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Chagigah Daf 27

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Rabbi Yochanan and Rish Lakish both say: When the Beis HaMikdosh was in existence, the Altar would provide atonement for a person. Now that the Beis HaMikdosh is destroyed, a person’s table atones for him (*through acts of kindness, i.e. inviting guests to his house*). (27a)

The Mishna had stated: All the vessels which were in the Temple were subject to immersion, except the Golden Altar and the Copper Altar because they were likened to earth (*and earth is not susceptible to tumah*). These are Rabbi Eliezer’s words.

The Gemora provides the Scriptural verse that the Altars are like earth. (27a)

The Mishna had stated: All the vessels which were in the Temple were subject to immersion, except the Golden Altar and the Copper Altar because they were likened to earth (*and earth is not susceptible to tumah*). These are Rabbi Eliezer’s words. The Chachamim said: Because they were plated.

It would seem that the Chachamim are in agreement with Rabbi Eliezer that the Altars are

not susceptible to tumah; they are just offering another reason.

The Gemora asks: Isn’t the fact that the Altars were plated a reason why they should acquire tumah?

The Gemora answers: The Chachamim are in fact arguing with Rabbi Eliezer and they maintain that the Altars can acquire tumah because they are plated.

The Gemora offers an alternative answer: The Chachamim were asking Rabbi Eliezer on the necessity for citing a verse proving that the Altars cannot acquire tumah because they are likened to earth. What would be the reason to think that they are susceptible to tumah? If it’s because they are plated and treated as a metal utensil, that is incorrect. The metal is subordinate to the wood because Scripture refers to the Altar as an Altar of Wood. Since it is regarded as a wooden vessel, it cannot acquire tumah because it is stationary, and stationary wooden utensils are not susceptible to tumah. (27a)

Rabbi Avahu said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: The fire of Gehinom does not rule over Torah scholars. This is derived through a kal vachomer from the

salamandra (a beast created through magic from a fire that was burning for seven uninterrupted years): A salamandra, which is only an offspring of fire, and one who smears himself with its blood, fire cannot rule over him; a Torah scholar whose entire body is fire, how much more so (fire cannot rule over him). (27a)

Rish Lakish said: The fire of Gehinom cannot rule over the sinners of Israel. This is derived through a kal vachomer from the Golden Altar: The Golden Altar had only a dinar's thickness of gold and nevertheless, the fire of many years did not rule over it; the sinners of Israel, who are full of mitzvos in the same manner as a pomegranate is full of seeds, how much more so (*fire of Gehinom cannot rule over them*). (27a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, CHOMER BAKODESH

**AND TRACTATE CHAGIGAH
IS CONCLUDED**

DAILY MASHAL

BURIAL CASKETS MADE FROM THEIR TABLE

The Torah specifies (25:23) that the table in the Mishkan was to be made specifically from atzei shitim – acacia wood. Why was this type of wood specifically chosen for this purpose?

Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that the letters spelling the word shitim are short for the words shalom,

tovah, yeshuah, mechilah – peace, goodness, salvation, and forgiveness. This type of wood was also used in the Holy Ark and the altar, hinting to us that the Divine Service performed through these vessels was the source of bringing down all of these blessings to the world.

In our day, however, when we unfortunately lack all of these items, what do we have in their stead through which we may merit the rewards and bounty that they brought? The Gemora derives from a verse in Yechezkel that in the absence of the Holy Temple, the generous opening up of a person's table to serve the poor and other guests serves in lieu of the altar. The Gemora in Berachos (54b) adds that doing so is a merit for long life.

Reb Oizer Alpert cites the Rabbeinu Bechaye, who mentions the fascinating custom of the pious men of France who had their burial caskets built from the wood of their tables. This symbolizes their recognition that upon dying, none of their earthly possessions would be accompanying them and the only item they could take with them was the merit of the charity and hosting of guests that they performed in their lifetimes. In fact, the Minchas Cohen suggests that the letters in the word shulchan are abbreviations for shomer likevurah chesed nedivosayich – preserving for burial the kindness of your giving!