

## **Clothes Make the Saint, Sometimes (Tetzaveh)**

***I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. -Henry David Thoreau***

From the mists of antiquity there comes a tale. The tale is of a Persian king who inherited some special garments. The king is one that Jewish tradition names Achashverosh. The garments were none other than the robes of the High Priest of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem.

According to Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the Kli Yakar (1550-1619), on Exodus 28:42, Achashverosh wore the garments for a specific purpose. He ties that purpose to an unusual story in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Sabbath 31a). A gentile wished to convert on one condition – that he could wear the garments of the High Priest. What's this obsession with the High Priest's clothing? Why did both Achashverosh and the potential convert seek out the High Priest's garments?

The Talmud explains that the garments of the High Priest had unique properties. They had the power to absolve a host of sins. The Kli Yakar theorizes that both Achashverosh and the potential convert wanted to dress their way out of sin. They both wanted to elevate themselves. They just wanted a shortcut with these magical threads. However, they both ignored the fact that it only works for the High Priest. Only an individual who has reached that elevated level can make use of these special tools. Dressing a certain way might make one think they have reached a specific level, but the Kli Yakar reminds us that there are no shortcuts, and one has to elevate oneself by actions beyond a change of costume.

May we dress in clean, appropriate clothing, with good taste, and without seeking extra magical powers from our wardrobe.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

### *Dedication*

*To all those who've been coming to Israel on missions of support. It is greatly appreciated and impactful.*