewish children are the living splendor of our people. On a trip to *Eretz Yisrael* during the 1950's, *Horav Zelik Epstein, zl*, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Shaar HaTorah, took his young son (*Horav*) Kalmen (present *Rosh Yeshivah*) to visit the *Brisker Rav, zl*. At the end of the visit, the *Brisker Rav* turned to *Rav Zelik* and said, "Take your son to *Yeshivas Eitz Chaim* and allow him to see the *cheder* children learning Torah and their *rebbeim* teaching them. That is the *sheinkeit*, the splendor of *Eretz Yisrael*."

True beauty is neither merely skin deep, nor is it in the eyes of the beholder. True beauty is intrinsic, dignified, inspiring and, like children – who represent our survival and future – enduring. They are our enduring legacy, our future. They represent true beauty.