

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



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Acharei, Sicha 1

The Verse:

Introducing the Kohen Gadol's Temple service on Yom Kippur, the Torah states:

"He shall wear a holy linen shirt and linen pants shall be upon his flesh, and he shall gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen cap these are holy garments, [and therefore,] he shall immerse himself in water and don them." (Vayikra 16:4)

The Rashi:

Linen shirt — This teaches us that the Kohen Gadol does not perform the service inside [i.e., in the Holy of Holies] wearing the eight garments with which he performs the service outside [the Holy of Holies, for those [garments] contain gold, and a prosecutor cannot become a defender. [I.e., since the Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur to effect atonement for all Israel, he may not enter wearing gold, reminiscent of the golden calf]. Instead, [he wears] four garments, like an ordinary kohen, all of which are [made] of linen.

The Question:

The expression Rashi uses, "This teaches us," implies that Rashi is offering some novel insight that we otherwise would not have been aware of. Yet the verse's plain meaning is that the Kohen Gadol wears these four linen garments when performing the Yom Kippur service. What is Rashi's supposed innovation?

The Explanation:

Rashi is bothered by the placement of this verse about the Kohen Gadol's white garments. We would expect the dress code to be given either before the description of all the Temple services the Kohen Gadol was to perform that day, or after those services have been delineated. Yet the Torah places this verse after the verse introducing the Kohen Gadol's personal sacrifices: "With this shall Aaron enter the Holy: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering." This might imply that the white garments were only to be worn for these two sacrifices.

Yet from the continuation of the chapter it is clear that the Kohen Gadol's burnt

offering was performed with his golden garments, and other sacrifices were performed with his white garments.

Rashi therefore clarifies that the white garments were only worn for the services performed inside the Holy of Holies, and not for those performed outside. This is precisely why this verse was placed after the verse, “With this shall Aaron enter the Holy,” and not at the beginning or end of the chapter, to imply that the white garments are connected to Aharon’s entrance into the Holy of Holies which is the central theme of the Yom Kippur service.

Further Questions:

According to this, the Kohen Gadol does wear his golden, splendid garments on Yom Kippur, but during the most important services he wears simple garments. Why does the Torah detract from the Kohen Gadol’s splendor during these services? Rashi therefore clarifies that the Kohen Gadol wears “four garments, like an ordinary kohen, all of which are [made] of linen.”

Meaning, he is not wearing an incomplete set of Kohen Gadol garments, rather, he is wearing the complete uniform of an ordinary Kohen. The Kohen Gadol’s belt, for example, was made of many different

colored threads, yet for the “inner” services on Yom Kippur, he wears the ordinary Kohen’s garments made “only of linen.”

Thus, he is not wearing a watered down version of his own glorified garments, he is, rather wearing the humble garments of an ordinary Kohen.

Rashi’s opinion here is in opposition to that of the Rambam, who maintains that there are three categories of Priestly garments, the Kohen Gadol’s, the ordinary Kohen, and the white garments of Yom Kippur. According to Rashi, as we have seen, there are only two categories, and on Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol adopts the garments of the ordinary Kohen.

The Lesson:

When a person wants to effect atonement for someone else, and bring them closer to G-d, they need to enter the inner “Holy of Holies,” the innermost recesses of their own soul. But to do this, the person must remove their golden garments and don the simple linen garments of the ordinary Kohen. Only when he sets aside his sense of self importance and adopts the humility and simplicity of the ordinary Kohen, will he be able to bring others close to G-d.
