

He shall remove the linen vestments that he had worn when he entered the Sanctuary, and he shall leave them there. (16:23)

After the *Kohen Gadol* completed the *Yom Kippur* service, he removed the white linen vestments that he had worn upon entering the Holy of Holies. We wonder why he should discard such expensive garments. Why can he not wear them the following year? *Horav Zalman Sorotzkin, zl*, explains that the white linen vestments leave a powerful impact upon the *Kohen Gadol*. He realizes that the white linen is essentially the same material used to sew shrouds. The priestly vestments accompany him into the Holy of Holies, while the shrouds are the garments he wears when he meets his Maker. He understands that the slightest deviation from the prescribed service can result in his untimely end. These same vestments could be his *tachrichim*, shrouds (not exactly these vestments, but shrouds that are similar in color and material). This is a sobering thought. He is about to enter the most exalted place, but also, the most dangerous. He must be entirely focused upon his mission, meticulously following the prescribed order of the service to a “t.” He has no room for error.

Now, if the *Kohen Gadol* were to wear these same garments the following year, they would not have the same impact on him as they did this past year. Each and every year, the *Kohen Gadol* should wear newly sewn vestments. He should realize that last year is not this year. Has he ascended the spiritual ladder, or has he digressed slightly? While the *Kohen Gadol* follows the exact same ritual every year, he might fall into the abyss of complacency catalyzed by the annual routine. Thus, the Torah insists that he wear new vestments, in the hope that the outward departure from the routine will imbue him and concomitantly his service – with freshness and enthusiasm.

One must grow spiritually from day to day, week to week, month to month and year to year. This year's *Kohen Gadol* is not the same as last year's *Kohen Gadol*. He has progressed on the upward trajectory of spirituality. *Horav Nachman Breslover, zl*, put it quite succinctly when he taught, “If we shall be no better tomorrow than we are today, then why is tomorrow necessary altogether?!” We need tomorrow for the potential for growth that it offers. New opportunities, chances to improve, should be our aspiration as we look forward to the next day. The journey of continuous growth should be exciting. Furthermore, tomorrow offers us a blank canvas on which to apply lessons learned, make positive changes and strive for personal betterment. Indeed, if we have no tomorrow to look forward to, what value does today have?