

# TORAH AND FIRE

by Community Contributor

"A fire that is permanent shall be kept burning on the Altar; it may not be extinguished."

*Chazal* compare *Torah* to fire. The *posuk* says that the fire needed to be תָּמִיד, *permanent*. Therefore, "*Torah* study is one of the four activities which require strengthening." As *Rashi* explains, "A person should strengthen himself in this תָּמִיד, *constantly*, with all his energy."

*Korbanos* were brought onto the Altar. What does the word *Korban* mean? Rabbi Jonathan Gewirtz says that the Hebrew word *Korban* means, 'that which brings close.' It is a joyful term because it signifies that we have substances available to help us attain our spiritual goals...

Rav Chayim of Volozhin states the following:

"... Whoever learns *Torah* is considered as though he had offered to *Hashem* all the *korbanos* in the world... *Torah* study is more important than bringing the daily *korbanos*. One who learns *Torah* needs no *korbanos* and burnt offerings, for *Torah* study is better than everything. The *korbanos* have ceased, but the *Torah* has not ceased. Therefore, since *korbanos* can no longer be brought, one should devote himself to *Torah* study; it will be even more beneficial than *korbanos*."

Just like the fire on the *Altar* was not allowed to be extinguished, so too, if one wants to insure that what has he learned is securely embedded into his memory, he must review it many times over. As *Rashi* says, "One is constantly reviewing his learning. You must keep your learning safe in your innards [i.e. have it well memorized], so as not to forget..." Likewise, the *Yalkut Shimoni* states, "*Torah* does not become part of a person unless he devotes himself to it totally."

Avos D'Rabbi Nassan states, "A person can learn *Torah* for ten years and yet forget it all in just two. How is that possible? If a person sits idly for six months without review, he will begin to say of that which is impure that it is pure and vice versa. After twelve months without review, he will switch the names of the *chachomim* with one to another. After eighteen months without review, he will forget entire sections. After twenty-four months without review, he will forget entire *mesechtos*. [After reaching this state] he will eventually sit silently and be inactive..."

Simply put, learning *Torah* requires commitment. *Torah* isn't something that one only learns when it's convenient for him. Avos tells us, "Do not say, 'When I have free time I will learn,' because you may not have free time."

For instance, the *Ramban* says there is a positive *mitzvah* that the *Kohanim* must place enough wood

on the fire to keep it burning at all times, including the entire night. So too, one should be more meticulous about studying *Torah* at night than about doing so in the daytime. As the *Gemara* states, "Night was only created for the purpose of *Torah* study."

The most important part of learning or reviewing *Torah* is enthusiasm. When Aharon HaKohein would light the *menorah* every day in the *Mishkan*; the *posuk* emphasizes that "Aharon did as was commanded." Rav Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter says, "Aharon lit the Menorah, day in and day out, with the same degree of fresh enthusiasm. The same task always appeared in his eyes as new and it never became a matter of routine with him. Now that's truly deserving of praise!"

With Hashem's help, by making it our *task* to constantly review what we learn, may we develop deeper insights into His Torah!

This article is dedicated:

In memory of *Eliyahu ben Mordechai, Mashah Tzivyah bas R' Shlomo Zalman, Altah Soshah Devorah bas Aryeh Leibush, Chaim ben Shmuel Efraim Zalman, Tuvyah Shlomo ben Naftali Tzvi HaKohein, Esther Perel bas R' Shlomo, Miriam bas Zelig Shaul, Menachem ben Shimon, Menachem ben Zev, Sarah bas HaRav Yisroel, Yosef ben Moshe HaLevi, Yisroel ben Yeshayah, Elisheva Basyah bas Yechiel Ephraim* and all the other departed souls of our nation.

For the complete recovery of *Chayah Malka bas Bas-Sheva*, among the other sick ones of our nation.

To view this article with footnotes, go to <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/63320>. For comments or feedback, please email [sreviewch@gmail.com](mailto:sreviewch@gmail.com).