

To All My Dear Friends and Relatives-
Parashat TZAV- Shabbat Zachor, 5774, 2014
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

We read in our parasha that the first task of the day for the Kohanim- was to remove the ashes from the offering sacrificed on the previous day (6:3). What is the significance to this being the first order of business to start the day ?

R' Shimshon Rafael Hirsch suggests that this mandate serves as a constant reminder that service of the new day is connected to the service of the previous day. It was the ashes from the remains of yesterday's sacrifice that had to be removed. Teaching us, that even as we move forward in time and deal with new situations and conditions it is crucial to remember that all that is being done is anchored in a past, steeped with religious significance and commitment.

I would suggest another thought that I heard from Rabbi Avi Weiss. The Kohen begins the day by removing the ashes to demonstrate the importance of his remaining involved with even mundane matters. Very often, those who rise to important lofty positions, separate themselves from the people and withdraw from the everyday menial tasks. The Torah, through the laws of *Terumat HaDeshen*- insists that it should not be this way.

A simple, but beautiful story reflects this point. Several years ago a husband and wife appeared before Rabbi Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, asking him to rule on a family dispute. The husband is a member of Rabbi Gifter's Kollel (an all day advanced Torah learning program) felt that as one who was studying Torah almost all day and night it was beneath his dignity and dignity of the Torah, to take out the garbage. His wife felt that no mundane earthly matter should be considered beneath the dignity of Torah. Rabbi Gifter concluded that while the husband should in fact help the wife he had no halachic grounds to force the husband to remove the refuse.

The next morning, before the early minyan services, the Rosh Yeshiva knocked at the door of the young couple. Startled, the young man asked Rabbi Gifter in. "No", responded Rabbi Gifter, "I have not come to socialize but to take out your garbage. You may believe it's beneath your dignity, but I'm telling you, it's not beneath mine".

Parenthetically, it's not beneath the dignity of anyone to pick up stray papers from the floor of a shul, or straighten out the shelves of Chumashim and Siddurim. Not only is that suggested but it's even a Mitzvah of Kavod Bet HaKnesset.