

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Acharei

29 Nissan, 5779 – May 4, 2019

Compiled from the works of  
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
Parshas Acharei**

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**Rashi in His Own Words**

ויקרא ט"ז, ד': כְּתוּבָה בְּדֹשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ וּמְכַנְסֵי־בָד יִהְיוּ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּבְאַבְנֵט בֶּדֶל יִהְיֶה וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בֶּדֶל יִצְנָף בְּגֵדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרִתֹץ בְּמַיִם אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשָׁם:

רש"י ד"ה כְּתוּבָה בְּדֹשׁ: מגיד שאינו משמש לפניו בשמונה בגדים שהוא משמש בהם בחוץ, שיש בהם זהב, לפי שאין קטיגור נעשה סניגור, אלא בארבעה, ככהן הדיוט, וכולן של בוך:

**Vayikroh 16:4:** He shall wear a holy linen shirt and linen pants shall be upon his flesh. He shall gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen cap, these are holy garments ...

**Rashi Heading – a linen shirt:** This tells us that he (the Kohen Gadol) does not perform the service inside (in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur) wearing the eight garments with which he performs the service outside (the Holy of Holies) because those (garments) contain gold, and a prosecutor cannot become a defender<sup>1</sup>. Instead, he wears four garments like an ordinary Kohen, all of which are linen.

**Synopsis**

This week we read Parshas Acharei, which begins with a description of the service which was performed in the Tabernacle and the Temple on Yom Kippur<sup>2</sup>. The entire service must be performed by the Kohen Gadol. The Torah specifies the vestments which he must wear while performing this service. The Torah says that<sup>3</sup> “He shall wear a holy linen shirt, and linen pants shall be upon his flesh. He shall gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen cap, these are holy garments ...” Rashi cites the words “linen shirt etc.” He explains that this tells us that in the Holy of Holies, the Kohen Gadol does not wear the special eight vestments which he was commanded to wear the rest of the year. Rather he only wears the four garments which a regular Kohen was commanded to wear, and these were made of linen. He explains that this is because a prosecutor cannot become a defender<sup>4</sup>.

Why does Rashi need to tell us that “he wears four garments?” The Torah enumerates each garment; by simply counting them we know that there are four. Furthermore, why does Rashi need to tell

1. The Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur to atone for all the Jews. Therefore, he may not enter wearing gold, which is reminiscent of the sin of the golden calf.

2. This description begins with our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:1.

3. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:4.

4. For the explanation of this, see footnote 1.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

us that they are all made of linen? While enumerating the garments, the Torah specifies that each one was made of linen.

Rashi needs to explain this in order to understand the answer to a different question. We do understand from the context that the Kohen Gadol does serve with only four garments on Yom Kippur. However, a Kohen who is lacking the proper number of vestments is not permitted to serve in the Bais Hamikdosh. Rashi's explanation that "a prosecutor cannot become a defender" does not explain why the Kohen Gadol was permitted to serve with fewer than eight garments.

In order to answer this question, Rashi specifies that on Yom Kippur in the Holy of Holies the Kohen Gadol "wears four garments like an ordinary Kohen, all of which are linen." He is not wearing four of the eight vestments which he must ordinarily wear. Rather at that time he is serving "like an ordinary Kohen," who is only obligated to wear four garments.

### **Rashi's Explanation**

This Shabbos we read Parshas Acharei. It begins by describing in great detail the service of the High Priest on Yom Kippur<sup>5</sup>. Among other things the Torah tells us which priestly vestments the Kohen Gadol had to wear while performing this service. We are told that<sup>6</sup> "He shall wear a holy linen shirt. Linen pants shall be upon his flesh. He shall gird himself with a linen sash, and wear a linen cap. These are holy garments ..." Rashi cites the words "a linen shirt" and explains as follows. "This tells us that he (the Kohen Gadol) does not perform the service inside (in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur) wearing the eight garments with which he performs the service outside (the Holy of Holies), because those (garments) contain gold, and a prosecutor cannot become a defender<sup>7</sup>. Instead, he wears four garments like an ordinary Kohen, all of which are linen."

The Torah told us earlier of the obligation for a Kohen to wear special garments while performing the service in the Tabernacle or the Bais Hamikdosh. It spelled out in great detail both the commandment to fashion these vestments, as well as the Kohen's obligation to wear them while serving. Moreover, the Torah tells us that if a Kohen serves without wearing these garments, he is liable to a death penalty<sup>8</sup>. What need is there for the Torah to tell us of the garments which were worn by the Kohen Gadol *here*?

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5. See Footnote 2.

6. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:4.

7. For the explanation of this, see footnote 1.

8. Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 28:43.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Therefore, Rashi explains that this verse does not come to command or teach us something new. Rather it teaches us something new about those vestments worn on Yom Kippur by a Kohen Gadol. Throughout the year a regular Kohen wears four garments, while a High Priest wears eight. We indeed know this from before. The Torah is teaching us that on Yom Kippur the order is changed. The service in its entirety is performed by the Kohen Gadol. For every service which he performs within the Holy of Holies he wears only four garments; the same as a regular Kohen throughout the year.

### **Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

This explanation leaves us with a number of difficulties in understanding Rashi. Why does Rashi need to tell us that “he wears four garments?” All one needs to do is to count the number of garments which the verse lists! Furthermore, we need to understand why Rashi adds the words “like an ordinary Kohen?” The Torah taught us that a regular Kohen wears four garments quite some time ago<sup>9</sup>! Additionally, what difference does it make that on Yom Kippur a Kohen Gadol wears the same number of garments as an ordinary Kohen does during the year? Finally, we need to understand why Rashi tells us that “all of them are of linen.” The verse specifies this regarding each garment.

### **The Explanation**

These questions can be understood in the following manner. Rashi is actually answering a different question which arises from this verse. Namely, why does the Torah choose to tell us *here* which garments the Kohen Gadol wore on Yom Kippur. One would think that it should appear in one of two different places. It could either have been written before the Torah told us of the entire service which must be performed on Yom Kippur<sup>10</sup>. Or it could have been written after the Torah finishes telling us the details of the Yom Kippur service which must be performed in the white garments<sup>11</sup>. Why tell us of these garments in the middle of describing the Yom Kippur service?

The verse which tells us of his wearing the four white garments immediately follows the words<sup>12</sup> “with this shall Aharon enter the Holy of Holies; with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.” Therefore, one could have assumed that he *only* wears the four linen garments when he enters to bring the “young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.”

However, from the verses following ours, two things are clear. Firstly, that his burnt offering – the ram for a burnt offering – must be brought while he is wearing the eight garments in which he serves all

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9. Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 28:40-42.

10. In other words, it should be written one verse earlier; our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:3.

11. It could have been written following 16:22.

12. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:3.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

year<sup>13</sup>. There are other services which he must perform before bringing his burnt offering. These include the two goats which are brought as a sin-offering on behalf of the Jewish nation and the incense offering. These are taught *after* our verse. Yet it is clear that these must be brought while wearing the four white garments.

In order to explain this Rashi says that “this tells us that he does not perform the service inside wearing the eight garments with which he performs the service outside.” From a simple reading of the verses we see that the burnt offerings are described immediately before the injunction to wear the four white linen garments. From this it would seem clear that they must be brought while wearing those four garments. Rashi’s comments explain that this is not the case. Our verse tells us that only for those services which are performed *within* the Holy of Holies the Kohen Gadol must wear the four linen garments. For those which are performed *outside* of the Holy of Holies he wears the eight garments he wears all year. The burnt-offerings are brought outside of the Holy of Holies, in the sanctuary<sup>14</sup>. Hence, he wears all eight garments.

In contrast to this, the sprinkling of the goat’s blood and the offering of the incense are performed within the Holy of Holies<sup>15</sup>. He therefore performs those in the four linen garments.

This is also the reason that the Torah tells us of the special vestments for Yom Kippur after saying<sup>16</sup> “With this shall Aharon enter the Holy of Holies, with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.” The Torah is telling us that the change in clothing is not because of Yom Kippur. It is because of Aharon entering the Holy of Holies. He may not enter there with golden clothing.

The law is that a Kohen serving without all of the proper vestments is liable to a death penalty. If so, how can the Kohen Gadol enter with only four garments? He is seemingly in the category of what the Sages call a “Mechusar Begodim – Lacking (the Proper) Vestments.” Rashi’s explanation that “a prosecutor cannot become a defender” would not seem to suffice. That is not a reason to allow a Kohen Gadol to transgress the law!

In order to answer this question Rashi specifies that on Yom Kippur in the Holy of Holies the Kohen Gadol “wears four garments like an ordinary Kohen, all of which are linen.” He is not wearing four of the eight vestments which he must ordinarily wear. Rather at that time he is serving “like an ordinary

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13. See our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:24 and Rashi’s comments there.

14. See the previous footnote.

15. Even a service which is not actually done within is done for the need of that which is done within.

16. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:3.

## THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Kohen,” who is only obligated to wear four garments.

This also explains why Rashi writes that “all of which are linen.” He is not merely pointing out that his clothing does not serve as a prosecutor. He is emphasizing that on Yom Kippur his service is comparable to that of an ordinary Kohen.

### **A Deeper Lesson from Rashi**

Rashi’s comments provide us with a very important lesson in our personal service of Hashem. There are times that a Jew strives to reach the level of<sup>17</sup> “you shall be cleansed of all of your sins before Hashem.” He not only wishes to reach this level himself, but he would like to bring those around him to this level. He would like to bring himself and those surrounding him closer to Hashem, His Torah and His Mitzvos. The first step is that he must go “inside” the Holy of Holies. He must “enter,” serve with the innermost, deepest parts of his soul. It is only with this strength that he will be able to affect another Jew. How can he enter the depth of his soul? He must first take off his own “honor and glory<sup>18</sup>,” his golden clothing. One cannot reach the depths, the innermost intention of Hashem, as long as he is involved with his own “honor and glory.” It is only when he feels like an ordinary Kohen, with simple, white linen clothing rather than vestments of gold, that he can accomplish his goal. It is only then that the pure simplicity of G-d and his soul shine<sup>19</sup>.

This alone entitles him to go “within.” In this manner he accomplishes atonement and purity not for himself alone. Rather, in the words of the Torah<sup>20</sup> “...he shall bring atonement upon himself, his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

*(Adapted from talks given on Shabbos Parshas Acharei 5736)*

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17. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:30.

18. Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 28:2.

19. See Likkutei Torah, Vayikroh beginning with page 28 at the end of side 2. See also Atteres Rosh at length, in the section dealing with Yom Kippur beginning with Chapter 5.

20. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 16:17.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF  
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**IN HONOR OF**

The Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim** and **Aiden Oded** שיחיו **Morris**

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Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M.** and **Chaya Mushka** שיחיו **Morris**

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Chana** bas Rabbi **Avrohom** ע"ה **Winter**

who passed away on Nissan 23, 5774

May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

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**DEDICATED BY HER HUSBAND**

Rabbi **Menachem Mendel** שיחיו **Winter**

\* \* \*

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR FATHER**

Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheh ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

\*

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כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש**

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חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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מרת חנה בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם ע"ה ווינטער

נפטרה ביום אסרו חג פסח ה'תשע"ד

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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**נדפס ע"י בעלה**

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שיחי' ווינטער

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ר' שלום משה בן ר' שלמה מאיר הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטר ש"ק פ' בשלח, י"ג שבט, ה'תשע"ט

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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