

FIRE - אש

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to learn about *fire* as it is used and applied in the Torah. I would like to understand fire.



[HaShem](hashem.html)’s word [teaches](teacher.html) us a great deal about fire. It is used in [sacrifices](korbanot.html), in the judgment of the [wicked](wicked.html), and in the vindication of the righteous. Fire is the means by which [HaShem](hashem.html) will renew the earth ([the *new* earth](new.html)).

Fire isoften used to describe Divine revelation. This will help us to understand why fire is present when [HaShem](hashem.html), His Torah, and His [Mashiach](mashiach.html) are communicating. As we explore this idea, we need to note that there are underlying reasons why fire is used as opposed to some other medium, for Divine communication. To begin this [study](study.html) we need to understand what the Torah [teaches](teacher.html) about [HaShem](hashem.html) and fire.

# I. [HaShem](hashem.html) is a consuming fire

Our sages have a general rule: In order to ascertain a word’s importance [one](one.html) must retreat to its [first](one.html) appearance in the Torah and examine it in its original context. The context of the [first](one.html) use of a word in the Torah gives us the word’s essential meaning. The [first](one.html) use of aish - אש, [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word, in the Torah, for *fire* is in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 15:17*** *And it came to pass, that, when the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, and a burning* (aish) *lamp that passed between those pieces. 18 In the same day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, saying, Unto thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

This [first](one.html) use of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for fire (aish אש) [teaches](teacher.html) us that it’s essence is related to [HaShem](hashem.html), who used the fire to communicate His presence and His [desire](needs.html) to make a unilateral [covenant](covenant.html) with [Avraham](avraham.html).

The Torah indicates that, not only does fire represent [HaShem](hashem.html), but that in some way [HaShem](hashem.html) is fire:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:24*** *For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 12:29*** *For our* [*God*](conundrum.html) *is a consuming fire.*

Throughout the scriptures we will find that [HaShem](hashem.html) is *fire*. He is not spirit (air), He is not [dust](rock.html) (man), He is not water (Torah). [HaShem](hashem.html) is *FIRE*! Many folks believe that [HaShem](hashem.html) is spirit (air). This faulty understanding comes from a casual reading of this pasuk:

***Yochanan (John) 4:24*** *God a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.*

This [sod](sod.html) level passage is translated in a way that could easily confuse those that were not well grounded in Torah. To help clarify this passage, I have removed the words that were added by the translators, but which are not in the Greek original. The translators wrote: “[God](conundrum.html) *is* a Spirit”. The italicized word “is”, is not part of the original, it was added by the translators. This would not confuse those who are well grounded in the Torah because they would already understand that [HaShem](hashem.html) is fire. They would also view all of the [Masorah](mishna1.html) of Yochanan as [sod](sod.html), and would look for the symbols, not the [peshat](remez.html). The bottom line: [HaShem](hashem.html) is a consuming fire!

[HaShem](hashem.html) used a different kind of fire to represent His presence when He [spoke](mashal.html) to Moshe:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 3:1-3*** *Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-*[*law*](law.html)*, the* [*priest*](priests.html) *of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to* [*Horeb*](stages.html)*, the* [*mountain of God*](temple.html)*. There the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up.”*

[HaShem](hashem.html) appears to Moshe in the midst of fire! [HaShem](hashem.html) used the fire to communicate His presence and to attract Moshe’s attention. Notice that as [HaShem](hashem.html) meets the righteous that the flame does not consume. This same phenomenon of fire that does not consume, happened every day for [forty](forty.html) years, to drive home a similar lesson to the [Benei Yisrael](gen-jew.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 13:21*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *went before them by day in a pillar of a* [*cloud*](important.html)*, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

In this unusual display [HaShem](hashem.html) is relating to the day as a [cloud](important.html) and to the night as fire.

In this next passage [HaShem](hashem.html) is going to again appear as fire [coming](coming.html) down on [Mount Sinai](stages.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 19:14-18*** *After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they* [*washed their clothes*](forty.html)*. Then he said to the people, “Prepare yourselves for the* [*third*](three.html) *day. Abstain from* [*sexual relations*](marriageact.html)*.” On the morning of the* [*third*](three.html) *day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick* [*cloud*](important.html) *over the mountain, and a very loud* [*trumpet*](shofar.html) *blast. Everyone in the* [*camp*](stages.html) *trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the* [*camp*](stages.html) *to meet with God, and they stood at the* [*foot*](heel.html) *of the mountain. Mount* [*Sinai*](stages.html) *was covered with smoke, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, the whole mountain trembled violently,*

When [HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html) out of the fire it was literally “[face](body.html) to [face](body.html)”:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:2-5***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God made a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with us at Horeb. It was not with our* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made this* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to you* [*face*](body.html) *to* [*face*](body.html) *out of the fire on the mountain. (At that* [*time*](time.html) *I stood between* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and you to declare to you the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:*

This appearance of [HaShem](hashem.html) was unusual in that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s people saw [HaShem](hashem.html) as fire and lived!

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:31-36*** *For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with your* [*forefathers*](fathers.html)*, which he confirmed to them by oath. Ask now about the former days, long before your* [*time*](time.html)*, from the day God* [*created*](bara.html) *man on the earth; ask from* [*one*](one.html) *end of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself* [*one nation out of another*](one.html)[*nation*](nations.html)*, by testings, by miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html) *and wonders, by war, by a mighty* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and an outstretched arm, or by great and* [*awesome*](awesome.html) *deeds, like all the things* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God did for you in Egypt before your very* [*eyes*](body.html)*? You were shown these things so that you might* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is God; besides him there is no other. From* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 9:10-11***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *gave me* [*two*](two.html) *stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the* [*day of the assembly*](shavuot.html)*. At the end of the* [*forty*](forty.html) *days and* [*forty*](forty.html) *nights,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *gave me the* [*two*](two.html) *stone tablets, the tablets of the* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:10-18*** *Remember the day you stood before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God at* [*Horeb*](stages.html)*, when he said to me, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may* [*teach*](teacher.html) *them to their children.” You came near and stood at the* [*foot*](heel.html) *of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, with black clouds and deep darkness. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, the* [*Ten*](ten.html)[*Commandments*](cmds613.html)*, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on* [*two*](two.html) *stone tablets. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *directed me at that* [*time*](time.html) *to* [*teach*](teacher.html) *you the decrees and* [*laws*](law.html) *you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *to possess. You saw no form of any kind the day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to you at* [*Horeb*](stages.html) *out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, So that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an* [*idol*](idolatry.html)*, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, Or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, Or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below.*

I wonder if this means that [HaShem](hashem.html) will be like fire to those who do not keep the [commandments](cmds613.html)? This idea is reinforced in a related passage:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 24:13-18*** *Then Moses set out with Yehoshua (Joshua) his aide, and Moses went up on the* [*mountain of God*](temple.html)*. He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.” When Moses went up on the mountain, the* [*cloud*](important.html) *covered it, And the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *settled on* [*Mount Sinai*](stages.html)*. For* [*six*](six.html) *days the* [*cloud*](important.html) *covered the mountain, and on the* [*seventh day*](seven.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *called to Moses from within the* [*cloud*](important.html)*. To the* [*Israelites*](gen-jew.html) *the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the* [*cloud*](important.html) *as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain* [*forty*](forty.html) *days and* [*forty*](forty.html) *nights.*

and:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:18-22*** *You deserted the* [*Rock*](rock.html)*, who fathered you; you forgot the God who* [*gave you birth*](birth.html)*.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. “I will* [*hide my face*](body.html) *from them,” he said, “and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse* [*generation*](toldot.html)*, children who are unfaithful. They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a* [*nation*](nations.html) *that has no understanding. For a fire has been kindled by my wrath,* [*one*](one.html) *that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains.*

[HaShem](hashem.html)’s presence over the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) was like a [cloud](important.html) by day and like fire in the [cloud](important.html) by night:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 40:34-38*** *Then the* [*cloud*](important.html) *covered the* [*Tent of Meeting*](mikdash.html)*, and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *filled the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the* [*cloud*](important.html) *had settled upon it, and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *filled the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*. In all the* [*travels of the Israelites*](stages.html)*, whenever the* [*cloud*](important.html) *lifted from above the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*, they would set out; But if the* [*cloud*](important.html) *did not lift, they did not set out--until the day it lifted. So the* [*cloud*](important.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *was over the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *by day, and fire was in the* [*cloud*](important.html) *by night, in the sight of all the* [*house of Israel*](israelja.html) *during* [*all their travels*](stages.html)*.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) demonstrated His presence when he kept the menorah burning for [eight](eight.html) days during the Maccabeans [Chanukah](chanukah.html). This same kind of miracle was evident in the burning of the western lamp of the menorah, during [Temple](temple.html) times.

***Menachoth 86b*** *Without the veil of the testimony in the tent of meeting. It is a testimony to mankind that the Divine Presence rests in* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*. For how can you say He is in need of light, when the whole of the* [*forty*](forty.html) *years that the Israelites travelled in the wilderness they travelled only by His light! But it is a testimony to mankind that the Divine Presence rests in Israel. What is the testimony? Rab said, It was the western lamp [of the candlestick] into which the same quantity of oil was poured as into the others, yet he kindled the others from it and ended with it.*

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) tells us that when [HaShem](hashem.html) was pleased with the actions of His [nation](nations.html), [one](one.html) of the [seven](seven.html) lamps of the Menorah would miraculously burn for [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) hours, instead of the normal [twelve](twelve.html) hours, in order to demonstrate that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Divine Presence [dwelled](http://www.betemunah.org/dwelling.html) among His people. The fire of the Menorah would make clear to all that the figurative “fire of [HaShem](hashem.html)” rested with His people. Similarly, the incessant burning of the Menorah after the victory against the Greeks was meant to demonstrate that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s presence, that [dwelled](dwelling.html) with the [Jews](gen-jew.html), brought about the victory.

In this next passage [two](two.html) righteous men got a little too close to [HaShem](hashem.html).

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 9:22 - 10:2*** *Then Aaron lifted his* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the* [*sin offering*](sin.html)*, the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and the fellowship* [*offering*](korbanot)*, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into the* [*Tent of Meeting*](temple.html)*. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and consumed the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown. Aaron’s sons Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*; and they offered unauthorized fire before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, contrary to his* [*command*](cmds613.html)*. So fire came out from the presence of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and consumed them, and they died before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

Nadav and Avihu were consumed by a fire that entered through the [nose](body.html). Since the soul entered the [body](body.html) through the [nose](body.html). Thus Nadav’s and Avihu’s [souls](connection.html) were burned and their [bodies](body.html) were left perfectly intact. [HaShem](hashem.html) is fire and [one](one.html) who brings his soul closer than it can handle gets devoured by this mighty blaze.

Here we again see the consuming fire:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 11:1-3*** *Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of* [*the camp*](stages.html)*. When the people* [*cried*](mashal.html) *out to Moses, he* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and the fire died down. So that place was called Taberah, because fire from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had burned among them.*

The ones on the outskirts of the [camp](stages.html) are those who are weak in their relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html) and deficient in their [study of Torah](study.html). They were righteous men who were prone to question the judgments of [HaShem](hashem.html).

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:28-35*** *Then Moses said, “This is how you will* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: If these men die a natural death and* [*experience*](experience.html) *only what usually happens to men, then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has not sent me. But if* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *brings about something totally* [*new*](new.html)*, and the* [*earth opens its mouth*](body.html) *and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will* [*know*](daat.html) *that these men have treated* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *with contempt.” As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart And the earth opened its* [*mouth*](body.html) *and swallowed them, with their* [*households*](househld.html) *and all* [*Korah’s*](qorach.html) *men and all their possessions. They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the* [*community*](community.html)*. At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, “The earth is going to swallow us too!” And fire came out from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and consumed the 250 men who were* [*offering*](korbanot) *the* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) will consume with fire those who transgress, while protecting the righteous from the destructive part:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 9:1-5*** *Hear, O Israel. You are now about to cross the* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *to go in and dispossess* [*nations*](nations.html) *greater and stronger than you, with large* [*cities*](city.html) *that have walls up to the sky. The people are strong and tall--Anakites! You* [*know*](daat.html) *about them and have heard it said: “Who can stand up against the Anakites?” But be assured today that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God is the* [*one*](one.html) *who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has promised you. After* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the* [*wickedness*](wicked.html) *of these* [*nations*](nations.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the* [*wickedness*](wicked.html) *of these* [*nations*](nations.html)*,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, to* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*,* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*.*

The anger of [HaShem](hashem.html) was also manifested in the fire that consumed those who would molest His Prophet.

***II Melachim (Kings) 1:9-15*** *Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *on the top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’” Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consume you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed the captain and his men. At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’” “If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may fire come down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the fire of God fell from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed him and his fifty men. So the king sent a* [*third*](three.html) *captain with his fifty men. This* [*third*](three.html) *captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! See, fire has fallen from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed the* [*first*](one.html)[*two*](two.html) *captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!” The* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.*

# II. Torah is [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is like fire

The Torah is like fire, as it is written:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 33:2*** *And he said,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came from* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from* [*mount Paran*](stages.html)*, and he came with* [*ten*](ten.html) *thousands of saints: from his right* [*hand*](mashal.html) *went a fiery* [*law*](law.html) *for them.*

***Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 23:29*** *Is not My word like fire.*

***Ta’anith 7a*** *Rabbah b. Hanah said: Why are the words of the Torah likened to fire, as it is said, Is not my word like as fire? saith the Lord?[[1]](#footnote-1) This is to* [*teach*](teacher.html) *you that just as fire does not ignite of itself so too the words of the Torah do not endure with him who* [*studies*](study.html) *alone.*

Just as it is impossible to grasp fire without garments, so is the Torah called fire, that [one](one.html) can not take hold of it without a vessel. Therefore it needed to be clothed in garments and vessels. The Mechilta[[2]](#footnote-2) further expounds that because [HaShem](hashem.html) descended on [Sinai](stages.html) in fire:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 19:18*** *And mount* [*Sinai*](stages.html) *was altogether on a smoke, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

This [teaches](teacher.html) us that the Torah is fire and from fire it was given, and was compared to fire. Like fire, if a person comes close to it, he is burned; if he goes far from it, he is cold; but rather [one](one.html) should warm himself near its brightness. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also equates Torah to fire:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Deuteronomy III:12*** *Resh Lakish said: When Moses wrote the* [*law*](law.html) *he acquired a lustrous appearance. How [did this come about]? Resh Lakish said: The* [*scroll*](letters.html) *that was given to Moses was made of a parchment of white fire, and was written upon with black fire and sealed with fire and was swathed with bands of fire, and whilst he was writing it he dried his pen on his* [*hair*](hair.html)*, and as a result he acquired a lustrous appearance.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Tanchuma, Genesis 1*** *The Torah is written “black fire on white fire.”*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) echoes this understanding:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 84a*** *Said R. Hiya: ‘When the* [*letters*](letters.html) *were engraved upon the* [*two*](two.html) *tablets of stone they were visible on both sides of the tablets. The tablets were of* [*sapphire stone*](staff.html)*, and the* [*letters*](letters.html) *were formed of white fire and covered again with black fire, and were engraved upon both sides.’*

Keep in mind that the [Midrash](orallaw.html) is not to be taken literally. Chazal have suggested several allusions for the black and white fire. [One](one.html) idea is that the black fire is the written Torah and the white fire is the [oral Torah](orallaw.html).

[Mashiach’s](mashiach.html) appearance is like fire:

***Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 1:25-28*** *Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their* [*heads*](body.html) *as they stood with lowered wings. Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a* [*figure like that of a man*](body.html)*. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a* [*rainbow*](noachide.html) *in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of* [*one*](one.html)[*speaking*](mashal.html)*.*

[**Mashiach**](mashiach.html)**’s throne is fire:**

***Daniel 7:9-11*** *“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the* [*hair*](hair.html) *of his* [*head*](body.html) *was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing,* [*coming*](coming.html) *out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him;* [*ten*](ten.html) *thousand times* [*ten*](ten.html) *thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the* [*horn*](shofar.html) *was* [*speaking*](mashal.html)*. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its* [*body*](body.html) *destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.*

Some have suggested that the previous passages [speak](mashal.html) about [HaShem](hashem.html). Those who have [studied](study.html) Torah [know](daat.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) has no [body](body.html) and that he does not have any form. This is a tenet of faith as stated by the Rambam in the Mishneh Torah.

# III. Fire from [heaven](heaven.html)

Fire from [heaven](heaven.html) ([HaShem](hashem.html) sent the fire from the [rock](rock.html)) that consumes the [offering](korbanot) on the altar is a recurring act in the Torah.

It is [first](one.html) displayed in the days of [Adam](adam.html) when Abel brought his [Passover](passover.html) [offering](korbanot) according to the Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: Bereshit (Genesis) 4:3:

*3.* ***And it was at the*** [***end of days***](lastdays.html)***, on the*** [***fourteenth***](fourteen.html) ***of*** [***Nisan***](feasts.html)*, that Kain brought of the produce of the earth,* ***the*** [***seed***](flower.html) ***of cotton (or flax)****, an oblation of* [*first*](one.html) *things before the Lord;* *4. and Habel brought of* ***the firstlings of the flock, and of their fat****; and it was pleasing before the LORD, and He gave (His) countenance to Habel and to his oblation;* *5. but to Kain and to his oblation He gave no countenance. And Kain was angered greatly, and the features of his* [*face*](body.html) *were downcast.*

It is displayed in the days of the Judges when Gideon sought the presence of [HaShem](hashem.html) and requested Divine communication.

***Shoftim (Judges) 6:17-24*** *Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your* [*eyes*](body.html)*, give me a* [*sign*](signs.html) *that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my* [*offering*](korbanot) *and set it before you.” And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, “I will wait until you return.” Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread* [*without yeast*](chametz.html)*. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. The* [*angel*](angels.html) *of God said to him, “Take the meat and the* [*unleavened bread*](chametz.html)*, place them on this* [*rock*](rock.html)*, and pour out the broth.” And Gideon did so. With the tip of the* [*staff*](staff.html) *that was in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *touched the meat and the* [*unleavened bread*](chametz.html)*. Fire flared from the* [*rock*](rock.html)*, consuming the meat and the bread. And the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *disappeared. When Gideon realized that it was the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, he exclaimed, “Ah, Sovereign* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*! I have seen the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*face*](body.html) *to* [*face*](body.html)*!” But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” So Gideon built an altar to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *there and called it* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

When Elijah confronted the [priests](priests.html) of Baal, he requested that [HaShem](hashem.html) manifest His presence and communicate this presence to those who were seeking strange gods. [HaShem](hashem.html) answered Elijah with fire from [heaven](heaven.html):

***I Melachim (Kings) 18:36-39*** *At the* [*time*](time.html) *of* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and* [*prayed*](prayer.html)*: “*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, God of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*,* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and* [*Israel*](israelja.html)*, let it be* [*known*](daat.html) *today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your* [*command*](cmds613.html)*. Answer me,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, answer me, so these people will* [*know*](daat.html) *that you,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” Then the fire of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *fell and burned up the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*--he is God!* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*--he is God!”*

When Moshe finished erecting the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), fire came from [heaven](heaven.html) and consumed the [offering](korbanot), and lit the fire of the altar:

*Vayikra (Leviticus) 9:23-24 And Moses and Aaron went into the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared unto all the people. 24 And there came a fire out from before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and consumed upon the altar the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their* [*faces*](body.html)*.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis III:9*** *R. Samuel b. Ammi said: From the beginning of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*’s* [*creation*](bara.html) *the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, longed to enter into partnership with the mortals. For what will you: if it is a matter of* [*time*](time.html) *reckoning, it should say either* [*one*](one.html)*,* [*two*](two.html)*,* [*three*](three.html)*, or* [*first*](one.html)*, second,* [*third*](three.html)*, but surely not,* [*one*](one.html)*, second,* [*third*](three.html)*! When did the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, repay them? At the erection of the* [*Tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*, as it says, And he that presented his* [*offering*](korbanot) *the* [*first*](one.html) *day (Num. VII, 12), meaning, the* [*first*](one.html) *of the* [*world’s creation*](worlds.html)*, for God said, ‘ It is as though on that day I created My* [*world*](worlds.html)*.’ That day took* [*ten*](ten.html) *crowns: it was the* [*first*](one.html) *of the* [*creation*](bara.html)*,* [*first*](one.html) *in respect of kings, the princes, the* [*priesthood*](priests.html)*, and the Shechinah, (as it says, And let them make Me a* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*, that I may* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *among them (Ex.XXV, 8)); it was* [*first*](one.html) *in respect of blessing, sacrificial service, the prohibition of high places, killing at the north [side of the Altar], and the descending of fire, as it is said, And there came forth fire from before the Lord (Lev. IX, 24).*

On the site where King Solomon would build David’s [Temple](temple.html), fire from [heaven](heaven.html) was manifested even before the [Temple](temple.html) was built.

***I Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 21:22-27*** *David said to him, “Let me have the site of your* [*threshing floor*](ruth.html) *so I can build an altar to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price.” Araunah said to David, “Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the* [*burnt offerings*](offering.html)*, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain* [*offering*](korbanot)*. I will give all this.” But King David replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *what is yours, or* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *a* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *that costs me nothing.” So David paid Araunah* [*six*](six.html) *hundred shekels of gold for the site. David built an altar to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *there and sacrificed* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*s and fellowship offerings. He called on* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *answered him with fire from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *on the altar of* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to the* [*angel*](angels.html)*, and he put his sword back into its sheath.*

When King Solomon finished constructing King David’s [Temple](temple.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) demonstrated His presence and pleasure by consuming the [offering](korbanot) with fire from [heaven](heaven.html).

***II Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 7:1-3*** *When Solomon finished* [*praying*](prayer.html)*, fire came down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and the sacrifices, and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *filled the* [*temple*](temple.html)*. The* [*priests*](priests.html) *could not enter the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *because the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire* [*coming*](coming.html) *down and the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *above the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshipped and gave thanks to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, saying, “He is good; his love endures forever.”*

There is an important component in the story of king Solomon, the fire from [heaven](heaven.html), and [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html). When the people saw that the gates were open, and the fire came down from [heaven](heaven.html) to consume, the [first](one.html) [time](time.html), everything which was placed on he altar, they were filled with an extreme Simcha, joy, and they bowed, and prostrated on the floor of the [Holy Temple](temple.html), and sung, ***for the*** [***first***](one.html)[***time***](time.html) ***ever*** in the Tanach, **the Hallel of** **David** “*Ki Leolam Chasdo*”. Then they stood up, and the music instruments which David had made were playing, and they sang again the Hallel of David “*Ki Leolam Chasdo”.* This [time](time.html) not prostrating but [standing](mashal.html). And here we encounter a [new](new.html) [type](types.html) of the Hallel. It is not said after a miracle of saving from the [hands](fourteen.html) of the enemies, not as a Hallel which accompanies a [mitzva](cmds613.html), not as a song for the [holiday](festival.html), but as a thanksgiving song. For the general goodness of all the good which [HaShem](hashem.html) has done to [Israel](gen-jew.html) and to David. Moreover, that [type](types.html) of the Hallel was said while prostrated, and then while [standing](mashal.html).Hence, the only Hallel which is equal to the Song of the day, where they prostrated themselves on the floor of the [holy Temple](temple.html), was on [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html).

So [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) is [the *birth*](thebirth.html)*day* of the Fire from [heaven](heaven.html) on the altar, which burned, without interruption, for [four](four.html) hundred years.

This fire from [heaven](heaven.html) was also evident during the [time](time.html) of the [Maccabees](chanukah.html). After they cleansed the [Temple](temple.html), rebuilt the altar, and kindled the menorah, [HaShem](hashem.html) again communicated His presence and His pleasure with fire from [heaven](heaven.html). In the book of Maccabees we read as follows:

*II Maccabees 2:1 “And now that our hearts* [*desire*](needs.html) *to celebrate the day of the* [*rededication of the altar*](chanukah.html) *... you shall celebrate it, like the day upon which Nehemiah found the holy fire when he returned to build the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *... For when our* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *were* [*exiled*](galuyot.html)*, the holy* [*Kohanim*](priests.html) *secretly took the fire and hid it ... and it came to pass after many days that the king sent Nehemiah to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *... they could not find the fire, and found only freezing water instead ... and it happened that when they offered God’s* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, he commanded them to sprinkle some of the water on the wood and on the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *which was upon the altar, and they did so. When they had finished, and the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *shone upon the earth and the clouds were scattered, behold a heavenly fire ignited the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, and the entire* [*nation*](nations.html) *surrounding it was astonished, and the* [*Kohanim*](priests.html) *and all the* [*nation*](nations.html) *fell upon their faces ... and the* [*Kohanim*](priests.html) *sang praise and thanks to God.”*

In all of the above cases, the significance of the miracle is that it bears testimony to the fact that the Shechinah [dwells](http://www.betemunah.org/dwelling.html) amongst Israel. The necessity of the [sign](signs.html) comes about as a result of the nature of the Divine Presence in general.

The final place where we see fire from [heaven](heaven.html) is in the destruction of the [wicked](wicked.html) at the battle of Har Megiddo.

***Revelation 20:7-9*** *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the* [*nations*](nations.html) *which are in the* [*four*](four.html) *quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to* [*gather*](gather.html) *them together to battle: the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the* [*camp*](stages.html) *of the saints about, and* [*the beloved city*](city.html)*: and fire came down from God out of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and devoured them.*

**Deception!**

Not all fire from [heaven](heaven.html) comes as communication from [HaShem](hashem.html). For every true thing there is also a counterfeit. Fire from [heaven](heaven.html) is no exception:

***Revelation 13:11-14*** *And I beheld another beast* [*coming*](coming.html) *up out of the earth; and he had* [*two*](two.html) *horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the* [*first*](one.html) *beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *therein to worship the* [*first*](one.html) *beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

Why does [HaShem](hashem.html) allow an imposter to prove himself with a counterfeit [sign](signs.html)? [HaShem](hashem.html) has given man free will. In order to preserve free will, [HaShem](hashem.html) must give us a reason to believe the imposter. Except we be [Talmud](orallaw.html) Torah students, we will be deceived. The only way to avoid being deceived by false [signs](signs.html) we must have Torah [knowledge](knowledge.html) to guide us.

# IV. Fire stories

Fire was created on the night of the [first](one.html) [Sabbath](sabbath.html), by [Adam](adam.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XI:2*** *When the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *sank at the termination of the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*, darkness began to set in.* [*Adam*](adam.html) *was terrified, [thinking,] Surely indeed the darkness shall bruise [E.V. ‘envelop’] me (Ps. CXXXIX, 11): shall he of whom it was written, He shall bruise thy* [*head*](body.html) *(Gen. III, 15), now come to* [*attack*](attacks.html) *me! What did the Lord do for him? He made him find* [*two*](two.html) *flints which he struck against each other; light came forth and he uttered a blessing over it; hence it is written, But the night was light about me--ba’adeni (Ps. loc. cit.), i.e. the night was light in my* [*Eden*](eden.html)  *(be’edni). This agrees with Samuel, for Samuel said: Why do we recite a blessing over a lamp [fire] at the termination of the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*? Because it was then created for the* [*first*](one.html)[*time*](time.html)*. R. Huna in Rab’s* [*name*](name.html)*, and R. Abbahu in R. Johanan’s* [*name*](name.html) *said: At the termination of the* [*Day of Atonement*](kippur.html)*, too, we recite a blessing over it, because the fire rested the whole day.*

[Adam HaRishon](adam.html) created fire after [HaShem](hashem.html) showed him [two](two.html) flints. Later in this paper we will look a little closer at fire and flint.

At havdallah on motzie [Shabbat](sabbath.html) (the beginning of the [first](one.html) or [eighth](eight.html) day), we kindle the havdallah torch. Hence the [first](one.html) [eighth](eight.html) is parallel to the very [first](one.html) day: on the [first](one.html) day [HaShem](hashem.html) created light for the [world](worlds.html), and on the [eighth](eight.html) day [Adam](adam.html) created light and warmth (aish) for the [world](worlds.html). [Adam](adam.html) did not create fire *ex nihilo*. He was simply [taught](teacher.html) how to actualize an already existing potential for fire in the [world](worlds.html).

In this next passage we see a very interesting picture. It is a picture of the preservation of the righteous and the destruction of the [wicked](wicked.html), by fire.

***Daniel 3:19-27*** *Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *heated* [*seven*](seven.html) *times hotter than usual And commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. The king’s* [*command*](cmds613.html) *was so urgent and the* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, And these* [*three*](three.html) *men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his* [*feet*](heel.html) *in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there* [*three*](three.html) *men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, O king.” He said, “Look! I see* [*four*](four.html) *men* [*walking*](walking.html) *around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the* [*fourth*](four.html) *looks like a son of the gods.” Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, And the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their* [*bodies*](body.html)*, nor was a* [*hair*](hair.html) *of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.*

[HaShem](hashem.html)’s enemies were destroyed. [HaShem](hashem.html)’s people were preserved through the fire. This strikes me as an apt picture of the [end of days](lastdays.html) when [HaShem](hashem.html) will [renew the earth with fire](furnace.html). This same fire will [purify](purity.html) the righteous and consume the [wicked](wicked.html).

Even the merkava, the chariot, of [HaShem](hashem.html) depicts the revelation of [HaShem](hashem.html) as [coming](coming.html) from fire:

***Ezekiel 1:4*** *And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great* [*cloud*](important.html)*, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*

[HaShem](hashem.html)’s presence when He gave excellence in communication was manifested by fire:

***II Luqas (Acts) 2:1-4*** *When the day of* [*Pentecost*](shavuot.html) *came, they were all together in* [*one*](one.html) *place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and filled the whole house where they were* [*sitting*](mashal.html)*. They saw what seemed to be* [*tongues*](spirit.html) *of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to* [*speak*](mashal.html) *in other languages as the* [*Spirit*](spirit.html) *enabled them.*

**Man, Woman, and Fire**

The [male and female](male%2Bfemale.html) forces of [creation](bara.html) are represented by the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) *yod* - י and *heh* – ה of the Tetragrammaton (יהוה). This is very closely related to a fascinating Talmudic [teaching](teacher.html): The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for man is ish (איש) while the word for woman is ishah (אשה). If [one](one.html) looks at the words, [one](one.html) sees that the word ish contains a י, while ishah contains a ה. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) says that these are the י and ה of the Tetragrammaton. If the י and ה are removed from ish and ishah, then the remaining [letters](letters.html) of both words spell out aish (אש), the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for *fire*. The fires of [passion that unite man and woman](marriageact.html) are seen as receptacles for the [letters](letters.html) of the Divine [Name](name.html), and hence, for the masculine and feminine elements of the Divine Essence.

Rabbi Akiva[[3]](#footnote-3) [teaches](teacher.html) that if a man and woman are virtuous, the divine presence will abide with them. If not, fire will consume their relationship. Rashi explains that the man (איש) and woman (אשה), each bring part of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [name](name.html) into the [marriage](mashal.html). If they cultivate that Godliness, the י and ה permeate their union. If not, the only thing that remains is אש (fire).

The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[4]](#footnote-4) states that a man and a woman actually partner with [HaShem](hashem.html) when they bear a child. However, if they do not utilize the [world](worlds.html) as a receptacle for spirituality, they are left only with fire. This is the consuming fire of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s anger, as it were. It destroys that which is not used for its true calling.

# V. [HaShem](hashem.html) will test people with fire

All communication is a form of judgment. Therefore, we are not surprised when [HaShem](hashem.html)’s judgments are manifested or communicated by fire:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 19:24-25*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *out of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

A [third](three.html) will be refined by the fire that destroys [two](two.html) thirds.

***Zechariah 13:7-9*** *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *against the little ones. In the whole land,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, “*[*two*](two.html)*-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet* [*one*](one.html)*-*[*third*](three.html) *will be left in it. This* [*third*](three.html) *I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will* [*call on my name*](name.html) *and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is our God.’”*

***Malachi 3:1-4*** *“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the G-d you are seeking will come to his* [*temple*](temple.html)*; the messenger of the* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, whom you* [*desire*](needs.html)*, will come,” says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty. But who can endure the day of his* [*coming*](coming.html)*? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and* [*purifier*](purity.html) *of silver; he will* [*purify*](purity.html) *the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, And the offerings of Judah and* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *will be acceptable to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, as in days gone by, as in former years.*

Resh Lakish tells us, in the [Midrash](orallaw.html)[[5]](#footnote-5), that those who observe the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of the [succah](succoth.html), will be protected from the heat of the blazing [sun](hachama.html) which will consume the [wicked](wicked.html) in the [future](future.html). Moreover, he says that the righteous will derive pleasure from the [sun](hachama.html), as it says:

***Malachi 4:2*** *But for you who revere my* [*name*](name.html)*, the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *of righteousness will rise with healing in its* [*wings*](tzitzith.html)*. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.*

Rashi gives us the same picture from:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 4:1-6*** *In that day* [*seven*](seven.html) *women will take hold of* [*one*](one.html) *man and say, “We will* [*eat*](eating.html) *our own* [*food*](food.html) *and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your* [*name*](name.html)*. Take away our disgrace!” In that day the Branch of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a* [*cloud*](important.html) *of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and* [*rain*](rains.html)*.*

Rashi says that the *storm* which will engulf the [wicked](wicked.html) refers to:

***Daniel 7:9-11*** *“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the* [*hair*](hair.html) *of his* [*head*](body.html) *was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing,* [*coming*](coming.html) *out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him;* [*ten*](ten.html) *thousand times* [*ten*](ten.html) *thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the* [*horn*](shofar.html) *was* [*speaking*](mashal.html)*. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its* [*body*](body.html) *destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.*

***Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 23:19-20*** *See, the storm of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the* [*heads*](body.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. The anger of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his* [*heart*](body.html)*. In days to come you will understand it clearly.*

Rashi goes on to say that the rain refers to:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 11:6*** *On the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot.*

It does not look like the [wicked](wicked.html) will prosper in the end!

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 66:15-17*** *See,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is* [*coming*](coming.html) *with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. “Those who consecrate and* [*purify*](purity.html) *themselves to go into the gardens, following the* [*one*](one.html) *in the midst of those who* [*eat the flesh of pigs*](eating.html) *and rats and other abominable things--they will meet their end together,” declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

The righteous will be [baptized](forty.html) with fire, and it appears to be the same fire that consumes the [wicked](wicked.html).

***Matityahu (Matthew) 3:7-13*** *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees* [*coming*](coming.html) *to where he was* [*baptizing*](forty.html)*, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the* [*coming*](coming.html) *wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *as our* [*father*](fathers.html)*.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*. The ax is already at the root of* [*the trees*](wicked.html)*, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. “I* [*baptize*](forty.html) *you with water for repentance. But after me will come* [*one*](one.html) *who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and he will clear his* [*threshing floor*](ruth.html)*,* [*gathering*](gather.html) *his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Then* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *came from Galilee to the* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *to be baptized by John.*

***I Corinthians 3:9-15*** *For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. By the* [*grace*](grace.html) *God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each* [*one*](one.html) *should be careful how he builds. For no* [*one*](one.html) *can lay any foundation other than the* [*one*](one.html) *already laid, which is* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*HaMashiach*](mashiach.html)*. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be* [*saved*](salvation.html)*, but only as* [*one*](one.html) *escaping through the flames.*

Rabbi Levi [taught](teacher.html) that he who fulfills the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of [succah](succoth.html) in this [world](worlds.html) will be sheltered from the fires of the Day of Judgment[[6]](#footnote-6).

It appears that the fire that refines the righteous will consume the [wicked](wicked.html) and will [renew](furnace.html) the earth:

***II Tzefet (Peter) 3:6-13*** *By these waters also the* [*world*](worlds.html) *of that* [*time*](time.html) *was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this* [*one*](one.html) *thing, dear friends: With* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *a day is like a* [*thousand years*](cycles.html)*, and a thousand years are like a day.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the* [*day of HaShem*](hashem.html) *will come like a thief. The* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives As you look forward to the day of God and speed its* [*coming*](coming.html)*. That day will bring about the destruction of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a* [*new*](new.html)[*heaven*](heaven.html) *and a* [*new earth*](new.html)*, the home of righteousness.*

I have this picture: At the end of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) [millennium](millenium.html); the [wicked](wicked.html) and the righteous are on the earth when the fire storm hits. The righteous are [dwelling](dwelling.html) in their succahs. The [wicked](wicked.html) in their homes. It is the [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html). The [wicked](wicked.html) are burned up like Nebuchadnezzar’s guards. The righteous are joyful in their [succahs](succoth.html) as they are refined, just as Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah were preserved in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar’s [furnace](furnace.html).

There will come a day when the righteous will be cleansed and [purified](purity.html) with fire.

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 4:1-6*** *In that day* [*seven*](seven.html) *women will take hold of* [*one*](one.html) *man and say, “We will* [*eat*](eating.html) *our own* [*food*](food.html) *and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your* [*name*](name.html)*. Take away our disgrace!” In that day the Branch of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a* [*cloud*](important.html) *of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and* [*rain*](rains.html)*.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 43:1-3*** *But now, this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says--he who created you, O* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*, he who formed you, O Israel: “*[*Fear*](fear.html) *not, for I have* [*redeemed*](redemption.html) *you; I have summoned you by* [*name*](name.html)*; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you* [*walk*](walking.html) *through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, your God, the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *of Israel, your* [*Savior*](salvation.html)*; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.*

The final end of the [wicked](wicked.html) is a destination of fire.

***Revelation 21:8*** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Finally, there will come a day when all men and their works will be tested with fire.

***1 Corinthians 3:13*** *Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.*

# VI. Wisdom

We have [two](two.html) forms of comprehension: Wisdom that comes naturally without exertion, and wisdom that comes through exertion. Even though both types of understanding are rooted in the unconscious mind, nevertheless they express [two](two.html) different dimensions of the concealed unconscious. An example of the [two](two.html) is the difference between a white-hot coal and a flint stone. The fire in the coal is hidden, but it exists in the coal. All you need to do is fan the coal and the flame will emerge. In a flint stone no [physical](physical.html) fire exists. Its power remains even if it is immersed in water. However by striking it with force, you can release its spark. Because the fire in the coal has substance, it also is limited and finite: At some point the coal will burn out. By contrast the flint stone, not having a flame of substance, can be struck again and again and continuously release sparks.

The way to tap the unlimited reservoirs of intellectual energy within the “undefined unconscious” is through pressure and force (as [one](one.html) strikes the flint stone), the intellectual exertion applied to comprehend the ideas. The deeper the questions and contradictions, all the more refined and clearer is the resulting comprehension. The more intense the challenge and force applied, the more profound are the ideas that come flowing out of the *hidden essence* .

# VII. Offerings made By fire

In the [Akeida](human.html), fire was used because [Yitzchak](isaac.html) was to become a [burnt offering](korbanot):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:4-8*** *On the* [*third*](three.html) *day* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, “Stay here with the* [*donkey*](chamor.html) *while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *took the wood for the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot) *and placed it on his son* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the* [*two*](two.html) *of them went on together,* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *up and said to his father* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, “Father?” “Yes, my son?”* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *replied. “The fire and wood are here,”* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *said, “but where is the lamb for the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*?”* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *answered, “G-d himself will provide the lamb for the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*, my son.” And the* [*two*](two.html) *of them went on together.*

\* \* \*

As we told you in the beginning of this paper, fire is often used to describe Divine revelation. We have shown the various ways that [HaShem](hashem.html) has communicated through fire. His communication is not always accompanied by a voice, but its message is always clear.

\* \* \*

# VIII. The [future](future.html)

Prophecies are not always visible and especially if you are reading them in English. The line from the prophet Joel that says:

***Yoel (Joel) 3:3*** *I will show wonders in the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and on the earth,* [*Blood*](body.html)*, fire and columns of smoke.*

In English there isn’t too much exciting information, but in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the word used for Column (or Pillar) is תמרות, which is the same root used for the word for a Date Palm, התמר. It is telling us in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) that the shape of the pillar is like that of a Date Palm or, as we are more familiar with, a Mushroom [Cloud](important.html) shape. This is [one](one.html) of the places in Tenach that alludes to nuclear in the [end of days](lastdays.html). It does not tell me specifically when; in other words, Hiroshima and Nagasaki may have already satisfied this prophecy. My point is that a simple statement in the Haggadah could have such an impact and significant meaning in the prophecy of today.

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1. Jer. 23:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Yitro, 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sotah 17a [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kiddushin 30b [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Avodah Zarah 3b [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Pesikta D’Rav Kahana 29 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)