

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

The *Bigdei Kehunah*, Priestly vestments, were different from any other type of garment, because of their service *l'kavod u'lsiferes*, for honor and splendor. Furthermore, they are similar to the garments worn by the Heavenly Angels. *Otzar Efraim* quotes *Gevuras Shimshon* (cited by *Horav Shlomo Levenstein, Shlita*), who asserts that this is implied by *Yechezkel HaNavi's* vision of *Malach Michael, V'hinei ha'ish l'vush ha'badim*; "And behold! The man clothed with linen" (*Yechezkel* 9:11). The *Midrash* explains that this alludes to the *Bigdei Aharon HaKohen*, the Priestly vestments of Aharon *HaKohen*, who was granted the honor of being clothed in the same fashion as the Ministering Angels.

On the other hand, the very concept of clothing is the result of the sin of Adam *HaRishon*. Prior to eating of the *Eitz HaDaas*, Tree of Knowledge, the Torah writes, *Va'yiheyu shneihem arumim... v'lo yisboshashu*; "They were both naked... and they were not ashamed" (*Bereishis* 2:25). Following the sin, the Torah records that Hashem fashioned *kosnos ohr*, garments made of skin, to clothe Adam and Chavah. In other words, clothing, in contrast to the Priestly vestments, is a sad reminder of Adam's sin and the consequent need for clothing.

Rav Shlomo Levenstein offers a telling analogy. The king's close friend rebelled and was sentenced to death. At the last minute, with the thick noose around his neck, the king remembered their close relationship and commuted the sentence. He did have one stipulation, however, that henceforth the condemned man, his children and every one of his descendants be relegated to wearing a noose around their necks. This would remind them of their good fortune in being alive.

The condemned man was only too excited to trade the real noose for this replacement. He wore a thick noose, similar to the one that had encircled his neck. He gladly wore the noose until his final moment on earth. His son also wore a noose – perhaps a bit thinner – but he wore it nonetheless. As the generations continued, the noose was an integral part of their daily garments. With each ensuing generation, however, they became more and more creative in the size, thickness, material and color of the noose. The noose ended up being a necklace of thin string, its colors changing with the color trend of society. At one point, they attached trinkets and eventually jewels to the string/noose.

Rav Levenstein decries our present attitude towards clothing and modern styles of dress. We seem to have forgotten that clothing is the consequence of the sin of Adam *HaRishon*. Instead of wearing clothing as "clothing," because it is something that we must wear to cover ourselves, it has, instead, become a marketable item which presents us with some styles that border on *tznius* criteria and some that clearly do not. Indeed, the *Bigdei Kehunah* the *Kohen* wore had a lofty purpose. The only aspect of loftiness that applies to modern-day clothing is the price.