

# Tetzaveh

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Purim is the least straightforward holiday of all of them. There are some who treat Purim as a time to let go and have a blast, while others look at it as holy of holies. Some go no further than the *Megillah's* childlike story to understand the holiday's basis, while others see Purim as an intellectual and spiritual rabbit hole that just keeps going deeper and deeper.

One detail about Purim that isn't given enough attention is this:

[The Torah says, "*Moshe brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the base of the mountain*" (*Shemos* 19:17). Rebi Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa said: "The Jewish people actually stood beneath the mountain, and the verse] teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain above them like a barrel, and told them: 'If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial. Rav Acha bar Ya'akov said: "From here [there is] a substantial caveat to [the obligation to fulfill] the Torah. [The Jewish people can claim that they were coerced into accepting the Torah, and it is therefore not binding.]" Rava said: "Even so, they again accepted it willingly in the time of Achashveros, as it says: '*The Jews fulfilled and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them*' (*Esther* 9:27)." (*Shabbos* 88a)

What does Purim have to do with accepting the Torah more willingly?

Many hold that this did not apply to all of Torah. According to *Tosafos*, the Jewish people accepted the Written Law by saying, "*We will do, and we will understand*" (*Shemos* 24:7), for which they were praised. It was the Oral Law they struggled to accept, as has been the case with many breakaway factions over the generations, and required some coercion. It was at Purim, well into the future, that they finally accepted it with a full heart.

The question is, *why*, and why *then*? What was Purim that it inspired such an act of national self-sacrifice, since the topic doesn't even show up anywhere in the entire *Megillah*?

The answer is in this week's *parsha*, though you wouldn't know it to just read it, especially since it has to do with the Menorah, the clothing of the *Kohen Gadol*, and the *Mishkan* in general. Although the world often says that "clothing *makes* the man," this week's *parsha* says that clothing *reveals* the person, the *inner* person.

The body is the vehicle that allows the soul to give expression to its will. But it is limited inasmuch as you live with the body you are born with because of genetics. You can enhance or lessen your body somewhat, but short of actual surgery, it is your body for life.

It is different with clothing. We have more flexibility with what we choose to wear, so in a sense our clothing is more an expression of our souls than our bodies might be. Whatever you buy to wear is a choice you make based upon how influenced you are by your body or soul.

The olive oil of the Menorah was similar with respect to how its inner essence—the oil—was hidden inside the olive like the soul is in the body. This made the Menorah a symbol of our devotion to reveal the hidden essence of the light of God in the world, of which our soul is a part. Once a person does, then they can finally appreciate just how much deeper life is, and can be, once you start looking deeper into reality for essential truths.

Like *Torah Sh'b'al Peh*—the Oral Law. The Oral Law is to the Written Law what the soul is to the body. So when the *Gemora* says that God only made a *bris* with the Jewish People because of the Oral Law, it is because we're not really capable of making a *bris* with God on any other level on any other level of Torah.

That's what Purim showed the Jewish People. They obeyed the Oral Law, but not with a complete heart, which made the rest of the Torah rather perfunctory. The Oral Law may be complex and complicated, but so is a soul, and yet it is the soul that gives us life—*all of it*. After Purim, they understood that they could never really love Torah as much as they could without taking the Oral Law to heart.

How did they learn that? Because they watched God do His thing from behind the scenes. They realized it was God pulling all the strings that led to their miraculous redemption, out of eyesight. They learned that history is just the body, and God is its soul, no matter how Godless it may seem.

But the deeper one goes into *Torah Sh'b'al Peh*, which we call *Pardes*, the more one learns how to see history's "soul," and God where most people are blind to Him. That is how you become elevated above the mundane reality that shackles most of mankind, something the *Mishkan* and its service were meant to instill within us. And it is the only way to defeat Amalek in any generation, which is why "he" has fought

so hard to keep people from it (see my book, Redemption to Redemption: The Very Deep & Intimate Relationship Between Purim and Pesach).

Latest books, Haggadah: "*The Wise Son Says*," and "*Taking It Even Higher: Going Beyond Everyday Reality*." Available through Amazon.com.

I am giving a two-session webinar, *b"H*, called Kabbalah & Redemption. Part 1 was on March 4 and Part 2, on March 11. To register (and see Part 1 uploaded), go to <https://www.shaarnunproductions.org/webinars.html>. Shaarnun Productions, and to gain access to the recorded classes after. For more details, write to [pinchasw@shaarnun.org](mailto:pinchasw@shaarnun.org).

Good Shabbos,  
Pinchas Winston