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Parshat Pinchas **July 11, 2020 – 19 Tammuz 5780**

Inheritance

Most people believe that they are owed an inheritance when a loved one dies. Often there are bitter disputes about who inherits what, and whether they even deserve it or not. These disputes go all the way to the beginning of time.

There was a group of five sisters who approached Moses publicly. These women were the daughters of Tzelophchad. They were Machlah, Noa, Choglah, Milkah, and Tirtzah. Their public discussion with Moses was about their inheritance of their father's portion in the Land of Israel.

The end of the sojourn in the wilderness was coming near and the Land of Israel was to be divided among the tribes. Each man would be given a parcel of land. Upon the man's death, the parcel would be inherited by his son.

Tzelophchad died in the wilderness. The daughters state their case, that he was not part of Korach's rebellion. Those in Korach's rebellion lost everything, even the future in the Land of Israel.

Tzelophchad was punished for other deeds, but they were done with the best of intentions, the Midrash tells us. With that in mind, his daughters used the defense of their father that they are the worthy inheritors of what his estate would be because whatever Tzelophchad's sin was, it was not on the same scale of Korach.

It would appear that these women were pious, intelligent, and could deduce what the law should be. It was these women who would shape laws of inheritance for the future.

For then it was not about property but rather about legacy. I learned something about an inheritance from a very special man. He said, "When you leave this world, you want to leave behind a good name." That is the message of Tzelophchad's daughters.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

