

Clothing Arguments

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Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by HaRav Zev Leff

[https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SH74_08_Tetzaveh_Mo
desty_in_the_Mishkan_The-Priestly_Garments-1.mp3](https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SH74_08_Tetzaveh_Modesty_in_the_Mishkan_The-Priestly_Garments-1.mp3)

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and for splendor...and they shall make the vestments of Aharon, to sanctify him to minister to Me.

Shmos 28:2-3

The *bigdei kehunah* served two purposes: *lekadsho* (to sanctify the kohein) and *lechavod ulesiferess* (for glory and for splendor).

The essence of a person is his *neshamah*, given to him in the spiritual world before the body is formed. But just as an astronaut requires a spacesuit to function in space, the *neshamah* requires a physical body to fulfill its mission of observing the Torah in this world. After death, the *neshamah* returns to the spiritual world and the body stays behind.

Adam and Chavah demonstrated through their sin that sometimes the body rebels against the *neshamah* rather than serving it. So Hashem provided them with clothes to cover the body (Bereishis 3:21), reminding them that though the *neshamah* is hidden from view, it is a person's essence. (The Hebrew word for clothing, *beget*, comes from *bogeid* (traitor), because the need for clothing arose from the body's treachery.) On the other hand, the body is still visible when wearing clothes, and the Torah notes the physical beauty of Sarah, Yosef, and others. In addition, R' Yochanan (Shabbos 113a) ascribed significance to clothes by calling them "*mechabdusei* (those things that honor me)." This is because clothing, worn properly, highlights a person's inner beauty and enables others to discern it.

The two functions of the *bigdei kehunah* reflect these themes. They cover the kohein's body to sanctify him and show that the key quality required for serving in the Bais Hamikdash is holiness (*lekadsho*), and they were physically beautiful (*lechavod ulesiferess*) to highlight the kohein's spiritual beauty.