

Is God Racist and Sexist? Why are we?

Parshat Mattot-Mase'ei

Source Sheet by Ari Lev Fornari

1. **ספרי במדבר קל"ג** **Sifrei Bamidbar 133** .א
- (א) ותקרבנה בנות צלפחד - (1) (Bamidbar 27:1) **"And there drew near the daughters of Tzelofchad":**
- כיון ששמעו בנות צלפחד שהארץ When the daughters of Tzelofchad heard that the land was to be apportioned to the tribes and not to females, they gathered together to take counsel.
- מתחלקת לשבטים ולא לנקבות, נתקבצו כולן זו על זו ליטול עצה. They said, "Human compassion is not like the compassion of the Holy One. Human compassion is greater for males than for females. Not so for the compassion of the One who spoke and brought the world into being. God's compassion extends to males and females (equally). God has compassion for everyone! As it is written (Psalms 145:9) "God is good to all, and God has compassion for upon all of God's creations."
- אמרו: לא כרחמי ב"ו רחמי המקום! ב"ו רחמיו על הזכרים יותר מן הנקבות, אבל מי שאמר והיה העולם אינו כן, אלא על הזכרים ועל הנקבות, רחמיו על הכל, שנאמר תהלים קמה טוב יי לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו:
- Questions for Discussion:**
1. What was the organizing strategy of the Daughters of Tzelofchad?
 2. What was at stake for them in imagining a God who loved all of creation equally?
 3. How does this text respond to the tension between declaring "All Lives Matter" and "Black Lives Matter"?
2. In the book *Dirshuni: Israeli Women Writing Midrash*, Rivka Lovitz notices that Tzelophechad's daughters are first referred to as "daughters of Tzelophechad" (Numbers 27:1), and then at the end of the verse (Numbers 36:11) they are each mentioned by name ("Mahlah, Noa, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah"). Lovitz reads their father's name as composed of two words, interpreting it this way: At first, they were filled with shadow (tsel) and fear (pachad). It was only when they .ב

stood together that they were able to come out from the shadow of fear, be called by their own names and speak their truth.

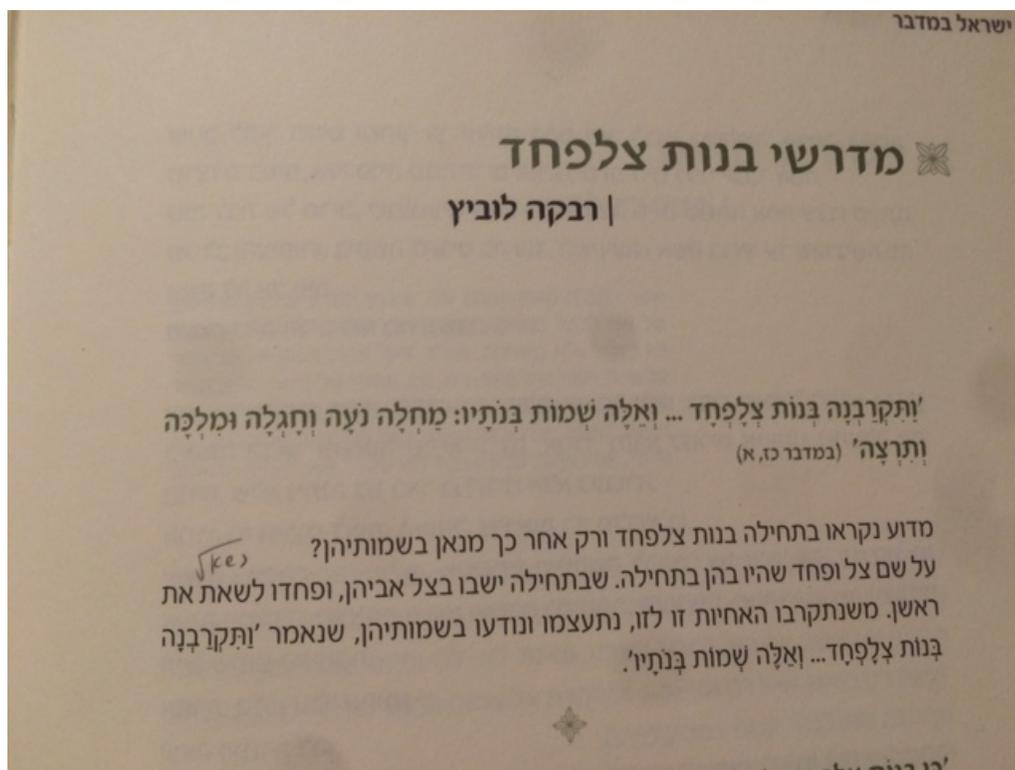
Fat Torah: Emerging together from the shadow of fear

A d'var Torah for Parashat Pinchas by Rabbi Minna Bromberg

Questions for Discussion:

1. How is Rivka Lovitz understanding the role of fear in the liberation of these Daughters?
2. How do you understand the role of fear in your own liberation?
3. What do the Daughters of Tzelofchad and the Vision of Black Lives have in common?

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