

Kindert Torah

Parashas Tzav

בס"ד

מוקדש לע"נ רבקה בת אברהם ישראל ע"ה

We're Serving Hashem

"Class, let us begin our study of the *Parashas Ha'shavuah*. I have a question for you. Who has ever helped clean up the ashes after a bonfire?"

Several boys raise their hands.

"Please tell us about it Avi."

"It was very messy. The ashes were black and stuck to my skin and clothes. I was dirty from head to toe."

"Would you call this a high level job, Avi?"

"Not at all, Rebbe."

"Would you wear nice clothes for this job, Avi?"

"Never, Rebbe."

"Very good, Avi. I have another question for the class. Which *avodah* (service) is mentioned in the beginning of the *parasha* (Vayikra 6:3)?"

"Cleaning the ashes of the *korbonos* (sacrifices) from the *mizbeach* (altar)."

"Very good Chaim. What did the Kohen wear when he performed this *avodah*?"

"*Bigdei Kehuna* (the Priestly Garments)."

"Excellent, Chezikie. Let me ask you another question, class. Why would the Kohen wear his holiest clothes - the *Bigdei Kehuna* - when cleaning up ashes?"

The class was quiet.

"This is not my question, class. Rabbeinu Bechaye discusses the subject. He points out that the *haramas hadeshen* (clearing the ashes) was the simplest *avodah* in the Mishkan. Even so, Hashem commanded the Kohen to wear the *Bigdei Kehuna* when performing this *avodah*. Why? To glorify the mitzvah. Rabbeinu Bechaye learns two important lessons from this mitzvah. Who knows what they are?"

"To glorify our *Avodas Hashem*."

"Fantastic, Nochum. Any mitzvah or service to Hashem that we perform must be done with the utmost care and honor to the One Who commands us."

"To humble ourselves before the Almighty."

"Perfect, Moishie. We must be prepared to perform even the simplest work for Hashem. That is why it is called *Avodah*. Because we are His *avodim* (servants). There can be no servant without a Master, and no Master without a servant. One does not precede the other; rather they come into existence at the same time. When we lower ourselves to serve Him in any way that is necessary, we become His servants and He becomes our Master."

"The Rabbeinu Bechaye is saying that sometimes must do things which appear very small. However, we must still glorify them by giving them our best. In that way we humble ourselves, and bring splendor to our Creator."

"Tzviki, you've got it right. May you always be a faithful *Eved Hashem*."
"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

"Who is going to help with the dishes, the laundry, the floors, and the gardening?"

No one answers. "These are mitzvos of preparing for Shabbos and helping your parents." Still no answer. Imma begins humming a little tune. "I'm serving Hashem with simcha and a lev tov (good heart)!" She begins folding clothes, taking great care to do a very good job. Abba joins in the tune, as he cleans the garden.

"I'm serving Hashem with simcha and a lev tov!" One by one the children begin to join in. "I want to Serve Hashem!"

"Please wash these dishes, Yossie." "I want to Serve Hashem!" "Sweep the floor with simcha and a lev tov Chani." Soon the whole house is humming with Hashem's happy children, serving Him. "Everyone, please make sure that you do the best job you can, to glorify your mitzvos." "Of course we will, Abba. After all, we're serving Hashem!"



Keep the Fire Burning

"Come, Avi. We're going to burn the *chometz* now."

"Wait for me, Abba."

"Hurry, Avi. It's getting late."

Avi quickly puts on his coat. He and his father go to the vacant lot where they find many people burning their *chometz*. They approach one fire.

"Let's burn our *chometz* over here, Abba."

"There are only embers here, Avi. We need a stronger fire for our *chometz*. Let's add some wood."

Avi and his father find some scrap wood, add it to the coals, and before long the flames are blazing.

"We kept that fire burning, Abba, just like in the *Beis HaMikdash*."

"What do you mean, Avi?"

"This week's *parasha*, Abba, includes the mitzvah of keeping the fire constantly burning on the *Mizbeach* (altar) (Vayikra 6:6). The Kohanim were commanded to place wood on the *Mizbeach* every morning and evening to keep the fire burning."

"Excellent, Avi."

"Abba, in the *Beis HaMikdash*, the miraculous fire came down from Heaven to consume the *korbonos*. Hashem did not need the wood of the Kohanim to keep the fire burning."

"Avi, you are warming up to a very deep subject here. The *Sefer HaChinuch* (Mitzvah 132) elaborates on one of the foundations of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Hashem sent down blessing to the entire world via the *Beis HaMikdash*. By fulfilling the mitzvah of the fire, the Kohanim brought blessing to all worldly fire."

"Which fire needs blessing, Abba?"

"That is another hot subject, Avi. The Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah) relates that everything is composed of four basic elements - fire, wind, water, and earth. The 'fire' in a person is the life force that keeps him going. The body is warm. We need that *bracha* in our bodily fire to keep us alive."

"Abba, that is fascinating. What about the *neshama* (soul)? What element is it composed of?"

"The *neshama* is a different element. It is from Hashem in Heaven. When a person passes away, it goes back up to Heaven. The body stays here and decomposes back to the four elements."

"Abba, you have kindled my interest in this subject. I want to keep my soul fired up, as well as my body."

"In what way Avi?"

"By having real enthusiasm for Torah and mitzvos. To do them with a burning desire."

"Avi, may your *'aish tomid'* for mitzvos never be extinguished."

Kinderlach . . .

How do you sit down to learn Torah? With great enthusiasm? Rav Gifter zt"l's love for Torah was described as a fire. How do you pray? With all of your heart? How do you help people? With a smile on your face? *Kinderlach*, get fired up about Torah and mitzvos. Kindle your soul with a flame that will never go out.

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