

Keep a Fire Burning

Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

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Parshat Tzav

It is the burnt offering that must remain on the hearth of the Altar throughout the night and on to morning, so that the fire of the Altar may be kindled from it. (Leviticus 6:2)

One of the Gerer Rebbes interprets this verse to mean that it is the Cohen, the priest, who must remain aflame with the desire to serve G*d; a priest who lacks such passion cannot truly serve.

Since the destruction of the physical Temple in 70 CE, we have graduated from bringing offerings of meat and meal to bringing offerings of ourselves. The Altar remains in every human heart, and, drawing upon the Gerer's teaching, we must attain the absolute passion of the burnt offering in our service of G*d, lest our service be lacking.

Keep a fire burning on the Altar; never let it grow cold. (Leviticus 6:6)

The Altar remains in our hearts, in the heart of every individual, and we are obligated to keep it always aflame, to keep ourselves always aflame. Thus we will be able to serve G*d whole-heartedly and make G*d of ultimate importance in our lives. As our master and teacher Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel declares, "G*d is of no importance unless [G*d] is of supreme importance."

Shabbat Shalom.

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