Named Women of Virtue

Seudah Shlishit Parashat Pinchas 2023

במדבר כ״ו

וּצְלָפְחָד בֶּן־חֵפֶר לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים כִּי אִם־בָּנוֹת וְשֵׁם בְּנוֹת צְלָפְחָד מַחְלָה וְנֹעָה חָגְלָה מִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָה: אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת מְנַשֶּׁה וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת: אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי־אֶפְרַיִם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְשׁוּתָלַח מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשֻּׁתַלְחִי לְבֶכֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבַּכְרִי לְתַחַן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַתַּחֲנִי:

Numbers 26:33-35

Now Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons, only daughters. The names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Those are the clans of Manasseh; men enrolled: 52,700. These are the descendants of Ephraim by their clans: Of Shuthelah, the clan of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the clan of the Becherites; of Tahan, the clan of the Tahanites.

במדבר כ״ו:מ״ו–מ״ז

וְשֵׁם בַּת־אָשֵׁר שָׂרַח: אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת בְּנֵי־אָשֵׁר לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם שִׁלְשָׁה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת:

Numbers 26:46–47

The name of Asher's daughter was Serah. These are the clans of Asher's descendants; men enrolled: 53,400.

במדבר כ״ו:נ״ב-כ״ז:י״א

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: לָאֵלֶּה תֵּחָלֵק הָאָרֶץ בְּנַחֲלָה בְּמִסְפַּר שֵׁמוֹת: לָרַב תַּרְבֶּה נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלַמְעַט תַּמְעִיט נַחֲלָתוֹ אִישׁ לְפִי פְקֻדָיו יִתֵּן נַחֲלָתוֹ: אַךְ־בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת־הָאָרֶץ לִשְׁמוֹת מַטּוֹת־אֲבֹתָם יִנְחָלוּ: עַל־פִּי הַגּוֹרָל תֵּחָלֵק נַחֲלָתוֹ בֵּין רַב לִמְעָט: וְאִתְּקְרַבְנָה בְּנוֹת צְלָפְחָד בֶּן־חֵפֶר בֶּן־גִּלְעָד בֶּן־מָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה לְמִשְׁפְּחֹת מְנַשֶּׁה בֶן־יוֹסֵף וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֹתָיו מַחְלָה נֹעָה וְחָגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָה: וַתַּעֲמֹדְנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְלִפְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְלִפְנֵי הַנְּשִׂיאִם וְכָל־הָעֵדָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר: אָבִינוּ מֵת בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהוּא לֹא־הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַנּוֹעָדִים עַל־ה' בַּעֲדַת־קֹרַח כִּי־בְחֶטְאוֹ מֵת וּבָנִים לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ: לָמָּה יִגָּרַע שֵׁם־אָבִינוּ מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֵּן תְּנָה־לָּנוּ אֲחֻזָּה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵי אָבִינוּ: וַיַּקְרֵב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטָן לִפְנֵי ה': {פ} וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כֵּן בְּנוֹת צְלָפְחָד דֹּבְרֹת נָתֹן תִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲחֻזַּת נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵי אֲבִיהֶם וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת־נַחֲלַת אֲבִיהֶן לָהֶן: וְאֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר אִישׁ כִּי־יָמוּת וּבֵן אֵין לוֹ וְהַעֲבַרְתֶּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְבִתּוֹ: וְאִם־אֵין לוֹ בַּת וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְאָחָיו: וְאִם־אֵין לוֹ אַחִים וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לַאֲחֵי אָבִיו: וְאִם־אֵין אַחִים לְאֲבִיו וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לִשְׁאֵרוֹ הַקָּרֹב אֵלָיו מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וְיָרַשׁ אֹתָהּ וְהָיְתָה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֻקַּת מִשְׁפָּט כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

Numbers 26:52-27:11

ה' spoke to Moses, saying, "Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names: with larger groups increase the share, with smaller groups reduce the share. Each is to be assigned its share according to its enrollment. The land, moreover, is to be apportioned by lot; and the allotment shall be made according to the listings of their ancestral tribes. Each portion shall be assigned by lot, whether for larger or smaller groups." The daughters of Zelophehad, of Manassite family—son of Hepher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph—came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said: "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against ה', but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!" Moses brought their case before ה'. And ה' said to Moses, "The plea of Zelophehad's daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father's kinsmen; transfer their father's share to them. "Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: 'If a householder dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan, who shall inherit it.' This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with יהוה's command to Moses."

בבא בתרא קי״ט ב:י׳

חַכְמָנִיּוֹת הֵן שֶׁלְּפִי שָׁעָה דִּבְּרוּ דְּאָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר רַב יִצְחָק מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהָיָה מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ יוֹשֵׁב וְדוֹרֵשׁ בְּפָרָשַׁת יְבָמִין שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כִּי יֵשְׁבוּ אַחִים יַחְדָּו אָמְרוּ לוֹ אִם כְּבֵן אָנוּ חֲשׁוּבִין תְּנָה לָנוּ נַחֲלָה כְּבֵן אִם לָאו תִּתְיַבֵּם אִמֵּנוּ מִיָּד וַיַּקְרֵב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מִשְׁפָּטָן לִפְנֵי ה׳

Bava Batra 119b:10

The Gemara proves these assertions. That **they are wise** can be seen from the fact **that they spoke in accordance with the moment,** i.e., they presented their case at an auspicious time. **As Rabbi Shmuel bar Rav Yitzḥak says:** Tradition **teaches that Moses our teacher was sitting and interpreting in** the Torah **portion about men whose married brothers had died childless, as it is stated: “If brothers dwell together,** and one of them dies, and has no child, the wife of the dead shall not be married abroad to one not of his kin; her husband’s brother shall come to her, and take her for him as a wife” (Deuteronomy 25:5). The daughters of Zelophehad **said to** Moses: **If we are** each **considered like a son, give us** each **an inheritance like a son;** and **if not, our mother should enter into levirate marriage. Immediately** upon hearing their claim, the verse records: **“And Moses brought their cause before the Lord”** (Numbers 27:5).

בראשית מ״ו:י״ז

(יז) וּבְנֵי אָשֵׁר יִמְנָה וְיִשְׁוָה וְיִשְׁוִי וּבְרִיעָה וְשֶׂרַח אֲחֹתָם וּבְנֵי בְרִיעָה חֶבֶר וּמַלְכִּיאֵל׃

Genesis 46:17

Asher’s sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, and their sister Serah. Beriah’s sons: Heber and Malchiel.

רש"י על במדבר כ״ו:מ״ו:א׳

(מו) **ושם בת אשר שרח.** לְפִי שֶׁהָיְתָה קַיֶּמֶת בְּחַיֶּהָ מְנָאָהּ כַּאן (סדר עולם) :

Rashi on Numbers 26:46:1

ושם בת אשר שרה AND THE NAME OF THE DAUGHTER OF ASHER WAS SERAH — Because she still remained alive after all these long years it exceptionally mentions her here (Seder Olam, ch. 89).

שמות רבה ה׳:י״ג

יכול לא האמינו עד שראו האותות? לא, אלא וישמעו כי פקד ה', על השמועה האמינו, ולא על ראיית האותות. ובמה האמינו? על סימן הפקידה שאמר להם. שכך היה מסורת בידם מיעקב, שיעקב מסר את הסוד ליוסף, ויוסף לאחיו, ואשר בן יעקב, מסר את הסוד לסרח בתו ועדיין היתה היא קיימת. וכך אמר לה: כל גואל שיבא ויאמר לבני (שם שם, טז): פקוד פקדתי אתכם, הוא גואל של אמת. כיון שבא משה ואמר: פקוד פקדתי אתכם, מיד, ויאמן העם. במה האמינו? כי שמעו הפקידה, הדא הוא דכתיב: כי פקד ה' את בני ישראל וכי ראה את עניים ויקדו וישתחוו. ויקדו, על הפקידה. וישתחוו, על כי ראה את עניים:

Shemot Rabbah 5:13

There was a secret sign handed down to the Israelites in Egypt, a legacy left by Jacob, who entrusted it to Joseph, and he again to his brother Asher, who handed it down to his daughter Serach. She was blessed with longevity, and was living when Moses made his appearance before Pharaoh. [...]

Sefer HaYashar (midrash), Book of Genesis, Vayigash 9

(9) And when Joseph had finished giving them his orders, he turned: and went back into Egypt, and the sons of Jacob went to the land of Canaan, in joy and happiness to their father. And when they came to the boundaries of the land, they said to one another: What shall we do in bringing this matter before our father? For if we impart it to him suddenly, and tell him all about it, he will be greatly astounded at our words and he will refuse to listen to us. And when they went on until they approached their houses they met Serach coming towards them, and the damsel was exceedingly beautiful and wise, and a skilled player on the harp; and they called her and she came unto them and she kissed them. And they took her and gave her a harp saying unto her: Go, we pray thee, before our father and sit down before him and

strike this harp and speak unto him according to these words. And they instructed her concerning what she had to say, and she hastened unto Jacob and she sat down before him. And she sang and she played beautifully upon the harp, and she sang in the sweetness of her voice: Joseph my uncle is alive and he reigneth over all the land of Egypt; he is not dead. And she often repeated these words. And Jacob heard her words and it pleased him greatly, and when he heard her sing it twice and three times, the heart of Jacob was possessed by joy, through the sweetness of her voice, and the spirit of God came over him, and he knew that all her words were true. And Jacob blessed Serach for singing these words before him, and he said: My daughter, may death never prevail against thee forever, for thou hast revived my spirit, only repeat thou this song once more before me, for thou hast caused me gladness with thy words. And she sang once more the same words and Jacob listened, and he was pleased and he rejoiced, and the spirit of God came over him. And while he was yet speaking with her, his sons came before him with horses and chariots and royal garments and servants running before them. And Jacob arose and went to meet them, and he saw his sons dressed in royal garments and all the good things that Joseph sent unto them. And they said unto him: Be informed that our brother Joseph liveo, and that he ruleo over the whole land of Egypt, and it is he who has spoken unto us all we have told to you. And Jacob heard all the words of his sons and his heart fainted, for he believed them not, until he saw all that Joseph had given unto them and all that Joseph had sent along with them, and all the signs he had spoken of unto them. And they unpacked all the things before him, and they displayed all that Joseph had sent, and they gave to every one of them what Joseph had sent him. And Jacob knew that they had spoken the truth, and Jacob was greatly rejoiced on account of his son. And he said: It is enough, Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die. And his sons told unto him all that had befallen them, and Jacob said: I will go down into Egypt, to see my son and my children. | And Jacob rose up and he put on the garments which Joseph had sent unto him, and he put a turban upon his head which Joseph had sent him after having washed and shaved himself. And all the men of the house of Jacob and their wives dressed themselves with the things that Joseph had sent them. And they rejoiced greatly on account of Joseph that he was still alive and that he was the ruler over Egypt. And all the inhabitants of Canaan heard the news, and they came and rejoiced with Jacob on account of Joseph that he was still alive. And Jacob prepared for them a feast of three days, and all the kings of Canaan, and all the great men of the land ate and drank and made merry in Jacob's house.

Zohar, Sh'lach 25

(2) They issued the ruling, and all the [other] students of the Yeshiva left. I requested permission, since [Shimon] Bar Yochai had asked the same question, and I was therefore shown what I had known before: Oh, my teacher -- there were six chambers shown to me [though only four are described here], with so many delights and pleasures! These were from that curtain-divider and beyond, where no males at all may go up. (3) In one chamber, Batya, Pharaoh's daughter, comes, and so many thousands and thousands of women who merit to be with her. Every single one of them deserves the supernal lights and pleasures [of that place], nothing at all is withheld from any of them. Three times each day, the announcement is made: The likeness of Moshe, the faithful prophet, is coming! And Batya goes out, to that curtained area which is dedicated to her, and observes the likeness of Moshe, and bows before it, saying, "Happy is my portion, that I raised such a light!" This is her delight, above all others. (4) Batya returns to the women, and they delve into precepts of Torah. All of them have the likenesses they had in this world, and were clothed in light, just as the clothing of the men, except not quite as much light. The precepts of Torah that they did not merit to fulfill in this world, they [now] delve into, along with their meanings, in that world. And all these women that dwell together with Batya, Pharaoh's daughter, are called serene women, and they are not troubled by the pains of gehenna at all. (5) In another chamber, **Serach bat Asher** comes, and so many thousands and thousands of women who merit to be with her.

Three times a day, the announcement comes: The likeness of Yosef the tzadik is coming! With joy she goes out, to that curtained area which is dedicated to her, and observes light with the likeness of Yosef. With joy she bows before it, saying, "Happy was that day, when I gave the tidings before my grandfather [that you were still alive]!" Then she returns to the rest of the women, and they delve into the praises of the Ruler of the world, and praise the Name. How many places and joys, that each and everyone of them had! Then they return and delves into the precepts of Torah, along with their meanings. (6) In another chamber, Yocheved comes, the mother of Moshe the faithful prophet, and so many thousands and thousands of women with her. In this chamber, there is no announcement at all, but three times each day, she acknowledges and praises the Ruler of the world, she and all the women with her. They sing the Song of the Sea every day, and she herself recites from "And Miriam the Prophet...took her timbrel in her hand..." (Shmot 15:20). And all these righteous women there in Gan Eden listen to her pleasant voice, and so many holy angels acknowledge and praise the holy Name with her. (7) In another chamber, Devora comes, and here too, all the other women with her acknowledge and sing [praises], with that very song that she sang in this world (Shoftim 5:1). Oh, my teacher! Oh, my teacher, who has seen the happiness and delight of these righteous ones, of the women who merit to serve the Holy One of Blessing?! Deeper in from these chambers, are four hidden chambers of the holy mothers, which are not passed on or revealed, and no one has seen them. All day they are separate among themselves, as I have told you; and the men also [are separate]. (8) Every night they come together, all of them as one, at the time of coupling, which is midnight, both in this world and in that world. Coupling in that world is the cleaving of soul with soul, light with light. Coupling in this world is body with body. Everything is as it should be: like after like, couple after couple, body after body. Coupling in that world, light after light. The chambers of the four mothers are called the chambers of the confident daughters, which I did not merit to see. Happy is the portion of these righteous ones, males and females, that go down the straight path in this world, and are entitled to all the delights of that world. (9) Oh, my teacher! Oh, my teacher, if you were not [Shimon] Bar Yochai, I would not have passed it along to be revealed. The coupling of that world brings more fruit (1) than the fruit brought in this world. Their coupling, the coupling of that world, their desire is as one. When their souls cleave one to another, it creates fruit. Lights go out from them, creating candles. These are the souls for the [future] converts that will convert, and all of them enter this particular chamber. (2) For the conversion of a particular convert, the soul flies out from that chamber, and enters under the wings of the Shechina. And She kisses it, since it is the fruit of the righteous ones, and sends it into that convert, and it steeps within. From that moment, they are called a "Ger Tzedek" (righteous convert). This is what the verse alludes to (Mishlei 11:30), "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." Just as the tree of life produces souls, so too the righteous person can produce fruit, by making souls. (3) The Rav of the Yeshiva said, it is written (Breishit 11:30), "Now Sarai was barren; she had no child." When it tells us that Sarai was barren, I already know that she had no child. So why [does the verse add], "she had no child"? Rather, here is what the Rav of the Yeshiva said: She had no child born to her, but souls she had born to her, by means of the cleaving with desire. These two righteous ones [Sarai and Avram] birthed souls for converts all the time that they were at Haran, just as the righteous make [souls for converts] in Gan Eden. As it says (Breishit 12:5), "the people [literally 'the soul'] that they acquired [literally 'made'] in Haran" -- they really did create that soul!

מדרש משלי ל״א:ה׳

"פיה פתחה בחכמה" - זו אשה חכמה, שאמרה (שמואל ב כ טז): "שמעו שמעו אמרו נא אל יואב קרב עד הנה ואדברה אליך", שהצילה את העיר בחכמתה, וזו היתה סרח בת אשר.

Midrash Mishlei 31:5

"Her mouth opens in wisdom" - This is a wise woman that says, "Listen, listen! Speak, please, to Yoav: Come here and I will speak with you." She saved the city through her wisdom, this was Serach bat Asher.