



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

July 21, 2022

## Shabbat Shalom



Light candles 8:28pm

Shabbat Services 10:00am

## Services... Your Way

The Carnegie Shul has adopted a hybrid model for our weekly Shabbat services.

We are now holding services in the sanctuary, for those who want to attend in person, as well as online, via Zoom. **Services begin at 9:30am.**

Vaccinations are required for in-person attendance and we will be on the honor system. Masks are optional, and we recommend that you socially distance when sitting in the sanctuary.

For those wishing to attend service from their homes, the Zoom link will be emailed to Carnegie Shul members later in the week. If you don't receive it, contact Wendy Panizzi at [panizziw@gmail.com](mailto:panizziw@gmail.com).

## Women in Judaism

**Women of Valor.** The Torah mentions many, as I relate in my introduction to today's commentary.

Many Jewish men, on Friday evening, as they welcome the Sabbath, sing the song "Eshet Hayil," A Woman of Valor, to their wives. And so in honor of the Five Sisters in today's parshah, here are the lyrics to that song.

A woman of valor who can find?—  
for her price is far above rubies.

She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness.

The heart of her husband trusts safely in her.

She does him good, she does him no evil.

She girds her loins with strength,

She strengthens her arms, stretches out her hands,

Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.

Strength and honor clothe her, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

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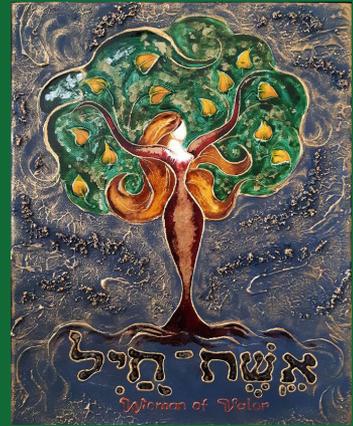
She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth to the needy.

Her children call her blessed.

Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain,  
But the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.

Many daughters have done valiantly,  
But you excel them all.



## Pinchas in a Nutshell

### Numbers 25:10–30:1

Aaron's grandson Pinchas is rewarded for his act of zealotry in killing the Simeonite prince Zimri and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: G-d grants him a covenant of peace and the priesthood.

A census of the people counts 601,730 men between the ages of twenty and sixty. Moses is instructed on how the Land is to be divided by lottery among the tribes and families of Israel.

The five daughters of Tzelaftach petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; G-d accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance.

Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people into the Land of Israel.

The Parshah concludes with a detailed list of the daily offerings, and the additional offerings brought on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh (first of the month), and the festivals of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret.



## Carnegie Shul Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for the Carnegie Shul's Annual Meeting, **July 31, 2 pm.**

The Meeting will be held over Zoom and will include election of offices. More details to come.

Our special guest speaker is Dan Ottenheimer, who will be speaking about his father, Holocaust survivor Fritz Ottenheimer.

Fritz Ottenheimer was born in 1925 in Konstanz, Germany - a large town with



a population of around 40,000. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Fritz and his family were forced to endure increasing anti-Jewish propaganda, discrimination and persecution. And then in November of 1938, Fritz witnessed his father's arrest, on what is now called Kristallnacht, or "night of broken glass," when about 30,000 innocent Jewish men were taken to concentration camps.

After his father's release from the Dachau concentration camp, Fritz and his family immigrated to the United States in 1939. Fritz was 14 years old.



In 1944, after graduating from high school in New York, Fritz volunteered to become a member of the U.S. Army. In early 1945, he was deployed to Germany, and served in units that aided in the "de-Nazification" process of his home country.

When the war ended, Fritz came back to the U.S. and got a degree in Industrial Engineering. In 1950, Fritz was hired by a Western Pennsylvania engineering firm and moved to Pittsburgh, where he lived for the rest of his life.

In 1982, Fritz became a volunteer speaker for the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. He spent many years speaking at schools in Western Pennsylvania, and his story was featured in Volume I of the Chutz-Pow comic book series published by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. Fritz passed away in 2017, at the age of 92.

Dan Ottenheimer, Fritz's son, was born in Pittsburgh in 1957. He moved to Boston to attend college, and never left.



In 2019, two years after his father passed away, Dan began to speak in the Greater Boston area about his father's experiences in Germany. And in 2021, Dan joined the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh's Generations Speakers Bureau, using video-conferencing technology to tell his father's stories at schools and organizations in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Dan will be joining us at the Annual Meeting via Zoom from his home outside of Boston.

## **This Week's Torah Portion**

### **The Five Sisters – True Women of Valor**

Too often, when we think about the heroes of the Torah, we think only about the men – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. But let's not forget our heroines too. Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Miriam, and Ruth were also notable for their faith, wisdom, and leadership. And then there were the five daughters of Tzefafched who we read about in today's parshah, true women of valor, who, as our featured commentator says, showed "much courage and conviction."

Here is a commentary about these remarkable women by Maxine Zelster, published at [woodsideparksynagogue.org.uk](http://woodsideparksynagogue.org.uk).

# The Five Sisters

By Maxine Zelster

The climax of Megillat Ruth is when Boaz takes Ruth, the widow of Machlon, as his wife to perpetuate the name of the deceased on his inheritance.'

The theme of inheritance is prominent throughout chumash. Disputes about inheritance can have catastrophic consequences, just look at Yaacov and Esav. Even today, the level of inheritance tax and whether social care costs should be paid out of one's estate are hot political issues.

I would like to focus, today, on the incident in parshat Pinchas where five sisters brought their claim to inherit a portion in Eretz Yisrael before Moshe. At the time, it must have been extremely unusual for a woman to raise such an issue and would have required much courage and conviction. So, who were these sisters and what inspired them to persist in their claim?

The sisters were called Machla, Chagla, Noah, Milka and Tirtza. All five were righteous, intelligent and learned. At the time of Aharon's death, when these events occurred, they were almost forty years old and unmarried, as they could not find worthy spouses. Their father, Tzelaafchad, had passed away in the wilderness without leaving any male heirs. He was a descendant of Machir which was a family of the tribe of Menashe.

When they learnt that Eretz Yisrael was to be distributed according to the number of males, they were concerned that their father's name would be forgotten. The tribe of Menashe was one of the tribes that had asked for permission to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan. This land was to be distributed through Moshe personally and not by divine lot and so they knew that it would not be difficult for them to obtain territory on that side. However, they loved Eretz Yisrael. They wanted a share in Eretz Yisrael proper and decided to claim this as their entitlement.

Before a claim would have been heard by Moshe, it needed to go before the judges appointed over every ten people; then to the judges over fifty people; then to the judges over a hundred people and then to the judges over a thousand. Only if none of these judges felt competent to decide the matter, would it be brought before Moshe himself. That they continued with their claim through all these stages shows their incredible persistence and determination.

The Midrash explains that although the sisters were reluctant to appear in public, they overcame their natural modesty because their question was of fundamental importance.

They argued that their father passed away in the wilderness and not in Egypt and thus was



entitled to a portion in Eretz Yisrael. He was not among the Complainers or part of Korach's evil congregation who all forfeited their shares in the Land. They stated that their father did not induce others to sin but rather died because of his own sin. Some sources state that Tzelafchad was the man who gathered sticks on Shabbat whilst others believe that he was among those who attempted to enter Eretz Yisrael without permission.



The sisters argued that their father's name should not be forgotten because he left no son. Moshe, at first, denied their claim but then deferred the issue to Hashem. Hashem replied that the daughters of Tzelafchad were correct and should receive a double portion to reflect the fact that their father was a first born. Hashem then commanded Moshe to teach Bnei Yisrael the laws of inheritance. These included a provision that daughters can inherit if there are no sons.

The Midrash explains that Hashem told Moshe to advise the sisters to take husbands from their own tribe and eventually they all found worthy husbands and had children. Hashem performed a miracle to allow these righteous women to have children despite their age.

The Midrash describes the five sisters as tzidkaniot which means virtuous and pious women. Rabbi Shlomo Riskin in his commentary 'Torah Lights' queries why the sisters were described in this way? Surely it would be more appropriate to refer to them as persevering, courageous and aggressive.

Not only did the sisters have to take their case through the numerous tiers of appeals but they would also have had to ignore the endless chorus of discouraging voices arguing that their cause would be doomed to failure. The disastrous mission of the spies had already taken place which resulted in the entire generation being told that they would die in the desert. Korach's rebellion had just occurred and this would have filled the nation with disappointment and despair. There would have been great uncertainty as to whether any Israelite would ever enter the Promised Land. The sisters', however, ignored the doubters and the doom-mongers. They were prepared to fight on behalf of their children and grandchildren because they had an unshakeable faith in Hashem's promise that the nation would enter the Promised Land. It is because of the steadfastness of their faith that they merited the description of being virtuous and pious.

As a direct result of the sisters' persistence, Hashem conveyed all of the laws of Inheritance to Moses and Israel. As Rabbi Riskin points out, 'women's inheritance rights developed from this case to such an extent that if a father bequeaths only a small amount of property, the daughters' sustenance and dowries must be provided for – even if nothing will be left over for

the sons.’ He goes on to point out that it can be said that the daughters of Tzelaḥad were pioneers in arguing the case for women’s rights under biblical law. ‘They won the first bona fide example of feminist legislation ‘on the books’.

What I think is most poignant is that their prime motivation was their love for the Land of Israel and that they had an overwhelming desire to ensure that their descendants should inherit a share in the Promised Land. In a week when we have celebrated the 50th anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem, I think their faith and perseverance in pursuing their dreams and their continued love for the Land of Israel, regardless of the odds, are great examples for us to follow.

## Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

**Lawrence I. Miller**

**Pearl Shutzberg**

**Dr. Harry W. Cooper**

**Bertrand Joseph Speizer**

**Harvey Srolovitz**

**Eva R. Weiss**

**Ruth Lee Roteman**

May their memories be for a blessing.