

Divine and Human Fire

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Parshat Tzav

The flame kindled upon the Altar is eternal; it will never be extinguished, and the priest shall kindle wood upon it every morning. (Leviticus 6:6,5)

The Talmud (*Eruvin* 63a) declares that a heavenly fire burned continuously on the Altar. Nevertheless, it was incumbent upon the priests to kindle wood on the Altar every day.

Among many Hassidic movements, there is a belief that the Tzaddik, the Rebbe, vitalizes his followers, and it is certainly so. Indeed, in virtually every passionate faith tradition around the world, we find that the passion and devotion of the Master provides inspiration for the spiritual passion of the followers.

But Hassidism teaches that this is only the beginning, not the end. The devotee, the Hassid, must work for his or her own spiritual attainments.

We recall, as we read this verse, that the Tablets of the Law which were carved and written by G*d G*dself were the Tablets which Moses shattered when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf. The second set of Tablets, the ones which Moses carved and engraved at G*d's direction, were the ones which lasted; they had staying power because Moses put himself, his own energy, into them.

Even though a Divine Flame was eternally and continually burning upon the Altar, it was still essential for the priest to kindle wood on the Altar on a daily basis. The Altar, in order to effect atonement, in order to be a place for connecting with G*d, had to have not only G*d-energy but human energy as well.

To our rightful place as *shutafei El*him*, partners with G*d, in bringing about a full awareness and manifestation of our G*d-connection, may we speedily be drawn.

Shabbat Shalom.

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