

And the fire of the Altar should be kept aflame on it. (6:2)

The commentators interpret this *pasuk* homiletically. “And the fire of the Altar shall be kept aflame on it.” One in whom the fire/passion to serve the Almighty burns within him should be careful to see to it that it remains *bo*, “within him” – not externally, to hurt others. In other words, one should go to great strides to see to it that his religious observance does not impinge on others. An observant Jew should be especially sensitive to the feelings of those around him. They quote the passage in the *Talmud Succah* 28a, which notes that Yonasan *ben* Uziel, the student of Hillel *HaZakein*, the Elder, was so passionate and fervent about his Torah study, that when he studied Torah, a bird that would fly over him would immediately be emolliated.

The question is asked: If this is the great devotion to Torah study evinced by Yonasan *ben* Uziel – the student – what was the level of his revered *Rebbe* – Hillel *HaZakein*? Certainly, it was even more elevated, and perhaps more extreme. The **Sefas Emes** explains that Hillel *HaZakein*’s level of Torah study was so exalted, that if a bird flew over him, it would not become burned! Hillel *HaZakein*’s fire burnt *bo*, “internally, within him.”

The greatness of a person is determined by his ability not to cause any pain or discomfort – either physical or emotional – to anyone who comes within his proximity. If one’s *frumkeit* negatively affects others, his religious observance is sorely lacking. In the apartment of **Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl**, author of the *Michtav M’Eliyahu*, there was a container of air freshener displayed prominently on the kitchen counter. It created a stir, since the students who had occasion to visit the *Mashgiach* could not fathom the need for such a utensil in their *Rebbe*’s home. Once, on *Purim*, when everyone was in an alcoholic-induced stupor, such that their courage was emboldened, one of the students sprayed some freshener and asked, “What *brachah*, blessing, does one recite on this?” *Rav* Dessler immediately countered, “I think that it states explicitly in *halachah* that one does not recite a blessing over something which does not belong to him.” The subject was closed, and it remained that way.

Sometime later, after the passing of the *Rebbetzin*, the mystery was solved. Only then was it discovered that, every two weeks, a man came to pick up the couple’s laundry to be washed. Being a true scion of the famous *Kelmer mussar* movement, of character refinement, the *Rebbetzin* would not allow another Jew to be compelled to smell the unseemly odor of dirty laundry. She would spray the soiled laundry with air freshener to spare the man this indignity. This was a prime example of internalized *frumkeit*.