

Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the Olah/Elevation-offering. (6:2)

In previous exhortations concerning the *korbanos*, offerings, the *mitzvah* was introduced either with the word *daber*, speak, or *amarta*, say. Why does the Torah use the more emphatic term, *tzav*, command, regarding the *Korban Olah*, Elevation/Burnt offering? *Chazal* explain that the more emphatic term is used here to urge the *Kohanim* to be especially zealous in performing this service; and to ensure that this enjoinder be repeated and emphasized constantly throughout future generations. Rabbi Shimon adds that this exhortation is especially relevant to those commandments that involve a monetary loss, such as the *Korban Olah* from which the *Kohanim* received none of the meat. The entire animal is burnt, leaving nothing for the owner or the *Kohen*. *Maharal* explains that for the *Kohen* this was especially taxing, since the meat he received from the *korbanos* was his livelihood. Although he received the hide of the *Korban Olah*, this was hardly sufficient to compensate for his loss. Other commentators suggest that the financial loss applies to other offerings and aspects of the Temple Service.

We will focus not on the actual emphasis, but on the need to place this emphasis – almost ritualistically – for the future generations. Once it was mentioned that emphasis be placed on the *Kohen's* alacrity to serve (see *Rashi* 6:2), it goes without saying that this exhortation is not a one-time command, but part of the future process of offering the *Korban Olah*. The commentators explain that everything novel inspires one to go out of his way in carrying out the command diligently, with vigor and alacrity. After all, it is the first time, and he is excited. This is especially true if he derives personal pleasure as a fringe benefit. Satisfaction, pleasure, and financial remuneration are all powerful motivators. As time goes on and the activity loses much of its allure, the fringe benefits diminish and he becomes accustomed to it. Thus, the inspiration he has received from the activity slowly dissipates and, finally, becomes non-existent. The *Korban Olah* presents a special challenge to the *Kohen*. It is a *mitzvah* that is *l'doros*, for all generations. It involves *chisaron kis*, monetary loss. There are no fringe benefits that might encourage a more favorable attitude toward the service. In other words, this *mitzvah* needs special encouragement.

One might think that the enjoinder to have the fire burn on the *Mizbayach* applies to the *korban*. No, the Torah is speaking to the *Kohen* – exhorting him to maintain his fervor, his passion, his “fire,” so that the original *hislahavus*, enthusiasm/passion with which he began his service, continues on throughout the generations. The joy inherent in serving the Almighty should accompany him throughout his lifetime of service. Indeed, it is an intrinsic component of the *mitzvah* – without which the *mitzvah* is nothing more than a tepid, sterile act of observance. The *Kohanim* are reminded of this, so that the joy continues constantly.

The *Chafetz Chaim*, *zi*, had occasion to be in Lida. The entire Jewish community turned out to hear words of Torah and *mussar*, admonition, from the venerable sage. The *Chafetz Chaim* related the following incident, with its accompanying lesson: “Once, I went to the *mikveh* in my city, Radin, and

noticed, to my chagrin that the water was quite cold. I turned to the attendant in charge of the *mikveh* and asked, 'Why is the water cold?'

He explained that he had no clue: 'I did what I always do. I took the water from the large cooking pot and poured all of it into the *mikveh*.'" The *Chafetz Chaim* went over to the pot to check the temperature of the water. When he discovered that the water in the pot was barely lukewarm, he said, "Now I understand why the water from the pot was unable to heat the *mikveh*! In order to heat the cold water of the *mikveh*, the water from the pot must be burning hot."

The *Chafetz Chaim* stopped for a moment and gazed into the faces of those assembled before him. "*Eis tzarah hee l'Yaakov*, 'It is a time of trouble for (the people of) Yaakov.' Many of our brethren have alienated themselves from the heritage of their fathers. They have distanced themselves from the Torah and have become cold to its *mitzvos*. It is our responsibility to bring them back, to warm their hearts and souls, so that they return to the warmth of Torah. There is, however, one problem: One cannot heat up a cold heart with a dispassionate soul. It is only when **our** hearts are aflame with religious fervor, with a burning passion for Torah and *mitzvos*, that we will be able to transfer our flame to them and ignite their dormant feelings for *Yiddishkeit*."

As long as the Jewish heart beats, it is never too late. The embers have cooled; some have even turned into ashes, but there is an inner spark. The *neshamah*, soul, which is a *chelek Elokah mi'Maal*, a part of the Divine Above, continues to burn, regardless of its surroundings. That flame is eternal and can always be stoked into a powerful blaze. One may never give up on any Jew – regardless of his/her background or previous deeds.