

19 Adar II, 5784
March 29, 2024

Parashat Tzav

Parashat Tzav, like much of Sefer Vayikra, discusses many laws of sacrifices and other laws pertaining to the Mishkan and Bet Hamikdash. The obvious question is, why is it important for us, in exile for thousands of years already, to read these portions and to study these laws?

The answers are multifaceted, but perhaps we can focus on one particular point. Our Rabbis tell us, “In Nissan we were redeemed, in Nissan we will be redeemed”. The Jews left Egypt during the present month of Nissan, and this month is an especially auspicious time for redemption. Living in the present uncertain circumstances, we can all feel this a little more than usual as we hope and pray for Mashiah to come speedily.

There’s much more to it, however. The Jews left Egypt in a hurry. So quickly, in fact, was their redemption, they did not have time to even bake bread. One moment they were imprisoned, bound by shackles of slavery, and the next moment, an entire nation free. This is the way Hashem redeems- in the blink of an eye. When we pray to Hashem during a time of need, we are not just praying to be delivered from the problem. We are announcing our trust in Hashem, that the previous moment did not dictate the present moment, and the present moment does not dictate the next moment. A situation can be totally upside down, and a moment later everything is completely different. We can all attest to how our present situation happened so quickly and suddenly. We can use that as a model to realize how fast, even faster, we can be delivered from it.

A familiar custom amongst many during the Seder, is to recite the Passuk, “Misharotam” while acting as if we are leaving Egypt with our sacks on our shoulders. On the night of Pesah, we try to show and visualize as if we ourselves are leaving Egypt. Simply, it’s because had Hashem not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we’d still be there today as slaves. A very bleak outlook. Not even a tiny glimmer of light could be seen by anyone of how the Jewish nation would ever be free, even thousands of years later. And suddenly they were free. Perhaps we can add another point. We show we are leaving because we are saying to Hashem that no matter what or where, we are just like our ancestors. They were taken out in the blink of an eye, and so can we. But not just to the good old ways. Rather, we pray that Hashem bring us back to the way we are meant to be, in Yerushalayim with the Bet Hamikdash.

This is why we read and learn about the sacrifices in such detail. Because we believe that the way we are now does not mean we will be like this in another moment from now. We are declaring our belief in Hashem that these laws may very well be relevant in the very near future.

Shabbat Shalom,
R’ Elnadav