

Temple-ready altar dedicated on last day of Hanukkah by activist groups

A new altar, fit for the Temple, was dedicated outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.



Then I shall finish by singing a song of praise for the dedication of the altar,” goes the famous Maoz Tzur Hanukkah song, and on Monday morning, the last day of Hanukkah, a new altar, fit for the Temple, was dedicated outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Following the Maccabees’ defeat of the Seleucid Greeks in the historical events of Hannuka, the Maccabean Jews cleansed and restored the Temple after Jerusalem was liberated, and built a new altar, since pigs had been slaughtered on the old altar by the Greeks.

On the last day of Hanukkah – which literally means “dedication” – a new altar built in accordance with all the Jewish laws pertaining to the Temple vessels and infrastructure was unveiled and nominally dedicated for use in the yet-to-be built Third Temple by several Temple activist organizations.

The initiative came from Prof. Hillel Weiss, a hard-right political activist and Temple activist, who established a non-profit organization called The Temple in Zion and raised some NIS 40,000 for the building of the altar.

The project was also backed by the Committee of Temple Organizations, an umbrella group for Temple activist groups.

The altar is built out of bricks over a wooden frame, and specifically not of stone, since Jewish law requires that the Temple and its various structures not be made out of stone that has been hewn by iron implements.

The altar itself weighs some four-and-a-half tons, and the ramp another two tons. It was built in the Elkana settlement in the western Samaria district by carpenters, brick layers and other construction specialists.

Organizers intended that a sheep was to be slaughtered during the dedication ceremony, and the various rituals, including burning some of its limbs and innards on the altar, was to be performed. However, Weiss said, objections were raised by the Jerusalem Municipal Authority's legal department.

Instead, a sheep was slaughtered earlier this week in an abattoir, and just one of its front legs was burned on the altar in a practice sacrificial exercise.

Although the Passover and daily sacrifices do not require a full temple, they must be done on an altar built according to the requirements of Jewish law, and placed at the appropriate spot on the Temple Mount, believed to be several meters east of the Islamic Dome of the Rock shrine.

Olive oil, wine and grain, produced according to standards required by the laws in the Torah pertaining to ritual offerings, were also "offered" on the new altar in the practice exercise, while ketoret, a mix of oils and perfumes used in the ancient temples, was offered on a separate, smaller altar.

"This is the purpose of the Torah. Almost all the commandments are connected to the Temple," Weiss told The Jerusalem Post.

"This gives meaning to our lives and to the life of the world, and to justice and to truth and to peace. This is the prophecy: 'Their offerings and sacrifices shall be acceptable upon My altar, for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples,'" quoted Weiss from the Book of Isaiah.

He rejected the notion that people today cannot connect to the ancient practice of animal sacrifices, saying, "The world today is impure. We want a world of purity," he said, adding that people's impure actions and thoughts remained the same regardless of how they relate to the prescribed method in the Torah of expunging impurity, that is, through animal sacrifices.

He said he and the Temple activists and organizations would begin animal sacrifices immediately if the state allowed them to bring their altar to the requisite spot on the Temple Mount, and declared that the state should be "the first to support" the resumption of these rituals.

Asked if restarting Jewish animal sacrifices on the Temple Mount would cause tensions and conflict with the Muslim world, which views al-Aqsa Mosque at the

site as one of the holiest places in Islam, Weiss said emphatically that this should not be a concern and that only Jewish courage to rebuild the Temple would end anti-Jewish sentiment and actions.

“This is propaganda disseminated by the Jewish unit of the Shabak [Shin Bet General Security Service] and antisemitic Jews who talk in the name of non-Jews and who have brought us the situation in Gaza, and other situations, and are trying to scare people,” said Weiss.

“We think the opposite, that as long as the Jews don’t have the courage to build the Temple, they will be persecuted. As long as there is no Temple, there will be antisemitism.”

Source: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Temple-ready-altar-dedicated-on-last-day-of-Hanukkah-by-activist-groups-573980>

[Disclaimer]