"How to Argue With God- a Feminist and Zionist's Perspective"

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What seems to be the motivating factor behind the daughters of Tzlafchdad's actions? How does it look for a feminist? A Zionist?

Numbers Chapter 27

1 Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, at the door of the tent of meeting, saying: 3 'Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he had no son? Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father.' 5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD. {P}

6 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: 7 'The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. 8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying: If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. 11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it. And it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.' {P} (JPS 1917)

במדבר פרשת פינחס פרק כז פסוק א - יא (א) וַתִּקְרַבְנָה בִּנְוֹת צְלָפִחָּד בֵּן־חֵפֶר בֵּן־ גּלְעַד בֶּן־מָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה לְמִשְׁפְּחָת מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן־יוֹסֵף וָאֵלֵה שִׁמְוֹת בִּנֹתֵיו מַחָלֵה נֹעַה וְחָגְלֶה וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרצֵה: (ב) וַתַּעַמֹדְנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶּׁה וְלפְנֵי אֶלְעָזֶר הֹכֹּהֵוֹ וְלפְנֵי הַנְּשִׂיאִם וָכַל־הָעַדָה פֶּתַח אְהֶל־מוֹעֵד לֵאמְר: (ג) ָּאָבִינוֹ^{*} מֵת בַּמִּדְבַּר וֹהוּא לֹא־הָיָה בְּתְוֹךְ ָּהָעַּׁדָה הַנּוֹעָדֶים עַל־יְלוָלָק בַּעֲדַת־ לֻרַח בִּי־ בַחָטָאָוֹ מֶּת וּבַנֵים לֹא־הַיִּוּ לְוֹ: (ד) לַמַּה יָגָרַע שַׁם־אָבִינוּ מִתְּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתֹּוֹ כֵּי אֵין לְוֹ בֵּן תִּנָה־לֵנוּ אַחַלָּה בְּתָוֹךְ אֲחֵי אָבְינוּ: (ה) וַיַּקְרֵב מֹשֵׁה אֶת־מִשְׁפַּטָן לִפְנֵי יִקֹנַק: ס (ו) וַיָּאמֶר יְלְוָק אֶל־מֹעֶיה לֵאמְר: (ז) בַּוְ בְּנְוֹת צָלָפָחָד דֹבָרֹת נָתֹן תִּתַּן לָהֶם אַחַזַּת נַחַלָּה בְּתָוֹךְ אֲחֵי אֲבִיהֵם וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת־נַחַלַת אַבִיהָן לָהָן: (ח) וְאֶל־בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּדְבֵּר לַאמַר אֵישׁ כִּי־יָמֹוּת וּבֵן אֵין לוֹ וְהַעַבַרְתֵּם אַת־ נַחַלַתִּוֹ לְבָתְּוֹ: (ט) וָאָם־אֵין לְוֹ בַּת וּנְתַתֵּם אֶת־נַחַלָּתְוֹ לְאָחֵיו: (י) וָאִם־אֵין לְוֹ אַחֶים וּנָתַתֵּם אַת־נַחַלַתְוֹ לַאַחֵי אַבֵּיו: (יא) וָאִם־אֵין אַחִיםؓ לָאָבִיוֹ וּנְתַהֵּם אֵת־נַחַלָּתוֹ לְשָׁאֵרוֹ הַקַּרָב אֵלֵיו מִמְּשְׁפַּחְתָּוֹ וְיַרָשׁ אֹתָהּ וָהָיִתָּה לִבְגֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ֹלְחָקָת מִשְׁפָּט כַּאֲשֶׁר צוַה יַלוַק אֶת־מֹשֵה: ס

Now that we have properly explained how amazing they are, we can find out what the future holds for them.

Numbers Chapter 36

1And the heads of the fathers' houses of the family of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spoke before Moses, and before the princes, the heads of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel; 2 and they said: 'The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters. 3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then will their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of our fathers, and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they shall belong; so will it be taken away from the lot of our inheritance. 4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then will their inheritance be added unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they shall belong; so will their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.' 5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: 'The tribe of the sons of Joseph speaketh right. 6 This is

במדבר פרשת מסעי פרק לו פסוק א - יג (א) וַיִּקְרַבֿוּ רַאשֵׁי הָאַבֿוֹת לִמִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־ גַּלְעַד בַּן־מַכִיר בַּן־מִנַשֵּׁה מֵמִשְׁפַּחָת בָּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיְדַבְּרוּ לפְגֵי מֹשֶׁהֹ וְלפְגַי הַנְּשִׂאִים רַאשֵׁי אַבָּוֹת לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרַאֵל: (ב) נִיּאֹמְרוּ אֶת־אֲדֹנִי צָוָה יִלְנָׁק לָמָת אֶת־הָאַרֵץ בְּנַחַלָה בְּגוֹרֶל לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַאדֹנִי צַוָּה בִּיקֹנָק לָתַׁת אַת־נַחַלֵת צָלַפָּחָד אַחִינוּ לְבָנֹתֵיו: (ג) וְהֵיוּ ַלאַחָּד מִבְּנֵי שִׁבְטֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׁרָאַלֹּ לְנַשִׁים וָנְגְרָעָה נַחֲלָתָן מִנַּחֲלָת אֲבֹתֵׁינוּ וְנוֹטַּף עֲל נַחַלַת הַמַּטָּה אַשֵּׁר תַּהָיִינַה לַהַם וּמִגֹּרֵל נַחַלַתַנוּ יִגַּרַעַ: (ד) וָאָם־יִהְיֵה הּיֹבֵל לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנְוֹסְפָה נַחַלַתְוֹ עַל נַחַלָּת הַמַּטֵּה אַשֶׁר תִּהָיֻינָה לָהֶם וּמְנַּחַלַתֹּ מַטֵּה אֲבֹתִּינוּ יָגַרָע נַחַלַתַן: (ה) וַיִּצֵו מֹשֵׁה אֵת־בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵׁל עַל־פָּי יִלֹוָק לַאמֶר כֵּן מַמֵּה בְנֵי־ יוסף דברים: (ו) זה הדבר אשר־צוה יקוק

the thing which the LORD hath commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying: Let them be married to whom they think best; only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. 7 So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may possess every man the inheritance of his fathers. 9 So shall no inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; for the tribes of the children of Israel shall cleave each one to its own inheritance.' 10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad. 11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons. 12 They were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. 13 These are the commandments and the ordinances, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. {P} (JPS1917)

לָבְנָוֹת צָלָפָחָד לֵאמֹר לַטְוֹב בְּעֵינֵיהָם תּהָיֶינָה לְנָשִׁים אַּדְּ לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מַפֵּה אֲבִיהָם תָּהָנִינַה לְנַשִּׁים: (ז) וָלֹא־תַּסָּב נַחַלַה לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמַּטָה אֶל־מַטָּה כִּי אִֿישׁ בִּנַחַלַתֹּ מַטָּה אַבֹּתִּיו יִדְבָּקוּ בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ח) וְכַל־ בַּת יֹרֶשֶׁת נַחֲלָה מִמַּטוֹת בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ּלְאֶחָׁד מְמִשְׁפַּחַת מַטֵּה אַבִיהַ תִּהְיֵה לֹאִשַׁה לֹמַעַן ַיִירְשׁוּ בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵׁל אָישׁ נַחֲלָת אֲבֹתַיו: (ט) וַלֹא־תַסָּב נַחַלַה מִמַּטֵה לְמַטֵּה אַחַר כִּי־אִישׁ בָּנַחַלָּתוֹ יִדְבָּקוֹּ מַטָּוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (י) כַּאַשֵׁר צְוָה יִלְוַק אֶת־מֹשֵׁה כֵּן עֲשִׂוּ בְּנִוֹת צְלָפְחָד: (יא) וַתִּהְיֵּינָה מַחְלֵה תִרְצָּה וְחָגְלָה וּמִלכֵּה וִנֹעָה בִּנִוֹת צְלַפְחָד לִבְנֵי דֹדִיהַן לָנַשִׁים: (יב) מֵמִּשִׁפְּחָת בְּנֵי־מִנַשֵּׁה בֶּן־ יוֹסֵף הַיִּוּ לְנַשִׁים וַתִּהִי נַחַלַתַּן עַל־מַטֵּה מִשְׁפַּחַת אֲבִיהֵן: (יג) אֱלֶה הַמִּצְוֹת וָהַמִּשִׁפַּטִּים אֲשֵּׁר צְוָה יִלְוֵק בִּיַד־מֹשֵׁה אֵל־ בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַרְבָת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדָּן יִרְחוֹ:

Who were the sons of Machir to demand the share of the land?

Numbers Chapter 32

1Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle, 2 the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying: 3 'Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Sebam, and Nebo, and Beon, 4 the land which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle.' {S} 5 And they said: 'If we have found favour in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan.' 6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: 'Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here? 7 And wherefore will ye turn away the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? ...39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites that were therein. 40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein. 41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the villages thereof, and called them Havvoth-jair. 42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

פרשת מטות

(א) וּמָקְנֵהוּ רַב הָיָָה לְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלְבְנֵי־גָד עַצוּם מָאַד וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ יַעְזֵר וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ גּלְעַּׁד וְהַנֵּה הַמָּקוֹם מְקוֹם מִקְנֵה: (ב) וַיָּבְאוּ ַבְנֵי־גַד וּבָנֵי רָאוּבָן נִיאמְרָוּ אֵל־מֹשֵׁה וָאֵל־ (ג) אַלְעָזֶר הַכּּהֵוֹ וְאֶל־נְשִׂיאֵי הָעָדָה לֵאמְר: עֲטָרָוֹת וְדִיבֹן וְיַעְזֶר וְנִמְרָה וְחֶשְׁבָּוֹן וְאֶלְעָלֵה ּוּשְׂבָם וּנְבָוֹ וּבְעָוֹ: (ד) הָאָׁרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִבָּה יְלֹנָק לְפָנֵי עַדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָרֶץ מִקְנָה הָוֹא וַלְעַבָּדֵיךְּ מָקנֵה: ס (ה) נַיּאמָרוּ אָם־מַצַאנוּ חֵן בִּעֵינֵיך יַתַּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַוָּאֹת לַעֲבָדֶיךּ לַאֲחָזָיָה אַל־ תַּעַבָרָנוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן: (ו) נִיְּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְבָנֵי־גָד וְלִבְגֵי רְאוּבֵן הַאֲחֵיכֶּם יָבּאוּ לַמִּלְחָמָּה וְאַתָּם תַּשָׁבוּ פָה: (ז) וַלַמַה תנואון תִנִיאוּן אַת־לֶב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרַאֵל מֵעֲבֹר אֶל־הָאָָרִץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָהָם יְלֹוֶק: ... (לט) וַיַּלְכוּ בָּוֵֹי מָכָיר בֶּן־מְנַשֵּׁה גִּלְעַדָה ... וַיִּתַן מַן נַיִּוֹרֵשׁ אֶת־הָאֱמֹרֵי אֲשֶׁר־בָּה: (מ) נַיְּתַן משה את־הַגּּלִעַּד לְמַכִיר בַּן־מִנַשֵּׁה נַיָּשֵׁב בַּה: (מא) וְיָאִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁהֹ הָלַדְ וַיִּלְכָּד אֵת־חַוּתֵיהָם וַיִּקְרָא אֶתְהָן חַנִּת יָאִיר: (מב) וְנְבַח הָלַךְ וַיִּלְכָּד אָת־קָנַת וָאֶת־בָּנֹתֵיהָ וַיִּקְרָא לֵה נְבַח בִּשְׁמְוֹ:

Is it fitting that Benot Tzlafchad married their cousins?

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Midrash Fits

Rashi Bamidbar 27:1

OF THE FAMILIES OF MANASSEH THE SON OF JOSEPH — Why is this stated? Has it not already been said בן מנשה. and consequently we know that they belonged to the family of Manasseh the son of Joseph?! But it is to suggest the following idea to you: Just as Joseph held the Promised Land dear, as it is said, (Genesis 50:25) "And ye shall bring my bones up (to Palestine) from hence", so, too, his daughters held the Land dear, as it is said, (v. 4) "Give us an inheritance"; and further to teach you that they were righteous all of them (everyone here mentioned in the pedigree), for in every case where a person's doings and his ancestors' doings are nowhere plainly described and Scripture somewhere enters into the details of the pedigree in respect to one of them, tracing his genealogy back to someone worthy of praise, it is evident that the person in question is himself a righteous man and a son of a righteous father. But if it gives his genealogy in connection with something deserving of reprobation, — as, for example, (2 Kings 25:25) "Ishmael the son of Nethanian the son of Elishama came ... and smote Gedaliah", then it is quite certain that all who are mentioned in connection with him were wicked people (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:1).

למשפחת מנשה בן יוסף. למה נאמר? והלא כבר נאמר בן מנשה, אֵלַא לוֹמַר לְדָּ, יוֹסֵף חָבֶב אֶת הָאָרֵץ, שׁנֵּאֵמַר "וָהָעֵלְתָם אָת עַצְמֹתַי" וְגוֹי" (בראשית נ') וּבְנוֹתַיו חָבָּבוּ אֵת ָהָאָרֶץ, שֶׁנָאֱמַר חִנָה לְנוּ אֲחַזַּה, וּלְלַמֵּדָהָ שֶׁהַיוּ כַלַּם צַדִּיקִים, שַׁכַּל מִי שַׁמַעַשַּׂיו וּמַעַשָּׁה אַבוֹתֵיו סְתוּמִים וּפַרֵט לְדְּ הַכַּתוּב בָּאֵחָד מֶהֶם לִיַחֲסוֹ לשבח, הרי זה צדיק בן צדיק, וְאָם יִחֲסוֹ לְגְנַאִי, כָּגוֹן "בַּא "ישמעאל בו נתניה בו אַלישמע" (מלכים ב כ"ה), בַיַדוּעַ שֶׁכֵּל הַנְּזַכַּרִים עִמּוֹ רְשַׁעִים הַיוּ (ספרי):

והוא לא היה וגרי AND HE WAS NOT [... IN THE CONGREGATION OF KORAH] — Because they intended to state בחטתו מת, that HE DIED IN HIS OWN SIN they felt compelled to say he had taken no part in the sin of those who murmured, nor had he been in the congregation of Korah who incited the people against the Holy One, blessed be He (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3, Bava Batra 118b), but he had died through his own sin only, and had not made others to sin with him (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3). — As regards what this sin was, R. Akiba said that he was the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day (Numbers 15:32); R. Simeon said that he was one of those who presumed to disobey God's command (Numbers 14:44) (Shabbat 96b).

והוא לא היה וגו .'לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ בָאוֹת לוֹמֵר בחטאו מת ,נְזְקְקוּ לוֹמֵר לֹא בְחַטְא מִתְלוֹנְנִים וְלֹא בַעֲדַת לְרָח שֶׁהָצוּ עַל הַקַבָּ"ה הָיָה, אֶלָּא בְּחָטְאוֹ לְבַדּוֹ מֵת, וְלֹא הָחֶטִיא אֶת אֲחַרִים עִמוֹ (ספרי); רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר מְקוֹשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים הָיָה וְרַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר מִן הַמַּעְפִּילִים הָיָה (שבת צ"ו):