

פרשת פינחס

If I remember correctly, I first learned about a literary device called 'foreshadowing' when I was in 11th grade. We were told to be on the lookout for seemingly irrelevant points that later on would be a significant part of the story line. For those of us who like to read detective or mystery novels, part of the fun of reading is identifying the foreshadowed information before the story's conclusion.

Although the Torah is certainly 'literature' and sometimes we see that it employs methods which are the same as methods in non-Kodesh literature¹, nothing that is written in Torah is irrelevant where it appears. If something is written, it has a meaning in the place that it appears. Of course, much of what is written in the Torah has ramifications for the Torah's other parts also. That is no secret. However, nothing is written in the Torah in place *alef* only because it wants us to remember it much later on in place *beis*.

Therefore, when we come to our Parshas Pinchos and read about the claim of B'nos Tzelofchod for their father's *nachalah* – inheritance in Eretz Yisroel and we see that these women are mentioned a few verses earlier, we understand that their initial mentioning is not for naught.

Our challenge in learning Torah is to understand why they are mentioned, seemingly with no purpose, and to comprehend what message is given when they are first mentioned, in addition to being part of the general episode of *B'nos Tzelofchod*.

Let us first have a picture of what our discussion is about.

¹ For example, see Ramban's commentary to the first Posuk in Sh'mos where he discusses the need to repeat the names of those who came to Egypt at the onset of that Sefer even though all the information is given in its entirety in B'reishis, Parshas Vayigash.

An early part of our Parsha is the final census of Israel that is undertaken prior to their entry into Eretz Yisroel.

Rashi gives us two reasons for the census to have been undertaken at that time. He writes (Perek 26/Posuk 1):

ויהי אחרי המגפה וגו' - משל לרועה שנכנסו זאבים לתוך עדרו והרגו בהן והוא מונה אותן לידע מנין הנותרות. דבר אחר כשיצאו ממצרים ונמסרו למשה, נמסר לו במנין, עכשיו שקרב למות ולהחזיר צאנו, מחזירם במנין:

It was after the plague – The parable is of the shepherd that wolves entered into his flock and killed some of his sheep. The shepherd counts his sheep to know how many remained.

An additional reason – When Israel left Egypt, they were placed in the care of Moshe and were given to him by an exact count. Now that it is close to the time when he will die and return the sheep, he returns them with a precise account.

We can understand that there is an additional reason as well. In this week's Parsha we begin to learn regarding the division of Eretz Yisroel to the Shevatim. The numbers of each Shevet and the families to whom the Land will be parceled out is vital for that division.

Thus, the Torah writes clearly (Perek 26/P'sukim 51-53):

אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאַלְף שֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים: וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: לְאֵלֶּה תִּחְלַק הָאָרֶץ בְּנַחֲלָה בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁמוֹת:

These are the numbers of B'nei Yisroel – 601,730. Hashem spoke to Moshe saying. 'To these the Land will be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of their names.'

The protocol for this census was the same as for the earlier ones as we read (ibid. Posuk 2):

שָׂאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁ כָּל עֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמֵעַלָּה לְבֵית אָבוֹתָם כָּל יֵצֵא
צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

Take the heads of the entire congregation of B'nei Yisroel from the age of twenty and above, according to the house of their fathers, all who go out to the army in Israel.

Thus, our expectations are that the results of this final census should be reported in a similar manner to the way that the results in the earlier census were reported.

In fact, there are a number of differences between the way that the results were reported some 38 years earlier and how they are reported here. Netziv, in his introduction to Sefer B'midbar and in his commentary on our Parsha, notes some of those differences and explains them in light of the transitional period between the years of Egyptian slavery and the freedom of living in Eretz Yisroel that the years in the wilderness allowed.

One of the differences between the two censuses is the appearance of the names of the six women who are mentioned here and, who, by definition, do not meet the criteria of whom is included in the census.

We read (ibid. Posuk 46):

וְשֵׁם בֵּת אָשֶׁר שֶׁרַח:

The name of the daughter of Asher is Serach.

Rashi explains that she is mentioned exceptionally because she had an exceptionally long life:

לְפִי שֶׁהִיטָה קִיּוּמָהּ בְּחַיִּים מִנְּאֵה כֹּהֵן:

Because she was still alive, she was counted here.

Another exception deals with our specific topic. We read (ibid. P'sukim 28-34):

בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶפְרַיִם: בְּנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה לְמֹכִיר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמֹּכִירִי וּמֹכִיר הוֹלִיד
אֶת גִּלְעָד לְגִלְעָד מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגִּלְעָדִי: אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי גִלְעָד אִיעֶזֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאִיעֶזְרִי לְחֶלֶק
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶלְקִי: וְאַשְׂרִיאֵל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַשְׂרִיאֵלִי וְשָׁכֶם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁכָמִי: וְשְׁמִידֹעַ
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁמִידְעִי וְחֶפְרִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶפְרִי: וְצִלְפֹּחַד בֶּן חֶפְרִי לֹא הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים כִּי אִם
בָּנוֹת וְשֵׁם בָּנוֹת צִלְפֹּחַד מַחֲלָה וְנַעֲמָה חַגְלָה מִלְכָּה וְתִרְצֹה: אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה
וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וְחֲמִשִּׁים אָלֶף וְשֶׁבַע מְאוֹת:

The children of Yosef according to their families, Menasheh and Efraim. The children of Menashe: Mochir and the Mochir family², Mochir gave birth to Gilad. Gilad and the Gilad family. These are the children of Gilad: l'ezer and the l'ezer family, Cheilek and the Cheilek family. Asriel and the Asriel family, Shechem and the Shechem family. Shmido and the Shemido family, Cheifer and the Cheifer family. To *Tzelofchod* the son of Cheifer there were no sons, only daughters and the name of the daughters of *Tzelofchod* were Machloh, No'o, Choglo, Milko and Tirtzo. These are the families of Menasheh and their numbers were 52,700.

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch writes (Ibid. Posuk 5):

כל שבט הסתעף לענפי משפחות...היו בדרך כלל בנים ראשונים של אבי השבט...בשבטים אחדים - כך ביהודה, אפרים ובנימין - יצרו גם הנכדים ענפי משפחה הנקראים כאן לעצמם, ובמנשה גם הנינים יצרו משפחות.

Each Shevet branched out to many families. They were, in general, the children of the fathers of the Shevet. In Yehuda, Efraim and Binyamin, the grandchildren formed their own branches of the family and in Menashe also the great-grandchildren formed their own branches of the family.

Rav Hirsch points out, quoting Ramban, that the multitude of branches extending to grandchildren and great-grandchildren was not necessarily based on larger numbers. There were larger Shevatim that did not branch out so much.

² Although Rashi (Posuk 5) attributes special meaning to the repetition of the family names with the letters *heh* and *yud* as prefixes and suffixes respectively, we follow the translation of Onkelos here that does not emphasize that change.

So we must ask, what makes Menashe so unique that we are witness to the exceptional extent of the family in that great-grandchildren, the fourth generation, are so uniquely connected to their ancestors that they are considered to be equivalent to the children, the second generations of the other Shevatim.

In Parshas Mattos we will read of the request of the Shevatim of Reuven and Gad to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan River, *Eiver HaYarden*.

When we get to that section, we are surprised to read (B'midbar Perek 32/Posuk 33):

וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה לְבִנֵי גָד וְלְבִנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלַחֲצִי שֵׁבֶט מְנַשֶּׁה בֶן יוֹסֵף אֶת מַמְלַכַת סִיחֹן
מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת מַמְלַכַת עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן הָאֶרֶץ לְעֵרִיָּה בְּגִבְלַת עֵרִי הָאֶרֶץ סְבִיב:

Moshe gave to B'nei Gad and to B'nei Reuven and to half of Shevet Menasheh the son of Yosef the kingdom of Sichon, King of the Emorites and the kingdom of Og, the King of the Boshon, the land with its cities according to the borders of the cities that surrounded.

Menashe was not mentioned as requesting to live in *Ever HaYarden*!. Why are they mentioned here? Furthermore, the people who requested are referred to as *B'nei Reuven* and *B'nei Gad*, not as *Shevet* whereas Menashe is referred to as Shevet. And not only is Menashe referred to as *Shevet*, he is also attached to the name of his father, Yosef. Why?

Briefly here, and at greater length in Sefer D'vorim, Netziv explains some of our difficulties.

The Posuk in Devorim (Perek 3/Posuk 5) reads:

וְלְרְאוּבֵן וְלְגָדִי נָתַתִּי מִן הַגִּלְעָד וְעַד נַחַל אַרְנוֹן תּוֹךְ הַנָּחַל וְגַבְלֵי עַד יַבֵּק הַנָּחַל גְּבוּל
בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:

I, Moshe, gave to the Reuvenites and the Gaddites from *Gil'ad* to the Arnon River, in the river and the border, and until the *Yabbok*, the river that is the border with the people of Amon.

Where is Menashe? Why isn't that Shevet mentioned? Furthermore, when we read in Parshas Mattos the limitations that were placed on Reuven and Gad in order for their request to be accepted, we did not read of any limitations on Shevet Menashe.

Netziv writes:

...ולאו דבר ריק הוא. אלא נראה על פי שיש להתבונן עוד שהרבה משה רבינו חלקת חצי שבט מנשה הרבה לפי ערך שני שבטים אלו, וגם לא התנה עמם תנאי בני גד ובני ראובן. הן אמת שהלכו בני מכיר בן מנשה גלעדה וילכדוה, מכל מקום אין זה טעם ליתן להם בשביל זה....

ועל כרחק היה בזה כונה פנימית שנוגע לכלל ישראל שישבו בעבר הירדן. ונראה דבשביל שראה משה רבינו דבעבר הירדן כח התורה מעט...על כן השתדל להשתיל בקרבם גדולי תורה שיאירו מחשכי ארץ באור כח שלהם, וכתוב [שופטים ה/יד³] מני מכיר ירדו מחוקקים, היינו גדולי תורה ראשי ישיבות...והשתדל משה שיתרצו המה לשבת בעבר הירדן, ומשום זה הרבה להם נחלה עד שנתרצו...וזוהו סדר הפרשה שהוכיח משה לישראל שהחל לחלוק נחלת בני גד ובני ראובן, ולא יכול לגמור עד שדבר עם חצי שבט מנשה, וגמר עמם ונתרצו בחלקם, אז ידע משה לגמור חילוק נחלת בני גד ובני ראובן...

³ This Posuk is taken from *Shiras Devorah* and it reads in its entirety:

מִנֵּי אֶפְרַיִם שָׁרְשָׁם בְּעַמְלֵק אַחֲרָיִךְ בְּנֵימִין בְּעַמְמֵיךְ מִנֵּי מְכִיר יִרְדּוּ מְחַקְקִים וּמַזְבִּילֵן מְשִׁכִּים בְּשֶׁבֶט סִפְרֵ:

Rashi explains:

מני אפרים - מן אפרים יצא את שורש יהושע בן נון לרדות בעמלק ליחלש אותו לפי חרב(שמות יז/ג)...
From Efraim – From Efraim went out the root who was Yehoshua Bin Nun [of that Shevet] to rule over Amalek and to weaken them by sword...

אחריך - יקום משבט בנימין שאול בן קיש שיגרמנו ויעמם אותו כגחלים עוממות...
After you – There will arise from the Shevet of Binyamin Shaul ben Kish who will break them and snuff them out like coals that are extinguishing.

מני מכיר ירדו מחוקקים - שרים גדולים שכבשו את האמורי אשר כבשו ששים עיר כל חבל ארגוב שכבש יאיר:

From Mochir, the lawgivers went down – Great officers who conquered the Emorites and the sixty cities in the Argov area that Yair conquered.

All this is not written without a reason. Rather, it appears that we must consider why Moshe Rabbenu gave the half of Shevet Menashe a large portion of inheritance in comparison with these two Shevatim [of Reuven and Gad]. Also, Moshe did not make the stipulations with the half of Menashe as he did with Reuven and Gad.

It is true that that the children of Mochir ben Menashe went to Gil'ad and captured it – but that is not a reason to give that portion to them as an inheritance⁴.

Thus, we are forced to say that there was an inner-intent that is relevant to all of Israel who resided in *Eiver HaYarden*. It appears that because Moshe Rabbenu saw that the power of Torah in *Eiver HaYarden* was less [than that of Eretz Yisroel proper] he attempted to plant in the midst of *Eiver HaYarden* people great in Torah learning that would enlighten the darkness of that land with the light of the power of their Torah.

It is written, 'from Mochir there came down lawgivers'. That refers to *Gedolei Torah* and *Roshei Yeshivos*. Moshe tried to persuade Menashe to reside in *Eiver HaYarden* and therefore he increased their inheritance until they acquiesced.

Thus, [in Parshas Mattos] the order of the event was that Moshe first rebuked Israel that began to divide the inheritance of *Eiver HaYarden* between Gad and Reuven but he could not finish [and allow them to inherit] until he first spoke with half of Shevet Menashe and concluded with them [what they would receive] and they acquiesced to their portion and then Moshe knew that he could conclude the inheritance of Gad and Reuven.⁵

⁴ In the omitted section, Netziv shows how others captured parts of *Eiver HaYarden* and were not given those parts as an inheritance.

⁵ Netziv concludes his commentary here writing:

Thus, we see that there are two aspects in which Shevet Menashe excelled uniquely: the multi-generational renewal so that even fourth generation descendants could take their place with their grandparents and great-grandparents as continuing the chain of their ancestors, and their superiority in Talmud Torah to such a degree that they would be able to preserve a Torah lifestyle for Reuven and Gad who evidently did not have dedication to such a goal.

And there is a third aspect as well that Netziv emphasizes and that is the dedication that Shevet Menashe had for Eretz Yisroel.

That dedication was unique as Rashi points out in our Parsha.

When Tzelofchod's daughters came to claim their inheritance, the Torah reintroduces them as we read (Perek 27/Posuk 1):

וַתִּקְרַבְנָה בָּנוֹת צֶלְפַחַד בֶּן חֲפַר בֶּן גִּלְעָד בֶּן מֹכִיר בֶּן מְנַשֶּׁה לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן יוֹסֵף
וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בָּנֹתָיו מַחֲלֹה וְחֹגְלֹה וְנֹוֹחַ וְמִלְכוֹה וְתִרְצֹה:

The daughters of Tzelofchod the son of Cheifer the son of Gil'ad the son of Mochir the son of Menashe from the family of Menasheh ben Yosef drew near; these are the names of his daughters: Machloh, No'oh, Chogloh, Milkoh and Tirtzoh.

I can understand, perhaps, the need for the names of these women to be repeated a second time. Perhaps if the Torah wrote 'daughters' and did not name them, I may have thought it was referring to other daughters.

ומזה ילמדו לדורות להשתדל לדור במקום תורה דוקא, כי בזה תלוי חיי ישראל, וכדאיתא בכתובות דף קי"א א' כשם שאסור לצאת מארץ ישראל לבבל כך אסור לצאת מבבל לחוץ לארץ, ופירש רש"י לפי שיש שם ישיבות המרביצות תורה תמיד...

From this we learn for future generations to specifically seek to live in a place of Torah; because upon that the lives of Israel are dependent. This is like what it says in Masseches Kesuvos that just like it is prohibited to go out of Eretz Yisroel to Babylonia, so is it forbidden to go out of Babylonia to *Chutz La'aretz*. Rashi explains that this is because in Bavel there were Yeshivos that spread Torah constantly.

However, I do not understand at all why the lineage had to be written once again. The census made clear what their lineage was and how they are traced back to Yosef HaTzaddik. Why is it repeated?

Rashi writes:

למשפחת מנשה בן יוסף - למה נאמר, והלא כבר נאמר בן מנשה, אלא לומר לך יוסף חבב את הארץ, שנאמר (בראשית נ/כה⁶) והעליתם את עצמותי וגו', ובנותיו חבבו את הארץ, שנאמר (במדבר כז/ד⁷) תנה לנו אחוזה.

To the family of Menashe ben Yosef – Why is this said? Was it not already said [their ancestor was] the son of Menashe? But this is to teach you: Yosef loved Eretz Yisroel as it says, ‘You shall take up my bones’ and his daughters loved Eretz Yisroel as it says, ‘Give us an inheritance’.

The entire Shevet Menashe was unique – the men and the women. It is true that the men of Shevet Menashe died during the forty years in the wilderness, no different than all of the other men of Israel, yet they were still exceptional.

When at the conclusion of the census in this week’s Parsha we read (Perek 26/P’sukim 64-65):

וּבִאֲלֵהּ לֹא הָיָה אִישׁ מִפְּקוּדֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּקְדוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי: כִּי אָמַר ה' לָהֶם מוֹת יָמֵתוּ בְּמִדְבַּר וְלֹא נֹתֵר מֵהֶם אִישׁ כִּי אִם כָּלֵב בֶּן יִפְנֵה וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נוּן:

In these numbers there was no man from the census of Moshe and Aharon HaKohen who counted B’nei Yisroel in the Sinai Wilderness. Because

⁶ We read at the end of Sefer B’reishis:

וַיִּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֶעֱלֵתֶם אֶת עֲצָמוֹתַי מִזֶּה: Yosef imposed an oath upon B’nei Yisroel saying, ‘G-d will certainly remember you and you should bring up my bones from this [place to bury them in Eretz Yisroel].

⁷ The entire verse reads:

לָמָּה יִגְרַע שֵׁם אָבִינוּ מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֶּן תְּנֶה לָנוּ אַחֲזָה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵי אָבִינוּ: Why should the name of our father be detracted from his family because he has no son; give us an inheritance among the brothers of our father.

Hashem said to them, 'You will surely die in the wilderness', and no man was left from them except Kolev ben Yefuneh and Yehoshua bin Nun.

Rashi writes there:

ובאלה לא היה איש וגו' - אבל על הנשים לא נגזרה גזרת המרגלים, לפי שהן היו מחבבות את הארץ. האנשים אומרים (במדבר יד/ד⁸) נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה, והנשים אומרות (במדבר כז, ד) תנה לנו אחוזה.

In these numbers there was no man – [There was no man but there were women because] the decree on the Meraglim did not apply to women because they loved Eretz Yisroel. Regarding the men it says, 'Let us appoint a head and we will return to Egypt' and the women say, 'Give us an inheritance'.

And now we can see some of the uniqueness about Shevet Menashe that is evident from episodes that the Torah shares with us.

At the conclusion of next week's Parshas Mattos (together with Parshas Mas'ei this year) we read:

וילכו בני מכיר בן מנשה גלעד וילקדה ויורש את האמרי אשר בה: ויתן משה את הגלעד למכיר בן מנשה וישב בה: ויאר בן מנשה הלק וילכד את חותיהם ויקרא אתהן חות יאיר: ונבח הלק וילכד את קנת ואת בנתיה ויקרא לה נבח בשמו:

The children of Mochir the son of Menashe went to Gil'ad and captured it and they banished the Emorites who were in it. Moshe gave Gil'ad to Mochir ben Menashe and he dwelled in it. Yair the son of Menashe went and captured their farms and he called them *Chavos Yair* – Yair's Farms. Novach went and captured Kenos and its satellite cities and he called them *Novach* after his own name.

⁸ The entire verse reads:

ויאמרו איש אל אחיו נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה:
One man said to the other, 'Let us appoint a head and we will return to Egypt.'

Nowhere else have we found the initiative of individual families to capture lands in Eretz Yisroel. Only in Shevet Menashe and his descendants of many generations do we find such an initiative.

But, such an illustrious description of this Shevet might be surprising if we would base ourselves on past history.

What role was Menashe destined to play in Jewish history? When Yosef's two children were born, we read in Parshas Miketz (Perek 41/P'sukim 51-52):

וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי נִשְׁנִי אֲנִי... לִקְיָם אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי וְאֶת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי:
וְאֶת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי הִפְרִינִי אֲנִי... לִקְיָם בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי:

Yosef called the name of his first-born Menashe because Hashem caused me to forget all of my toil and the entire house of my father. The second he called Efraim, because Hashem made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.

If we had thought that being the first-born of Yosef would place Menashe in a unique relationship with his grandfather Yaakov, those thoughts were dashed when we read Parshas Vayechi. The Torah writes there (B'reishis Perek 48/P'sukim 14-20):

וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת יָמִינוֹ וַיִּשֶׁת׀ עַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הַצָּעִיר וְאֶת שְׂמָאלוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שִׁכַּל אֶת יָדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר׃ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵל... לִקְיָם אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אֲבָרְהָם וַיִּצְחָק הֲאֵל... לִקְיָם הֲרַעָה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדִי עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה׃ הַמְלֶאֶךְ הַגָּאֵל אֹתִי מִכָּל רָע׃ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת הַנְּעָרִים וַיִּקְרָא בָהֶם שְׁמֵי וְשֵׁם אֲבֹתַי אֲבָרְהָם וַיִּצְחָק וַיִּדְגּוּ לָרֶב בְּקֶרֶב הָאֶרֶץ׃ וַיֹּרָא יוֹסֵף כִּי יָשִׁית אָבִיו יָד יָמִינוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּרַע בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּתְמַךְ יָד אָבִיו לְהִסִּיר אֹתָהּ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֵל אָבִיו לֹא כֵן אָבִי כִּי זֶה הַבְּכוֹר שֵׁים יְמִינְךָ עַל רֹאשׁוֹ׃ וַיִּמָּאֵן אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר יַדְעֵתִי בְּנֵי יַדְעֵתִי גַם הוּא יִהְיֶה לָעַם וְגַם הוּא יִגְדֹל וְאוֹלָם אַחֲיוֹ הַקָּטָן יִגְדֹל מִמֶּנּוּ וְזָרְעוֹ יִהְיֶה מְלֹא הַגּוֹיִם׃ וַיְבָרְכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאִמּוֹר בְּךָ יְבָרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאִמּוֹר יִשְׁמְךָ אֲנִי... לִקְיָם כָּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה וַיִּשֶׁם אֶת אֶפְרַיִם לְפָנָיו מְנַשֶּׁה׃

Yisroel put out his right hand and he placed it on the head of Efraim, he was the young one; and his left hand on the head of Menashe; he intentionally crossed his hands because Menashe is the first-born. He blessed Yosef and

he said, 'G-d before Whom my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak, walked, G-d Who shepherds me from when I first was until this day. The angel who redeems me from all evil, he shall bless the lads and my name should be called upon them, and the names of my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak, and may they multiply greatly in the midst of the land.

Yosef saw that his father placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim and it was bad in his eyes and he supported his father's hand to remove it from the head of Ephraim and to be upon the head of Menashe. Yosef said to his father, 'Not so my father; because this one is the first-born; place your right hand upon his head.'

His father refused and he said, 'I know my son, I know; he too will be a nation and he too will grow; nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than him and *his* seed will fill the nations. Yisroel blessed them on that day saying, 'By you Israel will give blessings saying, "G-d should make you like Ephraim and Menashe'; and he placed Ephraim before Menashe".

The special place that Yaakov Ovinu assigned Ephraim seems to have had ramifications for both Ephraim and his older brother.

When Yosef's brothers discuss among themselves their travail when *Tzofnas Pa'aneach* threatens to hold them captive, we read (B'reishis Perek 42/Posuk 23):

וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שִׁמְעַי יוֹסֵף כִּי הִמְלִיץ בְּיַנְתָּם:

They did not know that Yosef could understand because there was a translator between them and Yosef.

Rashi writes:

המליץ - זה מנשה:

The translator – This is Menashe.

Where was Ephraim? When Yosef brought his sons to receive their blessing from Yaakov Ovinu, as above, we read (Perek 48/Posuk 1):

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה וַיִּקַּח אֶת שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ אֶת מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת אֶפְרַיִם:

It was after these words, he said to Yosef, 'Behold your father is sick'; Yosef took his two sons with him, Menashe and Efraim:

וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף - וַיֹּשֶׁב אֹמְרִים אֶפְרַיִם הִיא רִגְלִי לִפְנֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּתַלְמוּד, וְכַשְׁחֵלָה יַעֲקֹב בְּאַרְץ גּוֹשֶׁן, הֵלֵךְ אֶפְרַיִם אֶצְלֵ אָבִיו לְמִצְרַיִם וְהִגִּיד לוֹ:

He said to Yosef – There are those who say that [the one who spoke to Yosef] was Efraim who was accustomed to be before Yaakov in Torah study. When Yaakov became ill in the Land of Goshen, Efraim went to his father in Egypt and told him.

Efraim was with Yaakov and Menashe was with Yosef. Was this a matter of location and coincidence or was there a plan? Netziv tells us that indeed there was a plan. He writes (Perek 48/Posuk 20):

כֹּאֲפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה. בְּאֵמֶת הִיא עוֹד זֶרַע בְּרוּכֵי ה' בְּנִכְדֵי יַעֲקֹב כְּמוֹ פֶרֶץ וְזֶרַח וְעוֹד הַרְבֵּה, אֲבָל אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה הִיא כָּל אֶחָד גְּדוּלְתוֹ מִשׁוֹנָה מִחֲבִירוֹ, אֶפְרַיִם הִיא גְּדוּלָּה בְּתוֹרָה וְדַבָּק לֹא...ל'קִיּוֹ, וּמְנַשֶּׁה בְּהִלְיָכוֹת עוֹלָם וְעוֹסֵק בְּצִרְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Like Efraim and like Menashe – In truth there were other descendants of Yaakov who were blessed by Hashem [and worthy to serve as a blessing for others] such as Peretz, Zerach and many others. But, Efraim and Menashe each had a unique greatness. Efraim was great in Torah, cleaving to his G-d. Menashe was great in worldliness and was involved with the needs of Israel⁹.

So, Efraim stayed with his grandfather Yaakov Ovinu. He benefitted from the Torah of the *Ovos* and the years that Yaakov Ovinu was in *Yeshivas Shem v'Eiver*¹⁰.

Menashe did his apprenticeship with his father Yosef, second-in-command to Par'o by royal decree but first in command de facto. He saw the life of the

⁹ See also the Netziv to Posuk 14 here.

¹⁰ See Rashi to B'reishis Perek 28/Posuk 9.

political and royal elite and observed his father's machinations so that his brethren would not feel discrimination¹¹.

So what is our expectation from Menashe's descendants? In our modern age we would ask if they remained Jewish or religious. Did they retain their Jewish identity? We would expect very little from those who were in the house of royalty and 'rubbed elbows' with the elite of a kingdom that was infamous for its depravity.

We read in Sefer Vayikro (Perek 18/Posuk 3):

כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַּתֶּם בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְכַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מְבִיא
אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וּבַחֻקֹּתֵיהֶם לֹא תֵלְכוּ:

Do not do according to the actions of the Land of Egypt in which you dwelled and according to the actions of the Land of Canaan that I Hashem am bringing you there do not do and do not go by their statutes.

But, despite this automatic prejudice, the facts and the results were not so. Already we have a glimpse of what Shevet Menashe is able to become at the end of Sefer B'reishis. The Torah tells us of the death of Yosef HaTzaddik and writes (Perek 50/Posuk 23):

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים גַּם בְּנֵי מְכִיר בֶן מְנַשֶּׁה יֵלְדוּ עַל בְּרַכֵּי יוֹסֵף:

¹¹ See B'reishis Perek 47/Posuk 21:

וְאֵת הָעָם הָעֵבְרִי אֵתוּ לְעָרִים מִקְצֵה גְבוּל מִצְרַיִם וְעַד קְצֵהוּ:
Yosef moved the people [of Egypt] to cities from one end of the border of Egypt to the other end.

Rashi writes:

ואת העם העברי...-לזכרון שאין להם עוד חלק בארץ, והושיב של עיר זו בחברתה. ולא הוצרך הכתוב לכתוב זאת, אלא להודיע שבחו של יוסף שנתכוין להסיר חרפה מעל אחיו, שלא יהיו קורין אותם גולים:

He moved the people – as a remembrance that they no longer had a portion in the land and he settled the people of one city in another city.

The Torah did not have to tell us this except to let us know the praise due Yosef that he intended to remove shame from his brothers – that people would not call them exiles.

Yosef saw for Efraim children of the third generation; also the children of Mochir the son of Menashe were born on the knees of Yosef.

Rashi writes:

על ברכי יוסף -...גדלן בין ברכיו:

On the knees of Yosef – Yosef raised them between his knees.

Rabbenu Bachaye writes there:

...ומה שהוצרך להזכיר "בני מכיר", שהוא גלעד בן מכיר בן מנשה, זקנן של בנות צלפחד, כדי להורות כי יוסף הצדיק גדל בביתו צדיקים, שמהם יצאו בנות צלפחד שהיו חכמות וצדקניות שבדור.

And the reason that it was necessary to mention 'the sons'¹² of Mochir', which refers to Gilad the son of Mochir the son of Menashe, the grandfather of *B'nos Tzelofchod* is to teach that Yosef HaTzaddik raised righteous people in his house, from whom issued *B'nos Tzelofchod* who were the wisest and most righteous women in the generation.

And so now, after the Torah has established the integrity of Shevet Menashe, after teaching us that Yosef was able to instil, even within his generations that he was unable to know, the strength of his convictions and beliefs and the *masorah* from the house of his father and grandparents, now we are ready to see a particular episode that encapsulates all of the ideas that we have seen above.

Rashi (B'midbar Perek 27/Posuk 1) notes that when the Torah presents the names of the daughters of *Tzelofchad*, it varies the order in which they are introduced. He writes:

¹² *Gilad* was the only son of Mochir and thus the plural 'sons' seems inappropriate. Rabbenu Bachaye explains that it was referring to his children and his children's children throughout the generations.

This explanation was brought in the name of *Toras Chaim* by Rav Chavel in his commentary on Rabbenu Bachaye.

See Netziv here as well.

מחלה נעה וגו' - ולהלן הוא אומר (במדבר לו/יא¹³) ותהיינה מחלה תרצה, מגיד שכולן שקולות זו כזו, לפיכך שנה את סדרן:

Machla, No'a – later on the Torah writes '*Machla, Tirtza were*' to teach that they were all equal, one to the other; therefore the Torah varied the order.

And what was that equality? They were all wise and they were all learned¹⁴ and they were all righteous¹⁵.

These traits are what led *Or HaChaim HaKodosh* to explain the description of the appearance of *B'nos Tzelofchod* before Moshe as

ותקרבנה ותעמדנה

They approached and they stood.

Or HaChaim writes:

אומרו ותקרבנה ולא הספיק במאמר ותעמודנה וגו' שאמר בסמוך, לומר שלא עמדו לפני משה עד שהתוועדו יחד בעצה הגונה וראו כי יש בפיהם נכונה בטענה הנשמעת...

It says 'they approached' and it was not enough to say 'they stood' as it says immediately. This teaches that before they came to stand before Moshe they consulted to make sure that their counsel was proper and that they were certain that they had a claim that was sensible.

What power there is in such a statement! Are we not reminded of a similar word of 'approaching' in which the event was so different?

¹³ The entire verse reads:

ותהיינה מחלה תרצה וחגלה ומלכה ונעה בנות צלפחד לבני דדיהן לנשים:
Machla, Tirtza, Chogla, Milka and Noa the daughters of Tzelafchad became the wives of their cousins.

¹⁴ Sifre here.

¹⁵ Masseches Bava Basra 119 b.

When the people clamored for the spies to enter Eretz Yisroel, we read (D'vorim Perek 1/Posuk 22):

וַתִּקְרְבוּ אֵלַי כְּלֶכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ נִשְׁלַח אַנְשִׁים לְפָנֵינוּ וַיַּחְפְּרוּ לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וַיָּשְׁבוּ אֵתֵנוּ
דְּבַר אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נַעֲלֶה בָּהּ וְאֵת הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר נָבֵא אֵלֵינוּ:

You all approached me and you said, 'Let us send men before us who will spy out the land and they will reply to us regarding the path in which we will ascend to Eretz Yisroel and the cities that we will come to.

Rashi writes:

וַתִּקְרְבוּ אֵלַי כְּלֶכֶם – בערבוביא...ילדים דוחפין את הזקנים וזקנים דוחפין את הראשים:

You all approached me – in disorder. The children were pushing the elders and the elders were pushing the leaders.

And, as we saw above, these were the *men* who in truth did not want to enter Eretz Yisroel. And why did the men not want to enter Eretz Yisroel?

Kli Yokor (B'midbar Perek 26/Posuk 64) explains:

ובאלה לא היה איש. אבל נשים היו כי לא נגזרה גזירת מרגלים כי אם על האנשים לפי שהאנשים היו שונאים את הארץ והיו אומרים ניתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה (במדבר יד/ד¹⁶) אבל הנשים היו מחבבות את הארץ שכן בנות צלפחד אמרו תנה לנו אחוזה... וארץ ישראל...אין..סובלת זימה כמו שנאמר בפרשת עריות (ויקרא יח/כה-כז¹⁷) כי את כל התועבות עשו אנשי הארץ ותיקיא הארץ את יושביה, וכבר

¹⁶ The entire verse reads:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל אָחִיו נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ וְנָשׁוּבָה מִצְרֵימָה:
Each man said to the other, 'Let us appoint a leader and we will return to Egypt.

¹⁷ These verses read in their entirety:

וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ וְאֶפְקֹד עֲוֹנָהּ עָלֶיהָ וַתִּקְא הָאָרֶץ אֶת יֹשְׁבֵיהָ: וַיִּשְׁמְרֶתֶם אֶתֶם אֶת חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת מִשְׁפָּטַי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ מִכֹּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הָאֲזָרָח וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי אֶת כָּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵל עָשׂוּ אַנְשֵׁי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵיכֶם וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ:

When the Land becomes defiled I will visit its sin upon it and the Land will spew out its inhabitants. You shall guard My statutes and My laws and not do any of these abominations, the citizen and the stranger who dwells in your

כתבנו למעלה שהאנשים היו פרוצין בעריות ועל כן שנאו את הארץ, אבל הנשים היו כשרות וצנועות...היו מחבבות הארץ המגדלת צנועים...

In these numbers there was not a man [who was present at the earlier census]– But there were women [who were present earlier] because the decree of the meraglim was only decreed upon men because the men hated the Land and they said, ‘Let us appoint a head and return to Egypt.’

But the women loved the Land as we see that *B’nos Tzelofchod* said, ‘give us an inheritance’.

[The explanation is] that Eretz Yisroel does not tolerate promiscuity as it says in the section in Parshas Acharei Mos dealing with forbidden relationships: Because all of these abominations the people of the Land did and the land spewed out its inhabitants.’

I have written above¹⁸ that the men were promiscuous and therefore they hated the Land. But the women were proper and modest.

They loved the Land that would produce modest people.

After *B’nos Tzelofchod* finish presenting their case and their reasoning before Moshe, the Torah writes (B’midbar Perek 27/Posuk 5):

וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מִשְׁפָּטָן לִפְנֵי ה':

Moshe brought their judgment before Hashem.

Did Moshe not know the answer to their question¹⁹?

Rashi writes:

midst. Because all of these abominations the people of the Land who were before you did them, and the Land became defiled.

¹⁸ B’midbar Perek 25/Posuk 17.

¹⁹ In the Rashi that will be brought presently we are told that indeed Moshe did not know the answer because he was punished. See the complete Rashi.

ראויה היתה פרשה זו להכתב על ידי משה, אלא שזכו בנות צלפחד ונכתבה על
ידן:

This section was appropriate to be written by Moshe but it was written in the name of B'nos Tzelofchod because they merited that it be written in their name.

It is facile to attribute the *zechus* of B'nos Tzelofchod to the fact that they were women standing up for their rights. It is facile and disrespectful to them.

B'nos Tzelofchod were the bearers of the Halachos of inheritance in Eretz Yisroel [and elsewhere] because they embodied all that made it possible for the Jewish People to enter into Eretz Yisroel with the hope of eternal possession of the Land.

The Jewish People were to use their wisdom to be learned in Torah and to act with righteousness and that the expression of their love for Eretz Yisroel would not be mere lip-service, but would be an integral part of their being.

Thus, B'nos Tzelofchod were chosen to be the bearers of this message because no other group within Am Yisroel could have done it better.

This week we enter into the period of *בין המצרים*, we are caught 'between the straits'. We particularly feel the exile and are to be more aware of it than we are during other times of the year.

We seek the formula for our redemption. We search for an answer that will bring our dispersion to its conclusion. We yearn for the Geula Shleima and say that we want to find the path that will lead us there.

In our Parshas Pinchos the Torah has presented us with all of the answers.

B'nos Tzelofchod, united in purpose, seeking Eretz Yisroel because of their love of the land, and crowned with wisdom, Torah learning and righteousness are the models whom we are to emulate.

The answer is given. Our task is to listen and to do.

B'virchas Nechemas Tziyon

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Pollock