

He shall remove his garments and don other garments, and he shall remove the ash to the outside of the Camp, to a pure place. (6:4)

For practical purposes, the *Kohen* who cleans the excess ash from the Altar changes his garments. He removes his regular vestments and changes into older, more worn priestly garments. A number of lessons can be derived from this concept. The most notable is that one should appreciate the significance of dressing properly for an occasion. When one greets the king he should prepare himself, donning garments which befit royalty. Hence, when one greets *Shabbos*, or enters a sanctuary, such as a *Shul*, he should dress in clothes that are appropriate to the sanctity of the place and the holiness of the day. All too often, many of us find nothing unseemly about entering a *Shul* dressed in casual clothing or directly after participating in a demanding physical sport. We might even try to "add" something to our attire *l'chvod Shabbos*, to honor *Shabbos*. If we would only accord the same reverence to *devarim she'b'kedushah*, areas of holiness, as we do to secular functions, our whole attitude towards *Yiddishkeit* might be different.

Horav Moshe m'Kubrin explains this *pasuk* homiletically. He applies this *pasuk* to the day when all of us confront our mortality, the *yom ha'missa*, day of death. "*He shall remove his garments*"--a person should always bear in mind the day that he will remove his garments, and "*don other garments*," he will be dressed in *tachrichim*, shrouds, the garments in which deceased are dressed. "*And he shall remove the ash to the outside*"--his soiled body, his earthly container, will be removed and taken to its eternal resting place, the cemetery, "*to a pure place*"--while his *neshamah*, soul, will go before Hashem to give a *din v'cheshbon*, a complete accounting of its sojourn on this world. While we are not suggesting that one should be obsessed with the concept of death, confronting reality might enhance our spiritual well-being. How unfortunate it is that when we give consideration to our mortality, it tends to be late in the closing scenes of the performance we call "life."