



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



Asher Manning Gush Chapter Director Family First?

“Judaism is rooted in the love of family” – Moses Hess – 1862

Sefer Bamidbar ends with a curiously cryptic story.

The elders of the tribe of Yosef are worried about Tzelofchad’s daughters (who’s story appears first in Parashat Pinchas) who are set to inherit their father’s portion in the tribal lands. If they marry outside their Shevet their lands will pass to their children, who take after their husbands’ tribe, and thus will be lost to the Shevet of Yosef. A solution was found – Tzelofchad’s five daughters must find themselves a husband from within their own tribe – and thus they did.

It is not immediately clear why this is the final note that Sefer Bamidbar wishes to end on as it seems to be quite a mundane question of tribal territorial politics.

And yet, hidden in this story is a very deep message regarding the sacrificial

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nature of family.

By definition family demands sacrifice. Relationships and the forthcoming children demand a huge investment of time, attention, sleep, money, love and in essence are the primary drain on one’s physical and emotional resources. And yet, there is nothing more worthy of one’s efforts than family.

A very disturbing statistic that I came across states that as of 2021 – 57% of households in the US are childless. The birth rate in the US and in nearly all other western countries is at an all time low. Family as a value is losing its shine and more and more people are choosing to opt out of a familial lifestyle.

In an age of individualism – self-sacrifice is counter-cultural.

Nonetheless, self-focused ideology is antithetical to Jewish moral values and I think the very final episode of Sefer Bamidbar comes to drive that concept home.

Tzelofchad’s daughters show us the priority of family above self-interest. For the sake of tribal continuity and familial values, these five strong women sacrificed whatever romantic relationships they may have had, in order to build a better future for their children. They showed us the way by putting family first.



Emily Kaufman 12th Grade, Efrat

Parshiot Mattot - Massei always falls between the fasts of the 17th day of Tamuz and Tishah B'Av. The Lubavitcher Rebbe discusses in Likkutei Sichot the reason why these Parshiot are always read between these two significant dates in Jewish history. The message embedded here is the concept of destruction in order to rebuild again in a stronger and better way.

We don't always understand the master plan that Hashem has for us. Just as a child does not see the ultimate goal and lesson behind his father's sometimes harsh discipline, so too we must look to Hashem's actions, even though they may seem difficult to comprehend, and accept it as faith. We need to see the kindness of Hashem even though it may be through a catastrophe of destruction. We should all strive to see our history and the way the world runs through the eyes of Hashem. Having complete faith that there is a plan and it must be good.

We have all experienced a rough past year. Covid-19 has changed our lives in so many ways. People became sick and

many perished including holy and righteous people. Schools had to rethink in creative ways how to educate us and likewise in NCSY, many events were not able to take place and friends were not able to meet up. We could live in despair and ask why Hashem did this to us? Or, we could proclaim "destruction in order to rebuild". Perhaps now we can improve by honoring our parents and grandparents, loving and respecting our friends, and appreciating the world we are given to serve Hashem through faith and complete devotion.

Perhaps the words of Ben El Tavory of in the song titled "הכל לטובה" say it best:

לֹא תַמִּיד קֵל, לֹא תַמִּיד טוֹב, אֲבֵל זֶה תַמִּיד גּוֹרֵם לִי לַחֲשׂוֹב.
יּוֹם עוֹבֵר וְצָרָה חוֹלֶפֶת כִּי לְכֹל עֵצָב יֵשׁ גַּם סוּף"

May we be Zoche to see the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash bigger and better and the coming of Mashiach soon in our days. ■

NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, empower, and help teen olim with "Klita" to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at israel.ncsy.org

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