

Session 32 – Shemot

10 January 2021

The Exodus – From Slavery to Israel

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Shalom fellowship, here we are again. It's so good to see you all. I can't tell you how good it is to see you all. Every week, it's just like the light of my life. And so, we've gone up a level. The world is getting crazier by the week, but our fellowship is slowly, but surely is getting stronger and stronger.

And we're starting the book of Exodus, the book of Shemot. In this book, like the moral grandeur and spirit of a few great men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob become a national phenomenon. And they're now able to contend with nations and ultimately, they bring the mightiest nation in the world at that time, down to its knees. Now we need to bend our knees to the King of Kings and boy do we need prayer. And so let's take this opportunity, like almost I don't know anyone that has this opportunity once a week to bring such an amazing group of people from literally all over the world together in prayer. So let's just align our hearts, align our minds, align our spirits and through this Land, and through this fellowship lift it up to Hashem:

Hashem, Master of the world, we are so confused now. I think that's fair. I think that the coronavirus has confused us in the last week. In the United States, what is going on? We have never lived through anything like this. Israel is in another lockdown. America had a tattooed, a horned pagan-looking barbarian storming America's capital. The big internet platforms are tightening their grip and silencing voices that are opposing their views. It feels like it's starting to rain. It's starting to rain hard, it feels like the flood is coming. And so, Hashem, please show us the path to our ark, help us build our ark. Walk with us and we will walk in Your light. Free us from our slavery, from our fears, from our limiting thoughts. Give us strength and courage to be who we need to be in these times. We come here together, this fellowship every week as your loyal servants. Our hearts are open to your guidance. And we're ready to take the next steps on our journey toward our destiny. Towards Jerusalem. Toward a new world. Toward a new Jerusalem. Toward your kingdom. Thank you for today. Thank you for our lives. Thank you for our loved ones. Thank you for our health. Thank you for the love in our lives. Thank you for all the gifts and blessings you've given us. Thank you for choosing us to lead this charge of unity and love and prayer in the world. Help us take the light you shine on us today and reflect it to all the people around us, toward the people who need us now. Thank you for the light in our lives. And the whole world came together to say Amen.

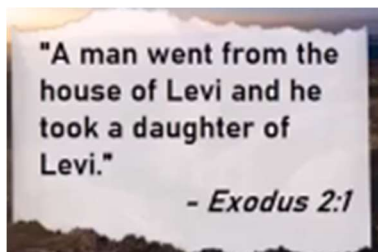
Okay, so let's begin. At the end of the book of Genesis, the children of Israel they come down to Egypt and they make their way down and they settle in the land of Goshen. And here we are now, we open up the next book, the book of Exodus. Genesis is called by our sages as the book

of the upright. And the Hebrew tradition calls the book of Exodus, the book of Shemot, the book of names. And that's just a peculiar name for the book. Exodus makes a lot more sense. That's the key of what this book is all about. The story of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. Why is the Hebrew tradition stuck on calling the book, the book of Shemot, the book of names? What message is being delivered to us? And I think that's the basics. If we can answer that question, and it's there in order that we ask the question, it will give us the proper framework of looking at the entire book. And that's why that name is there. It's there to trigger something in us, that we need to like dig a little bit deeper.

Someone may say, Hebrew, Shibrew, why is that important? Just because the Jews decided to call the book Shemot, the book of Names, that doesn't mean that there's any wisdom or message in that. So, just to make sure that we're all in line and that everyone agrees that it's a real question to contend with, what we're going to do now is we're just going to analyze the text of the beginning of the book. What you will see is a hidden pattern in the text. In case you didn't think names is an issue...the concept of names screams out of the text and forces us to grapple with what's going on here, and what is this about the names that's going on?

So here's what we're going to do and this session is going deep. I mean we're going to talk about everything today and so here we go. Let's open it up to the beginning of the story of our Savior, Moses, and the unfolding redemption from Egypt.

This is how it starts. See how the text presents itself.

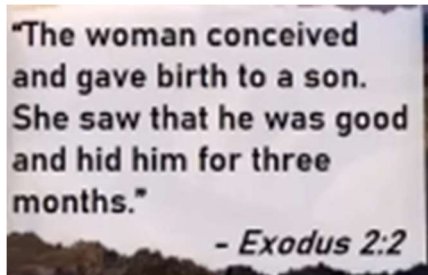


A man from the house of Levi? Who is that? That's the father of Moses. His name was Amram, and according to the midrash, he was literally the leader of the Jewish people at that time. When Pharaoh decreed that every boy would be thrown into the Nile, he divorced his wife Yochaved and all of Israel followed his example and separated themselves from their wives, saying, listen we're not just going to have children to be thrown into the Nile.

And when Yochaved convinced him to re-marry her, she said listen Amram, your decree is worse than Pharaoh's decree. Pharaoh decreed that no boys shall live, but you now know no boys or girls will live. You've destroyed the nation of Israel. And so Amram decided to rejoin Yocheved. And then all of Israel followed his direction. And the verse that calls Amram's wife

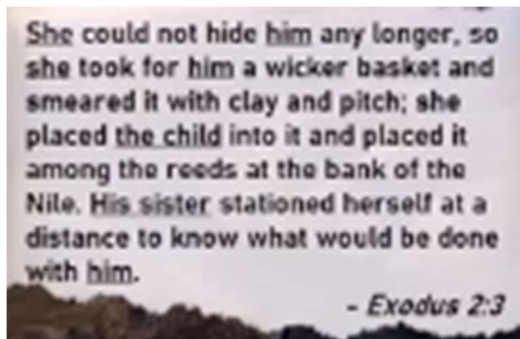
Yocheved, the mother of Moses, a prophetess in her own right, just a daughter of Levi...like we don't know her name? Okay.

Let's go to the next verse:



Yocheved, not mentioned by name, has a son, Moses, and he's not mentioned by name either. I mean, the first time Moses is mentioned in the Torah we don't even know who he is. We don't know his name, we don't know his father's name. We don't know his mother's name. They're just these random men and women with no names having a child with no name and nothing seems like this anywhere in Genesis. Everything in Genesis is about the names. We know everyone. We know Noah is born, we know about his father, we know the name of his children. We know everyone's names.

All of a sudden now, in the book of exodus, the book of names, we have no one's names. Look at the third verse.



So now, Miriam has now appeared onto the scene. Miriam, the prophetess is now seen, and it's just who is she? His sister. It's like, what is going on here? Moses' sister. At this point, it's already glaring. It's like, hello, there's no names here and the Torah is going out of its way to not mention anyone's names. But look, it just keeps on going. Let's go to the next few verses:

Exodus 2:4 And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to know what would be done to him. ⁵ Pharaoh's daughter (we don't know her name) went down to bathe by the river. And her maidens walked along the river; she saw the basket among the reeds, and sent her maidservant and she

took it. ⁶ She opened *it*, and saw him, the child, and behold, a youth was crying. She took pity on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys." ⁷ His sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and summon a wet nurse from the Hebrew women, who will nurse the boy for you?"

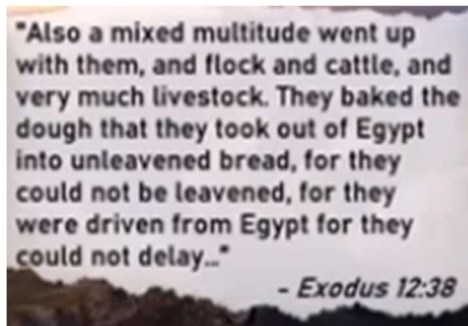
I mean, his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter...it's so convoluted, the Torah just doesn't talk like this, it's ridiculous. And so, in the book of names, the Torah is doing everything it can not to mention anyone's names. And his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter. It's like who's sister? And we don't even know what the baby's name is. And so if you weren't convinced by the Hebrew name of the book of Shemot, just look. The text is telling you, I want you to know something's going on here with names. Names you read in chapter two. You can't help but wonder, like, where have all the names gone? And that's exactly the point. The book of names, the names are gone. The book of Genesis is the map of personal avodat Hashem, our personal service of Hashem. Our personal of God. The whole book is about learning the ways, the greatness, the victories, the mistakes of individual men and women in order that we can implement the lessons of their lives in our lives. The book of Genesis is all about the names. And here in the book of Shemot, we transcend the individual name. The names are omitted because the path towards redemption goes through the individual in Genesis.

But in Exodus, we learned that the path toward redemption is through a people. It's through a nation. Our name becomes a part of a collective. We all carry the name of Israel. Every believer in the world carries the name of Israel with them. They carry the name of God with them. We're all branches of one tree. The branches aren't known through their leaves, but by the tree itself. It's like, yes, each branch is important. They'll bring its own fruit in its own way. But in each person is an entire world unto themselves. But the true power of believers comes as a united movement. A people, a tree, one nation and we're known as a nation now. No longer as just individual men and women.

And so, when you think about it, I mean, we're here to change the whole world and the world needs changing right now. And so like one Jew, one believer somewhere, we could maybe save a whale, we could, one guy, could save one whale. That's what we can do. If we dedicate our whole lives, we can save a whale. One believer can adopt a child from an orphanage. But a people, a movement, a nation, an international movement of people can change the entire world. And that is the Biblical dream and that only becomes really apparent to us that, wow, we could take down Egypt, if we need to as a nation in the book of Exodus. It's like for the first time Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, they've become this nation that can contend with the entire world now.

And in prior generations, you know for us, like, the goal is Jewish survival. Fight off the world – it wants to convert us, that wants to kill us, that wants to submit us. Communists and Nazis and God knows what else. Just keep the Jewish people, Jewish. Keep the Torah alive. But this generation, it's like we're taking it up a level now. This generation, we are meant to mirror the redemption of the generation of Egypt. Our name as a nation will attract a movement of

believers from all around the world. Look at Exodus 12:38. This is a key prophetic map of how this redemption is to unfold.



A mixed multitude of nations joined Israel as they left Israel. And flock and cattle and very much livestock and the nations...they're bringing their property, they're bringing their money, they're bringing their power with them. They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt, together with the people of Israel, into unleavened bread. For they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay.

Like all of a sudden, wow, the story of matzah, the story of Passover, is intertwined with the mixed multitudes of nations. None of us had time. We all had matzah. We all, it's like the holiday of matzah that's what it's called. Passover. And we're all experiencing it together. Now the prophetic blueprint for redemption is that a mixed group from the nations joins Israel in their salvation. They joined Israel, left their slavery, walked with them into the desert, and stood together with them at Sinai.

Now look at Zechariah. Look what he says will happen at the end of days, a mirror of the first redemption. Not only Israel is saved, but Israel is a beacon and a magnet for every believer in the God of Israel. Zechariah 2:

Zechariah 2:10 " Sing and be glad, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," the word of Hashem. ¹¹ "Many nations will join themselves to Hashem on that day, and they will become a people unto Me. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that Hashem, Master of Legions has sent Me to you. ¹² "Hashem will take Judea as His heritage, His portion upon the Holy Land, and He will choose Jerusalem again.

Many nations are going to join Israel and Hashem on that day and they, that whole movement, there is going to be one people that leave Egypt and they're going to be a people unto Him. And Hashem is going to dwell in our midst. Then you will know that Hashem, Master of Legions has sent me to you. Hashem will take Judea as His heritage, His portion upon the Holy Land and He will choose Jerusalem again.

So, here we see, it's like, here we are broadcasting from Judea and the nations are now slowly, but surely gathering to His portion in the Land of Israel. The vision is that many nations, a

mixed multitude will join themselves to Hashem and they will become a people, a movement of believers, just like those who left Egypt. They walk into the desert of the unknown and they're called to the Land of Israel. The Jewish people in some ways...like we call in the calvary. It's like we have backup. We didn't know, it's like, oh my goodness, there's a whole movement of believers that are out there. We're like, guys, we're on our way to the Land of Israel. We're getting out of Egypt and all, like David's army, non-Jewish believers. You look at the book of Chronicles, all of David's men, it's like so many of them weren't Jews. They were non-Jewish believers that joined the movement. That joined King David in the mountains of Judea. They joined the movement and Israel's strength and influence just went to a whole new level.

And so, what we're seeing now is Hashem is taking Judea in the Land of Israel back as His portion and we are continuously settling the Land of Israel, cultivating the Land of Israel. As you know, the Arugot farm, our new sister farm, we are the cutting edge of the settling of the Jewish people in the mountains of Judea. That is really happening and we can see it with our own eyes. And then, look what's happening here. We're just getting started. The Land of Israel fellowship now has almost 500 families who join us every week from 35 countries. Plugging into the heart of Judea, all of us connected to these mountains. To the mountains of the Land of Israel, to the mountains of King David. We're all speaking one language, with the Jewish people together. It's like a language based in the Hebrew. Based on the Torah, and as far as I know, this is one of the first movements of that final vision of the end of days that's actually materializing right now before our eyes.

It's so similar to David. It's like eerie. It's like David's messianic move. It didn't start off in the masses. It was an exclusive group that met sort of quietly. He had to like sign up. It's like, ok, I'm part of this thing in the mountains of Judea. These groups were meeting away from the world, away from the masses, and they were together in Judea. And then something of that was born. It's like, friends, it's like when things look like they're falling apart all around the world, that might be because they are. They are transitioning now into a new era and so for some people, that is just going to freak them out and terrify them.

But we are so fortunate to be walking in the path of the prophets and bringing a pathway for everyone to come and join and see what's going on here. New unity, new love, new strength in the world. An example for others to follow and like it's like Israel right now, we are on the rise and those connected to the Land of Israel, they're going to be lifted up alongside her. That is the promise and the hope of Israel. And we're just the luckiest most fortunate people in the world that somehow, we're on this path. Somehow, we've been brought here. I don't know how that happened, but here we are the most fortunate people in the world.

And so, things are sort of falling apart now and we have to keep our eyes open. We have to stay awake. We have to know what's going on and with that introduction to the book of Exodus, the book of names, the transition of our names all being intertwined with the name of Hashem. All of us carry His Name with us. That's why the Ten Commandments, I mean, we're going to get into that a little bit more when we get to the Ten Commandments, but God doesn't forgive those

who carry His Name in vain. What does that mean? People think that mean, oh, you said, Oh God, why did that happen? No that's not what the Torah says. No, it's not saying God's Name in vain, it's carrying God's Name in vain and all of us, we carry God's Name with us and when we use that for evil, that's just unforgivable.

And so, here our names are becoming attached to the Name of God, to the Name of Israel, and so it's one of the most exciting transitions in world history. And so, as things are sort of falling apart in America, there is something that is emerging out of this. And so, I just want to bring Ari on board now because he always has a perspective that is just Torah from Judea. Pure, it's always just truth. It's always just love and the world needs truth and the world needs love. And Ari is our medicine and so, Ari, my soul brother. The zoom is on you.

Ari

Shalom my friends,

I remember hearing the analogy of the lobster in a pot full of water. The temperature is slowly increased one slow degree at a time and the lobster doesn't even realize, because it's gradual and by the time he realizes what's happening, he's being cooked in boiling water and it's too late. As I look at what's happening in America and around the world, that's what I'm seeing. Things that would have been ludicrous and unimaginable just a year ago are happening before our eyes and it seems like too many people are simply not seeing it. I mean, imagine that a barbaric looking, horned tattooed guy would be standing at the senate plenum and that the President of the United States and scores of others would be expelled from every social media platform and that out of the closet, Israel haters and Jew haters would be gaining prominent seats in the Congress, the Senate and the halls of power of the United States would have been unimaginable. And now we see it happening before our eyes.

I'm not going to claim that I know definitively where all this is going, but one thing I believe with my whole heart is that it's not going to a very good place and the extreme and unprecedented division and polarization and hate in America is only getting worse. It feels like we're watching the unraveling of one of the greatest countries in world history, that we're watching real time the decline of America from a global superpower to a nation that's eating itself alive. And being that America is still currently the global superpower, in some ways the capital of America is the capital of the world. And as freedom and liberty in America goes, so will go freedom and liberty for the rest of mankind. And while I'm concerned for every American, for every God-fearing person in the world, being both a student of world history and Jewish history, I'm particularly concerned for the Jews in America and throughout the diaspora because without going into every eventuality and scenario, I can say that when things get really bad for a country, they get even worse for the Jews therein.

And no matter how strongly Jews may think that they side with and are activists for one side or another, they always seem to forget what history has shouted from the rooftops. That in the end

of the day, we are not left or right, we're not conservatives or liberals, but we're Jews, whether we like it or not.

And so we see in this week's Torah portion, the Jews went down to Egypt and brought with them blessing and success and salvation for the Egyptians. The Jews cleaved to Egypt the Torah tells us. They really made it their home. They believed it was their home. Then a new Pharaoh arose in Egypt who did not know Joseph and the Hebrews were taxed and singled out and persecuted slowly. They didn't even realize it was happening to them before it was too late, and they were full-fledged slaves to the Egyptians. But this didn't stop the suspicion and fear the Egyptians had of them and Pharaoh ordered the execution of every male baby born in Egypt and he ordered this genocidal decree to be carried out by the midwives who delivered the babies.

And this is what I want to talk to you about. There were two primary midwives, Shifra and Puah, and there's much discussion about who they were and what really happened regarding them, but what everybody agrees upon is that they were brave heroes who put their lives at risk to defy Pharaoh's orders and saved the lives of as many Jewish babies as they could. Now Rabbi Sacks brought a perspective to my attention that I want to focus on with you today. He brought down the perspective of both the Abarbanel as well as Sh'muel David Luzatto, who were two great sages of Israel and according to these two great rabbis, Shifra and Puah were not Jews at all. They explained that these midwives were described ambiguously as *hamiladot ha'ivriot*, which some define as Hebrew midwives, but they define as midwives to the Hebrews, meaning that they themselves weren't Hebrews, but they were midwives to the Hebrews and that it wouldn't have made sense for Pharaoh to appoint Hebrew midwives to implement this horrific deed because Pharaoh simply could not have expected Hebrew midwives to murder the male babies of their own people's children.

So the command was given to non-Jewish midwives to commit this horrific genocide. And what did these heroic non-Jewish midwives do? They defied orders at risk of their own lives. These midwives were ordered to commit a crime against humanity and for the first time in history, these righteous Gentiles who could have claimed they were just following orders, refused, laying the groundwork for the Schlinder's and the Wallenbergs, and the Corrie Ten Booms of history to endanger their lives and more often than not, sacrifice them in order to protect Jews and save them.

Rabbi Sacks explains that when Moshe Rabbeinu was told by God to say to Pharaoh, my son, my firstborn Israel, he was essentially saying to the most powerful leader in the world who considered to be God by himself, by his people – much of the world considered him god, he was saying that while these Israelites may be your slaves, first and foremost they're my children, the children of the living God of Israel. But by defying Pharaoh's explicit commands, these midwives, not through their words, but through their actions, were saying that they answer to a higher authority than Pharaoh himself. They answer to God, Creator of heaven and earth. And by standing with Israel, they were casting their lots with Israel and tying their fate together with the fate of the nation of Israel. Even if that meant a most probable death. And how were they

rewarded for this courageous and revolutionary act of faith? Rav Shalom Brod pointed out that the Torah tells us that the midwives feared God and they were rewarded and Hashem blessed them with houses.

And while there are many different interpretations to what that means, different dimensions of understanding, the Ishbitzer Rebbi explains that these houses refer to tranquility of mind which Hashem provided them with as a reward for their fear of Him above all else, due to the fact that they recognize that Hashem alone is the Master of the world, the ultimate authority. Hashem blessed them with these internalized spiritual houses of faith within which they could take refuge within their own hearts. They were able to hide within these homes, allowing them to continue doing what was right and true without the otherwise crippling and paralyzing fear of Pharaoh, the mortal King.

As I've shared with you before, Maimonides explains that the greatest distance of the world is the distance between your head and your heart. You can know a truth, but to truly and completely internalize that truth into the very fiber of your being, well that's a different story. That's what I believe the holy Ispitzer is saying – that due to their faith in Hashem, they were blessed from above with the complete internalization of Hashem's sovereignty, allowing them internal peace and tranquility during times that would otherwise be fraught with fear and doubts.

Now one thing I believe the Torah shows us is that no matter how often the Jewish people rebel against God and disobey God, and the Torah does not hide the multitudes of times in which we have that, that no matter what, God loves the Jewish people unconditionally and blesses those who bless the Jewish people and protects those who protect the Jewish people. We even see an interesting illustration of this in this week's Torah portion when Moses encounters God at the bush. He expresses doubts. Doubts about his own ability to lead, but also doubts about whether the people would believe him at all.

In the beginning of chapter 4, we see that Moses says that they will not believe me. They will not listen to me. They will say, God did not appear to you. And so God gives him three signs. The first is his staff turning into a snake. The second, his hand becoming white as snow with leprosy. And the third, a goblet of water turning into blood. Now if you look carefully, the first sign and the third, the staff/snake and the water/blood are actually used as signs both for the Israelites and for Pharaoh himself, but the second, his hand turning into leprosy is never used at all. How do we make sense of this? What is this telling us?

The sages explain that later on, Miriam was punished with leprosy for speaking lashon hara, for speaking negatively about Moshe. They point out that leprosy is a specific punishment for the sin of lashon hara. And that the second sign of Moshe's hand becoming leprous was not a sign at all, but it was a punishment. A punishment for him speaking negatively of the nation of Israel. Of him saying that when the time came, that the people of Israel wouldn't believe, when in fact, we see that they did and the sages explain that he was also punished measure for measure that he said that the Israelites would not believe and toward the end of his life when he hit the rock,

rather than speaking to it as he was commanded, God Himself says to him that he cannot enter the Land because as we see in Numbers 20;12, because you did not believe in me.

So extreme and exacting is the divine punishment of speaking negatively of the Jewish people, not believing in the Jewish people no matter how convincing the evidence is otherwise. And so while we're blessed to have a holy mix of Jews and non-Jews, a beautiful mix of people in this fellowship, I share this message with our non-Jewish brothers and sisters in particular because we're going forward into very scary and confusing times. And you very well may face opportunity to stand with the Jews and protect Jews even if it would mean real danger to you and your families. And while there may not be reason to give of why the Jews may be deserving of such sacrifice, loving the Jewish people and believing in the Jewish people is loving and believing in God, Himself. And God makes clear, starting in Genesis 12 and continuing through the very end, we could make a whole show just about that.

And so, I want to bless all of you. I want to bless all of you because in my heart, I know that you're all already there. That in Egypt, you would have hidden the Jewish baby boys, just as you would have hidden the Jews in Nazi Germany and so many countless times in between. And so my blessing to you is that during these times, when the temperature is increasing one degree at a time, as we approach boiling during these times of growing danger and threats, that Hashem should build you houses, houses of internalized courage and strength, houses of peace and tranquility which you and your families can take refuge in during the unstable and even chaotic times ahead. May Hashem bless you, my friends. May Hashem bless you and protect you. We love you all very much. Shalom, back to you Jeremy.

Jeremy

Thank you, Ari, thank you for the blessing. Thank you, we all need blessings now. So you know, Ari said that the midwives were blessed with houses and they were like fortresses in their minds with all the chaos that surrounded them, the fears of Pharaoh the fears of them becoming slaves. They were blessed with serenity, with inner peace knowing that God is king and He's running the show. And I think that's key because so many of my friends now, so many people are writing me that they're just riddled with fear. It's like understandably so, there's a global pandemic, there's absolute chaos in the world superpower. Who knows what tomorrow's going to bring?

It's like I remember listening to a lecture by the dear blessed Jordan Peterson who I just adore and thank God it looks like he's slowly doing better, and he said that intellectuals are asking the wrong questions so much of the times. And they're not only getting the questions wrong, they get them backwards. And it's like in the field of psychology, people wonder and they study and they ponder, why are people anxious and that's just a ridiculous question. The reasons for anxiety are starkly self-evident. The real question is why aren't people terrified out of their skulls so badly every second of their lives that they can't even move? That makes a lot more sense. Anxiety, that's not a mystery. Brief spells of calm, that's a mystery. I mean, the natural

order of the world, if you don't believe in God, then there are just endless reasons for fear and anxiety.

And that actually is prophecy in the Torah. That the Torah is prophecy, not in just foretelling the future, but it is a map of the soul which is timeless. So it's true 100 years ago, it's true a thousand years ago and it will be true in 100 years from now because it's talking about the essence of what it is to be a human.

So, in the map in the guide to help us navigate our lives, Israel, the journey begins in slavery in Egypt. In Mitzrayim. And what is that about? It's telling us the default of human existence in some ways is slavery and it's something you need to break free from. It's something you need to overcome. And we already sort of know this from the basics of the story of the Garden of Eden, but the story of Exodus really clarifies this point. It becomes more defined, it's you know, you look at the world around us. It's not ideal, it's broken, it's like we're out of the garden. We have to work to make bread and it's not easy because the earth is not like cooperating and it's hard to raise children and the world isn't easy. It's like we're not in Eden anymore.

Okay, in comes the book of Exodus as a spiritual map telling us, no, it's not only that you're born into a broken world, the world outside of the Garden of Eden, you're actually born into some form of slavery in Egypt, the beginning of Israel. You're actually in some type of slavery, you're born as a child, you think you're free, you think you're just celebrating holidays and having a good time. You're not really free. You just don't know it. You're actually a slave in some ways.

All of us are born into a kind of slavery. It's like in the primary path of the believer, the most fundamental purpose of the Jew, the direction in which all of us are supposed to live our lives, is a life striving toward freedom. We want to be free. We want to be free from the shackles of fear, from the shackles of culture, from all of it. That is the goal of...that's Jewish enlightenment, is freedom. And when you see the world through the eyes and the guidance of the Bible, ok, so we understand now. Our starting point, we're born into Egypt, all of us, and the goal is liberation. And in Hebrew, Egypt is not just a country, it's an idea and the Hebrew explains exactly what this idea is. Look at the word Egypt in Hebrew:



Egypt in Hebrew is call Mitzrayim. Now the word Mitzrayim is literally the same word as narrow, constraints, being held back, being enslaved, practically. It's meitzarim, it's the same word. So Jews are not only in Egypt, Mitzrayim, but they're inside the concept of meitzarim. It's like they're in constraints. They're in limitation, they're in narrowness they're in despair.

Who could blame them? They're slaves to the mightiest empire. They have no hope of freeing themselves. It's like, look at my parents, of what they've done to me and look at this situation. I'm born here. They're just in meitzarim. They are in constraints and that's how they're born. And they see no way out of the situation and they are locked in the dungeon of despair.

That's the beginning of Israel and that's the essence of being a slave in Egypt. It's total constraint. It's when you give up. It's total despair and you know we can read this message like in between the lines. In Genesis, it's like laying the foundations, but here, it's just becoming clear. It's like Abraham is called from his land, from his father's house, from his homeland. All of the things that could possibly hold him back – the culture he's influenced by, the family that he grew up with, the people around us, our friends. In some ways, they're holding us back from fully expressing ourselves.

In comes the book of Exodus and in case we miss the memo with Abraham, the journey of life on earth is a journey from slavery to freedom. It's actually four stages. It's slavery, freedom, Sinai, Israel. That's the map and that's the Biblical map towards enlightenment. That's the Biblical map towards joy, freedom, happiness, that we have to see it that way. If we don't know that we're enslaved, then we're just...we don't know, it's like we're locked in the matrix and we don't know we're in the matrix. The Bible's telling you, you should know you're in the matrix. There is something that you need to break free from, that is the path toward the blessing that awaits us in the world.

But the first step of really like getting as if we're in slavery, like, that's just counter-intuitive. It's like why on earth would God create a world that would put us in slavery? Like what's that about? If God is good, slavery doesn't immediately, intuitively feel good or look good. But the Torah here isn't trying to make excuses for God. It's here to guide us how to live our best lives in this world and the guidance isn't explaining why existence is the way it is. But the presupposition is that the creation is good. We may not understand it, but the Torah is here to guide us how to make the best out of our lives within a world that we don't and in a world that we can't understand. This is the pathway. Know how to see the world. Know how to interact with the world. And just so you know, we're starting off in Egypt and the world is built as a challenge. Our name, Israel, it means to struggle. It's like, it's all pointing back to this same idea – to struggle with man and to struggle with God and to prevail. That's what the name Israel means. That's what we're doing here and when we prevail, there is nothing sweeter on earth.

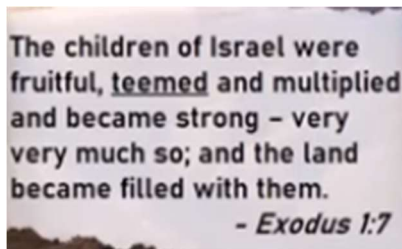
And so, here's the deal. We have some new Jewish members in the fellowship and of course, they don't come to the live sessions. They only want to listen to it on their time and they're like a little bit distant from the Torah. Let's put it that way. Okay, they just don't know, it's not their fault. They just don't know as much yet. And it's like come on. Can an ancient text 4000 years old, written in times when humanity's culture was like relatively primitive? Could such an old text really give us guidance in 2021? I mean, what I want to say is so much more than that. You know, catch the first 15 sessions of the fellowship and you will be blown away at the incredible guidance, inspiration, and wisdom that is embedded in our 4,000-year-old tradition. And the

Torah deals with the essential struggles of man in the world and the wisdom of how the Jewish people have navigated through the turbulent waters of life will absolutely blow your mind and make your life a hundred times better.

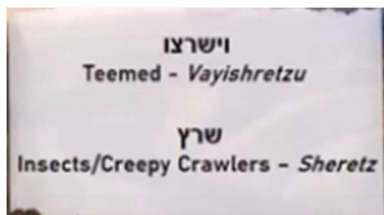
But what I want to say is something so much more radical than that. I'm not saying that the ancient teachings of the Torah, it's not that they're just applicable and relevant and meaningful for you in your life today. What I'm saying is that a 4,000-year-old text is speaking directly to you right now. It's nothing less than a living word emanating from above, transmitted through a text and speaking to us below, right now. Every Jew very soon, every believer in the world will be learning the Torah portion of the week. It's just a matter of time and what I'm saying is that the Torah portion itself is a living message that's... once you know how to read it, it is a direct message that will absolutely enlighten you and speak to you in ways on a personal level, on a national level, on an international level, and somehow in a supernatural way.

If you train yourself to look, you will find the personal message for you in your life that emerges from the Scripture itself. It's like, let me give you an example. It's like the Jewish people were more than just slaves in Egypt. They had almost entirely lost their identity as the children of Israel. The midrash puts it this way. There are 50 gates of impurity and the nation of Israel had reached the 49th gate. They had just a little flicker of flame left in them. They were just on their way out of being totally gone from the world.

Exodus, the first chapter, verse 7 says it like this:



So the children of Israel, they come down from Egypt, Joseph was their king and they become very, very strong. But the language there, especially in Hebrew, there's something that's off. The word teemed is just out of place. It doesn't belong there. What does that word mean? They were fruitful, teemed and multiplied. In Hebrew, be fruitful and multiplied, that's just a Biblical saying. When the verse says teemed, it's the word vayishretzu. What is that word?



Teamed. Sheretz is like a cochroach. Hasheretz is like insects, creepy crawlers. Impure animals. Sheretz. It's like what's going on here? We were fruitful and we became insects, we were like multiplied like bugs. And it's a like a negative connotation in Hebrew. HaSheretz is something that is impure, something that's wrong, that's not a good thing.

It's like wait a minute. What if you just read "team?" Okay, they're fruitful, multiplying they are teaming. No, the Hebrew is pointing out something here in that word, sheretz. And when it says the people of Israel vayishretzu, it's like the Jewish people are like cockroaches. That's just, what it's saying, it's an impure, unwanted, negative bug. Why does it say that word there? The Midrash tells us that the Jewish people, the people of Israel, they were so totally absorbed in the money that they had, the property that Joseph had, everything was just...they were just so immersed in the culture of Egypt that all of the darkest places, I don't know what to call them, the dance clubs, the idolatry houses, and all the stuff that went on in the idolatry houses was not just spiritual, it was pretty horrific. And the Israelites were enslaved not only physically by the Egyptians and their physical power, Israel was enslaved spiritually to the Egyptian pagan cultural spiritual power. It was through their mental and spiritual slavery that they became physical slaves.

Now keep that in mind, I think it's pretty fair to say that 2020 was a crazy year and 2021 has been quite a doozy so far. And for me 2021, this is the picture of the year of 2021. Can we put the picture up of the horned guy?



There he is, the horned guy. What is that? That is such a crazy picture. Did that actually happen? The riots in America's capital last week. Like the black lives matter and the riots in the summer. It's like are we in some type of science fiction movie? Like what is happening? Like the reality has surpassed Netflix and Hollywood's wildest imaginations. Reality is just so much crazier than anything we could have dreamed up of. What is the horned deer-headed guy doing on the capitol? What are we going to make of this? Now, as a believer, last week I experienced like a real down, seeing America like come apart at the seams. America is one of the greatest expressions of the Bible in the world and I love the Bible so much. It's like a country, the only

one that was built entirely on the values and the spirit of the Bible, has achieved more than any other country, has been more blessed than any other country. As a country, it's like the manifestation and witness of God's goodness in the world. Follow the Bible and you will be blessed. That was what America was and as the country is turning away from God it's like crumbling before our eyes.

And if you want to look at this horned guy from the capitol again. I want you to look at him for a second, but this time I want you to see him alongside the Egyptian pagan supreme sun god, the Egyptian god who rules over the sun. I took this picture from Wikipedia, you can check it out after this session if you want. Is that unbelievable? Like the picture that is on everyone's mind is this guy.

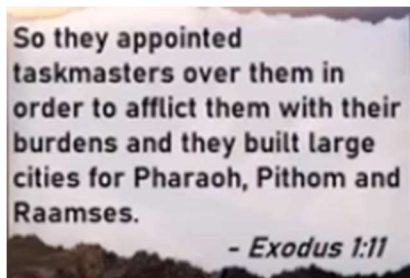


On the week every believer is learning the Torah portion of the week about the spiritual slavery of Israel in the Egyptian gods. In comes a living manifestation, representation of the pagan god of Egypt. Resurrected in the capital of America for everyone to see. What are the chances? Folks, it is a living word. It is a direct message through a text, for us, in our times, in our generations. The Torah is an active verb. Bible means book. Torah is, like it's happening right now. And it was like whoa! To me, it's like when I found that out, it was like despair turned into hope. Spice carts all over the place here. Look at that! That is unbelievable! Look at what's happening. It's like a message is being sent to the world. Right as we read the book of Exodus, Israel was born in Egypt. Israel is the counter force to paganism. And you think paganism is an archaic form of idol worship gone from the world. You are wrong.

The essence of paganism is the transfer of qualities that belong to God to nature. The worship of nature, the worship of man bending our knees to human lusts. Bowing down to the work of our own hands and our own social media platforms. That is the timeless temptation of paganism. And the sad truth is that traditional Judaism and traditional Christianity, they're on the decline in America. But the spiritual energies, they're not gone. They don't disappear, they're now being rerouted to an uninstructed natural pagan way that our ancestors fled from. And it can be seen in the radical left and we saw it last week with the radical right. The rioters in America, both right and left, for the most part, those guys, they're post religious America. The guy with the horns and the bare-chested, tattooed painting, like he looks like a European barbarian, that's not an accident. His image feeding the exact image of the supreme sun god of Egypt. That's not an accident. He wanted to look like a pagan.

And America and Europe today are not the places that we grew up in anymore and it's like a wake-up call. It's a wake-up call to people who are still enslaved in their own ways of thinking and their own culture and their father's house in the land which they were born. Every believer now is being called to Israel. Period. Israel is your promised land. Israel is your destiny. Israel is our hope. If you're a believer in the God of Israel, then we may love America, but the God of Israel has a Land and it's called the Land of Israel. That's your Land and what's happening now is like a wake-up call.

America and Europe, I don't know I'm 41 now. I can't imagine the next generation. My kids growing up there will not be the way that I grew up in Atlanta Georgia. It's like, think about it. A new Pharaoh arose in Egypt after Joseph died. That's all it took. One generation, maybe two, from being the most powerful people in Egypt. They were multiplying and teaming and very, very powerful it said. And in one generation it was turned upside down. And they were enslaved for 200 years. Look at Exodus 1:11.



For Pharaoh – Pithom and Raamses. It's like, whoa, that verse is just, it's so casual. It's like, so they appointed taskmasters over them. Just a verse a second ago, they were being fruitful and teeming and multiplying and powerful and without them even noticing, it's like, oh they were enslaved. How did that happen? Like was there a process? Probably, but that's the point. They didn't notice the process. It just happened. By the time they realized the process was happening, it was already too late. They were already enslaved. The Jews went from being almost royalty, respected, free. In the end of Genesis, they were the only people in Egypt that were buying property. Everyone lost all their property. They lost theirs, their freedom. They all gave it up to Pharaoh. Only the Jews were actually purchasing land and in one verse the whole thing flipped upside down. Without any warning, they became enslaved.

It's like, whoa we've witnessed now since the summer until now the entire spectrum of American culture from the far radical left of the riots of black lives matter and antifa to the far right. Camp Auschwitz, the horned guy, those people on the right and both of them are without God and without God, to put it nicely, it's not pretty. It's like oey.

In a study I just hear from Dennis Prager, most Americans don't know who Cain and Abel are. If you say who are Cain and Abel, they don't know. A new TV show? The Bible, the foundation stone of America is being lost in this generation and think about the phrases that cover American public property. It's like liberty, freedom, In God We Trust on every dollar.

Like those are direct outcomes of the Bible. Abraham Lincoln, he didn't attend church regularly but he had one book on his night shelf. The Bible. It's the source of morality in the world and without it, society will eventually implode. You take away the Bible, you take away God. You will be left with the god of Egypt. Tyranny, power hungry, lustful people that want control. That will ultimately end up like Egypt.

And like America's greatness emerged from the truth and foundation that all men and women are created of equal value because we're all made in the image of God. Once you remove God from the equation, the unbridled power of paganism will be unleashed in unconstrained pursuit of power will wreak havoc on society and if America loses its faith in God, then get ready for the flood. The Ten plagues, the great reset, call it what you want. It's all the same thing. But a country founded on faith in God cannot thrive when the foundation is just swept out from under it.

But inside this challenge, there's an opportunity of a lifetime. For the nations outside of Israel, they are represented by the mixed multitudes of nations in the book of Exodus. They were enslaved alongside the Jews. No one likes these riots. There are believers that are watching the things in the capital. They're like, oh, why is this happening? And the Jews in Brooklyn are like, oh my gosh, what's happening? And they're all together really in the same boat in some ways. Now they had to go through a transformation when they didn't identify anymore as a Jebusite or a Kushite. They became believers in the God of Israel and where is their Promised Land? It wasn't in Kush anymore, it's not in Norway or Holland or England. It's actually saying, oh, it's ok, like my homeland is the Land of Israel. That's my route. That really Israel is the hope. It's ok if things are kind of falling out here because a kingdom is being built and I'm really a loyal servant to that King that will be in Jerusalem.

Now most believers in the world, they don't feel a deep connection to their cultures in the countries in which they reside anymore. Many of them see their modern cultures as like poisonous. It's like dangerous. Like, wow, we gotta homeschool our kids and keep them away from the public-school systems. It's like an emotional spiritual separation is happening now between believers and the countries in which they live and that separation is not easy. It's not fun, it's scary, it may even be painful. But these historic, tectonic shifts are happening to shake people out of their comfort zone because in some ways, they're still like enslaved and used to it. And that's just the way it's always been. And now, what's happening, we're being forced to realign with who we really are and everyone around the world is being forced to realign with who they are truly connected to. They can love America in their hearts, but they're a part of Israel's destiny. They're soul brothers and soul sisters with the Jewish people. We are one movement leaving Egypt on our way to Sinai to receive the revelation and then onward to the Land of Israel.

But this week, we receive perhaps the most important message for us in these times because, man it looks scary. The first Godly revelation to Moses, the burning bush. It's like of all ways for the Divine to manifest itself. What is this burning bush all about? In Genesis, God appears

in messengers, dreams, angels, but now, as Israel is born as a nation, He delivers His message to this little tree, in Hebrew, it's called a sneh. It's like covered consumed with fire, but not being burned. What is all that about? What is the message of that revelation? It's like, well, what does God say in that revelation. Let's take a look at Exodus 3:7:

Exodus 3:7 Hashem said, "I have indeed seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt and I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters, for I have known of its suffering. ⁸ I shall descend to rescue it from the hand of Egypt and to bring it up from that land into a good and spacious Land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Why is God taking the people out of Egypt? Not to give them the Torah, not to give them the Ten Commandments, not for Shabbat, not for the holidays. It's for one purpose. To bring them back to the Land of Israel. 3,500 years later, the Jewish people and the mixed multitudes around the world that live as an extension of Israel are one tree. The prophets make that clear. We are a tree of life, rooted in the Land of Israel, with branches that spread out across the world. This fellowship in so many ways represents that in the most profound way that I know of.

And in the time of Moses, Israel was just an infant. It was a small tree. It was just born, a sneh, it was like a little bush but today the tree has grown and the kingdom is getting stronger and it may look like the tree of life, the tree of Israel, the believers around the world. They are being consumed by the fires of Egypt. By the fires of Germany. By the fires of black lives matter. The horned pagan guy. It could be Facebook and Twitter and Google. They're controlling everything and we're fully consumed and blocked and locked away in the dungeons of metzarim, of constraints. The fires will burn all around us, but the believers, the people of Israel, the tree of Israel, the tree of life will never be burned.

Israel is alive and God is alive. All of us here are a part of the Tree of Israel and we're continuing on the path that began at that burning little tree with one direction and one destination. A good Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey to the Land of Israel. The blueprint, the prophetic reality of Exodus is quite literally manifesting before our lives. We just have to have the eyes to see it. And as the exile is coming to an end, the truth like the thin veil of the societies and the civilizations, it's being exposed. And what we will discover is that this world has one hope and it's not Donald Trump. It is the Kingdom of Israel. Israel will be the refuge. Israel is the light of the world to lead us in these dark times and thank God we can connect with every one of you every week as we journey into the unknown. We have like a direct connection now.

It's because we may be going into the unknown, but all the while we're walking together, walking together and Israel is our target. Israel is our destiny and the fires will burn all around the tree, but the tree will never be consumed. In fact, that fire manifests again as a pillar of fire when we leave Egypt. Not only does it not consume us, it guides us. It gives us direction in which way we should walk. The fire protects us. If we walk in its light, if we walk in its light.

That fire continues to burn today. It burned in the menorah, in the Temple, it continues to burn as an eternal flame, a ner tamid, in every house of prayer facing Jerusalem in the world. It's like that fire is still guiding us. And the fire's all around us. We are the Tree of Israel, never to be consumed. And so friends, we're entering into definitionally unprecedented times and the media and social media, they may try to silence the truth, but they can't silence the Torah. They can't silence our prayers. They can censor twitter, they can't censor God and they surely can't stop God whose Presence is returning to the Land of Israel before our very eyes as Jerusalem is being built.

So friends, stay strong and courageous and as always, Ari and Tehila and I we are here for you. We're just an email or a WhatsApp away. We probably have to find some new platform that isn't controlled by all these big tech companies, Parlor, people are sending you all these different ideas. We'll find one. But just know that we are praying for all of you from the bottom of our hearts because I just know that in this fellowship, this is like the core, this is our core, this is our Ark, this is the place that Hashem has brought us in these days, for this time and let us take this light and just share it and spread it and reflect it to all the people that need it around us. Let's open our ark for them and bring them onboard.

And Hashem, please, please bring your pillar of fire and keep the enemy away and guide us in Your light. And may every member of this fellowship be blessed from Zion.

Aaronic blessing.

Be blessed to know that the Torah is a Living Word speaking to us right now. So the scary images that we see on TV are actually spice carts, letting you know that HaShem is running the show.