

CHEVRAH TORAH 5778...Seeking ✧ Spirituality

Shabbat Tsav

LEVITICUS 6:1-6

KEY KOSHI:

WHAT DOES THE KOHANIM'S KEEPING THE EYSH TAMID PERPETUALLY BURNING TEACH US ABOUT HOW WE LIVE OUT/MAKE REAL OUR ✧SPIRITUALITY?

P'SHAT—AWARENESS... The beginning of knowing about God is simply paying attention, being fully present where you are

6:1] The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2] command Aaron and his sons thus: This is the ritual of the burnt offering: The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it. 3] The priest shall dress in linen raiment, with linen breeches next to his body; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. 4] He shall then take off his vestments and put on other vestments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. 5] The fire on the altar shall be kept burning, not to go out: every morning the priest shall feed wood to it, lay out the burnt offering on it, and turn into smoke the fat parts of the offerings of well-being. 6] A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : 2
אֶת־אֲהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת
תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הוּא הָעֹלָה עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ
עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוֹקֵד בּוֹ : 3 וְלִבְשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּו
בִּד וּמְכַנְסֵי־בֶד יִלְבָּשׁ עַל־בָּשָׂרוֹ
וְהָרִים אֶת־הַדָּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאֵשׁ
אֶת־הָעֹלָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׂמוּ אֶצְל
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ : 4 וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְלִבְשׁ
בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַדָּשָׁן
אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מְקוֹם טְהוֹר :
5 וְהָאֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוֹקֵד־בּוֹ לֹא
תִכָּבֶה וּבֵעַר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן עֵצִים בְּבֹקֶר
בְּבֹקֶר וְעָרַף עָלֶיהָ הָעֹלָה וְהִקְטִיר
עָלֶיהָ חֲלָבֵי הַשְּׁלָמִים : 6 אֵשׁ תָּמִיד
תּוֹקֵד עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִכָּבֶה : 8

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvoth, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

REMEZ—UN-SELF-AWARENESS...

v.2 *Command Aaron and his sons saying: This is the ritual of the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned, upon the fire, on the altar, all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept burning on it.*

RASHI... This is the “*torah*”—ritual of the burnt offering. Every time the Hebrew uses ‘*torah*’ its purpose is to teach us additional information not specifically recorded.

ALTER... The literal sense of “*al Moke’dah al HaMizbe’ach*” is place of burning...as if to focus on the idea of a sacred fire that burns perpetually...The word for burnt offering is *Olah*, not derived from the root that means “to burn” but rather from the verb “*to go up*,” which is linked to burning by suggesting the idea that the whole sacrifice goes up in smoke. Fire and blood are the two substances key to the sacrificial rites, but the present passage gives preeminence to the nexus between cult and fire—the element associated with God’s fiery epiphany at Sinai and with His first appearance to Moses in the burning bush. Hence an altar whose “*fire shall not go out.*”

RAMBAN... “*while the fire on the altar is kept going on it.*” That is, it is a commandment for the priests to add enough wood during the day so that it is not used up at night. In my opinion, V.6 is a separate commandment: that the fire shall not be allowed to go out at all. V.5 which says the same thing would then appear to be superfluous, permitting the Sages to interpret it as extending this commandment from the priests to all the people...All share responsibility for keeping up the fire.

CHIZKUNI... “*while the fire on the altar is kept going on it.*” Rather, ‘the fire on the [inner] altar is to be lit from it.’ In other words, one flame gives rise to another, from the outer to the inner...

BACHYA... “*all night until morning.*” Why not simply “*all night?*” R’ SHIMON Bar YOCHAI teaches that the *Olah* is meant to atone for the sins committed in thought but not carried out in deed. Thus we understand that the sacrifice must remain on the altar’s flame, when improper thoughts assail the mind, and see us through to the morning light...

SEFAS EMES... The phrase appears redundant: why “*until morning?*” if we have already said “*all night?*”? This is to teach us that the very admixture of “darkness” in the worshippers heart will itself bring about the “morning.” For this is our order: “*There was evening and there was morning...*”

v.5 *The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, not to go out: every morning the Priest shall feed it wood, lay out the burnt offering...*

RALBAG... “*v’ha-Eysh tukad bo...The fire shall burn on the altar.*” That is, it must burn there and be kindled there; it may not be kindled from down below and brought up to that sacred place.

R’ A.Z. FRIEDMAN... “*tukad Bo--a fire shall be kept burning BO—on it.*” Yet this may also be rendered “*within him.*” Hence the verse may be construed to mean that “*the fire of the altar shall be kept burning within him.*”

That is the zeal of sacrifice is to be kept burning within the priest to whom the command is addressed.

ETZ CHAYIM... The last Hebrew word can be read “*within him*” [instead of “on it.”] This prompted the comment that the fire on the altar must be paralleled by a fire in the heart of the officiating Priest, whose enthusiasm for the sacred nature of the work must never be lost. The congregation, for its part, must recognize its responsibility to see that the dedication and enthusiasm of the clergy is never extinguished.

v.6 *A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out.*

OROT HaKODESH... We are told that one who extinguishes even an ember from the Holy Altar violates the prohibition “*not to go out.*” This is all the more true for the spiritual altar—the Jewish heart.

TORAT MOSHE... In every Jew there flickers a spark of the Divine flame that will never go out.

But the leader—priest, prophet or teacher must feed that little spark with fire...If the Priests do this and kindle the spark in the heart of every Jew, they can be sure that God’s fire on the altar will burn perpetually—“*never to go out.*”

P.PELI... Shabbat was called a day of joy and light. Fire may not be kindled on Shabbat in all your dwellings [Ex 35:3] Yet the “*eysh tamid*” on the altar must be kept aflame even on Shabbat [Jer. TALMUD, Yoma 6:4] It is in the Sanctuary where both the “eternal light” and the “eternal fire” are kept. Both light and fire are gifts from God, and we need them both. The right balance between the light of *chesed* [grace] and the fire of *gevurah* [might] is the secret of a life that is good in God’s eyes...Misuse of fire is likely to destroy and bring the world back to chaos; the right use of fire which is perpetually kept in the Sanctuary and comes from the altar of God’s Presence can bring blessing, warmth and light.

D'RASH—READING BETWEEN THE WORDS...

SeFAS EMES...

“A fire must burn perpetually; it may not go out...” [Lev 6:6]

In the soul of every Jew there lies a hidden point, a place that is aflame with [the love of] God, a fire that cannot be put out. Even though *“it may not go out”* here referring to a prohibition, it is also a promise. Thus, do our Sages say,

“Even though the fire descends from the Heavens, it is a commandment to bring it from a human source.” The same is true of the human soul: there needs to burn within it a fiery longing to connect with the Creator, and this longing must be renewed each day, as we read, *“Every morning the Kohen shall feed it...”* Every person who worships the Holy One may be called a Kohen, and the arousal of love in Israel’s heart is the Service of the Heart, that which takes the place of sacrificial offerings...

When this fiery love is present, any distracting thought that enters the heart is consumed....This is the reason it is written, *“all night until morning.”* The phrase appears redundant. Why, *“until the morning,”* if we already said *“all night.”*?

This is to show that the very admixture of distractions and their accompanying darkness in the worshipper’s heart will itself bring about the *“morning.”*

For such is the order: *“And there was evening, and there was morning...”*

Weekday prepares us for the Sabbath. This world prepares us for the next.

So, too, the struggle in the heart of the one who serves goes on *“all night until morning.”*

Our spiritual exile may be like the night, but the struggle will bring about the dawning of a new morning.

Rabbi ART GREEN...

We long for a perfect approach to the Holy One, one in which there is no distraction, no holding back, no wandering, nothing but the devotion of our love...

But we miss the point.

Our spirituality is all about struggle, an ongoing inner process of transformation.

Indeed, there is the pure fire of love in our hearts, and it is there to help us meet and consume our distractions, all the thoughts that seem such unwelcome guests...But, their presence is the very point...igniting that secret fire which burns within us.

[[The Language of Truth](#) Green, pgs 155-156]

SOD—The SELF of the UNIVERSE... God's "I am" has the psycho-theological force not of dissolving individual selves but of reminding us that we were never individual selves in the first place...Our selfhood endures by virtue of its participation in some greater Self,

R' M.M. SCHNERSON...

The essential implication of the *eysh tamid* is that every Jew constitutes a Sanctuary to God, and even if he learns Torah and fulfills the commandments, if the continual fire is missing, the Divine Presence will not dwell within. For his service is without life, and a trace of that distant golden calf remains. The Jew must bring life, passion, fire to the primary aspects of Jewish existence...

Learning should not be something done merely to discharge an obligation...Torah should penetrate every facet of one's being until he can say: "All my bones proclaim: Who, Adonai, is like You?" [Psalms 35:10]

Service means prayer and this Pirkei Avot says, "Do not regard your prayer as a mechanical task, but as an appeal for grace before the Ever-Present One."

The practice of Chesed cannot be performed merely out of conscientiousness, but must be accompanied by an inner warmth that manifests outwardly to those whose lives are touched.

When the fire burns within...human fire ignites the Fire from heaven, bringing God into the world

[Torah Studies, adapted by R'J.Sacks, pgs 163-164]