

TZELAFCHAD'S DAUGHTERS WERE MOTIVATED BY THE LAND, NOT THE MONEY

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 513, Leining on Fast Days and Other Ta'aneisim Issues. Good Shabbos!

Tzelafchad's Daughters Were Motivated By The Land, Not The Money

The daughters of Tzelafchad came to Moshe to ask for their deceased father's portion in the Land of Israel, since their father had died without sons to inherit his portion.

In tracing the lineage of the daughters of Tzelafchad, the Torah seems to provide redundant information. The pasuk says that they were "the daughters of Tzelafchad, son of Chefer, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Menashe" and then that they were "from the family of Menashe son of Yosef" [Bamidbar 27:1]. Why was it necessary to emphasize the fact that they descended from Menashe son of Yosef twice?

Rashi asks this question and answers that the emphasis indicates that love of Eretz Yisrael is genetic. Yosef loved the Land of Israel and insisted that his bones be returned there. This love for Eretz Yisrael ran in his family such that his descendants (Tzelafchad's daughters) insisted that they be given their fair portion in the Land.

The wife of the Sefas Emes asked her son (the Imrei Emes) a question on this Rashi: What is the proof that the daughters of Tzelafchad loved the Land of Israel? Perhaps they were just interested in their inheritance as a monetary matter.

The Imrei Emes gave his mother a very good answer. There are two opinions regarding the identity of Tzelafchad. One opinion is that he was the chopper of wood [Bamidbar 15:32]. Another opinion is that he was from the group who tried to force their way into Canaan after the decree of the spies [Bamidbar 14:40]. Either way, Tzelafchad died in Parshas Shlach, prior to beginning of the decreed 40 years of wandering. His death occurred some 38 years prior to the events in Parshas Pinchas. If Tzelafchad's daughters were interested in their father's estate from a strictly financial perspective, why would they have waited 38 years to ask for it? Inheritance is not limited to land. What about his

cattle? What about his other property? Apparently, they were not interested in that. It was only now, when they were on the doorstep of Eretz Yisrael that they came pressing their claim for inheritance of their father's portion. This is the demonstration of their love for the Land. They were silent regarding the cash and moveable property. However, their inheritance in the Land of Israel mattered greatly to them. They inherited this affinity to the Land from their great grandfather, Menashe son of Yosef.

The Shame and Disgrace of The Fact That "Yehoshua Was Like The Moon" ----- -----

In this week's parsha, Yehoshua was designated as the heir to the position of leadership of the Jewish nation. He had the task and the privilege of leading Klal Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe was told "Take Yehoshua son of Nun... and place some of your majesty upon him so that the entire assembly of Israel will pay heed" [Bamidbar 27:18-20]. Rashi emphasizes that the instruction was to place SOME of your majesty - but not ALL of it upon him. Yehoshua bin Nun was not Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Talmud expresses this idea very sharply: "The elders of that generation bemoaned the fact that the face of Moshe resembled the sun (in its radiance), while the face of Yeshoshua (only) resembled the moon. Woe to us for the embarrassment; woe to us for the shame and disgrace." [Bava Basra 75a]. (Yehoshua was also on a very high level, but he still could not be compared to Moshe.)

The sun is too bright to look at on a clear day, whereas we have no difficulty staring straight at the moon. The moon is not the sun. That was the difference between Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua bin Nun.

But why did the elders refer to it as a 'disgrace'? What was the disgrace? The disgrace was that Moshe Rabbeinu was not the type of leader that comes along once in a lifetime. It is not true that every generation has a 'Moshe Rabbeinu'. No! A leader and prophet like Moshe came along only one time in the history of the universe. No one was ever or will ever be his match.

The reason why Yehoshua merited leadership was not because he could match any of Moshe's attributes. The Medrash [Bamidbar Rabbah 21] gives an analogy to explain how Yehoshua merited being Moshe's successor, based on the pasuk, "The protector of a fig tree will eat its fruit and the guardian of his master will be honored" [Mishlei 27:18]. Yehoshua succeeded Moshe because he was Moshe's talmid muvhak [prime disciple]. Yehoshua waited on Moshe hand and foot. He never departed from Moshe's tent. Our Sages speak of him spreading out the mats and the benches in Moshe Rabbeinu's study hall for people to sit on.

Our Sages are teaching us that if we cannot aspire to be a Moshe Rabbeinu, we can at least aspire to be dedicated servants to our superiors in the same sense that Yehoshua was dedicated to his master.

The disgrace was the fact that there was only one Yehoshua bin Nun! There were certainly other people capable of cleaning up the Beis Medrash and turning the lights on and off as did Yehoshua. But although "somebody had to do it" only one person actually did it.

There are some people who we cannot aspire to become. They are too brilliant. But there are other people to whom we look up that we certainly can aspire to be like. Many people accomplish things that I may not accomplish, but I COULD accomplish if I really applied myself. It often does not take brains, it takes effort and time and determination. These are attributes that are within the reach of many of us.

The Elders realized that they too had the same attributes that Yehoshua had. They could have exerted themselves and had the same loyalty and faithfulness to Moshe as did Yehoshua. But they did not do so. As a result of this fact they now bemoaned, "Woe to us for our shame and disgrace. Woe to us that out of all Klal Yisrael only Yehoshua made this effort."

"Moshe's face was like the sun and that is not always attainable. Not everyone can be a sun. But Yehoshua's face was like the moon. That certainly was attainable, had we made the effort. We should be ashamed for not having made that effort."

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