

KEEP THE FLAME ALIGHT

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

"The fire upon the altar shall be kindled upon it, never extinguished, and the priest shall place wood upon it every morning, and he shall arrange the elevation offering upon it, and he shall burn the fats of the peace offering. A permanent fire shall be kindled upon the altar; it shall never be extinguished." [6:5-6]

In Jewish sources, a connection is frequently drawn between the Altar in the Temple, and the altar we build within ourselves. The Toras Moshe interprets the verses above along these lines. Within the soul of every Jew, there is a spark of Judaism. "The candle of G-d is the human soul." [Proverbs 20:27] Even if it remains only a small spark, it is never extinguished. All that we must do, in order to bring the spark to full blaze, is to feed the fire with words of inspiration every day.

This will affect both our desire to perform the mitzvos between man and G-d, Jewish rituals, as well as our interpersonal behavior, the mitzvos "between man and man." These are reflected in the elevation offering, which is given entirely to G-d, and, of course, the peace offering, which in this context indicates peace between human beings. If those able to fan the flames make the appropriate efforts, then the sparks which lie within other Jews will burst alight as well. Those who do so, concludes the Toras Moshe, can rest assured that the eternal flame will never be extinguished!

Good Shabbos,
Rabbi Yaakov Menken

This class is dedicated in loving memory of Alisa Flatow, Chana Michal bat Shmuel Mordechai v'Rashka, z"l, Hy"d, who died on 10 Nissan 5755 from injuries received in a terrorist attack near Kfar Darom.