

Navi Notes for Test #3

The Psychology of Avodah Zorah

Background of Avodah Zorah

- Originally, man knew his Maker, up until the generation of Enosh (Adam's grandson). Humanity erred tremendously, and the wisdom of the men in that generation was confused. They felt that in order to venerate God's name and please him, they needed idols. They erected temples and altars to the sun and the stars, offering sacrifices and hymns of praise, believing this was the will of God. In later generations, there were false prophets and people who claimed God spoke to them. As time went by, the idea of God was gone. No one recognized or even knew about God except for the rare few such as Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem and Eber. This all happened until Avraham was born.
- The foreign worship of Hashem lead to the worship of foreign gods.
- In Sefer Shoftim, how could we be disloyal to Hashem and worship other gods and idols, and keep doing this again and again?
- Four explicit examples of Avodah Zorah during this time that Bnei Yisrael was worshiping idols:
 - שבט דן of פסל מיכה
 - Gideon's town worshiped בעל, a pagan god - Gideons nickname was ירובעל "Ba'al will fight for himself" - Gidon destroyed the altar after
 - At the end of the period of the Shoftim - Shmuel Hanavi tells the people who were interested in doing teshuva "remove the idols from your midst"
 - Sefer Tehilim פרק עח - gives a history of the Jewish people and in doing so recalls that שילה was destroyed because of all the idol worship (during period of Shoftim) - The Mishkan lasted in גלגל for 14 years and 360 years in שמואל until destroyed in times of עלי and שילה

Golden Calf

- Bnei Yisrael counted the 40 days wrong and got nervous when Moshe didn't come down. So they needed a new representation of Moshe, the golden calf. What were reasons why they did it?
- Two types of Avodah Zarah:
 - The worship of foreign gods
 - The foreign worship of god himself (Egel Hazav)

- Radak explains that generally speaking that Avodah Zorah that is pervasive throughout Tanach was of the second version of Avodah Zorah

10 Commandments

- How do we split up the first two commandments?
 - 1) I am your god who brought you out of Egypt, from the place of slavery. 2) Do not have any other gods before me.
 - 1) I am your god who brought you out of Egypt, from the place of slavery. Do not have any other gods before me. 2) Do not make for yourself any carved statue or picture of anything in the heaven above, on the earth below, or in the water below the land, do not bow down to them or worship them, for I am God your Lord, a God who demands exclusive worship, where My enemies are concerned, I keep in mind the sin of the fathers for their descendants, to the third and fourth generation. (This reading fits with “the foreign worship of God himself”)
 - 1) I am your god who brought you out of Egypt, from the place of slavery. 2) Do not have any other gods before me. Do not make for yourself any carved statue or picture...
- “You shall have no other gods before Me” - What does this mean?
- Negative commandment not to believe in any deity other than Hashem. This includes that we can not accept any being, entity or object and call it a god, even if you still believe in the one Hashem. This also includes that we can not accept any being, entity or object as a mediator between God and man. This is why Judaism rejects the Christian concept of a mediator between God and man. Most authorities believe that non-Jews must also hold like this. Others hold that a non-Jew may accept another being as a deity or mediator, as long as he does not actually worship it as an idol, and also believes in God.

Devorah & Women in Positions of Leadership & Authority

- The right for women to vote and to hold office - ratified in 1920
- Balfour Declaration - declared Jews would have a homeland in Palestine
- Rav Kook and Ashkenazim said no - Rav Uziel and Sephardim said yes
- Rules from the Torah & Gemarah
 - Two witnesses must be men, not women.
 - You can only be a Judge if you can be a witness.
 - Only a male can be a king, not a woman
 - Only a Jew can be a king, not a convert
 - A convert can't have any position of authority (tax collector, mashgiach)

- Rambam - A woman is like a convert and can't have any position of authority (minority opinion)
- Based on these rules, was Devorah allowed to be a leader of the Jewish nation? And how could she be the commander-in-chief? Answers:
 - Judge doesn't mean *decider/adjudicate*, but "teacher of law" - שופט just means a leader
 - There is a Tosfos that says a woman *can* be a judge, based on Devorah. Only a person who is fit to be a witness can be a judge is only by men.
 - The people *accepted* her decisions - it wasn't *externally* imposed on them - she wasn't appointed against their will
 - הוראת שעה - *divine exception*

Rav Kook

- Values of women - modest, family, shalom bayis. Rav Kook felt that if a women spent too much time politically, then she won't spend enough time with her family and modesty. Also, the women felt that it would help ease their family situation.
- Roles of men - Man's manner to rule and not the women. Also, the family forms an opinion, and the father shows it.
- When Mashiach comes, men and women will have equal roles