

King Lear and the Daughters of Tzelofchad

Shabbat Pinchas, Dr. Shaina Trapedo

King Lear by William Shakespeare

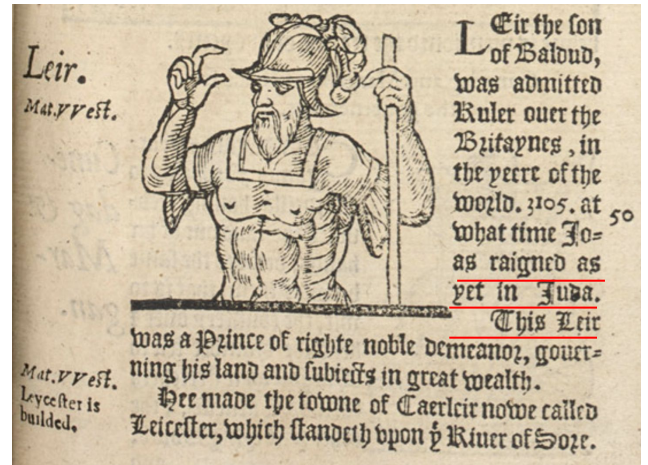
Act 1, Scene 1

LEAR Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.—
 Give me the map there. He is handed a map.
 Know that we have divided
 In three our kingdom, and 'tis our fast intent
 To shake all cares and business from our age,
 Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
 Unburdened crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall
 And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
 We have this hour a constant will to publish
 Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
 May be prevented now.

The two great princes, France and Burgundy,
 Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
 Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn
 And here are to be answered. Tell me, my daughters—
 Since now we will divest us both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state—
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most,
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
 Our eldest born, speak first.



Ford Madox Brown, "Cordelia's Portion" (1866)

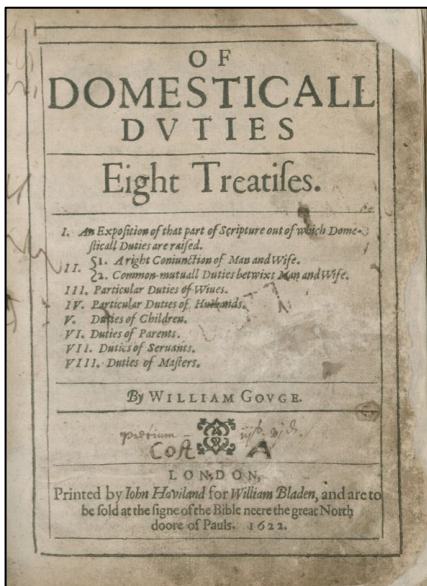


Holinshed's Chronicles (1577)

Numbers 27:1-11

The daughters of Zelophehad, of Manassite family—son of Hopher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph—came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said, "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against ה', 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 ה'. And ה' said to Moses, "The plea of Zelophehad's daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father's kinsmen; transfer their father's share to them. "Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: 'If a householder dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan, who shall inherit it.' This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with ה's command to Moses."

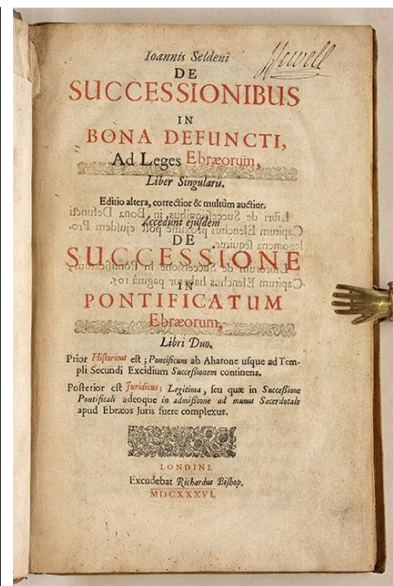
ותקרבנה בנות צלפחד בן-חפר בן-גלעד בן-מכיר
 בן-מנשה למשפחת מנשה בן-יוסף ואלה שמות בנותיו
 מחלה נעה וחסלה ומלכה ותרצה:
 ותעמדנה לפני משה ולפני אלעזר הכהן ולפני הנשיאים
 וכל העדה פתח אהל-מועד לאמר:
 אבינו מת במדבר והוא לא-היה בתוך העדה הנועדים
 עליהוה בעדת-קרח כיי-בחסאו מת ובנים לא-היו לו:
 למה יגרע שמ-אבינו מתוך משפחתו כי אין לו בן
 תנה-לנו אחזה בתוך אחי אבינו:
 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה לאמר:
 כן בנות צלפחד דברת נתן נתן להם אחזת נחלה בתוך
 אחי אביהם והעברת את-נחלת אביהו לקו:
 ואל-בני ישראל תדבר לאמר איש כיי-קמות ובן אין לו
 והעברתם את-נחלתו לבתו: ואם-אין לו בת ונתתם
 את-נחלתו לאחיו: ואם-אין לו אחים ונתתם את-נחלתו
 לאחי אביו: ואם-אין אחים לאביו ונתתם את-נחלתו
 לשארו הקרב אליו ממשפחתו יורש אתה והיתה לבני
 ישראל לחקת משפט כאשר צוה יהוה את-משה:



Object. Children marry for themselves and not for their parents, why then should parents consent be so much stood upon?

1 *Answ.* Though they marie not for their parents, yet they marie from their parents: by marriage they are freed from the power of their parents.

2 *Answ.* Children are not their own: they are the inheritance of the L-rd: the L-rd hath given them to parents as an inheritance: a childe therefore may no more marry for himself without consent of parents, then alienate his parents goods for himself.



Medal struck in the 18th century by Jean Dassier.

LEAR Now, our joy,
Although our last and least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interested, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak.
CORDELIA Nothing, my lord.
LEAR Nothing?
CORDELIA Nothing.
LEAR Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.
CORDELIA Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
According to my bond, no more nor less...
You have begot me, bred me, loved me.
I return those duties back as are right fit:
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
LEAR But goes thy heart with this?
CORDELIA Ay, my good lord.
LEAR So young and so untender?
CORDELIA So young, my lord, and true.
LEAR Let it be so. Thy truth, then, be thy dower....
Here I disclaim all my paternal care...
I loved her most and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.
To Cordelia. Hence and avoid my sight!—
Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest the third.



George Frederick Bensell, "King Lear" (c. 1837-1879)

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Preeminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty.
Ourself by monthly course... shall our abode
Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain
The name and all th' addition to a king.
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Belovèd sons, be yours, which to confirm,
This coronet part between you.

Rashi on Numbers 27:1:2

MAHLAH, NOAH, etc. — But further on (Numbers 36:11) states, “And Mahlah, Tirzah were” (changing the position of the names within the verse): this is to tell you that they all were of equal worth one with another, and on this account it is that it changed their order (i.e. the order of their names) (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:2).

מחלה נעה וגו'. וְלִהְיוֹן (במדבר לו יא) הוא אוֹמֵר 'וְתִהְיֶינָה מִחֻלָּה תִרְצָה', מִגִּיד שְׁבִילָן שְׁקוּלוֹת — זוֹ קִוּוּ, לְפִיכָּךְ שָׁנָה אֶת סִדְרָן (שם):

Or HaChaim on Numbers 27:1

Even at this moment we can already see a stress on an important aspect of the wisdom of the daughters of Tzelofchad, that they did not come before Moshe until they consulted together and formed a suitable plan and saw that they had a fitting argument.

יש בכך כבר ברגע זה, משום הבלטת פרט חשוב בחכמתן של בנות צלפחד, שלא עמדו לפני משה, עד שהתוועדו יחד בעצה הגונה וראו כי יש בפיהם נכונה בטענה הנשמעת

Netziv

It would have been appropriate to write “they came before Moshe, El’azar the Cohen and the princes” so why is it written “And they stood *before* Moshe and *before* El’azar the priest and *before* the princes”? But they were five, and they did not send one to argue for all, rather **all of them were wise** and were able to state their case; as such, one spoke before Moshe, one before El’azar, one before the princes, so that it appeared that each had come forward on her own.

ואם כך היה ראוי לכתוב – לפני משה ואלעזר הכהן והנשיאים (ולמה כתב לפני משה ולפני אלעזר וכו')? אבל, כאשר היו חמש, ולא שלחו אחת מהן לטעון בשביל כולן, אלא כולן **חכמניות היו**, ויכלו להטעים טענתן: ואם כן – זאת היתה מדברת עם משה, וזאת עם אלעזר, וזאת עם הנשיאים, עד שנראו שבאו לפני כולם בעצמם.

Yalkut Shimoni, Bamidbar 27:2

[*Daughters*: Give us a portion of the land along with our father’s brothers.]

Moshe: It is impossible for a daughter to inherit.

Daughters: Why?

Moshe: You are women.

Daughters: Then let our mother enter into yibbum (levirate marriage—as is the law with the wife of a person who died “without seed”) and conceive an inheritor that way.

Moshe: Impossible. Once there are children, yibbum is not possible.

Daughters: You are contradicting yourself, Moshe. Either we are not “seed” and the obligation of yibbum applies to our mother, or we are “seed” and can inherit the land ourselves.

In that moment they convinced Moshe. When he heard the justice of their complaint, he immediately presented their case before G-d

אמר משה: אי אפשר לבת לירש

אמרו לו: למה?

אמר להם: שאתם נקבות

אמרו לו: וכה אמרת משה רבינו הואיל שהזכר יורש תתייבם

אמנו לאחי אבינו שתוליד זכר שיירש

אמר להן משה: אי אפשר להתייבם הואיל שיש לה בנות

אמרו לו: מה הוא זה שאתה עושה משה רבינו שנירש את אבינו

אין אנו בנים שתתייבם אמנו אנו בנים?

אותה שעה סלקו את משה כיון ששמע משה כן מיד "ויקרב

משה את משפטן לפני ה' "

Bava Basra 119b

The daughters of Zelofchad were wise, learned, saintly. They were wise because they spoke at the appropriate time. Moshe Rabeinu was teaching the subject of Levirate marriage and they took the opportunity to say, “If we are like sons then give us an inheritance, and if not you must marry our mother in the process of Levirate marriage”. Moshe immediately saw fit to bring up their case with Hashem. They were learned, because they knew to say, “If he had had a son we would not speak”... They were also perfectly virtuous, since they married only men who were worthy of them."

בנות צלפחד חכמניות הן, דרשניות הן, צדקניות הן. חכמניות הן - שלפי שעה דברו, דא"ר שמואל בר רב יצחק: מלמד שהיה משה רבינו יושב ודורש בפרשת יבמין, שנאמר: (דברים כ"ה) כי ישבו אחים יחדיו, אמרו לו: אם כבן אנו חשובין - תנה לנו נחלה כבן, אם לאו - תתיבם אמנו! מיד: ויקרב משה את משפטן לפני ה'. דרשניות הן - שהיו אומרות: אילו היה [לו] בן לא דברנו... צדקניות הן - שלא נישאו אלא להגון להן.

Numbers 27:3 - 7

“Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah’s faction, which banded together against ה', 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 ה'. And ה' said to Moses, “The plea of Zelophehad’s daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father’s kinsmen; transfer their father’s share to them.

אָבִינוּ מִתּ בְּמִדְבָּר וְהוּא לֹא־הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הַעֲדָה הַנוֹעֲדִים עִלֵּי־הָהָרָה
בְּעֵדֹת־קִרְחַן כִּי־בִקְטָאוֹ מִתּ וּבָנִים לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ:
לָמָּה יִגְרַע שֵׁם־אָבִינוּ מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֶּן תְּנַה־לָּנוּ אֲחֵינוּ
בְּתוֹךְ אָחֵי אָבִינוּ:
וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
כֹּן בְּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד דְּבַרְתּ נָתַן תִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲחֻזַּת נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אָחֵי אָבִיהֶם
וְהִעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת־נַחֲלַת אָבִיהֶן לָהֶן:

Ramban on Numbers 27:3

In my opinion, according to the simple meaning of Scripture, they spoke in this way because they thought that Moses our teacher hated *the company of Korach* more than all other sinners who died in the desert, because they had rebelled against him and had denied [the Divine approval of] all his deeds; therefore they thought that perhaps *because he hated them* [the company of Korach] he would say: *Let there be none to extend kindness unto him; neither let there be any to be gracious unto his fatherless children*. Therefore they informed him that he [their father] was not one of them, and they furthermore hinted that he was not amongst those who died in one of the plagues [which came as a punishment for the sin of the people], but that he died [a natural death] in the wilderness in his bed.

ודעתי בדרך הפשט שאמרו ככה בעבור שחשבו שמששה רבינו היה שונא עדת קרח יותר מכל החוטאים שמתו במדבר שהם היו הקמים כנגדו והכופרים בכל מעשיו וחשבו אולי בשנאתו אותם יאמר אל יהי לו מושך חסד ואל יהי חונן ליתומיו יזכר עון אבותם אל ה' (תהלים קט יב יד) על כן הודיעוהו כי לא היה מהם ורמזו עוד שאינו במתי המגפות אבל במדבר מת על מטתו

Yalkut Shimoni on Pinchas

“Give to us a share in the land” Rabbi Natan said: the strength of women is better than that of men, the men say "let us appoint (nitnah) a leader and let us return to Egypt" while the women said "Give to us (tnah) a share in the land" ... At what point did the daughters of Zelofchad stand before Moshe? At the time when Israel said ““Let us appoint a leader, and let us return to Egypt.” Moshe said to them: Israel is asking to return to Egypt and you are asking for an inheritance in Israel? **The daughters answered: We know that in the end Israel will take possession of the land.**

תנה לנו אחוזה רבי נתן אומר יפה כח נשים מכה אנשים, אנשים אומרים נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה ונשים אומרות תנה לנו אחוזה... ללמדך באיזה שעה עמדו לפני משה בשעה שאמרו ישראל נתנה ראש אמר להן משה והלא ישראל מבקשין לחזור למצרים ואתנה מבקשות נחלה בארץ, אמרו **יודעות אנו שסוף כל ישראל להחזיק בארץ.**

Ibn Ezra on Numbers 27:1:1

כֹּן. אמת או הדבר כן
RIGHT. *Ken* means true. Or, the thing is so.

Rabbeinu Bahya on Numbers 27:1:1

“*the daughters of Tzelofchod speak properly;*” the word כֹּן here is in essence the same as באמת, truthfully, correctly. Sifri 134 comments: “hail to the people whose words are applauded by G’d.”

כֹּן בְּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד דּוֹבְרוֹת. מלת כֹּן כמו באמת, ותרגמו יאות. אשרי מי שהקב"ה מודה לדבריו.



Sanhedrin 8a

אלא כדתניא ראויה פרשת נחלות שתיכתב על ידי משה רבינו אלא שזכו בנות צלפחד ונכתב על ידן ראויה היתה פרשת מקושש שתיכתב ע"י משה רבינו אלא שנתחייב מקושש ונכתבה על ידו ללמדך שמגלגלין חובה ע"י חייב וזכות על ידי זכאי

Rather, the unusual manner in which the *halakha* of women's inheritance (see Numbers, chapter 27) was revealed may be understood **as it is taught** in a *baraita*: It would have been **fitting for the Torah portion about inheritances to have been written by** attributing it to **Moses, our teacher**, i.e., to introduce the *halakha* with the standard formulation: And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying. **But the daughters of Zelophehad achieved merit** as a result of their initiative in pursuing a portion in Eretz Yisrael, **and therefore the halakha was written by** attributing it to **them**. Similarly, it **would have been fitting for the Torah portion** concerning the punishment of the wood gatherer (see Numbers 15:32-36) **to have been written by** attributing it to **Moses, our teacher**. **But the wood gatherer was found guilty, and the halakha was written by** attributing it to **him**. This serves **to teach you that guilt is engendered by means of the guilty and merit by means of the innocent**.

Sarah Idit Schneider

“The Daughters of Tzlafchad: Towards a Methodology of Attitude Around Women’s Issues”

Moshe so empathized with their dilemma and respected their love of the land that he actually prayed for a favorable verdict. The midrash implies that it was Moshe's prayer itself that actually drew down the positive decision. If women felt that Rabbis had this kind of empathy with their yearning for more formal study or fuller participation in community life, any decision (even a bitter one) would still be sweet. When, instead, they are admonished for their urge to express themselves in ways that are deeply rooted in Torah but not keeping with the traditional female role, and adversary relationship develops. At this point, every option brings loss. Moshe prayed to be able to give them a favorable verdict. As much as he wanted truth, he wanted to share something with them that was an objectively good thing and for which he himself longed for (i.e., the land) but which was not, under normal circumstances, available to women. The Torah is teaching a powerful lesson to the Rabbis of today. If they are to imitate Moshe (which they must strive to do) then they must find a place of deep and authentic compassion for the women who approach them with halakhic petitions. Their empathy should be so compelling that it moves them to prayer.

Numbers 36:1-13

The family heads in the clan of the descendants of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, one of the Josephite clans... said, “ה commanded my lord to assign the land to the Israelites as shares by lot, and my lord was further commanded by ה to assign the share of our kinsman Zelophehad to his daughters. Now, if they become the wives of persons from another Israelite tribe, their share will be cut off from our ancestral portion... thus our allotted portion will be diminished... So Moses, at ה's bidding, instructed the Israelites, saying: “The plea of the Josephite tribe is just. This is what ה has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: They may become the wives of anyone they wish, provided they become wives within a clan of their father's tribe. No inheritance of the Israelites may pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelite [heirs]—each of them—must remain bound to the ancestral portion of their tribe. Every daughter among the Israelite tribes who inherits a share must become the wife of someone from a clan of her father's tribe... Thus no inheritance shall pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelite tribes shall remain bound each to its portion.” The daughters of Zelophehad did as ה had commanded Moses: Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, Zelophehad's daughters, became the wives of their uncles' sons, becoming wives within clans of descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph; and so their share remained in the tribe of their father's clan. These are the commandments and regulations that ה enjoined upon the Israelites, through Moses, on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho.

וַיִּקְרְבוּ רֵאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת לְמִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־גִלְעָד בְּנֵי־מַכִּיר בְּנוֹ מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיְדַבְּרוּ לְפָנָיו מִלִּשְׁנֵי הַנְּשִׂאִים רֵאשֵׁי אָבוֹת לְבָנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶת־אֲדֹנָי צְוֶה ה' לָתֵת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בַּנְּחִלָה בְּגֹרֶל לְבָנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲדֹנָי צְוֶה ה' לָתֵת אֶת־נַחֲלַת צֶלְפָחָד אֲחֵינוּ לְבָנָיו: וְהָיוּ לְאֶחָד מִבְּנֵי שְׁבָטֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנָשִׂים וְנִגְרָעָה נַחֲלָתוֹ מִנַּחֲלַת אֲבֹתָיו וְנוֹסַף עַל נַחֲלַת הַמִּשְׁטָה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה לָהֶם וּמִגְרָל נַחֲלָתוֹ יִגָּרַע: וְאִם־יִהְיֶה הַיָּבֵל לְבָנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנוֹסַף נַחֲלָתוֹ עַל נַחֲלַת הַמִּשְׁטָה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה לָהֶם וּמִנַּחֲלַת מִשְׁטָה אֲבֹתָיו יִגָּרַע נַחֲלָתוֹ: וַיִּצְוּ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־פִּי ה' לֵאמֹר כֵּן מִשְׁטָה בְּנֵי־יוֹסֵף דְּבָרִים: זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צְוֶה ה' לְבָנוֹת צֶלְפָחָד לֵאמֹר לָטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם תִּהְיֶינָה לְנָשִׂים אִם לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מִשְׁטָה אֲבִיהֶם תִּהְיֶינָה לְנָשִׂים: וְלֹא־תִסָּב נַחֲלָה לְבָנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּשְׁטָה אֶל־מִשְׁטָה כִּי אִישׁ בְּנַחֲלַת מִשְׁטָה אֲבֹתָיו יִדְבְּקוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְכָל־יִבַּת יִרְשֶׁת נַחֲלָה מִמִּשְׁטוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶחָד מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת מִשְׁטָה אֲבִיהֶם תִּהְיֶה לְאִשָּׁה לְמַעַן יִירְשׁוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלַת אֲבֹתָיו: וְלֹא־תִסָּב נַחֲלָה מִמִּשְׁטָה לְמִשְׁטָה אַחֵר כִּי־אִישׁ בְּנַחֲלָתוֹ יִדְבְּקוּ מִשְׁטוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּאֲשֶׁר צְוֶה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֹּן עָשׂוּ בְּנוֹת צֶלְפָחָד: וְתִהְיֶינָה מַחֲלָה תְרֻצָּה וְחֻגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְנִעֲזָה בְּנוֹת צֶלְפָחָד לְבָנָיו דְּיִהְיוּ לְנָשִׂים: מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה בְּנֵי־יוֹסֵף הָיוּ לְנָשִׂים וְתָהִי נַחֲלָתוֹ עַל־מִשְׁטָה מִשְׁפַּחַת אֲבִיהֶם: אֵלֶּה הַמִּצְוֹת וְהַמְשָׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר צְוֶה ה' בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ:

Bava Basra 120a

The Gemara returns to discuss Zelophehad's daughters: **Later on, the verse lists them according to their age**, stating: "For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married" (Numbers 36:11), **and here** the verse lists them in a different order, **according to their wisdom**: "And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah" (Numbers 27:1). This **supports** the ruling of **Rabbi Ami, as Rabbi Ami says**: In the context of **sitting** in judgment or learning Torah, **follow** the participants' **wisdom** in determining the seating, so that the wisest is granted the highest honor, and **in** the context of **reclining** for a meal, **follow** the participants' **age**. **Rav Ashi says**: **And this** is so only **when** one is **outstanding in wisdom**, then wisdom trumps age; **and this** is so only **when** one of the participants is **outstanding in age**, i.e., particularly old, then age trumps wisdom.

להלן מנאן הכתוב דרף
 גדולתו וכאן דרף חכמתו
 מסייעא ליה לרבי אמי
 דאמר רבי אמי בישבה
 הלף אחר חכמה במסיבה
 הלף אחר זקנה אמר רב
 אשי והוא דמפליג בחכמה
 והוא דמפליג בזקנה

Bava Basra 120a

Rav Yehuda says that **Shmuel says**: **The daughters of Zelophehad were permitted to marry members of any of the tribes, as it is stated**: "Let them be married to whom they think best" (Numbers 36:6). **But how do I realize** the meaning of the continuation of the same verse: "Only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married" (Numbers 36:6), according to which they were permitted to marry only members of their own tribe? **The verse offered them good advice, that they should be married only** to those **fit for them**, who were often men from within the family.

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל בנות צלפקהד
 הותרו להנשא לכל השבטים שנאמר לטוב
 בעיניהם תהינה לנשים אלא מה אני מקיים
 אך למשפחת מטה אביהם תהינה לנשים
 עצה טובה השיאן הכתוב שלא ינשאו אלא
 להגון להן

Act 5, Scene 3

KENT Is this the promised end?

EDGAR Or image of that horror?

* * *

EDGAR The weight of this sad time we must obey,
 Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
 The oldest hath borne most; we that are young
 Shall never see so much nor live so long.



Charles West Cope, "King Lear and Cordelia" (1851)

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein

"As Arnold insisted, one must seek 'the best that has been thought and said in the world,' and if, in many areas, much of that best is of foreign origin, we shall expand our horizons rather than exclude it. 'Accept the truth,' the Rambam urged, 'from whomever states it.' Following both the precept and practice of Rabbenu Bachye, he adhered to the course himself; and we would be wise to emulate him. The explicit systematic discussions of Gentile thinkers often reveal for us the hidden wealth implicit in our own writings." "A Consideration of Synthesis from a Torah Point of View," *Leaves of Faith: The World of Jewish Learning*, vol. 1, 2003, p. 94)

"The social sciences and the humanities [...] are directly concerned with many issues which are of the woof and warp of Torah proper. The structure and substance of law, the fabric of state and society, the nature of man and his cosmic context all fall within the purview of general as well as Torah thought. Knowledge of how such questions, legal and/or philosophic, have been treated in different traditions can frequently enhance our understanding of Torah positions, as regards either broad outlines or specific detail." ("Torah and General Culture: Confluence and Conflict," *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures*, ed. Schacter, 2017, p. 290)