



A Wonderful Revelation from the Rama and the Shela HaKadosh Aharon the Kohen Gadol Wore the Eight Priestly Garments to Rectify Adam HaRishon Who Was Presented These Garments by HKB”H

This week we will read parshas Tetzaveh. Here, HKB”H instructs Moshe Rabeinu to make eight sacred garments for his brother Aharon, the Kohen Gadol. Future Kohanim would wear these garments when performing the religious service—the avodah—in the Beis HaMikdash. Four of these garments were worn by all kohanim; however, the other four were designated to be worn only by the Kohen Gadol. Here are the pertinent pesukim (Shemos 28, 2):

וְעָשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ לְכַבֹּד וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת, וְאַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל כָּל חַכְמֵי לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלְּאֲתֵינוּ רוּחַ חֵכְמָה, וְעָשׂוּ אֶת בְּגָדֵי אַהֲרֹן לְקַדְּשׁוֹ לְכַהֵנוּ לִי, וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ, חוֹשֵׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וּמַעֲיֵל וּכְתוּמֹת תְּשַׁבֵּץ מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט, וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ וּלְבָנָיו לְכַהֵנוּ לִי.”

You shall make sacred garments for Aharon, your brother, for glory and for splendor. And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have imbued with a spirit of wisdom; and they shall make the garments of Aharon, to sanctify him, so that he shall be a kohen for Me. These are the garments that they shall make: a “choshen,” an “eiphod,” a “me’il,” a “Kestones” of checkered pattern, a “mitznefes,” and an “avneit”; they shall make sacred garments for Aharon your brother and his sons, so that he shall be a kohen for me. Further on, the Torah adds the following caution (ibid. 43): **וְהָיָה עַל אַהֲרֹן וְעַל בָּנָיו כְּבוֹאָם אֶל אֶהָל מוֹעֵד אוֹ בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֵל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא יֵשְׂאוּ עוֹן וּמָתוּ, חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לֹא יִזְרְעוּ אַחֲרָיו.”** **They shall be on Aharon and on his sons when they enter the Ohel Mo’ed or when they approach the**

mizbeiach to serve in the sanctuary, so that they should not bear a sin and die; this is an everlasting statute for him and his offspring after him.

With regards to these garments, we learn in the Mishnah (Yoma 71b): **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל מְשַׁמֵּשׁ בְּשִׂמּוֹנָה כְּלִים, וְהַהֲדוּטָה בְּאַרְבַּעָה, בְּכַתוּמֹת וּמְכַנְסִים וּמִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט, מוֹסִיף עָלָיו כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל חוֹשֵׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וּמַעֲיֵל וְצִיץ.”** **The Kohen Gadol serves wearing eight vestments; while the ordinary kohen does so with four—“Kestones” (tunic), breeches, “mitznefes” (turban), and “avneit” (belt). In addition to these, the Kohen Gadol wore the “choshen” (breastplate), the “eiphod” (apron), the “me’il” (robe), and the “tzitz” (a gold plate worn on the forehead).** The Mishnah and the Gemara refer to the four vestments worn by an ordinary kohen as **“bigdei lavan”—white garments**—because they were made of white linen. The four unique vestments of the Kohen Gadol are referred to as **“bigdei zahav”—golden garments**—because their fabric was interlaced with gold threads.

Adam HaRishon Was a Kohen Gadol

In this essay, we aim to clarify the teaching of the righteous luminary, the eminent “poseik” known as the Rama—Rabbi Moshe Isserles, zy”a—in his sacred sefer Toras HaOlah. There, he explains the practical significance of all matters related to the Beis HaMikdash—such as the dimensions of the sacred vessels, all of the korbanos that

were offered on weekdays, Shabbasos and Yamim Tovim, etc. In the chapter that deals with the eight garments of the Kohen Gadol (Part 2, Chapter 41), he asserts that all the proceedings and details of the Mikdash are based on the secret of the renewal of the world and its continued existence—a process performed by Hashem daily. The service performed by the kohanim in the Beis HaMikdash in their holy vestments reflect on the past and the present. Their unique garments illustrate what transpired with Adam HaRishon at the time of the creation of the world. In relation to the rest of the populace, he was comparable to a Kohen Gadol in comparison to the rest of the kohanim.

This is why the Kohen Gadol wore special garments. They relate to that which was said concerning Adam and his wife (Bereishis 3, 21): **”ויעש ה' לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור: וילבישם”**—**and Hashem (G-d) made for Adam and his wife garments of “ohr,” and He clothed them.** According to the Midrash, Hashem clothed them in the garments of the Kohen Gadol. This assertion is borne out by the translation of Onkelos there. Seeing as the Kohen Gadol corresponds to Adam HaRishon, he is commanded to be superior to his brothers in beauty, strength, wealth and appearance, since Adam was created in the image of G-d. (This concludes the excerpt from Toras HaOlah).

The source for the notion that Adam HaRishon was a Kohen Gadol is found in the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 4,8). To summarize the Midrash, it says: **Adam HaRishon was the firstborn of the world. When he offered his korban, he wore the garments of a Kohen Gadol. They were prestigious garments and were worn by the firstborn (that followed). When Adam died, he passed them on to Sheis; Sheis passed them on to Metushelach; Metushelach passed them on to Noach; Noach passed them on to Shem. Shem died and passed them on to Avraham. When Avraham died, he passed them on to Yitzchak; Yitzchak passed them on to Yaakov. Although Yaakov was not a firstborn, he took the birthright from Eisav by deception. Yaakov did not ask Eisav to sell him the birthright for naught; Yaakov wanted to offer a korban and could not, because he was not a firstborn.**

After Adam and Chava sinned and were expelled from Gan Eden, it says: **“Hashem G-d made for Adam**

and his wife garments of “ohr,” and He clothed them. According to the Midrash, Hashem made them the eight garments of the Kohen Gadol. The passuk includes Chava in the kedushah associated with these garments. Rabeinu Bachayei (Bereishis 3, 21) cites this Midrash and adds a nice allusion: **We know that there were eight priestly garments; similarly, in the passuk: ויעש ה' אלקים לאדם—there are eight words.** In a similar vein, the Ba'al HaTurim writes (ibid.) that the term **”וילבישם”** appears twice in Scriptures—here and with regards to Aharon's garments. This teaches us that HKB”H made Adam HaRishon **“bigdei kehunah”**—priestly garments. And the eight words in this passuk correspond to the eight priestly garments.

The Eight Bigdei Kehunah Correspond to the Prohibition to Eat from the Eitz HaDa'as and the Seven Mitzvos Bnei Noach

Let us now return to what the Rama writes in Toras HaOlah (Chapter 42). He explains that the eight priestly garments HKB”H clothed Adam HaRishon in correspond to the eight mitzvos that Adam HaRishon was commanded—namely, the prohibition not to partake from the Eitz HaDa'as and the seven mitzvos Bnei Noach. He writes that Adam was given these eight mitzvos before he sinned. After performing teshuvah and fulfilling these mitzvos, he was clothed in the eight garments of the Kohen Gadol. Then he explains why the seven Noahide laws are associated with **“bnei Noach”** and not with **“bnei Adam.”** It is because Adam was given eight mitzvos; however, only seven remained for future generations. Hence, since they could not be associated with Adam, they were associated with Noach, who was the first father after the mabul.

Notwithstanding, we must clarify one of the points made by the Rama. He asserts that HKB”H clothed Adam HaRishon in the eight **“bigdei kehunah,”** to attest to the fact that he had performed teshuvah and observed all eight of the mitzvos that he had been commanded to observe. This is problematic, because he could no longer observe the prohibition not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as, because he had been expelled from Gan Eden and was prevented from

returning there by the keruvim. So, there was no way he could eat from the forbidden tree even if he chose to. Thus, it is difficult to contend that he observed all eight mitzvos.

Let us propose an explanation for the Rama's assertion. We learn in the Gemara (ibid. 86b) that if one performs teshuvah motivated by ahavah, his intentional transgressions are transformed into positive deeds and merits. Since Adam HaRishon perform teshuvah from ahavah, it is considered as if he never sinned with the Eitz HaDa'as; for, as explained, the sin was transformed into a mitzvah. Nevertheless, HKB"H did not allow him to return to Gan Edan and did not repeal the death decree out of concern that he might not withstand future persuasions and ruses of the primeval serpent.

We will now return to the remarks of the Rama. He explains how the eight garments of the Kohen Gadol were for glory and splendor. He relies on the elucidation in the Gemara (B.K. 38a) related to the passuk (Chabakuk 3, 6): "עמד וימדד ארץ כנען ויבאר גוים"—**He stood and measured out the land; He looked and dispersed nations.** HKB"H saw that the nations of the world failed to observe the seven mitzvos Bnei Noach; so, he released them of the obligation. Thus, they would not be rewarded for them as those who fulfill a commandment but only as those who are not commanded to do so. In this manner, the Rama explains the significance of the Kohen Gadol wearing the eight garments worn by Adam HaRishon:

Therefore, the kohen wore these eight garments. In other words, to attest to the fact that they (Yisrael) observe these eight mitzvos which Adam was commanded to observe. Thus, Yisrael are remembered for good and the nations for bad before the Almighty. This is the significance of that with is said (Shemos 28, 30): "Aharon shall bear the names of Bnei Yisrael" for remembrance. For, the mitzvos that Yisrael observe are remembered through these garments.

The Tzitz with the Holy Name Corresponds to the Cheit Eitz HaDa'as

As a servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish the chiddush of the Rama. He taught us that

Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, wore the eight garments worn by Adam HaRishon, who was also a Kohen Gadol. They represented the eight mitzvos that Adam HaRishon was commanded to observe. Now, we know from the teachings of our master, the Arizal, in Sha'ar HaGilgulim (Introduction 23), that all of the neshamos were contained in the being of Adam HaRishon when he ate from the Eitz HaDa'as. Therefore, the death decree was imposed on everyone. Therefore, since then, every Jew is obliged to make amends for his part in the sin of partaking from the Eitz HaDa'as.

Thus, it appears that the "tzitz," which had the holy name engraved upon it, corresponded to the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," the first sin committed in the world. This is the significance of the passuk in our parsha (ibid. 36): "ועשית ציץ זהב טהור ופתחת עליו פיתוחי חותם קודש לה'... והיה על מצח אהרן ונשא אהרן את עון הקדשים אשר יקדישו בני ישראל לכל מתנת קדשיהם והיה על מצחו תמיד לרצון להם לפני ה'." **You shall make a "tzitz" of pure gold, and you shall engrave upon it, like the engraving of a signet: "Holy to Hashem" . . . It shall be on Aharon's forehead, and Aharon shall bear the sin of that which is holy that Bnei Yisrael consecrate for any gifts of their holy offerings; and it shall be on his forehead always for appeasement for them before Hashem.** They expounded in the Gemara (Shabbas 12a): "והיה על מצחו תמיד, שלא יסיח דעתו ממנו"—**"it shall be on his forehead always,"** teaches **that he should not divert his attention from it.** This teaching regarding the "tzitz" specifically refers to **"his da'as"**—as opposed to what transpired with the sin involving the **"Eitz HaDa'as,"** where the serpent diverted the focus of Adam and Chava from HKB"H.

We can substantiate this conclusion with Rabeinu Bachaye's contention that the "tzitz" was superior to all of the seven other garments; for, it represents the divine supervision of the Shechinah over Yisrael with the attribute of "rachamim." Therefore, it is called a **"tzitz,"** in keeping with the passuk (Shir HaShirim 2, 9): "מציץ מן החרכים"—(observing and) **peering through the lattices.** Here is a loose translation of his sacred words:

Now, the "tzitz" was included among the eight priestly vestments ("bigdei kehunah"), although it is not a vestment but rather an ornament. The reason

that Chazal always refer to eight priestly vestments is because they follow the majority; for, the other seven are garments that the Kohen Gadol clothed himself in. Know and understand that they correspond to the seven firmaments . . . And the golden “tzitz” (headplate) that was worn on his head is above all of them and alludes for all of them to the midah of which it is written (Tehillim 45, 14): “The entire glory of the king’s daughter is within, more than in the golden borders of her raiment” . . . For the divine mercy (“rachamim”) watches over Yisrael through her. This is the meaning of the name “tzitz”; it suggests the notion of: “Peering through the lattices.”

In keeping with what we have discussed, we can suggest the following: As a consequence of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the Shechinah abandoned the earth. This is explained in the Midrash (B.R. 19, 7) related to the passuk (Bereishis 3, 8): “וישמעו את קול ה' אלקים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום”—they heard the sound of Hashem Elokim walking in the garden toward the direction of the sun” . . . the word “מההלך” is not written here, but rather “מתהלך”, which implies jumping and ascending. Originally, the Shechinah was primarily in the lower worlds, but when Adam HaRishon sinned, the Shechinah moved to the first heaven. Therefore, to atone for this iniquity and return the Shechinah to earth, it was necessary to wear the “tzitz,” which had the sacred name of Hashem engraved on it. In that merit, HKB”H rested His Shechinah within Yisrael.

According to the Shela HaKadosh Aharon Made Amends for Adam HaRishon

I would now like to present to our esteemed audience a difficulty I have with the explanation of the Rama—that the eight “bigdei kehunah” worn by Adam HaRishon represent the eight mitzvos he was commanded to observe. The Midrash deduced this from the passuk: “ויעש ה' אלקים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבישם”. Rabeinu Bachayei and the Ba’al HaTurim concur, noting that there are eight words in this passuk. The problem, however, is that this passuk appears after Adam and Chava sinned, were expelled from Gan Eden and became aware of their nakedness. That being the case, what is the significance of HKB”H clothing

Adam HaRishon in the eight vestments of the Kohen Gadol specifically after he had sinned? Why not before the sin, while he was still in Gan Eden?

This difficulty is compounded if we consider the well-known teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 36b and Pekudei 229b) that as a consequence of Adam HaRishon’s sin, mankind suffered a tremendous loss. Originally, in Gan Eden, Adam and Chava were clothed in “כתנות אור” with an “aleph”—**tunics of light**. As a result of the sin, however, HKB”H clothed them instead in “כתנות עור” with an “ayin”—**tunics of skin**.

Even more confounding is the teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 58) that the garments HKB”H provided for Adam and Chava were made from the skin of the “nachash hakadmoni”—the primeval serpent. It seems inconceivable that HKB”H would have made vestments of a Kohen Gadol for Adam HaRishon from the skin of the deceitful, evil nachash.

To reconcile these difficulties, I had a wonderful thought. We learn a vital principle from the teachings of the Shela hakadosh (Tetzaveh 1). He asserts that the reason HKB”H commanded Moshe: “**You shall make sacred garments for Aharon, your brother, for glory and for splendor**”—was to atone for Adam HaRishon for the loss of the “**tunics of light**,” which were replaced by “**tunics of skin**.” Aharon wore special vestments to return to mankind the kedushah of “כתנות אור”—**tunics of light**. Here is a synopsis of his illuminating words:

The Mishkan was analogous to the creation of the heavens and the earth; the Mishkan constituted a tikun. Similarly, Aharon was a tikun for Adam HaRishon who strayed. Conversely, of Aharon it is written (Shemos 28, 1): “**Bring Aharon near to you**.” This is the hidden meaning of the passuk (Vayikra 16, 17): “**And no ‘Adam’ should be in the Ohel (Mo’ed)**”; the passuk is alluding to Adam HaRishon, i.e., that someone with his flawed character should not be present in the Sanctuary on that holy occasion.

As a consequence of Adam’s sin, his special, prestigious tunics of light were confiscated, and he was clothed instead

in tunics of skin. Hence, it states (Shemos 28, 40): **“For the sons of Aharon you shall make ‘kutanot’ (tunics).”** It was imperative that they wear garments symbolizing kedushah.

The foreign and mundane (profane) were introduced into Adam by the corruption and perversion of the nachash which requires tikun. In other words, Aharon, the personification of chesed, the pillar of the world, had to be on a separate, higher level. His body had to be holy, and his clothes had to be holy. His garments had to reflect honor and splendor akin to the “tunics of light.” The perversion of the נח”ש was transformed into a positive force, the חש”ן worn over his heart. [Note that חש”ן is an anagram of נח”ש.] The **“choshen”** contained the sacred name and was decorated with twelve stones representing the twelve shevatim and the names of the Avos, because the Avos are the chariot and the twelve shevatim correspond to the twelve permutations of Havaya.

This also explains our sages’ inquiry regarding what Moshe wore while officiating during the seven days of inauguration. They answer that he officiated in a white tunic. In other words, it was not necessary for him to wear “bigdei kehunah,” because he was not an outsider (he did not have alien, improper thoughts). His white tunic symbolized the “tunics of light.” He was pure, simple, holy, and pure. Therefore, he did not require prestigious garments, because he personified glory and honor. (This concludes the synopsis of the Shela hakadosh.)

Aharon Had to Cleanse the Bigdei Kehunah of the Filth of the Nachash

Nevertheless, even with the wonderful insight of the Shela hakadosh, the confounding assertion of the Midrash remains—that HKB”H made Adam HaRishon priestly vestments from the skin of the nachash--“כתנות עור”. Furthermore, how did Aharon HaKohen rectify the mistake and shortcomings of Adam HaRishon and transform the **“tunics of skin”** into **“tunics of light”** by wearing the eight “bigdei kehunah”?

Therefore, I dare to suggest a novel interpretation combining the explanation of the Rama in Toras HaOlah

with the explanation of the Shela hakadosh. We will explain why HKB”H did not clothe Adam HaRishon in the “bigdei kehunah” until after the sin. Let us refer to the following Gemara (Zevachim 88b):

“למה נסמכה פרשת קרבנות לפרשת בגדי כהונה, לומר לך מה קרבנות מכפרין אף בגדי כהונה מכפרין” —

why was the passage of the korbanos juxtaposed to the passage of the “bigdei kehunah”? To teach you that just as the korbanos provide atonement, so do the “bigdei kehunah” provide atonement. The Gemara goes on to explain the atonement provided by each garment: **The “Kestones” atones for murder . . . the trousers atone for immorality . . . the “mitznefes” atones for those who are arrogant . . . the “avneit” atones for improper thoughts . . . the “choshen” atones for miscarriages of justice . . . the “eiphod” atones for idolatry . . . the “me’il” atones for lashon-hara . . . the “tzitz” atones for brazenness.**

Now, let us refer to Rashi’s comment (Bereishis 2, 25): **Even though he (Adam HaRishon) was endowed with the knowledge to assign names, the yetzer hara was not placed in him until he ate from the tree; and it entered his being.** We learn that the yetzer hara entered man’s heart only after the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” So, we can now appreciate why HKB”H only clothed Adam HaRishon in the vestments of the Kohen Gadol after he ate from the Eitz HaDa’as. For, they were designed to atone for the eight sources of aveiros listed above; and he was not vulnerable to them until he was infected with the yetzer hara. While Adam was in Gan Eden prior to the cheit, he was simply clothed in **“tunics of light.”** He did not require the special priestly vestments just like Moshe Rabeinu did not require them during the inauguration of the Mishkan.

Following this line of reasoning, let us elaborate on the passuk: **“ויעש ה' אלקים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבישם”**—**Hashem Elokim made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and he clothed them.** They expounded in the Midrash that HKB”H made eight “bigdei kehunah” for Adam. Now, we learn in the Gemara (Shabbas 146a) that when the nachash seduced Chava to sin with the Eitz HaDa’as, it injected its vileness and perversion into her

and all creatures. At Matan Torah, however, the perversion of the nachash ceased: **”ישראל שעמדו על הר סיני פסקה זוהמתן, עובדי כוכבים שלא עמדו על הר סיני לא פסקה זוהמתן—Yisrael, who stood at Har Sinai, their contamination ceased; the idolaters, who were not present at Har Sinai, their contamination did not cease.**

This enlightens us as to why HKB”H made **“garments of skin”** for Adam, which were the eight priestly vestments. Indeed, we explained that the kedushah of those garments was aimed at protecting and saving him from the eight roots of aveiros which became a threat and a reality for him after being infected with the yetzer hara due to the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” Those “bigdei kehunah,” however, were still tainted by the vileness of the nachash that had infected all of creation. In short, the vestments of the Kohen Gadol that HKB”H fashioned for Adam HaRishon required purging.

Now, Moshe Rabeinu was pure and untainted by the perversion of the nachash. This is evident from the passuk (Shemos 2, 2): **”ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא—she (Yocheved) saw that he was good.** As Rashi explains: **When he (Moshe) was born, the entire house became filled with light.** It was precisely for this reason that HKB”H chose Moshe specifically to deliver the Torah to Yisrael at Har Sinai, where the perversion of the nachash ceased to affect Yisrael. Therefore, HKB”H instructed Moshe: **“You shall make holy garments for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor”**—to repair the inherent flaw of the eight “bigdei kehunah” of Adam HaRishon—the vileness of the nachash that permeated the **”כתנות עור”**. Since Aharon HaKohen, with his extreme kedushah, wore them after Matan Torah, they were a type of **”כתנות אור”** with an **“aleph”**—**garments of light.** Thus, they radiated **glory and splendor.**



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