

The Weekly Daf



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Week of 12-18 Nissan 5756 / 1-7 April 1996

Zevachim 86-92

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Clothes Help Make the Man

Why did the Torah place the laws of the sacrifices (*Vayikra* 6-7) right next to the sacred garments worn by the *kohanim* (*Vayikra* 8)?

To teach you that just as sacrifices serve as atonement for sin so do the garments of the *kohanim* serve as atonement.

Clothes exercise a disciplinary influence on their wearer. The Hebrew words for clothes and for character traits both stem from *midah*, suggesting a strong relationship between the attire of the soul and that of the body. Since the *kohen* had to be on a high spiritual level in order to perform the sacred service in the sanctuary he was required to wear special garments which would help him control his natural passions.

Our Sages offered a detailed description how each of the eight garments of the *kohanim* atoned - or controlled - another of the human drives. We shall content ourselves with just two examples.

The special hat worn by the *kohen* was to atone for haughtiness. This can best be understood in light of the directive given by our Sages to cover our heads in order to have a sense of awe for our Master. The awareness of a power above stimulated by a head covering is a universal need for all men but is even more important in regard to a *kohen*, requiring him to have a special hat. Since a *Kohen Gadol* had even a higher status of holiness his hat was an even more elaborate one, and he also wore a special plate inscribed with the name of Hashem on his forehead to atone for any trace of brazenness which could arise from even a momentary lapse of awareness that he stood in Hashem's presence.



Zevachim 88b

The Royal Table

The flesh of the sacrifices which the Torah awarded to the *kohanim* may be eaten by them in any manner they choose, boiled or broiled, and with any variety of seasoning. This liberty to select the manner of preparing the food is based on the language used (*Bamidbar* 18:8) by the Torah in regard to these gifts which indicates that they were intended to enhance the status of the *kohanim* who must therefore be privileged to eat them in the manner of kings.

This can be better appreciated when we recall the observation made by our commentaries that in bringing a sacrifice the sinner must view it as a vicarious offering of himself, since he deserves to be destroyed for his wrongdoing but has been spared by the grace of Hashem. A part of this exercise in spiritually and psychologically cleansing himself from the impact of his sin is the awareness that the flesh of the sacrifice will be consumed by the *kohanim* who will pray for his rehabilitation.

It may be suggested that the royal fashion in which the *kohanim* are permitted to eat this flesh facilitates this awareness that he is dependent on these righteous servants of Hashem to pray for the completion of his atonement.

Zevachim 91a

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