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THE WEISS EDITION

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*Tzav*



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Dare to Prepare

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Cynical is Criminal

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Burning Fats, Fueling Flames

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What does Joyful Judaism Mean?

# *Light points*

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

# *Lightpoints*

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

צו

# Tzav

6:4 | 7:1

וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא  
אֶת הַדָּשָׁן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה

*He shall then take off his garments and put on other garments, and he shall remove the ashes to outside the camp.*

## *Dare to Prepare*

The task of clearing the ashes from the altar was not an actual part of the Temple service; its purpose was simply to create more space for fresh wood on the altar. For this reason the Torah obligates the Kohanim to change into garments of lesser value while removing the ashes, so as not to soil their priestly garments.

Rashi explains, “The clothes worn by a servant while cooking a pot of food for his master, he should not wear when he mixes a glass of wine for his master.” Just as cooking takes place behind the scenes, in preparation for actually serving the meal, clearing the ash was only a *preliminary* task, not on par with the other services in the Temple. Clearly, it would not

be appropriate to wear garments dirtied by this preliminary task when you are actually serving “before the master.”

Interestingly, the chore of clearing the ash from the altar, which *preceded* the actual service in the Temple, required only a different set of clothing, not a different servant. The very same Kohanim who performed the rest of the service would clear the ash too, for as true servants of G-d, their primary concern—and likewise that of every Jew, members of the “kingdom of Kohanim”<sup>1</sup>—was for G-d’s desire to be fulfilled. With that focus, they made no distinction between roles that complete the mitzvah and those that merely *facilitate* its fulfillment, applying themselves to the preparative tasks as to the mitzvah itself.

—*Likkutei Sichos vol. 37, pp. 4-5*

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1. Shemos 19:6.

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 6:6 | 1:1
 

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אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תִּוְקַד עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכָּבֵה

*A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall not be extinguished.*

## *Cynical is Criminal*

The Torah instructs us to maintain a constant fire burning on the Outer Mizbe'ach in the Temple courtyard. According to the Talmud Yerushalmi,<sup>2</sup> the Torah's emphasis that the fire must be "constant" informs us that even if the Kohanim responsible for the fire are in a state of ritual impurity, which would normally disqualify them from serving in the Temple, they are still obligated to maintain the fire on the altar.

The mitzvah to maintain a constant fire on the altar also applies to the spiritual "Mishkan" that the Torah bids each of us to create within ourselves. The altar represents the heart, and the fire symbolizes the passion and excitement that a Jew should feel toward everything G-dly.

Just as the Kohanim must maintain the fire on the altar even if they are ritually impure, we must never allow the G-dly fire burning in our souls to die, no matter how distant we feel from purity and holiness. By keeping that fire alive, we will ultimately purge ourselves of our "impurity." As the Maggid of Mezeritch explains, "A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall not be extinguished': When the fire

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2. Yoma 4:6.

on the altar is constant, the ‘not’ (i.e., all things negative) will be extinguished.”

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, p. 217*

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 6:6 | 1:1
 

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אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תִּוְקַד עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

*A continuous fire shall burn upon the altar.*

## *Burning Fats, Fueling Flames*

In addition to the simple meaning of the verse, instructing us to maintain a constant fire on the altar, the Talmud sees the words “a continuous fire” as an allusion to the fire of the menorah, which is likewise called “a continual lamp.”<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the Talmud extrapolates that the flame used to kindle the Temple menorah must be taken from the fire on the altar.<sup>4</sup>

What is the significance of this requirement?

The light of the menorah symbolizes Torah study, as the verse in Mishlei states, “For a mitzvah is a lamp, and the Torah is light.” Like the continuous burning of the menorah’s flames, a Jew’s obligation to study Torah is constant.

To succeed in Torah study, however, one must be prepared to sacrifice. As the Rambam writes, “He whose heart inspires him to fulfill this mitzvah in a fitting manner and to become crowned with the crown of Torah must remove the desires and pleasures of the times from his heart.”<sup>5</sup> To maintain the level of dedication necessary to succeed in Torah study, one must utterly abandon his pursuit of material pleasure.

This principle is hinted at in the Torah’s requirement that the fire for the menorah be taken from the Outer Mizbe’ach, upon which the blood and fats of the animal sacrifices were

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3. Shemos 27:20.

4. Yoma 45b.

5. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Talmud Torah 3:6–9.

offered. This signifies that we “fuel” the fire of the menorah—our continuous fire of Torah study—when our “blood and fats”—our excitement, passion and delight—are completely “consumed” in the pursuit of G-dliness—the fire of the altar.

—*Reshimas HaMenorah*, pp. 124-125

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 זלא: | 7:31
 

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וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַחֵלֶב הַמְזֻבָּחַ וְהָיָה הַחֵזֶה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו

*The Kohen shall cause the fat to [go up in] smoke on the altar, and the breast shall belong to Aharon and his sons.*

## *What does Joyful Judaism Mean?*

After a sacrifice is slaughtered and some of its blood is sprinkled on the altar, the Kohanim burn the choice fats of the animal on the altar (with the exception of certain sacrifices that are burned in their entirety), and the remaining flesh is eaten. Although eating the sacrificial meat is a mitzvah in its own right, it may not be eaten before the sacrificial parts of the animal have been burned on the altar.

Ramban explains that the objective of the sacrifices is to arouse the individual to offer himself—his inner qualities and character—to G-d.<sup>6</sup> The fats of the animal represent lusciousness and pleasure. Burning the fats on the altar thus symbolizes that we must sacrifice our pursuit of pleasure and delight in order to come close to G-d.

We might assume that this refers only to enjoyment derived from physical delights, meaning that we should not indulge in material gratification. The requirement to sacrifice the fats to G-d even within the context of and *before doing the mitzvah* of eating the sacrificial meat teaches us, however,

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6. Ramban, Vayikra 1:9.

that even within the realm of holiness the “fat” of the mitzvah itself must be consecrated to G-d alone. In order to fulfill the mitzvos and study the Torah properly, we must not taint these holy pursuits with personal gratification.

Of course, we must study Torah and fulfill the mitzvos with joy and excitement. Our delight, however, must not be a product of the physically enjoyable aspects of the mitzvos or even the intellectual stimulation that Torah study provides, but purely from the great merit that we have in fulfilling G-d’s will and studying His wisdom.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, p. 950*



לזכות  
הת' חיים נתן נטע שי'  
לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בשעטו"מ  
ביום י"א ניסן ה'תשפ"ו  
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