

Shmos

Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the Priest of Midian, when he led the flock to pasture and came to the mountain of G-d unto Choreb. There an Angel of G-d appeared unto him in the heart of the fire, out of the midst of the thornbush; he looked and lo' the bush burned with fire and the thornbush was not consumed.

We see here that Choreb is already called the mountain of G-d, for at the time when this was written, the revelation of Torah had already taken place at Matan Torah. It is thus significant that the very *Aschalta D'geula*, the commencement of the redemption, started at Choreb known as Mount Sinai, at the future birthplace of Torah. As *Chazal* tell us, "The only true free man is he who is immersed in the study of Torah." Therefore it was made clear, at the outset, that the whole object of the redemption was to lead them to Choreb and here to dedicate them as the people of the Torah.

The fact also that the phenomenon of the fire was in the center of the thornbush, so that the bush was not surrounded and consumed, was to signify that the Torah is an *Aish Dos*, a fire taking the form of law. We see the same to be true at Matan Torah, that G-dliness always appears to us on earth in the form of fire, as is written in Parshas Yisro: "and Mount Sinai was full of smoke because G-d had descended upon it in fire." Torah, like fire, contains the power and purposes of fire, to penetrate our hearts and souls, to refine and purify us, and to warm and sustain us. We, on our part, must fuel this fire by sacrificing our very being as a *Lechem Eeshay LaShem*, to G-d, so we may maintain His G-dliness here on earth.

The lesson of the Burning Bush is that there is no place too humble to be a resting place for G-dliness. No one person or home is too lowly or humble that G-dliness cannot be found there. The maintenance of this G-dliness can only be accomplished with the

study of Torah, at least one hour a day, each one according to his ability.

Further on the Parsha states when Moses approached the Burning Bush: "Step not hither, but take off your shoes, for the place thou stands upon is a holy place." Taking off one's shoes expresses one's desire to give himself entirely to the meaning of the place, and to let nothing come between him and the desired purpose. The Gemara (Zevachim 24a) states that the *Ritzpoh Mekadeshes*, the floor of the Temple sanctifies. Therefore the Cohanim had to go barefoot in the *Mikdosh* for this express purpose, that nothing intervene between the Cohain and *Kedusha*. If the Cohain wished to identify with and serve in the *Mikdosh*, he had to identify himself directly with it and become part of it. Thus he had to remove his shoes and go barefoot.

Limud Hatorah also requires this attachment and identification of the *Lamdan* to the Torah. There can be no intermediary, only direct contact. One can donate all kinds of monies to Yeshivos and support Talmidei Chachomim, but he has not discharged his obligation until he immerses himself directly in the Torah itself.