



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel

From our archives

At times, our desire to live a Torah-inspired life comes into direct conflict with the messages and values that we receive from society. The expectation to live our lives governed by contemporary mores or zeitgeist, contrary to what we hold near and dear, can pose a significant challenge. Remaining true to our own ethical code might subject us to derision or scorn, leaving us deflated and disheartened. How do we fortify ourselves to remain resolute?

In Parshas Pinchas, we learn about the episode of B'nos Tzelophchad - the five daughters of Tzelophchad: Machlah, Noah, Chaglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Tzelophchad was from the generation of the Exodus and was therefore entitled to a portion in the Land of Israel. He perished in the desert, however, leaving only daughters. Because the laws of inheritance were not yet fully transmitted, there was uncertainty as to the daughters' right to inherit their father's portion. Motivated by their great love for the Land of Israel, and confident in the righteousness of their claim, they came forward and presented their case to Moshe. Moshe brought the matter to G-d, who agreed with the claim presented by B'nos Tzelophchad and instructed Moshe to convey this law of inheritance to the entire nation for all time.

The greatness of B'nos Tzelophchad is self-evident, demonstrated by their love of the Land of Israel and their courage to present their claim. But the Medrash Yalkut Shimoni provides us insight into an additional dimension of their greatness. The Yalkut teaches us that every righteous individual who stands up for what is right and just in the face of opposing societal values merits the reward for what was otherwise destined for that entire generation. For example, Avraham stood firm against the idolatry of his time. Similarly, Noach rose above the wickedness of his generation, and Lot resisted the cruel ways of Sodom. As a result, all of these luminaries merited the reward intended for their respective generations. So too, the Medrash continues, the B'nos Tzelophchad were entitled to such a grand reward for their conduct. B'nos Tzelophchad exhibited incredible love for the Land of Israel and were willing to present their claim to the leader of the Jewish people in order to vindicate that love. Even more remarkable, though; was the fact that they were willing to stand firm against a society that was rejecting the Land of Israel and rebelliously demanding "Give us a leader so that we may return to Egypt!" In contrast to the rest of the nation's demonstration of a lack of faith in G-d and appreciation for the Land of Israel, B'nos Tzelophchad resisted the influences that surrounded them and took a stand in support of that which was sacred. Accordingly, they merited the reward that was otherwise earmarked for the whole generation.

While peer pressure and social expectations to conform indeed form an imposing challenge, we should remember that the immense reward and love that we elicit from Above are commensurate with the difficulty of the circumstances. Recognizing and appreciating these situations as a wonderful opportunity to emulate our noble predecessors and draw close to G-d will provide us with the strength and courage to persevere.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Therefore say, "Behold I give him My covenant of peace." (25, 12)

Hashem said, "Legally he should take his reward." (Bamidbar Rabba 21, 1)

The reward for mitzvas is not in this world. (Kiddushin 39b)

According to the opinion that there is no reward for mitzvas in this world, how could Pinchas receive reward for his good deed in this world?

Parsha Riddle

How were Serach and Asher the son of Yaakov related?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey and it said to Bilaam, "What have I done to you that you struck me these three times?" (22, 28)

When did Hashem open the mouth of a different animal?

Answer: When Eliyahu HaNavi took the cow to give to the idolaters on Har HaCarmel, the cow told Eliyahu that it did not want to be used for avoda zora. (Bamidbar Rabba 23:9). For another example, see Shmuel Aleph 6:12 and Avoda Zara 24b.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

From our archives

In Parashas Pinchas (27:1-11), Zelophehad's daughters Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah petition Moshe for the right to inherit their father's estate, since he had no son. [Chazal explain that they apparently knew that had he had a son, they would have had no claim to the inheritance, and they infer from this that the daughters were "wise" (Rashi).] Hashem responded by endorsing their claim and setting forth the rules of inheritance, which, as interpreted and elaborated upon by Chazal, are as follows (see Yad Ha'Chazakah, beginning of Hilchos Nachalos):

If the decedent has living sons, the estate is divided equally between them, with the eldest son (the bechor) receiving a double share. If he has daughters but no sons, the estate is divided equally among the daughters. If he has neither sons nor daughters but his father is still alive, the father inherits the estate.

If the decedent had sons (or no sons but daughters) who predeceased him, the sons' (or daughters') sons (or daughters, if any of the sons or daughters had no sons) inherit their fathers' (or mothers') shares of the estate on a per stirpes basis, with the share of each of the decedent's children divided equally among his children. [E.g., if the decedent had two sons, both of whom predeceased him, and one of the sons had three sons, and the other, one daughter, each of the three grandsons inherits one sixth of the estate, and the granddaughter inherits half the estate.]

The same procedure is applied iteratively to the subsequent heirs: if the decedent has no surviving issue and so his father is next in line to inherit, and the father has predeceased the decedent, then the father's sons (or daughters, if the father had no sons) inherit the estate. If the father's children have predeceased him, the estate passes to their children, as above. If the father has no surviving issue, then his father (the decedent's grandfather) inherits the estate, and if he is no longer living, his heirs (as determined by the above rules) inherit the estate. This procedure is repeated until surviving heirs are found.

An exception to the above is a married woman, whose husband inherits her estate, taking precedence over all her other heirs.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I have a special chair.
2. I'll answer the questions.
3. I am the continuation of Pinchas.
4. The birds were my waiters.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was for Haman.
2. I was for Achan.
3. I was for the division.
4. I am not poor.

Last Week's Answers

#1 A sword (I was Bilaam's end, I was for Yehoshua, I guard the garden, Zroa Netuyah/Outstretched arm.)

#2 Balak Ben Tzipor (Don't confuse my father with Gershom's mother, Ruled, Unscrambled, I am "to curse," I was a foreigner.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

GWCK wishes everyone a wonderful summer!

Kollel classes (unless otherwise noted) conclude for the season this Thursday, July 28 and will resume be"Jf Rosh Chodesh Elul, Sunday, August 28.