

Parshas Tetzaveh and Purim
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Most years Parshas Tetzaveh is read on the Shabbos before Purim. Even in leap years it usually works out that Parshas Tetzaveh is read on the Shabbos before Purim Katan. The Kli Yakar makes an interesting connection between this Parsha and Purim.

Much of Parshas Tetzaveh consists of the instructions for making the clothing for the Kohanim to wear when they are doing the avodah, sacrificial service. Chazal tell us that these garments were atonements for specific sins. For example the *kesones*, robe was atonement for bloodshed and the Ephod was atonement for idolatry. The Kli Yakar quotes the well-known incident of the gentile who wanted to be converted on condition that he becomes the Kohen Gadol and be able to wear all of the special garments. Logically, there must have been something more to his motivation than just the glory of the vestments. Clearly, this gentile wanted to convert so that he could wear these garments and receive all the respective atonements associated with each garment.

The Kli Yakar then brings that King Achashverosh wanted all of these same atonements. The Kli Yakar quotes the Gemara in Megillah 12a that states that King Achashverosh wore the clothing of the Kohen Gadol at the banquet which started all the events of the Purim Story. The Gemara deduces this from the fact that the Megilla uses the word *tiferes* when the king was showing off his glory and the clothing of the Kohanim are said to be for honor and *tiferes*. The Kli Yakar then explains that King Achashverosh wanted to achieve the atonements that went with the vestments of the Kohen Gadol. He knew he was deserving of many punishments and thought he could achieve atonement in this manner. Furthermore, King Achashverosh ate at this feast in similar proportions to the korbonos that were brought in the Bais Hamikdash. For example he would consume more food than drinks similar to the proportions of the animals, the *minchah*, flour offerings and the *nesachim*, drink offerings. Similarly, he gave his servants names after our korbonos, as the Gemara

records, to commemorate the korbanos. He felt that he was not repeating Belshazzar's mistake of desecrating the holy items. Belshazzar simply used these items and was died. Achasheverosh felt that if he conducted himself in the manner described, he could somehow be atoned for and be favorable to Hashem and for sure not be punished as Belsazzar was.