

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler - Parshat Matot-Masei - 2020 – 5780

שבת מברכים מנחם אב, ראש חודש ביום ד

The Bnei Reuven and Gad approached Moshe and said, “*gidrot Tzon nivneh le'mik'neinu poh ve'arim le'tapeinu*” [We will build enclosures for our sheep here and cities for our children]

Rashi notes that the fact that they mentioned their animals before their children indicates that they were more concerned about their possessions than they were about their offspring.

The Gemara Sanhedrin (64a) relates that one of the reasons for the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash was the strong inclination that our people had for Avodah Zara (idol worshipping). The Anshei Knesset HaGedolah who lived during the period of Bayit Sheini, (second Bet HaMikdash) realized that the inclination for Avodah Zara was just as potent and prevalent in their time as it was during Bayit Rishon. The people were drawn and addicted to this yetzer Ha'ra (inclination) as strongly as they had been in the past and this would surely bring about the churban (destruction) of the Bayit Sheini, so in total desperation they turned to HaShem for help. They were determined that this Yetzer Ha'ra which had wrought havoc among the Jews of the First Temple Era, must be subdued, as Chazal say, (Shabbat 104a): “*Haba Le'taheir me'sa'ayim lo*” [If one comes to be purified, (Heaven) will assist him].

The Anshei Knesset HaGedolah therefore sought Divine assistance, on behalf of the Jewish People, to eradicate the Evil Inclination of Avodah Zara that dwelled in their hearts. HaShem heeded their pleas and they succeeded. No more Yetzer for Idol worship.

The Chazon Ish, (R' Avraham Karlitz, 1878-1953), cited the Maharal as saying that when the Anshei Knesset HaGedolah forced the Yeitzer Ha'ra of Avodah Zara to leave, it demanded, before leaving, that a new Yeitzer Ha'ra replace it, and that new Yeitzer Ha'ra became the “inclination for money”. The Chazon Ish concluded from this, that the Yeitzer Ha'ra that we have today for money is an offshoot from the Yeitzer Ha'ra of Avodah Zara.

Very often we find men pushing themselves to work longer hours to “make that extra buck”, but at what expense? They see less of their children and spend less quality time with their family. They place the “*gidrot tzon*” ahead of “*tapeinu*”. Or what about the many scandals we hear in our days about religious people cheating the government by lying on their tax returns, circumventing sales taxes, and money laundering schemes. Is this not the Yeitzer Ha'ra for money that has replaced the inclination for Avodah Zara?

Finally, someone finds a wallet with money, with \$10(ten), His first reaction is- follow the Mitzvah of Hashavat Aveida and return the money. If he finds \$1000 (a thousand), he now feels torn between the Mitzvah and his “inclination for money”. If he finds \$1,000,000 (one million), he starts thinking about all the things he could do with that money, his “inclination” now controls him, and he thinks about utilizing all the Halachik

legal heiteirim for NOT returning the money. The Yeitzer has now succeeded, and the man has been subdued.

I believe that this gives new meaning to the words found on United States currency—“In G—d We Trust”

Shabbat Shalom, from Yerushalayim ir HaKodesh

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT MATOT:

1-At what age of a girl can her father revoke [Hafara} her Neder?

2- What did HaShem command Moshe to do before leaving this world?

3 – What 6 metalics does the Torah mention that can be kashered?

4-After kashering an item that came from non-Jews , the Torah states that it still cannot be used in Jewish homes until another procedure is done. What is that procedure?

5-After Moshe agreed to allow the tribes of Re’uven and Gad to remain on the east side of the Jordan with certain conditions, He adds another condition into the stipulation that a half of another tribe be included with Re’uven and Gad. Which tribe was given this task?