

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

The Altar: The Pintaleh Yid

There were two altars in the Mishkan. Parshas Terumah teaches us about the Copper Altar, upon which animal sacrifices and meal offerings were brought. And Parshas Tetzaveh tells us about the Golden Altar, upon which incense was offered.

The last Mishnah of Tractate Chagiga, which is also the last Mishnah of the Order of Moed, speaks about these two altars. It says that these two altars cannot become impure. What is the reason? According to Rabbi Eliezer, it is "since they are like earth," meaning that the Torah calls them earth, and earth cannot become impure. According to the sages, "since they are [only] coated [with gold and copper],"

meaning that since the coatings of gold and copper are just that - coatings - they are secondary to what is underneath. And being that what is underneath cannot become impure, the coatings don't

become impure either.

Because Hashem is infinite, the Torah, which is His knowledge, is infinite as well. This means that it applies to us at every time and in every place. Just as when the

Torah was given, it applied to every one of us, so, too, it applies to each and every one of us right now, as if it were given today. It also has an infinite number of interpretations, as every one of us has a different Neshama, and we each see the Torah through the lens of our Neshama. We also approach Torah from our own circumstances and our own paradigm.

What is the lesson that we are meant to learn from this teaching, that the two altars cannot become impure?

We are all a small Temple where the Divine Presence wants to reside. Just as the Temple had different vessels in it, so, too, we have different aspects to our makeup- our mind, our thoughts, our emotions, etc.

Sometimes, we can have a mundane or unholy thought; it is also possible to have an inappropriate or sinful thought. In other words, it is possible for one of the person's "vessels" - their mind, thoughts, feelings, etc. - to become impure. When this happens, we have to find a way to make the vessel pure again, that it should be worthy of the status of a Temple vessel, where Hashem could reside once more. How does one go about doing this?

People can be generally divided into two categories. Whether physically or

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spiritually, they are either rich or poor. By the rich, everything is gold, and by the poor, their money is copper.

Every Jew, irrespective of how he or she feels inside or acts on the outside, the essential Jew – the Pintaleh Yid – can never be touched; it can never become impure. And that is the altar of the person, on which we sacrifice the evil inclination and come closer to Hashem. When we connect with the Pintaleh Yid, we become totally pure.

Why do we become totally pure? “Since they are like earth,” and earth cannot become impure. What is the symbolism of earth? The earth is nullified before everyone, as we all tread on it. When we connect with the Pintaleh Yid, we are totally nullified before Hashem, as we say at least three times a day, “And my soul should be like earth before all.” When we are nullified, there is no self; there is only Hashem’s will, which is revealed in the Torah.

“Since they are like earth,” are the words of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus, who was known as Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol (the great), who was greater than all the sages of Israel together, and still, he had no ego, as the Talmud tells us, “He never said anything that he hadn’t heard from his teachers.” He was like earth, nullified before Hashem, and that was the path of service he taught his students to follow. On a deeper level, Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol was at such a high plane that he only saw that everything was the essence of Hashem; he didn’t see the external shell, whether it was gold or copper. He only saw the essence, the earth.

The sages say, “since they are [only] coated [with gold and copper]...” – They are saying that not everyone is at Rabbi Eliezer’s

level. Most of us recognize the exterior, and at times, we will have failings. The wealthy see the gold, and they may be tempted to follow the desires that come with affluence. And the poor, since all they have is copper, may be tempted to do something dishonest to get ahead.

Whether rich or poor, we must realize that the gold and copper are only an exterior shell, which is nothing and nullified to what is underneath, the Pintaleh Yid. Ultimately, we will come to realize this and do Teshuva, and we will merit to see the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

“Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

I live in South Africa and i just want to let you know what a massive impact you make for me and so many people every single week. I always look forward to reading it and it always leaves me with inspiration to keep reaching higher.

Boruch Hashem, I started a chizuk group when the war started with close to 70 members and I have the greatest Zechus of sending your publication to them every week and they all love it.

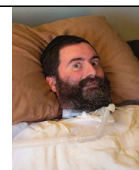
Keep spreading your shining light in the most phenomenal way,

Thank you so much!”

- Anonymous, South Africa

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Despite facing one of life’s most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe’s Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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