

The Jewish Connection to Eretz Yisrael

Introduction

Moshe Rabbeinu waged war against Sichon and Og and conquered their territory. Later, the area of Gilad was captured by the grandchildren of Menashe and allocated to them⁸. Was Gilad not part of Sichon and Og's territory which Moshe himself had captured? Also, what connection did the tribe of Menashe have to Gilad?

Tzelafchad, from the tribe of Menashe, died without leaving any sons. His daughters argued that if they do not inherit their father's portion in Eretz Yisrael, it will be lost. Moshe presented their case before Hashem. Hashem responded that if a man dies without leaving sons his property is bequeathed to his daughters.²

Later, officials from Menashe requested that the daughters of Tzelafchad marry only within their tribe. Otherwise, their land would be transferred to their husbands' tribe, and the territory of Menashe would be diminished.

The concern of these officials seems inconsequential. Just as the daughters of Tzelafchad could pass their property to a different tribe, men of Menashe could marry women from other tribes who had inherited land from their fathers and thereby enlarge the portion of Menashe. Statistically, this would eventually even itself out.

The daughters of Tzelafchad waited many years until they found appropriate spouses and then married their cousins³ because they refused to compromise their standards and marry unsuitable spouses. However, Nadav and Avihu are criticized for delaying marriage. Why was it acceptable for the daughters of Tzelafchad to wait?

This is even more peculiar because they ended up marrying their cousins. The Jewish People camped with their extended families in the wilderness. It follows that the daughters of Tzelafchad were neighbors of their future spouses all these years. Why did they not marry them earlier?

We will first explain a few concepts upon which the resolution to the above difficulties will be based.

The Origin of Every Jewish Couple

The Hebrew word for woman is אשה because "מאיש לקחה זאת"⁷, she was taken from the איש - man. Hashem formed Chavah out of Adam.

As their descendants, all the Jewish men are rooted in Adam and all the Jewish women are rooted in Chavah; just as generations of maple trees were once contained in an original seed.

Each woman was once fused with her husband, just as Chavah was originally part of Adam. When Hashem separated Chavah from Adam, each woman was separated from her husband. Therefore, when a couple marries, they celebrate - not a new union - but a reunion.

The Hebrew word for man is אדם because he was taken from the אדמה, earth. The dust Hashem used to create Adam came from the site of the Altar⁷, as well as from different parts of

Eretz Yisrael¹. Adam and Chavah - and thereby all Jews who are rooted in them – originate from the Altar and from Eretz Yisrael¹.

Yovel - The Law of Return

There is a law in nature: Everything must return to where it came from. This is a theme oft repeated in Koheles and we find it in all of nature; an apple falls to the ground because that's where it came from; fire strives upward because – the Tanya teaches - its source is the moon.

This 'Law of Return' is called Yovel. After settling Eretz Yisrael, the Jews began counting the years. Every seven years was Shemita and after seven cycles of Shemita, the fiftieth year, was Yovel.

Upon the commencement of Yovel, Jewish slaves were restored to their original status as free men, and property was returned to its original owner, even if he had sold it in the interim. Yovel returned everything to its origin.¹

A Person's Attraction to their Spouse and the Jewish Attraction to Eretz Yisrael

A man once asked the Rebbe of Satmar Rav zt"l for help deciding between two equally promising marriage suggestions. The Rebbe told him, "In our generation, there is no one who can tell you who your destined is. Therefore, I advise you to choose the one who appeals to you more."

A person is naturally inclined toward his origins. Because in our original state we were united with our spouses, we are naturally attracted to them.

Given that the Jewish People originate from Eretz Yisrael, we have a natural longing to her. The Sefer Chareidim writes:

"Every Jewish person must love Eretz Yisrael and come to her from faraway lands with great yearning, like a son to the lap of his mother."

Being Detached from One's Roots

If it is (G-d forbid) decreed that a Jew be severed from his roots, he would be separated from both, his wife and Eretz Yisrael. Our attachment to our spouses is linked to our bond with Eretz Yisrael, because from there we originated as one unit.

That is why Maseches Gittin - the tractate which discusses the laws of divorce - begins with a case of someone sending a Get (divorce document) to his wife from a distant land to Eretz Yisrael. He is detached from wife and Eretz Yisrael simultaneously.

Until the law that a daughter inherits her father in the absence of sons was established, the daughters of Tzela Chad could not connect to their portion in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, none

¹ This is why when a couple divorces the altar sheds tears over them (גיטין ד"צ ע"ב). The altar, as the source from where they originated as one, feels the pain of their separation most acutely. A Sotah (unfaithful woman) desecrates the earth from beneath the Altar from which her exclusive union with her husband originates. Therefore, her fidelity is tested with dust from the place of the altar.

of the marriage proposals suggested to them were appealing. They had been disconnected from their husbands along with their portion in Eretz Yisrael.²

The Individual Portion of Each Jew in Eretz Yisrael

Each section of Eretz Yisrael corresponds to a different part of the Torah¹. A person with spiritual perception, gazing down at Eretz Yisrael, would see a complete Torah scroll before him.

Likewise, every Jewish soul is rooted in a specific Mitzvah of the Torah². The Divine lot assigned each portion of Eretz Yisrael to the Jew whose soul was rooted in its section of the Torah.

Gilad and Yovel

Eliyahu Hanavi is called ‘Eliyahu HaGiladi,’ the one who comes from Gilad. Eliyahu Hanavi is the persona of Yovel. He returns every soul to its original, pure state by inspiring it to repent. Repentance will annul the decree of exile and then each Jew will return to his roots in Eretz Yisrael. (This was explained at length last week.)

This would suggest that the mitzvah of Yovel corresponds to Gilad. Indeed, "ארץ גלעד", is gematria (numerically equals) "המשים", fifty - the year of Yovel (they both are equal 398).³

There are חמשים שיערי בינה, fifty levels of perception. These correspond to the fifty years of the Yovel cycle. Throughout his lifetime, Moshe attained the first forty-nine levels of perception and on the last day of his life, the fiftieth level.

During the conquest of Sichon and Og, Moshe could not conquer Gilad - the place of Yovel - because he had not yet reached the level of Yovel.⁴

² “ותקרבנה בנות צלפחד בן חפר” “the Daughters of Tzelafchad came forward [to claim their inheritance in the land] is gematria (numerically equal to) “עפר אשר יהי בקרקע המשכן” “the dust that comes from the ground of the Mishkan [the place of the Altar]” – with which the faithfulness of the Sotah is tested (they both equal 1768). By claiming their portion in Eretz Yisrael, the daughters of Tzelafchad connected to their husbands with whom they originated from the dust of the Altar.

³ This is why Lavan caught up with Yaakov in the area of Gilad after his attempted escape. Lavan was then the chief of the powers of evil and had been holding many sparks of holiness in captivity. The Baal Shem Tov teaches that during his stay at Lavan’s house, Yaakov Avinu had emptied it of all the sparks of holiness.

However, there still were some holy sparks which Yaakov had not succeeded in liberating. Therefore, Hashem made Lavan chase Yaakov, and by their interaction in Gilad, Yaakov extracted the remaining holy sparks.

Gilad, as the place of Yovel which returns everything to where it belongs, was particularly suitable for the extraction of the sparks of holiness which Yaakov had heretofore found to difficult to rescue.

⁴ This is why Moshe could not deduce the law that daughters inherit a father in the absence of sons on his own and needed to ask Hashem. That a person must retain a connection to his source through his progeny is a matter rooted in Yovel. When the daughters of Tzelafchad presented their argument before Moshe, he sensed that this was not in his realm and asked Hashem what the law was. Hashem responded (רש"י במדבר כז:), “This is how this topic is written before me **above**.” This topic is **above**; it is from the lofty spheres of Yovel.

The daughters of Tzelafchad did grasp that they were to inherit their father’s portion in Eretz Yisrael. This is because women are blessed with an enhanced intuition (ראשית רבה יח:א). Moshe, on the other hand, understood matters with crystal clear, unbiased intellect. Intellect is limited to that which is within one’s grasp. Intuition, however, can infer that which is above our comprehension.

The daughter of Tzelafchad did not understand what Moshe couldn’t because they understood more than he did, but because they were not limited to what they could understand.

The Connection between the Tribe of Menashe and the City of Gilad

The tribe of Menashe was the eighth tribe according to the order of the nation's traveling in the wilderness. שמנה has the same letters as מנשה.⁵

Yovel is the fiftieth year. However, it can also be regarded as the first year of an eighth cycle of Shemita. Hence, the numbers eight and fifty both represent Yovel.⁶

Thus, the mitzvah of Menashe is Yovel. Therefore Gilad – the place of Yovel - belongs to them, and Menashe is connected to Eliyahu HaGiladi – the soul of Yovel. "מכיר בן מנשה", is gematria [אליהו] התשבי (they both equal 717) .

"ובאו", 'to Machir [son of Menashe,] I gave Gilad,' is gematria "האובדים בארץ אשור והנדהים בארץ מצרים", 'those lost in [the exile of] Assyria, and those cast off in the land of Egypt will return' (they both equal 1679). Menashe has a special connection to the power of Yovel which will return even the most far-flung Jew to Eretz Yisrael.

Officials from Menashe wanted the daughters of Tzelafchad to marry within the tribe in order to retain their territory. With their enhance perception of Yovel, they sensed that each tribe must retain the land that was allocated to them. Each tribe is rooted in the mitzvos of the Torah that their land corresponds to, and Yovel dictates that everything remains connected to its source.

A Consolation for Bain HaMitzarim

We do not perform weddings during Bain HaMitzarim - the three weeks when we mourn our exile from Yerushalayim. During this period, we were severed from our roots in Eretz Yisrael and consequently we cannot reunite marriage partners during this time.

It is during this bleak period that we read the episode of the daughters of Tzelafchad. They were reunited with their heritage in Eretz Yisrael and also with their husbands. This symbolizes that we, too, will soon return to our land with the coming of Eliyahu HaGiladi.

יבוא אליהו לברנו יבאו משיח צדקנו

^a במדבר לב:לט-מ

^b במדבר ריש פ' כ"ז

^c במדבר לו:יא

^d בראשית ב:כג

^e רבה, בראשית יד, יח

^f בראשית רש"י ב:ז

^g פ' בהר

⁵ Binah is the eighth of the ten Sefiros. Therefore, "מכיר בן מנשה" is gematria (דברי הימים א' יב:לג) "Men with Binah for the times (a reference to the sages)" (they both equal 717). Menashe, the eighth tribe, is endowed with the attribute of Binah.

⁶ The Maharal teaches the significance of the number eight. This world is complete with the number seven; there are seven days to a week, seven continents and seven musical notes. Upon entry into the supernatural spheres of Heaven, we exit the cycles of seven and arrive at a world which revolves around the number eight.

Menashe corresponds to Cheshvan - the eighth month when counting from Nissan. As the eighth month, Cheshvan is when the Third Temple - of the supernatural era of Mashiach - will be inaugurated. (בני יששכר)

The number fifty, like the number eight, represents the supernatural.

ערבי נחל^ח
Source?^ט