



Parashat Tzav-Parah

20 Adar II 5784 – March 30, 2024

Our entire Parashah informs us of various sacrifices that were performed in the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple). While in our time the Beit HaMikdash is not in operation, and sacrifices are not offered, what can we learn from them?

The purpose of the ideals of the sacrifices was to bring us closer to G-d, and to prepare us to be a “kingdom of priests and a Holy nation.” Prayer is the substitution. It is Parashat Tzav where formal community worship commences.

It is at this juncture that Aharon is specifically mentioned. The earlier chapters were addressed to B’nei Yisrael (The Children of Israel.) This chapter, and the next, are specific to Aharon and his sons. These are instructions only for Kohanim. Aharon is “reinstated” here following the Golden Calf debacle and Moshe’s intervention with G-d.

The burnt offering is to ask G-d for forgiveness for a sin. The meal offering is thanksgiving for the first fruits. The guilt offering is for atonement. The offering of ordination is for the installation of the Kohanim. The well-being offering is for thanksgiving for being saved from a life-threatening event or making a vow while in distress.

Rashi comments that all these intricate details with reference to the sacrifices were carried out by the Kohanim. They did not deviate to the right or the left, not in action or thought.

Parashat Parah

The second of four special Torah readings deals with the red heifer. It is associated with purification and is read just before the month of Nissan. It is to remind those who became ritually impure to purify themselves in time for Passover.

The sacrifice and ashes of the red heifer are not fully understood and will only be fully understood in the time of the Mashiach.

Good Shabbos! See you in Shul!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer