

NAGEELA SHABBOS

Have-a

Pinchas 5781
July 21st, 2021

SEASON 5 EPISODE 34

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



Tinted Glasses

by Hazel Kirsch

INTRODUCING: Jr. Writers
Over the course of the summer, Nageela Shabbos will feature several Torah essays and articles by some of our young participants and staff members!

Shabbat Shalom to everyone reading this!

My name is Hazel Kirsch, and I am a member of the Jewnior Regional Board of the West Coast. I was offered the opportunity to write a Dvar Torah on one of the incoming parshiot by Rabbi Locker, and I gladly obliged, so I would like to share my take on Parashat Pinchas with you all. This Parsha, though somewhat well known, mostly focuses on the census of the Jewish people, which isn't the most action-packed part. The Parsha starts off with Pinchas, Aharon's grandson, being rewarded for his act of religious bravery of killing a Simianite and Midianite prince and princess. God makes him a Cohen and grants him a generous covenant of peace. Then the census is taken, which shows there are 601,730 men within the age limits

of 20 and 60. Furthermore, Moshe is given the laws of how the land will be divided up, which leads us into the most famous part of Pinchas. The story of the 5 daughters of Tzelafchad. Though the story can be interpreted very much more in depth, I will give you guys a quick run through instead. The 5 daughters, Machla, Tirza, Hogla, Mielcah, and Noa, are girls in the tribe of Menashe whose father died when they were very little, and in the case of Noa, unborn. When the laws of dividing up the land became accessible to the public, the daughters realized that their father's land would belong to their uncles instead of them, as their father had no son. They started to campaign for the right of inheriting their deceased father's land as they wanted his name to live on in the land of Israel. Hashem accepted their



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claim and then incorporated it into the Torah's laws of inheritance. Moshe then encourages Joshua, his successor, to follow wisely in his footsteps, and the parsha concludes with an intricate list of the daily sacrifices, and the additional offerings brought on Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and the many other festivals.

After going through this parsha, I then decided to focus in on a few verses where the daughters of Tzelafchad are explaining to Moshe why they should have a share in the Land of Canaan.

“אבינו מת במדבר והוא לא היה ... בעדת קרח כי
”בחטאו מת ובנים לא היו לו ... ויקרב משה את משפטן לפני ה’
“Our father died in the wilderness and was not ... in
the assembly of Korach, but he died for his own sin
and he had no son’... and Moshe brought their claim
before G-d.” (27:3,5)

In this verse, the 5 daughters are telling Moshe that their father didn’t die because he was part of the rebellion of Korach, and he didn’t partake in that sin. I wondered though, why didn’t Moshe answer the daughters himself? Why instead, was the claim taken to G-d?

While looking for an answer to my question, I found an interpretation written by Chizkuni, a 13th century French commentator. Chizkuni thought that Moshe knew that Hashem would say yes to the daughters’ claim. He knew women in general had the right to inherit land, however because Tzelafchad himself never set foot in the Land, he didn’t know whether or not the family even had a share in the land itself.

Another answer I found was written by Rav Isaiah Horowitz, a 17th century Rabbi from the Czech Re-



public. Rav Horowitz cites a verse in Devarim (16:19) where it says “Bribery blinds the eyes of the wise,” which he interprets as that judges have the ability to lose their neutrality. Rav Horowitz acknowledges that Moshe had the ability and answer to say yes to the daughters of Tzelafchad’s claim. However, as soon as they told him that their father was not among Korach’s contingent, Moshe felt the tint of a bribe (like they were saying, “We support you, Moshe!”) and therefore removed himself from the case and turned to Hashem for the answer because he felt he couldn’t be completely neutral.

I personally feel that Rav Isaiah Horowitzes’ answer was more satisfactory. I think that Moshe did indeed have the ability to answer the daughters of Tzelafchad’s claim, yet he chose to be on the safe side just in case the daughters were trying to bribe him, and let Hashem have the final say.

What I think we can all take from this lesson is that if we do feel the “tint of a bribe” even slightly, to try and remain with our original beliefs and take stock and have faith in our gut feelings. Keep an open mind but don’t let your opinion be swayed by just anything. Try and take in this lesson for this week, and have an amazing shabbos. Shabbat Shalom!

**4
THE
CHILDREN**

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Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question.

Have a question? Please send it in to stump@nageelawest.org

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.

Note: We call this 'Stump The Rabbi' for fun, but that's not really the point. The goal is to learn something important in an interesting way.

Stump the Rabbi



#175 Memorial Day

Hi Rabbi,

My dad lit a large candle this week. When I asked what it was for, he said it's for his mother's 'yahrtzeit' which he then explained is the anniversary of the day a person dies. I'm interested to know more about this. What is the purpose of a yahrtzeit, and what traditions are normally done for it?

Thanks,
Rhys Memo

Dear Memo, Rhys,

Yahrtzeits are a pretty important part of Jewish tradition, and it's beautiful that your parents commemorate them with candles. Let's dig down a little deeper into what's going on. We work our whole lives to do good, be good and live good. When our lives here in the world are over, what happens?

[Whoa, Rabbi, you just took a simple question about candles and started getting all deep.] Yup. I did that. Jewish philosophy explains that once our bodies are done here in this world, our consciousness (some people use the word 'SOUL') continues to live. We then, forever, enjoy the benefits of all the goodness we've earned. So if we've lived a life of kindness, honesty and connection to God, then we've accrued a fat bank

account, and we get that enjoyment forever. That sounds awesome! The downside is that since we're no longer living in this world, we can no longer earn any more 'points'. There can be no more direct deposits into that bank account. That's one of the reasons we really value life and want to live as long as we can- so that we can continue to increase our earning power.

There is only one way our soul can keep earning even after death. That is if more good deeds are done as a result of what we did in our lives. Let's say Bob gave a large donation to a poor family right before he died, and that family is still living off of his generosity, Bob's eternal soul continues to get enjoyment as a reward for the goodness still happening in the world. Make sense so far? OK, now here's the cool part! There is no better way for a soul to earn



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breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the West Coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience. Our “questions encouraged” mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.