

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

PINHAS

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3
JULY 7, 2018 24 TAMUZ 5778

Rosh Hodesh Ab will be celebrated on Friday, July 13. No meat meals are permitted (except for Shabbat) from Saturday night, July 14 until Sunday night, July 22.

DEDICATION: In memory of our grandfather Reuben Joseph Bibi – Reuben Ben Farha 23 Tammuz

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EDITORS NOTES

Pidyon HaBen – Connecting the Worlds 5778

Its 3:30AM on Tuesday morning. I just woke up from an incredible dream and needed to write it down. As I went to sleep last night I was pondering the spiritual aspects of the pidyon Haben ceremony which is actually discussed in the Zohar Hakadosh this week for parshat Pinchas. I reviewed the words of the Zohar and some of the commentaries before nodding off.

I was wondering what happens on a spiritual level and how those who participate are affected to the point where the Rabbis teach us that one who attends a pidyon and participates in the meal is regarded as if he fasted 84 fasts. The letters peh daled from pidyon are the number 84. What is the incredible power of Pidyon?

In my dream I came into the Bet Midrash - the study hall - above and saw my beloved Rabbi.

He asked me to think about the question and begin at the beginning.

Each morning we ceremonially bind ourselves in Thought and in action to Hashem through the act of putting on our tefilin. As we wrap the tefilin around our arms representing action and over our heads representing Thought and finally over and around our finger repeating the words of the prophet “ve'erastik li” symbolic of a wedding ceremony, we are joined under heaven's chupah to our creator in heaven.

Immediately we repeat the words which Hashem told Moses.

“Kadesh li Kol bechor - sanctify onto me every firstborn”. We are told to remember the night of the exodus from Egypt and the final plague of makat bechorot. It was at that time that through being saved by the hand of Hashem himself that each first born became holy and the plan was for each first born from each family to be dedicated as a priest, a kohen to serve in the mishkan and the mikdash, to teach Benai Yisrael and to act as a bond between us and our father in Heaven

But unfortunately ninety days after that night, and only forty days after having stood at Sinai hearing Hashem give us the commandments we sinned while waiting for Moshe to return with the luchot, the tablets. It was the 17th of Tamuz which we commemorated this week when Moses found us unfortunately not awaiting his return but dancing around a golden calf. He destroyed the tablets and called out, Mi LaHashem - who is to G-d? The first born should have stepped up, but instead only the tribe of Levi did: only the Levites joined Moses and Hashem. And in that moment the mantle of service passed from the first born to the tribe of Levi.

We soon learn of the first pidyon Haben ceremony. “Did you remember it took place in the desert”, the Rabbi asked. We are told in parshat bamidbar that there were 22000 Leviim and each was exchanged with a bechor, a first born. But there were 22,273 first borns. So what about the extra 273? Each had to be redeemed using the five silver coins we use today.

So I asked the Rabbi what happens spiritually during our ceremony and why is it not needed when the child, although not a Levi or Kohen, is simply a grandson maternally of one or the other?

He pointed to the utility poles outside the window and to the electrical wires extending from one to another. One wire was cut and hanging and emitting sparks and I understood.

There is intrinsic holiness to every first born as we read kadesh li. But because the contract between the first born and Hashem was broken at the Chet HaEgel, there exists a short or a break in the line. The Kohen through the Pidyon ceremony repairs the

line bringing light and energy not only to the baby but to all who attend.

People run to holy men and spiritual gurus and pay handsomely for a blessing forgetting that they can be blessed by Hashem himself for nothing simply by coming to Synagogue and concentrating during the priestly blessing - birkat Kohanim each morning.

Yevarecha Hashem
Ya'er Hashem
Yisa Hashem
Vayasem Lecha Shalom

The key to blessings for us are to be found in the use of Hashem's name.

We have the yud and the heh representing the upper worlds and then the final vav and the heh with the vav representing transition to the final heh the lower world. When there is Shalom or shelemut meaning completion, the shefa or spiritual energy and blessing of the upper world is brought to the lower world. And this is what we always strive for; to connect our world below with the world above.

This holy child who is a bechor has a short in the circuit. We therefore bring the Kohen who as a Kohen represents this upper Yud (hochmah) and as a descendant of Levi represents the upper Heh (binah). Through the ceremony with five (heh) coins passing from one hand with five (heh) fingers to the other hand with five (heh) fingers the upper Heh is bound to the lower Heh (malchut) bringing Shalom and completing the circuit.

For one born to a Kohen or Levi, whether through his father or mother that connection to the upper yud/heh is already there and therefore they require no ceremony.

So at the moment the transaction is completed one has to imagine and actualize in ones soul this connection from the upper world to the lower world and from the lower world to the upper world. One must take advantage of this special moment recalling the exodus when Hashem and not an angel, when Hashem and not a seraph, when Hashem and not a messenger, but on his own, saved us forming a never ending and eternal bond with each and every one of us. We are bound to Hashem in Thought and in action whether as a bride to her spouse, a child to a parent or even a servant to a master. This is a moment when that channel is shalem, complete and fully open for our prayers to rise up and for them to be answered. This is a moment to stop and focus and realize that we have access to this pipe of unlimited

blessing. This is a moment when anything and everything is possible.

The Rabbi smiled and said, "but Da-vid you knew this all along." And with that I woke up. I lay there thinking about the dream and worried I would forget, grabbed my phone and began typing. I'm so happy I did. Now, back to sleep although not sure that I can.

PS: I did fall asleep. I read this over later today and decided not to edit it. I would like to make something clear. As I have said before, I don't think that my dreams are any level of communication with another world or those beyond. It's simply a tool I developed with rabbi Abittan's help. The rabbi explained that any attempt to learn Torah without the assistance of heaven was futile and advised me to always ask for Hashem's help and list and review my questions when I go to sleep at night. The rabbi explained that when we study regularly, we often have the answers in us and simply had to find it. When we enter sleep stage, it sometimes helps us to review.

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

PSS ... On the way home last Shabbat, I heard a class that Rabbi Joey Haber gave last week. He focused on the need, especially for fathers to be available for their families and especially their children which I found it very moving. As most of us men know, it's our wives who do the bulk of the child rearing. B'H, we have been blessed with amazing children and whenever I am complimented on the kids, I can only point to my wife. She's the one who pushes them beyond their comfort zone taking them from ordinary to extraordinary. Rabbi Haber listed the typical fatherly excuses of too much time in work, too much time doing chesed, too much time here or there. But it's our responsibility to better juggle our commitments and strengthen our families and make sure our children know, we are their best cheer leaders. This is a never ending responsibility and a never ending job.

In this week's portion following the tragedy of 24,000 husbands who abandoned their families and abandoned Hashem in the incident of Ba-al Peor and paid for it with their lives, Hashem again asks Moses to take a census. Every family is mentioned with a letter "heh" in the beginning and "yud" at the end. These are the letters of Hashem's name and testify to Hashem's endorsement of that family unit and in a way His partnership with the clan. We say when the parents the Ish and Isha work together we have the Yud from the Man and the heh from the woman (and

the Vav Heh from the Letubah) and know that within that family, the holy Shechina dwells.

BH, I grew up and my mother was and still is my biggest fan. My father worked crazy hours and has so many communal responsibilities, but he was always there for us. I pray I take that lesson.

Rabbi Haber closed his class with a famous story and although I read a version of it 25 years and heard Rabbi Abittan tell it 17 or 18 years ago, it still brings a tear. It's a reminder of how much one person can make a difference in another's life. And although it tells of friendship, we have to remember that blood bonds and obligation is that much more powerful.

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class was walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friend tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on. As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, and I saw a tear in his eye.

As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives." He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude.

I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before.

We talked all the way home, and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with me and my friends. He said yes. We hung all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends thought the same of him.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Damn boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just

laughed and handed me half the books. Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the smiles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class.

I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak. Graduation day, I saw Kyle.

He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than me and all the girls loved him! Boy, sometimes I was jealous.

Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach ... but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story." I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable." I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment.

I saw his Mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth. Never underestimate the power of your actions.

With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse, G-d puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way.

Summary of the Perasha Nathan Dweck

Pinchas - Pinchas' reward, Zelaphcad's daughters, korbanot for the holidays (year 40)

- 1- Hashem rewards Pinchas for killing Zimri. Hashem tells Moshe to count Benei Israel
- 2- Benei Israel is counted. The families and count for each tribe are listed.
- 3- Israel is divided between the tribes. The tribe of Levi is counted. The daughters of Zelphchad make a case that they should receive land too.
- 4- Zelaphchad's daughters get land. Moshe is shown the land of Israel and told he will not enter. Yehoshua is appointed as the new leader
- 5- Korbanot - The daily korban (korban tamid), Shabbat korbanot and Rosh Hodesh korbanot
- 6- Korbanot- The Pesach, Shavout, Rosh Hashana and Kipur korbanot. The issur of doing melacha on each holiday
- 7- Korbanot- The Succoth and Shemini Aseret korbanot. The issur of doing melacha on each holiday.

FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE

“May Hashem, G-d of all spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the assembly.” (Bemidbar 27:16)

After Hashem told Moshe Rabenu that he would not enter the Land, he requested that Hashem should appoint his successor. Hashem told him it would be Yehoshua. The Sefat Emet says that the Jews already have a reliable shepherd to lead them, Hashem Himself! Like David Hamelech says in Tehillim, “The Lord is my shepherd” (23:1). If so, why was Moshe requesting that Hashem should appoint a shepherd?

The Sefat Emet explains that even though in reality Hashem is always guiding us, human nature is such that there are difficult times when we feel distant from Him and abandoned. Therefore, we have leaders to help us understand that we are never forlorn and to give us the recognition that Hashem is constantly watching over us. The continuation of the Tehillim quoted above says, “Hashem is my shepherd, I will not lack.” He was saying that he should not lack the emotional connection and feeling that Hashem is his shepherd.

Rabbi Yisrael Reisman tells a story of a well known Jew in Williamsburg who was diagnosed with a terrible illness with a poor prognosis. Before he began treatment he went to every Hasidic Rebbe in Williamsburg for a blessing. Miraculously, after only two weeks, his disease disappeared and his doctor pronounced him completely cured. As news spread

of the miracle, each group of Hasidim took credit by asserting that it was the blessing given by their respective Rebbe that healed him. The man who was cured went to the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, to personally inform him of his improvement and to thank him for his blessing. He mentioned that each Hasidic group is taking credit. The Satmar Rebbe cynically responded that the true cause of his miraculous recovery was Hashem, but sadly He won't receive credit due to the fact that He has very few Hasidim who follow in Moshe's and David's footsteps in recognizing Him as their shepherd of life. Rabbi Reuven Semah

In this parashah, the total population of each tribe is recorded. The tribe of Dan was 64,400, while the tribe of Binyamin was 45,600. The fact that tribe of Dan was so much larger is surprising, because we know that Binyamin had ten sons while his brother, Dan, had only one son, and that one son was deaf!

The Hafess Hayim comments that we see from here that if Hashem wants a person to be successful, he will be successful even though it looks like there is no way he can do it. This also applies to intelligence and wealth. Even if a person seems to be less capable intellectually or financially, he should never feel that the cards are stacked against him and that he has no chance to succeed. Just like the tribe of Dan looked like it would not flourish and yet it grew tremendously, so too nobody should give up hope because he feels he cannot succeed.

There are many stories of people who took on major projects even though it looked like there was no way they could accomplish their goals, and yet they did succeed. When we consider embarking on a new endeavor, we need to remember that whether we succeed or not is entirely up to Hashem. We shouldn't just give up without even trying, but rather we should pray that Hashem helps us succeed, and then give it everything we have to accomplish what we set out to do. If we approach things with the right attitude, we will be amazed at what we can achieve! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Repeat After Me

Repetition can be boring. It can even make people lose their initial enthusiasm for an activity or a novel idea. Yet the Torah commands us to mention the Exodus from Egypt not merely daily, but twice daily, once in the daytime and again at night. This repetition may seem, from our perspective, counterproductive.

The Hafess Hayim, however, compares this commandment to a doctor's prescription that must be taken twice daily. The medication will not be effective if the repetitive schedule is not followed. Hashem

understands the fleeting nature of spiritual concepts in the cluttered minds of worldly humans. To ensure the effectiveness of His spiritual prescription, repetition on a regular schedule is the only technique that will yield implantation of these intangible principles in a person's being.

In his philosophical work, Kohelet, Shelomo Hamelech clearly states, "Havel havalim hakol havel – Vanity, vanity, all is worthless vanity!" (Kohelet 1:2). This clear statement of principle, we might think, would set us straight. But the wisest of all men felt it necessary to expand on his statement, and the balance of his great work is a detailed description of all the vanities of this world. For emphasis, Shelomo Hamelech completes each item that he mentions with the very repetitious postscript, "This, too, is vanity." From here we learn that repetition of spiritual concepts is beneficial for overcoming our animal natures.

Even while rushing through our busy schedules, we often hear words of wisdom: "Greet others with a pleasant countenance." "Love your neighbor as yourself." "Do not bear a grudge." Catch these thoughts and repeat them throughout the day. This simple technique will drive valuable concepts deep into your psyche to yield years of benefit. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Wings of Prayer

"Each dandelion seed is attached to a tiny parachute and a cluster of such parachutes form a spherical head at the top of the plant. They are picked up by the wind when the seeds are ripe and then carried for great distances, with each parachute carrying its tiny seed passenger."

The seeds of a dandelion can be compared to prayer. Each prayer develops wings that travels great distances towards Hashem. We must trust that Hashem knows when and how to answer them. (By Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller's, Duties of the mind.)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR Pinhas' Delayed Reward

Parashat Pinhas begins with G-d's announcement of the reward He granted to Pinhas, Aharon's grandson, for his heroic act of zealotry. As the Torah relates in the final verses of the previous Parasha, Parashat Balak, Pinhas brought a halt to the devastating plague that ravaged the nation and killed 24,000 people as a result of their immorality and worship of the Ba'al Pe'or idol. He ended the plague by killing two people – a member of Beneh Yisrael and a Midyanite woman – who committed a public act of immorality in front of the entire nation.

A number of commentators raised the question of why Pinhas' reward was "delayed" until the beginning of our Parasha. God's announcement of Pinhas' reward begins a new paragraph and a new Parasha, indicating that it was not immediate, that it was not automatic that Pinhas would be rewarded for his heroic act.

The explanation given is that not all acts of zealotry are necessarily valuable, or even legitimate. People act in a zealous, extreme manner for all kinds of reasons, such as immaturity, impulsivity, the thrill of controversy, self-promotion, or advancing some sort of personal agenda. And when acts of zealotry are driven by such motives, they are illegitimate and condemnable. G-d paused, so-to-speak, before announcing Pinhas' reward in order to dispel the possible misconception that such acts are inherently admirable and automatically bring reward. The pause points to the hesitation and ambivalence with which we must approach such acts, and the extremely delicate nature of zealous reaction to improper behavior. The validity of zealotry must be carefully weighed and considered on the basis of the person's motives and the circumstances surrounding the act in question. Was the individual sincerely driven by a desire to help the Jewish people, or was this just a spontaneous, immature outburst? Did he carefully consider alternatives, and take into account the consequences of his action, or did he act on raw, mindless impulse?

Pinhas' reward was not immediate because these questions needed to be asked before the announcement was made. In the end, of course, G-d emphatically affirmed that Pinhas acted purely for the sake of Hashem and the Jewish people. But the hesitation teaches us to exercise extreme caution before resorting to drastic acts in the name of G-d.

VICTOR BIBI SOD HAPARASHA

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Rabbi Wein THE SADDEST DAY

There is no doubt that the saddest day on the Jewish calendar is the commemoration of the fast day of the ninth of Av. The day marks the days of destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem millennia

ago. It also harbors within it the commemoration of many other sad and tragic events throughout Jewish history. From the original reluctance of the Jewish people to enter the land of Israel while they were still under Godly protection in the desert of Sinai, until the signs of the outbreak of the horrendous world wars of the past century, this day has served as the focal date of Jewish sadness and mourning.

The Jewish people as a nation has suffered so much and so greatly throughout its history that to commemorate the dates of our various tragedies would probably occupy all the days of the year. In order that life should continue and that the burden of our sadness should somehow be relieved and made more bearable, the commemoration of tragedy and the emotions that such remembrances automatically engender are to be concentrated on in this one sad, fast day of the ninth of Av.

Because the ninth of Av falls on the day of the holy Sabbath this year, the actual day of sadness is postponed till the next day. However the Talmud notes that there is opinion that even the 10th day of Av should be observed as a day of sadness and it is done so partially every year and fully this year.

One of the great tests in life is the ability to adjust to and handle grief and tragedy. For most humans, days of grief and sadness are unavoidable events, especially if one is blessed with years and age. Jewish tradition and law mandates that specific behavior be reflected at such difficult times. The observances of rituals are psychologically and emotionally beneficial to the mourner and allows a certain sense of perspective to govern our lives and reactions.

The Jewish people have mourned the destruction of Jerusalem for centuries on end. They did so even when there was no opportunity to attempt to restore and rebuild the Jewish presence in the holy city. Nevertheless, Jews never abandoned their vision of returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding and refurbishing it. When such a vision seemed to be hopeless, it was the observance of tradition and ritual and the words of the prophets and great poets of Israel that sustained the Jewish people so that eventually that vision of restoration and rebuilding would be actualized, as it has been in our generation.

There is no other comparable story in all the annals of human civilization. The grief is always tempered by the acceptance of God's will, by the realization of eternity and by the natural optimism that is part of the Jewish personality. The Jews always proclaimed that this saddest day of the year would somehow

eventually be transformed into a day of joy and rejoicing.

What that day joy and rejoicing will look like, I have no idea. I ruefully think that the Jewish people will find it difficult to give up this saddest day of the year and transform it into a day of happiness. This sad day has been around for so long and is such an integral part of our religious life and calendar year that just as it was difficult for us to imagine Jerusalem rebuilt in our dark exile, so too is it difficult for us to imagine a Jewish year without this day as one of its components.

I think that the change in our emotions and attitude will undoubtedly be a gradual one and that it will require a period of adjustment just as the recovery from personal grief and tragedy does. It will always be a day of recall and memory even if it will be celebrated as a day of joy and redemption. It will be the supreme test of our ability to rise from grief and tragedy and advance to great accomplishment and optimism.

Our future is always shaped by our past and this will necessarily occur when the ninth of Av will be treated as a holiday and not as a day of fasting and mourning. Nevertheless, this day will carry with it the events of Jewish history, which in turn will make the restoration of Jerusalem even more wondrous and miraculous in our eyes and in the eyes of the whole world.

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Lost Masterpiece

A true story that took place in 1995: It concerns the legacy of an unusual man with an unusual name: Mr Ernest Onians, a farmer in East Anglia whose main business was as a supplier of pigswill. Known as an eccentric, his hobby was collecting paintings. He used to go around local auctions and whenever a painting came on sale, especially if it was old, he would make a bid for it. Eventually he collected more than five hundred canvases. There were too many to hang them all on the walls of his relatively modest home, Baylham Mill in Suffolk. So he simply piled them up, keeping some in his chicken sheds.

His children did not share his passion. They knew he was odd. He used to dress scruffily. Afraid of being burgled, he rigged up his own home-made alarm system, using klaxons powered by old car batteries, and always slept with a loaded shotgun under his bed. When he died, his children put the paintings on sale by Sotheby's, the London auction house. Before any major sale of artworks Sotheby's puts out a

catalogue so that interested buyers can see in advance what will be on offer.

A great art expert, Sir Denis Mahon (1910-2011), was looking through the catalogue one day when his eye was caught by one painting in particular. The photograph in the catalogue, no larger than a postage stamp, showed a rabble of rampaging people setting fire to a large building and making off with loot. Onians had bought it at a country house sale in the 1940s for a mere £12. The catalogue listed the painting as the Sack of Carthage, painted by a relatively little known artist of the seventeenth century, Pietro Testa. It estimated that it would fetch £15,000.

Mahon was struck by one incongruous detail. One of the looters was making off with a seven branched candelabrum. What, Mahon wondered, was a menorah doing in Carthage? Clearly the painting was not depicting that event. Instead it was portrait of the Destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. But if what he was looking at was not the Sack of Carthage, then the artist was probably not Pietro Testa.

Mahon remembered that the great seventeenth century artist Nicholas Poussin had painted two portraits of the destruction of the second temple. One was hanging in the art museum in Vienna. The other, painted in 1626 for Cardinal Barberini, had disappeared from public view sometime in the eighteenth century. No one knew what had happened to it. With a shock Mahon realised that he was looking at the missing Poussin.

At the auction, he bid for the picture. When a figure of the eminence of Sir Dennis bid for a painting the other potential buyers knew that he must know something they did not, so they too put in bids. Eventually Sir Dennis bought the painting for £155,000. A few years later he sold it for its true worth, £4.5 million, to Lord Rothschild who donated it to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem where it hangs today in the memory of Sir Isaiah Berlin.

I know this story only because, at Lord Rothschild's request, I together with the then director of the national gallery, Neil MacGregor, gave a lecture on the painting while it was shown briefly in London before being taken to its new and permanent home. I tell the story because it is so graphic an example of the fact that we can lose a priceless legacy simply because, not loving it, we do not come to appreciate its true value. From this we can infer a corollary: we inherit what we truly love.

This surely is the moral of the story of the daughters of Zelophehad in this week's parsha. Recall the story: Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, had died in the wilderness before the allocation of the land. He left five daughters but no sons. The daughters came before Moses, arguing that it would be unjust for his family to be denied their share in the land simply because he had daughters but not sons. Moses brought their case before God, who told him: "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them" (Num. 27:7). And so it came to pass.

The sages spoke of Zelophehad's daughters in the highest praise. They were, they said, very wise and chose the right time to present their request. They knew how to interpret Scripture, and they were perfectly virtuous.[1] Even more consequentially, their love of the land of Israel was in striking contrast to that of the men. The spies had come back with a negative report about the land, and the people had said, "Let us appoint a [new] leader and return to Egypt" (Num. 14:4). But Zelophehad's daughters wanted to have a share in the land, which they were duly granted.[2]

This led to the famous comment of Rabbi Ephraim Luntschitz of Prague (1550-1619) on the episode of the spies. Focussing on God's words, "Send for yourself men to spy out the land of Canaan" (Num. 14:2), Luntschitz argued that God was not commanding Moses but permitting him to send men. God was saying, "From My perspective, seeing the future, it would have been better to send women, because they love and cherish the land and would never come to speak negatively about it. However, since you are convinced that these men are worthy and do indeed value the land, I give you permission to go ahead and send them." [3]

The result was catastrophic. Ten of the men came back with a negative report. The people were demoralised, and the result was that they lost the chance to enter the land in their lifetime. They lost their chance to enjoy their inheritance in the land promised to their ancestors. The daughters of Zelophehad, by contrast, did inherit the land – because they loved it. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

I cannot help but think that in some strange way the stories of the daughters of Zelophehad and the auction of the missing Poussin illustrate the state of Jewish identity today. For many of my contemporaries Judaism was like the story of Ernest

Onian's penchant for paintings. Judaism was something their parents had but not something that was meaningful to them. Like Onians' children they were willing to let go of it, unaware that it was a legacy of immense value. When we don't fully appreciate the value of something, we can lose a treasure without ever knowing it is a treasure.

Judaism, of course, is not a painting. It's an identity. And you can't sell an identity. But you can lose it. And many Jews are losing theirs. Our ancestors have given us the gift of a past. We owe them the gift of a future faithful to that past. At least we should not relinquish it simply because we don't know how valuable it is.

The life-changing idea here is surely simple yet profound: if we truly wish to hand on our legacy to our children, we must teach them to love it. The most important element of any education is not learning facts or skills but learning what to love. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

- [1] Baba Batra 110b.
 [2] Sifre, Numbers, 133.
 [3] Kli Yakar to Num. 13:2.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL "And you will see it" (27:12)

Why was it necessary to see the land? Moshe surely believed Hashem's promises of the exceptional excellence of the land, and even without viewing the land he would be deeply grateful to Hashem. But here we learn we are all in this life for the purpose of gaining a sensory Awareness of Hashem and His Wisdom and His Kindliness. Although all this would be fully revealed to Moshe in the Afterlife, it was of the most urgent necessity to gain this information in this life, where the Free-Will operates to bestow the true Perfection.

And this perfection does not consist merely of knowing Hashem's wisdom and kindness, but especially in seeing and experiencing His wisdom and His kindness. By utilizing our Free-Will existence here to gain the most concrete form of Awareness by means of our senses, we achieve the True Knowledge ('Daat') for which we were created.

"You will see it" while you are yet alive. "I have caused you to see with your eyes" (Devarim 34:4). "With Your eyes", while you are yet alive and are able to exercise your Free-Will to feel the emotion of gratitude for the gift of this beautiful land. Similarly, Moshe had requested "Cause me to see Your glory (Shemot 33:18), for he did not wish to wait until he

entered the Afterlife where he could gaze at Hashem's Presence (Iyov 19:26, Berachot 17A). He desired to see as much as was possible with his eyes of flesh and his Free-Will in this life.

Similarly, Hashem "brought Abram to the outdoors" (Beresheet 15:5) to see how numerous are the stars, "and He said to him: So shall be your seed" (ibid.). Why was it necessary to show him the stars? Hashem could have spoken to Abraham in his tent that his seed would be too numerous to count. But here we see that Abraham was being given the opportunity to experience a sensory perception of the great number of his progeny in order for his physical faculties of sight and his emotion of gratitude to Hashem to be activated, in addition to the mere intellectual knowledge of Hashem's promise.

We learn that men are in this world in order that their nerves and brains and their mouths and ears should experience the sensory Awareness of Hashem and His wisdom and power and kindness. "The praise of Hashem my mouth shall speak, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever" (Tehillim 145:21). "My heart And my flesh shall sing to the living G-d" (ibid. 84:3).

The True Knowledge is gained not from mere ideas, but from the manner in which the great truths become perceived by our physical faculties, which is the Awareness (Yirat Hashem) that Hashem created Man to attain.

Quoted from "Journey Into Greatness" by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT'L