



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA SHMIDMAN



Zeal & Ideal

HAFTORAH: MALACHI 1:1-2:7

Malachi, the last of the prophets, lived during the second Temple era. He describes how during that time period the Jews were lackluster in their bringing of Kabanot. The sacrifices were deficient, the animals were blemished and the people were disinterested in putting time and energy into their relationship with Hashem. The problem was exacerbated by the poor performance of the Kohanim. Their lack of passion and dedication impacted the people and their service.

How could this be, considering that people had only rebuilt the Beit Hamikdash shortly before - how could their religious stamina and enthusiasm have waned? While the second Beit Hamikdash did not measure up to the first Beit Hamikdash in miracles and stature, the expectation for wholehearted worship was the same. So how does a nation find religious zeal in a time of spiritual exhaustion? This is a question we may be asking ourselves as the war continues. How do we hold on to the energy, passion and unity that we have discovered in these last weeks?

Malachi provides insight and inspiration to confront this challenge. He approaches the Kohanim as the leaders who were both responsible for the Temple service and who

set the religious tone for the people. Highlighting values of peace, consistency, honesty and commitment, he empowers them as leaders. Just as he encourages the leadership of his time to strengthen themselves and the people will follow, we too must recognize our capacity as leaders of ourselves, our families and communities to energize and connect to the Torah and Mesorah. The remarkable activation of our people on multiple fronts during these last weeks should give us faith for our nation's future. ■



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