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Passed away on 24 Tamuz, 5783

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Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Tzav, 5785

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May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

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Passed away on 9 Cheshvan, 5783
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Reflections of Redemption

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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

The Announcement Of The Redemption

Tzav

18

IGNITING THE SOUL

The activities in the Temple are a metaphor for human conduct. From the apparently superfluous word “continuously” we learn that the menorah is to be lit from the fire on the altar. There is a practical lesson: the eternal fire of the menorah represents an “internal service” – working with one’s self to improve one’s character – while the eternal fire of the altar represents an “external service” – help another Jew, to bring others close to Torah and mitzvos. The “internal flame” must be lit from the “external flame,” because one’s own soul is ignited by igniting the soul of another Jew.

Before discussing the inner meaning of a passage of the Torah – its relevance to our daily Divine service and relationship to our times, the days of Moshiach – we must first understand its simple meaning. Of course, a literal reading often raises practical questions and reveals apparent contradictions. Two verses may seem to require opposite interpretations. But as these questions are reconciled on a fundamental level, the deeper, more mystical meaning emerges.

Thus, when discussing the Temple activities and the sacrifices, we must remember that the details of the Temple are a model for and reflection of the inner structure of the human soul. For this reason, rebuilding the Temple is integral to and a manifestation of Redemption. It indicates the completion of our Divine mission, transforming the world into a dwelling place for G-dliness. Obviously, then, we must not only understand the mystical relationship between the external Temple and our internal soul, but we must internalize the Divine service. We must translate the Temple’s vessels and activities into our own. Rebuilding our inner *Beis Hamikdash*, our inner holy Temple, is the first step toward rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

What was said previously concerning the Redemption receives extra emphasis as we find ourselves in the month of Nissan of this year, "It will be a year of miracles [that] I will show you." And as we said (also in the general letters) regarding the wonders and miracles which occurred this year (close to Purim), an opponent of the Jews was nullified. The victory reached the point that the enemy freed some of the prisoners of war in a fitting manner, as we previously discussed in detail.

And certainly the Holy One, Blessed be He, will continue to reveal wonders and miracles until - and most important - "I will show you miracles" in the true and complete Redemption.

For these wars in that part of the world ("the king of Persia" with the "king of Aram") are one of the signs that the Redemption through our righteous Moshiach is imminent, as stated in *Yalkut Shimoni*.¹ And as it says there, "My children, do not be afraid... the time of your Redemption has arrived" and "the King Moshiach stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash [Holy Temple] and proclaims to them - to Israel - and says, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived!'"

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Tzav, Shabbos HaGadol, 8 Nissan 5751)

1. *Yeshayahu, Remez 499.*

It is not sufficient to arouse the other person, to kindle his or her interest in Judaism and enthusiasm for mitzvos. Rather, the Jewish soul, the outer altar, must burn continuously. It must be an “*aish tamid*,” an eternal flame. We must continuously put ourselves to the test, go through the difficulties to continuously elevate our fellow Jew and thereby the world around us. Then will our Torah knowledge be perpetual, as the prophet declares, “The whole world will be filled with knowledge of G-dliness.”

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 17:50-56)

One such activity, described in this week’s Torah reading, is the lighting of the fire upon the altar. Regarding the outer altar where the sacrifices were brought, G-d instructs Moses: “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not be extinguished. The priest shall kindle wood on it every morning. He shall arrange the burnt offering on it and burn the choicest parts of the peace-offerings. A fire shall be kept burning continuously on the altar. It shall not be extinguished.”

At first glance, the word “continuously” seems superfluous. If the fire is to be kept burning and not be extinguished, of course it will burn “perpetually.” Since in the Torah every word counts, there must be a reason for an apparently unnecessary word. Of course, the explanation has to be consistent with the intent and context of the passage. As Rashi is the foremost exponent of the plain meaning of the text, it’s worthwhile to consider his comment: “The fire regarding which it is stated ‘perpetually’ is the one with which they kindle the lamps [of the menorah] , for it is stated regarding it, ‘to kindle the perpetual lamp.’ This fire too should be ignited from the fire on the outer altar.”

The word for ‘perpetually’ or ‘continuously’ in Hebrew is *tamid*. The perpetual or eternal lamp in the synagogue, the *ner tamid*, is a reminder of the menorah, the *ner tamid* or eternal lamp, of the Temple. So from this one word we can derive a very practical law regarding the Temple service: The menorah is called a *ner tamid*, an eternal lamp. The fire on the altar is called an *aish tamid*, an eternal fire. The flame of both the menorah and the altar is described as “*tamid*” – perpetual and continuous. There is no superfluous word. The “continuous fire” alludes to the “eternal lamp.” The “*aish tamid*” mentioned here invokes the “*ner tamid*” mentioned earlier. From this juxtaposition and allusion, we learn an important principle: the menorah is to be lit from the fire on the altar.

There is another critical factor: The Tabernacle consisted of two parts, an outer area housing the large altar for sacrifices and an inner area housing the incense altar, the menorah and the table for the so-called showbread. This means that the menorah, which belonged to the inner, more sacred area, had to be lit from the altar, which stood in the outer, more common area.

What is the lesson, the inner significance? Why must the eternal fire of the menorah, an “internal service,” be lit from the eternal fire of the altar, an “external service”?

What applies to the Temple service applies to a person’s individual Divine service. There is an inner service, a working with one’s self to improve one’s character – the *middos* – to become more observant, more spiritually sensitive, more truly learned in Torah. There is also an outer service, that which is done to help another Jew, to bring others close to Torah and mitzvos. The outer service includes the effect we have on the external world. In the process of transforming the world into a dwelling place for G-dliness, every Jew influences his environment, elevating the non-Jews as well. As every Jew could bring a sacrifice (the outer service) – and will again, imminently, bring sacrifices to the Third Temple, with the coming of Moshiach – so too every Jew has a responsibility and the strength to purify his part of the world.

This latter, outer service parallels the sacrifices brought on the outer altar. Precisely there were brought the sacrifices of every Jew. This contrasts with the inner, incense altar. Only the kohanim could enter the inner area, where the incense altar and menorah were located.

The comparison can be more precise: There is an obligation to learn Torah, to elevate one’s self through absorbing, and being absorbed in, G-d’s Wisdom. This is the concept behind lighting the menorah. As it says in Proverbs, “For a mitzvah is a candle, and

Torah is light.” The kindling of the “*ner tamid*,” the eternal light of the menorah in the Temple, represents the continuous connection of the Jew with G-d through Torah.

A Torah scholar might argue that he is too busy with learning to be concerned with someone on the “outside.” Worldly matters belong in the outer courtyard, while he is occupied with concerns of the menorah, secluded in the inner sanctum.

A Jew, no matter how learned, how wise, how holy, must never separate himself from another Jew. He may not isolate himself in his learning while another Jew waits on the altar, waits to have his soul kindled. This is the lesson of the law of kindling the menorah. For the menorah is kindled precisely from the external altar. Of course the “inner altar,” the spiritual self-improvement of a Jew, is important. But that does not kindle the light of the menorah.

The light of Torah is sustained – is a “*ner tamid*,” an eternal lamp, only when the fire on the outer altar is already lit, already an “*aish tamid*,” an eternal flame. Since the menorah must be lit from the altar’s fire, that fire must have an inherent and a prior connection with the menorah.

A Jew who wishes to “enlighten” himself, to ignite himself spiritually and intellectually, must first concern himself with a Jew who is “outside.” He must make sure that that Jew is aflame with Torah, that that Jew is alight, since “the candle of G-d is the soul of man.” By arousing another Jew, by igniting his Jewish soul, the scholar can kindle his own Torah, so to speak. The “candle of G-d,” the Jewish soul, kindles the “light of Torah.”

The directive is not limited to scholars or rabbis. Indeed, if Torah itself is vouchsafed only to the Jew who kindles the “candle of G-d,” then regardless of our status or level of learning, we must first make sure the Jewish soul standing “outside” is aflame.