

## Parshat Tetzaveh 5777

### The use of Bigdei Kehunah in Megillas Esther

The Bigdei Kehuna (garments worn by the Kohanim when officiating in the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash) referred to in this week's sedra, were worn by King Achashverosh during the first party mentioned in Megillas Esther.

Rashi says that the King actually wore the eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol. But why?

1. The Ein Yaakov (a perush/explanation of Aggadic material in the Talmud) says that Achashverosh wanted to show he was a melech chacham and not an unintelligent leader. It is not hard to see signs of his paranoia in the Megilla. According to this view, he wore those clothes to give him status.
2. The Kli Yakar explains that just as korbonos can give kaporoh (atonement), so can the Bigdei Kehuna; with each garment in some way able to achieve kaporoh for specific aveiros (Zevachim 88b). Since there was no Beis Hamikdash at that time, and since Achashverosh is not remembered as a tzaddik, and according to this view, he wanted to use the clothing to give him a personal kaporoh.
3. Rabbi Yehudah Zoldan (former head of the Bnei Akiva Yeshiva in Ra'anana, and then head of Yeshiva Neveh Dekalim in Gush Katif) basing himself on the Maharal, suggests that Achashverosh was trying to establish Shushan as the capital of the world, as then the Beis

Hamikdash had been destroyed and Yerushalayim was in tatters. By wearing the Bigdei Kehunah, Achashverosh was trying to be like the Kohen Gadol on the world stage.

This explains why all the keilim of the Beis Hamikdash were displayed and used at the party by the King.

This may also explain why he took the idea further by insisting on marrying a besulah (a girl within a specified age range) as Halochoh dictates that the Kohen Gadol can only marry a girl within that age range. In the Megilla we see (Perek 2:12) that Esther would have an audience with the king once a year. The Gra (Vilna Gaon) sees this as a remez (hint) to our neshamas having one special day each year when we have a special audience with Hashem to ask for kaporoh where Hashem is most receptive to such requests (not forgetting that we have to do teshuvah every day!).

So in according with this view, Achashverosh was aiming not for a personal kaporoh, but a universal kaporoh for the whole world with Shushan as the world capital, instead of Yerushalyim.

We celebrate Purim in 14<sup>th</sup> Adar but in a walled city on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Not any walled city, but one which existed at the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun. Why not from the time of Shushan? Because the yesod of Achashverosh's aim in the entire story of the Megilla is to downplay Yerushalayim and establish Shushan as the capital city of the world. We resist this by excluding Shushan from the halachic definition of a walled city for the purpose of celebrating Purim.