

July 26, 2019/23 Tamuz 5779

Dear chevreh,

Tonight I look forward to seeing you at services at 7:00 pm. I will be leading Kabbalat Shabbat services with Faye Bader who is becoming a bat mitzvah. I will be delivering a sermon exploring American's legacy of racism, inspired by my recent trip to the Deep South (spoiler alert: racism isn't just in the South). (Trigger warning: I will be talking about violent subjects as befits truth-telling.)

Just this week, Indo-Canadian sisters in British Columbia stood up for their land rights when they were not set to inherit land after their parents died, leaving the land to their brothers. Their attorney said that over the course of his 45-year practice, he has met many Indo-Canadian women who have consulted with him over wills they believe to be unfair. But none proceeded with a claim.

"The social pressures, family pressures, and pressure from their community at large prevented some of them from going ahead," he said.

One of the sisters said, "We did it because it was the right thing to do," adding she hopes their case will "inspire other women in the same situation to stand up for themselves."

<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/b-c-judge-overturns-will-that-left-majority-of-estate-to-sons-leaving-little-for-daughters>

Sound familiar? In this week's Torah portion, Pinchas, *b'not zelophehad*, the daughters of Zelophehad, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah, stood up against a system which had not recognized land ownership for women. They said, "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against God but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!" Moses brought their case before God and the sisters' claim led to the changing of the law of inheritance.

This was a radical departure from what appeared to be "the ways things are", and can serve as an inspiration to all of us to join together to make just changes. This is what POWER is trying to do as we come together trying to find a winnable issue to

fight. This is how slavery ended and how civil rights were achieved. Frederick Douglas said,

Power concedes nothing without a demand.

It never did and it never will.

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

May we all identify values and issues that move us in the direction of justice, and finds bands of sisters and brothers with whom to live out our vision.

Shabbat shalom, Gut Shabbes,

Rabbi Diana