

Session 35

Beshalach – Crossing over into the Unknown

31 January 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBYtO6eosUE>

Hey, Shalom, everybody. Oh, it's so good to see everyone here today. Sundays have never been the same since we've started this fellowship and for me, Sundays have never been so good. It's like, it's just a lifeline for me. I've never lived through a global pandemic before and it's been almost a year now and when I think about the fact that we're living through a global pandemic, it still just sort of shocks me. I know I should be used to it by now, but I'm like what are we actually living through this thing? And it was like just in time we were given this fellowship and the ability to tap into the energy of our unity and our togetherness. And it's just absolutely a tree of life for me. It's so energizing. Just watching the welcomes on the chat from Mexico, and Sweden...it's just so beautiful seeing the whole world come together. It's just awesome. And so, it's by far the coolest thing that I've ever, every been a part of and I just I can't wait to show you the update that I've been documenting all week about our center in Judea, that's going to be fun to show you. But, I wanted to start with something funny today.

Last week, we learned that as the people of Israel break free from slavery, we're learning that that's really just a map. We're not meant to literally break free from slavery, or recognize or remember the exodus from Egypt, but like the last command of that Torah portion is tefillin, the phylacteries, it's really something that we're supposed to do every day. And I made a video about my mornings in Judea, to make that teaching just really practical and hopefully give people some ideas about how to create better mornings in their lives. And I didn't know what the response would be. I'd never done that before. And it was received really, really well. I mean a bunch of Israeli websites posted it. People were comparing my life to monks in India, it was like, wow. That's like the beauty of Judaism, that you can have a fully spiritual life, but you don't have to be a monk. You can have six kids, you can have a job, you can be in the world, yet fully charged and led by the Spirit and that's just the marvel and wonder of living by the Bible.

And you know people from all over were telling me you know this is what they're doing in their mornings, and why they're going to adopt this in their mornings, and that was just really fun because it just made a real practical change in people's lives and what a marvelous thing to be a part of. And Tehila and I both got, I don't know how many emails, asking her to make a video about her routine, as a mom, up at night crying the babies nursing babies, taking care of our family and making time for her own personal spiritual growth in these crazy corona times and so this is the video we made for all of the women in the group to help make you smile. So this is a video of Tehila's morning routine.

Video – quite silly

So that's it, thank you Tehila for that video. That was Tehila's idea. She's so funny. You should know that everything that everything I do in the morning, is inspired by Tehila. She was the first one to get up early, she was the first one to be jumping into the pool and to be getting into cold showers. She pretty much sets the general rules in my life. All of the good things that are in my life or that I do in my life, they all pretty much come from her and just the crazy corona life with all of our kids in lockdown with no school, it's just knocked her a bit off her schedule. But she'll tell you more about that soon. But you'll be happy to know that she's back this week. She's better than ever.

And now that we are all together, let's take this time and bring our scattered hearts around the world together and lift them up to heaven. We are just so fortunate to be what we are able to be, to do what we're able to do, to unit from so many different backgrounds, from so many different countries, from so many different places and educations and to put all of that aside and to come together around the world in one moment in time and to pray together. We are of the most, the luckiest people, there are like 0.0001 percent of the world that gets to do this and we are so fortunate to be connected to this Land and connected to each other and so what an opportunity to start our week off with a global prayer.

So Hashem, Master of the Universe, thank you for this time together. Seems like the whole world is just spinning into the unknown. Thank you for guiding us on this journey. Thank you for this opportunity allowing us to join together to strengthen each other and to learn the wisdom of your Torah together. Thank you for making your Word real in our lives. Thank you. We gather here today, we gather here every Sunday from all over the world to connect to Your promise of redemption. To reconnect to Your Promised Land. We're starting off our week inviting You into our lives and Your blessing into our homes. We are here for You, to honor You, to better learn how to walk in Your ways, so no matter where the world turns, we will walk with Your direction. Show us our pillar of fire in our lives so that we can walk in Your light. May that light take us all the way to a new Jerusalem. And may the fellowship all around the world say, Amen.

Alright, so today, we have a lot on our plate. We have a lot to do. I have a lot to share. It's really going to be a beautiful session. And so, we're going to start right off with Tehila. And so she's been away for the last few weeks doing things that only she can do, but now Baruch Hashem, she's back, so let's kick off our fellowship with some insight in Torah from Tehila, so here she is.

Tehila

Hello everyone. I'm sorry it's been awhile. Live's been a little crazy. All of the kids have been home on lockdown. It's been almost impossible to break away to a quiet place to try to talk to you guys even for just a few minutes, but here I am. I've done it. So, in the Torah portion we just read, we heard about the splitting of the sea, and one of the remarkable parts of the story

in my opinion is the song of Miriam and the women. So Moshe and the people of Israel are singing and praising Hashem, and then the women go out with musical instruments and they start singing not so remarkable at first glance because everyone's dancing and singing, right? But, if you read it carefully they already had in their hands these musical instruments. I was talking to the kids about this on Shabbat and I said, "Let's say you were running away from slavery. What would you take with you? So they, said, we'd pack food and water, and so we'd probably pack some animals so that we could have more food and we'd take clothes and dishes and maybe some valuable jewels so you can sell them and buy other necessities, right? Those are the things you would pack if you're running away.

Probably the least useful thing to bring along is a musical instrument. One of the kids pointed out pretty astutely, "well, Abba probably would have forgotten something really important like the food or the baby car seat, but he definitely never would have forgotten his guitar. And I said, fair enough, good point. Why would he never forget his guitar? Because he's expecting to be singing. He's planning on singing. If you're planning on having an opportunity to praise Hashem and sing, then you're going to pack musical instruments. So that's really beautiful, right? They expected to have a reason, to have a cause to be singing and praising. And that's really beautiful.

So, ok, so they packed them, but's what even cooler is that you don't hear Miriam say, hey, go over to donkey 47 and go rummage through my kitchen gadgets and try to find those musical instruments I packed. Like Moshe started singing, and boom there were those instruments. It's like, so you guys might remember this thing called air travel that we used to do before there was covid. And people would fly from place to place in these airplanes. So back in those days, you could check on your bags, and then you would just bring with you your carry-on bag on to the airplane. What would you put in your carry on? It's like the stuff you would need right during the flight.

So it's like Miriam taught the women to pack their musical instruments, not on donkey number 47, not to check it under the plane. Bring it right in your carry on. Like stick it between your legs. You don't stick it between your crock pot and your pressure cooker, you pack it right there with your toothbrush and your spare pair of socks, so you'll have it right ready. So that's what Miriam is really teaching us and it's like all the women along with her. To be ready at any moment to see Hashem's miracles.

But you know it's interesting that it didn't necessarily have to be that way. There's something really interesting about Miriam's name. In Hebrew it can actually mean two things. Marim, right, Miriam, with different vowels, actually means "bitter." Like later on in the Torah, when they come to the bitter waters, it's mayim marim. Bitter water. And if you break her name into two parts, it would actually be mar, bitter, and yam, the sea. Like she had the potential inside of her name to just be really negative and bitter at the sea, right? But the other way of reading

the way of reading the word Miriam, is marim, to lift up. It's like she had these two potentialities in her and she chose to be the person that's going to lift up everyone and not the person to be bitter and bring everyone down. You know in Jewish mystical writings, and I know this is kind of a generalization and it's not true for everyone, but there's this idea that women are a little bit better at seeing the details. They're a little bit more detail oriented. Like the male aspect is associated more with having these kinds of grand ideas whereas women often can see the details. See where things can go wrong. This is Jeremy and me. Tell me if you guys can identify with this.

Jeremy will be like, Oh, we should do this. We should move to the farm, we should make a fellowship, like these amazing huge creative visions. So, he had the inspiration to move to the farm, and I'm like thinking, yeah, but I sort of see everything that can go wrong, like, where would the kids go to school, how will we take out our garbage, where will we go to the bathroom if we move to the farm? Like women often have the ability to envision the details and how something will look in reality. And now that can be a good thing or a bad thing, right? You don't want people running around you doing stupid ideas because they didn't think of everything that could happen. Right?

But on the other hand, if you're a person who's always pointing out everything that could go wrong, right, you could sort of take the air out of people's tires. You can kind of bring down the people around you. It can be really negative. It can be kind of bitter. Nobody can do anything because you're always saying, "ah this will go wrong, and that'll go wrong." So it's a very fine art form to try to be able to see the details, to see what could go wrong and to use that to fine-tune the idea, right, to come up with solutions ahead of time, to be the person in your family that's helping everyone be better prepared to you know, to bring into life their vision, but without killing the inspiration and the dream. It's like a really powerful potential that we carry inside of us to either by this bitter complaining force in our home, or to be a source of faith that says, yes, I do see what can go wrong, I am going to try to plan so that we'll be better prepared for all the things that can happen, but I'm going to lead the family to step out in faith, even though I know how hard it can be, right? Even though I know that it might be really, really challenging.

So it's kind of like this balance I've talked about with you guys in the past between faith and human effort. Like, Miriam could have been on the sea and said, "I'm just going to be bitter. I knew so many things could go wrong. She's a person that could have seen those details, right? She knows how to see, but you know, with no escape route, but she still chooses to raise up everyone with her instruments in her carry-on suitcase. And that's very much like the idea of the well.

Remember we talked about this? There's like the water pit in the Land, which is just something you dig and rain just goes in and it fills up and it's just about your effort. And then there's the

spring, where it's kind of magic. It just pops out of the ground and pure faith – it's like Hashem does miracles. A well is a really special kind of water from where you dig. It takes effort, but you have to have faith that Hashem put water there under the ground just waiting for you. Having a salvation waiting for you. So I don't think it's a coincidence that Miriam, of all characters in the Torah, is most associated with the well.

Our tradition teaches that there was a well that followed Miriam throughout the desert with the Israelites, providing them with water. That's why when she died there was the whole rock-hitting fiasco with Moshe because the well disappeared when she died. So, she's associated with the well because she makes the effort. Right? She's been in Egypt, where she watched over Moshe. She strives to save the babies, but she does it, right, like she combines her effort with faith and believing that Hashem will meet her in her efforts. And that's why she packs the instruments, because she knows that with all of her efforts, that's not going to be enough. She's waiting to see Hashem's miracles. And she teaches that to the people around her.

So I found that to be a really powerful life lesson. Especially for us women, but really for everyone. We all have the potential to face life with this bitterness. There're so many problems. Or we can say, yes, there are problems, but I'm going to step out in faith and Hashem will meet me there. Hashem will be there to save us. So, you know, it's amazing how these two opposite forces are embedded right there in Miriam's name, embedded right there in us, teaching us so often that the characteristics that are our greatest challenges, our greatest stumbling blocks, can actually be the tools that we use for good in the world.

So now, on a kind of unrelated, but kind of related note, last week Jeremy shared his morning routine. We've been getting such amazing feedback from all of you. It's really cool to see people sharing their stories about how they started to get inspired to get up early and make their own beautiful morning routine. And I got an overwhelming amount of questions about my morning routine. So, right now, as Jeremy just showed you guys, during the covid lockdown, my morning routine mainly consists of trying to get as much sleep as possible.

So that video that Jeremy showed you guys was sort of a joke, but sort of not a joke because the truth is that I've been getting a serious dose of humility in the last few weeks. I kind of stretched myself a little bit beyond my limits. Uh, knocked myself out a bit and the lesson that I walked away with is that there's a time for pushing, you know, for getting up early, waking up the dawn, exercising before the sun comes up. And then there's a time for recuperating and especially for us moms, I think we have a tendency to push ourselves beyond our limits and I've been trying to integrate in my own life the value of learning to accept myself, even when I need a little bit of extra rest and relaxation. That's been a journey for me, not to get mad at myself for needing a little more time to snuggle under the covers in the morning before I get up and give myself a little bit of strength to brace myself for what's coming in the day.

So, you know there's a value in kind of having the times where you don't have the most strenuous morning routine, but at the same time, I keep in mind that eventually things will get easier, bizrat Hashem, you know, please Hashem, and I'll get used to things or the circumstances will get a little bit easier. So I bear in mind that I have my ideal of what I aim for as well.

So as for my ideal morning, it definitely does look a lot like Jeremy's. The Judean morning is something that we developed together when we were first moving out to the farm. And when I used to have my Judean mornings, it definitely made my day amazing. I had a lot of the elements that Jeremy talked about like prayer, exercise, envisioning the day, journaling, even cold water when I was really extra brave. But there is one thing I do in my morning routine that Jeremy doesn't. I think it's super important as a mom and it connects to the discussion of Miriam that we were just talking about.

Something I try to do in the morning besides for journaling for myself is to actually journal about my kids' lives. It's something that Jeremy can't really do, because like, if I was to say to Jeremy, hey, what did Emunah do yesterday? Jeremy would be like, ahh...she was cute? I think as mom's we have a tendency to notice the little details about the kids. And it's really fun to write those things down. It's cool just to be able to look back and remember those cute little milestones. But it's even deeper. I think it does something really profound.

Just like Miriam's name that can either be like a bitter person or that person that can really lift everyone up. As parents and especially as moms, we notice these little things about the kids and that means we notice the things that they do wrong which can lead to nitpicking and criticizing, and I'm definitely guilty of that, sometimes as my kids would know. But, it also allows us to notice those good things, those little developments, those places where they may have had a hard time with something. Maybe they just moved an inch better and by journaling about them with a focus on the positive, we can orient our minds to notice and to pick up on their little growths, right? And encourage them.

So, you know, because what you think about is what your brain focuses on. So in the morning, I love to take time and think about each kid and just notice a little good thing about them. Maybe write it down, maybe you notice them being a little bit better at. And, you know, you might be able to give them a little more encouragement because you notice those things, and that helps them keep on growing and keep on developing and it feels really good for them to know that you're thinking about them and keeping track of them. Like when each of my kids turns bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, what I do is, I give them their journal as a gift and I even record myself reading to them from it. It really makes them feel special that I took all those years to notice the good in them.

So, that would be my little Miriam tweak of the morning routine, to use our Miriam characteristics, that ability, that potential to see the details. And taking that and channeling it to be marim. To lift up the people around us. So with that, I wish you guys a great week, and everyone feel good, be healthy. Bye!

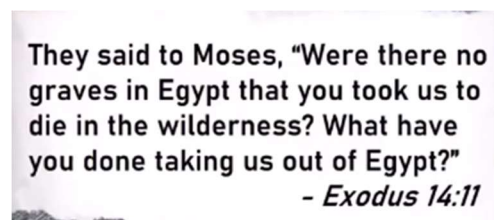
Jeremy

That's really good. Why don't you journal about me? You should journal the good things you see about me, also! Because you've got the criticizing things down to an art where you know exactly how to do it without rocking the boat too much but if you had a journal of the good positive things that I'm getting better at, that could also be good. I think that could be nice.

Well, either way, thank you so much. Thank you for coming back. We're just so happy to have you back. You add such a beautiful flavor to this fellowship. And so, Tehila is one of the funniest people that I know. She's always making me laugh and there's just something about the Jewish people and laughter. There's just so many Jewish comedians, and maybe that's because of our patriarch named Isaac, that literally means to laugh, but either way, there's just a disproportionate number of Jewish comedians and it's real outstanding.

And it's a little bit unlikely being that the Jewish nation has been through such hard times in the last 3000 years. Like from Pharaoh to Hitler, like my God, where do we get these comedians from. Maybe, maybe it's because we've been through so many hard times that we're so funny. But what my dear friend Yishai Fleisher, who is the international spokesman of the city of Chevron, the capital of Judea, he showed me a verse in this week's parsha, that has become one of my favorite verses in the Bible. And you can see that the Jewish people as a nation from the get-go we were already comedians and so this is a really famous story, but if you don't read it with the right eyes, you just kind of like flip over it. I flipped over it for years.

You know they're at the sea, the sea hasn't split yet. The Egyptian army is closing in on them and the Jewish people start complaining to Moses in perfect Jewish style. Put it up on the screen here. Exodus 14:11



It's like the Jews here, if you read it right, they're not just complaining, they're complaining in the funniest way. Hey, Moses, what, no good graves in Egypt? Well, you had to bring us all the way out here to die? Hahaha! That's just such a funny way to complain. This 4,000-year-old

text is like a modern-day Brooklyn Jew comedian, like Jackie Mason, it's so funny. Every time I read that verse in the Torah, it's like a Brooklyn Jewish accent. It makes me laugh. It's just the Bible, it's so good, I just love the Bible, it's the best book, but that's how we know the Jews were comedians from the get-go. Hey, Moses, what, no good graves in Egypt, so you had to bring us all the way out here?

Alright, anyway, moving forward so we have now a lot of fun jokes, we've had a lot of good times already and so, Ari Abramowitz has had an interesting week. I don't want to ruin any surprises, but I think it's fair to say that there's never a dull moment in the Abramowitz home. And so I know that he has a lot to say and um, I know that the Torah right now is guiding him profoundly and so I just want to give the Zoom over to Ari and let him take it from here. Because I know that what he has to say is going to touch our hearts.

Ari

Shalom my friends, last week I posed a question that I myself didn't know the answer to. My wife, Shayna, had contracted corona and so had my baby daughter, D'vash, but I was tested four times and I came out negative each time, so was I immune? Well, I have an answer. No, I am not immune. After being tested this past Tuesday, my results came back positive. I had indeed contracted the coronavirus. It was the cutest version of the virus possible because apparently my yummy little D'vash gave it to me. I guess after one of her direct facial sneezes that must have done the trick. But I had the virus, no question about it. And within a day or two, I started developing symptoms, not terrible symptoms, but I was dizzy and disoriented and more tired than usual which is why the message I'm sharing with you today may not be as coherent as it usually is.

But the doctor said that the sickness could often kick in after a week, so I really don't know still what's in store for me. And to some degree, I'm just wondering what may still unfold in my life right now. But I need to make a confession, I started getting really concerned. You see so many cases in the news and on the media about people my age or younger having horrible things happen to them, even dying, and would I share in the same fate? If something happened to me, what would happen to my wife, Shayna, what would happen to my little D'vash? When the results came in, I had more than a few moments of fear and that is what shocked and disturbed me really perhaps even more than the corona itself.

I was walking around believing that I had a much higher level of internalized faith than that. That getting corona wouldn't shake me in that way, but the first couple days, I had some real anxiety. I never had anxiety about the thought of getting corona, but now that my results came back positive, my stomach was tied in a knot.

And, I've often reflected in the past how the punishment or the consequence of a lack of faith is built in. It's the resultant anxiety that release of that unhealthy cortisol chemical that makes



things like corona even worse. The fear itself can cause that which you were afraid to manifest, but even knowing that it isn't always easy to just turn it off. And I talked it through with Shayna, a number of times. She strengthened me and she comforted me and she reminded me time and again that there's nothing to be afraid of. That Hashem runs the world. And I prayed and reflected and massaged that truth into the situation and remembered that my faith should not just be that I'll get better, but that whatever happens, whatever happens, it's in Hashem's hands and it's for the best.

Of course, I need to do everything in my power to take care of myself. I've been taking Vitamin D and Quercetin and Zinc, and trying to get sunlight, but ultimately surrendering to the truth that this isn't just happening but that Hashem is in charge and Hashem is running the show. That has truly been the calling and the challenge and the mission right now. But it didn't come immediately to me and it didn't come easy to me as I arrogantly thought it would. And I thought the reason could be that at the moment my head was not truly connected to my heart, the illusions of this world, the confusion, the doubts, the regrets were so overpowering that I didn't fully believe that Hashem was really running the show. I couldn't have truly believed it because if I did, that fear and anxiety wouldn't have tied that knot in my stomach.

And it was that fear that helped me connect with the fear that the Jewish people had in this week's Torah portion and not only this Torah portion, but of the Torah portions to come because as the Jewish people crossed through the Sea that was parted on both sides which our sages compared to a birth canal with which we are birthed as a people. We were redeemed from being slaves to Pharaoh. We were redeemed to being born as being slaves to Hashem, servants to the one true God and that everything that happens from that point on is designed and orchestrated with the purpose of transitioning their fear from being fear of man to being fear of God.

Even the manna itself. In verse four, it says, He said to Moshe behold I will rain bread from heaven on you and the people shall go out and gather a certain portion every day that I may test them whether they will walk in My Torah or not.

The manna itself was a test. Everything was a test designed to facilitate, to enable growth in both our faith in God and our fear of God. Even the sea itself our sage teach did not actually part until a prince from the tribe of Judah named Nachshon ben Abinadav went so deep into the sea that there was no turning back. That he would have drowned, only at that moment that he would have drowned, only then did the waters part.

But now I want to tell you the part of the portion that most deeply touched my soul that really spoke to me as I sat home with the coronavirus starting to do its work on me. The nation had crossed the sea miraculously. God had denied the laws of nature and caused divine honey fried pancakes, manna to fall as food for them from the sky. There were miracles all around them

and nonetheless, they continued to have crises of faith. The final crisis of the parsha was when the people were thirsty for water. Now I'm not trying to downplay the power of thirst because true thirst can be overwhelming, but the people were so thirsty that they thought they were going to die.

In chapter 17:3, the people said to God, they murmured and they said, why have you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children, and our cattle with thirst. They accused Moses and therefore, God, Himself of bringing them into the desert to die of thirst. God told Moshe to hit the rock and he did and water came forth from it. In verse 7 he called the name of the place Massah u'Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel and because of their test of Hashem saying, is Hashem with us or not? That was verse 7. What was verse 8? What immediately follows, the doubt of the children of Israel, chapter 17 verse 8. Amalek came and battled against Israel in Rephidim. That's right, immediately after Israel expresses their doubt and questions God, whether God is truly with them, they're attacked by Amalek. Now, I think that it may be worth doing an entire session explaining the nation of Amalek, their spiritual roots, and why their most focused solitary mission in the world is the destruction of Israel. That may be worth diving into a few weeks from now when we discuss Haman on Purim. For Haman was an Amalekite.

But for now, I'll just explain the idea that was refined by Rav Avraham Zvi Kluger. He explained that the Jewish people are always attacked by an enemy who embodies the spiritual flaw from which they themselves suffer at the time. And what was that flaw? Well Amalek's purpose in the world is their war on God. Their mission is to cast doubt on whether God really runs the world. As a descendant of Esau, Amalek knew the boundaries of the Land that was promised to Jacob. And they knew it did not threaten their territory. They never had a prior battle with Israel. Their motivation to attack Israel was pure. To cast doubt on the existence of the God of Israel. They knew that every nation in the world saw the unprecedented blatant miracles God did for Israel, and that every nation was trembling in fear of the God of Israel.

And so they brazenly led a charge and they attacked. Amalek represents doubt. They have the same numerical equivalent of suffic, which means doubt and it is only when Israel has doubt in their hearts that we're vulnerable to being attacked by Amalek. Amalek is an external physical manifestation of our own fears and doubts. This is why when Moshe held his hands up, Israel was victorious and when his hands were down, Amalek had success. Our sages say it was not some sort of abstract magic, but when Israel looked at Moses during the battle and his hands were raised, their hearts were directed towards Hashem and they were successful. And when they looked at Moses and they did not see his hands directed towards heaven, their hearts were therefore not directed towards heaven and they lost their strength. They lost their success. They lost their power.

This is further demonstrated by who Amalek attacked. Deuteronomy chapter 25 verse 18 tells us that Amalek attacked the weak who were straggling behind. What does this tell us? That if we really feared God more than we feared man, when we really fear God as we should, and we saw that our Israelite brothers and sisters were falling behind, we would have gone as slow as we needed to go to make sure that the weak stragglers were among us. It is only because we feared Amalek, because we feared man more than we feared God that the weak were left behind and therefore we were vulnerable in the first place.

So in sharing my fears with you, my friends, I'm not trying to criticize myself too strongly. I'm not saying this to condemn myself or to be hard on myself. I'm a human being. We're going to have our moments of weakness. We're going to have our moments of fear. The question is what then? Do we give in to it? Do we revel in it? Do we nurture it? No, that's when the work begins. Those moments of fear are opportunities in which Hashem is exposing to us the kinks in our own armor. Those are opportunities to build our faith and enhance our spiritual fortifications.

And as I told Shayna later, to some degree, Hashem is in the fear, too. Perhaps He purposefully pushes us out of our comfort zones not only to give us the opportunity to grow, but to give us the chance to experience gratitude and joy when He comes to our aid, when He save us from that which we're afraid of. The words of King David keep coming to mind again and again throughout this process... and to you Hashem, I will offer a sacrifice of thanks that with Hashem's help when my family is on the other side of this thing, I will offer a sacrifice an offering of thanks, whatever that means. Shayna and I have been discussing it, not only our family, but Israel, the Jewish people, the world, all of you and all of our families. We will be so grateful when we're on the other side of this.

Friends, thank you for your continued blessing, and your continued prayers. My name in Hebrew is Ari Yehuda Ben Raquel Esther, and I'm grateful for your prayers. May Hashem bless us all with health, spiritual and physical health, and may He grant us the faith to banish the fear and the doubts from our hearts and to finally defeat that age-old enemy of Amalek and bring the redemption for which we have all been praying. Shalom my friends. Thank you, we love you very much. Back to you Jeremy.

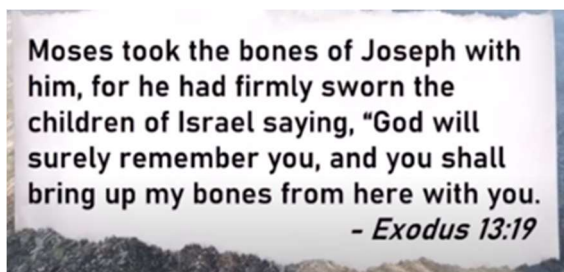
Jeremy

Wow, Ari, thank you so much. You look great. I haven't seen you in a while, you've been in quarantine. You sound great, a speedy recovery. I'm just so blessed that we're partners on this mission. So fortunate to have you as my friend as my soul brother. It's like, you know, in every story in the Bible you see our heroes work in pairs, like Joshua and Caleb and Adam and Eve and Noah works at least as a team, as it was a wife and his children. They're all building the ark together. Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebecca. Jacob has a whole clan, the brothers for better and for worse. They work together as a team. It's like they're so good that you know

that we're a team. And this fellowship is all here together, so we're praying for you, everything's going to be all right.

And you know that in this week's Torah portion, we get this insight into something really interesting. There are these two giant men who are a little bit more alone. You don't really hear much about their wives or their children. You don't see them, they don't really seem to play a big role in their hero story. And that's Joseph and Moses, I mean, the truth is even Moses has Aaron. There's no, like not as a partner, at least a good brother, a good assistant. But both of these men are two amazing individuals, were really loners, and most of their work was done alone and in some ways, they were so interconnected.

In fact, when you look at the beginning of the Torah portion, they go and they collect Joseph's bones to bring him out of Egypt because he made the nation swear you know bring me out of this land and bring me to the Land of Israel when you leave. And so look who goes down to the Nile to actually go and collect his bones in exodus chapter 13:19.



It's a little bit peculiar, it's like clearly pointing to something here. Moses is leading the greatest grassroots revolution in human history. He doesn't have the internet, no social media, and he's mobilizing an entire nation, liberating them from the mightiest empire on earth at that time. I think it's fair to say that Moses was a pretty busy guy, and he goes to get the bones of Joseph? Like what is that about? Couldn't he just outsource that, delegated that, like, hey Aaron, I'm pretty busy right now saving the world, could you just do me a favor and go get Joseph's bones for a second? Like thanks a million.

No, Moses, himself goes down and collects Joseph's bones as they're leaving. That's like, what is the Torah telling us here? Like what is that about that's clearly pointing us into the direction? I think the answer is that even these two men, even though they were loners, even they had each other. Moses felt so connected to Joseph, not only as his continuation, as the leader of the people of Israel, but literally as his mirror image. It's like, think about it. Joseph grew up with his brothers, and then was later separated from them. Moses was brought up, separated, and then joined his brothers only later and rejoined his nation. Joseph started as a slave in Egypt, and then rose to a high-ranking position in the palace of Pharaoh. Moses was brought up in the house of Pharaoh, and then only later he joins the slaves as their leader. Joseph was

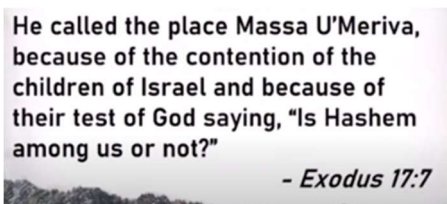
the one who brought Israel down to Egypt. And now, Moses, the perfect mirror image is called to be the one who brings them out of Egypt. They're the mirror image of each other in their lives and Moses goes to collect his bones because he feels like no one else can. That's his job because Joseph in some ways is his partner. And I think what's being said here is that the Torah here is guiding us like we cannot do this alone.

God, after creating Adam and before creating Eve in the Garden, says it is not good for man to be alone. It's not good for us to try to work this world out alone. To like cross through this life journey alone. We need partners, we need friends, and of course this fellowship is an amazing team, a great resource. It's so awesome to be together, but really it's not enough. Ideally, it'd be great if you married a partner to walk through this faith journey together. But if you don't have that yet, you need a study partner, you need a soul sister, a soul brother, someone to learn with, someone to talk to. Even Moses needed a partner.

The stronger your relationships are with the people closest to you, so the stronger your base is and in these times, we have got to strengthen our base. The Torah is constantly pointing us towards strengthening what we have around us because really all you need is one. You just need one solid friend, one Joshua, and one Caleb. And you can weather almost anything.

And so you know this journey into the desert into the unknown, it speaks so loudly to us today. I mean, no one knows where this world is going or what surprises lie ahead. It's like one thing that we can be certain of is that things are going to be uncertain. I think that's pretty fair and we can just look, learn, at this Torah portion and look at the structure of it and you can just see just what it's teaching us as we're walking into the unknown, what happens? The Torah portion starts with faith as they cross the Red Sea. The Torah actually says that they had emunah. They believed in God and Moses, his servant. And it's like until now, the plagues happened, the Jews of Goshen were spared from the chaos at the Sea. I mean, God with His own hands saved them at the sea from sure destruction in like the most epic way possible. It's like the greatest army in the world was crushed and the people of Israel were saved. It was a moment of total revelation. There were no doubts right then. It was like, wow, we are literally being saved by the universe. The world itself is opening itself up in order to save us. It was like just a total moment of ecstasy, victory, song, it was you know, just the height of revelation.

And at the end of the Torah portion, what we just now heard is Amalek. It's like the people ask the eternal question of disbelief. Exodus chapter 17:7.



**He called the place Massa U'Meriva, because of the contention of the children of Israel and because of their test of God saying, "Is Hashem among us or not?"**  
- Exodus 17:7

Massa U'Meriva, which literally means journey and battle of the contention of the children of Israel. Because of their test of God saying, Is Hashem among us or not? They've been traveling out through the desert and they are just still struggling. It's like the question here isn't, does God exist? Yeah, God exists, OK, I think all ancient people believed in one way or another that there were gods, a God. That wasn't their problem. It's like He may create the cosmos, He may bring down nations like Egypt, but is He dwelling among us? Is He really down here like in the details of our lives? Is He really caring about my thirst? I mean that question, that doubt, it's like it's looming around and it's exactly in that place that Amalek comes and attacks us, just like what Ari said, it's like from pure faith, seeing full revelation, to questioning of God in our lives at all. It's like, wow, it's such a spectrum of faith for one Torah portion. And it's really giving us the human experience and that's exactly the idea.

It's like that's the frame of the Torah portion. We're walking into the unknow, the only way to walk into the unknown is with faith, and I want you to know there's going to be highs and there's going to be lows, and all of that, it's like it's acceptable, it's wrong to think that the Jewish people were annoying to God when they complained. I don't think that's reading it right. We'll get to that in just a little bit. I mean, it's like clearly a faith journey. It's just not so clear-cut, it's you know, it's a journey towards freedom. It's not that easy. Along the way, there's going to be highs and lows, doubts and fears.

It's like from Jacob who's called Israel which literally means to struggle to the wandering people of Israel. It's like living with integrity and faith is not an easy path. It's a blessed path, it's a great path, it's like a life full of meaning and good, but it's not easy. It's like the people say that faith is just an opiate for the masses. I just can't get my mind around that. It is so much harder to tell the truth than to lie. To lie is really easy. It's harder to live with integrity and to really try to do what you know is right to do. It's so much harder to live as a believer. It's easy to do nothing to believe in nothing. It's like you don't have to do anything, you're not responsible for anything. There's no moral code here. You can do anything you want, it's like so many young men today are choosing to live exactly that life. Like no challenge, no mission, no responsibility. It's like modern nihilism. That's the opioid, that's like a quick fix, that ends up in absolute tragedy and misery, but for the moment so easy, just nothing.

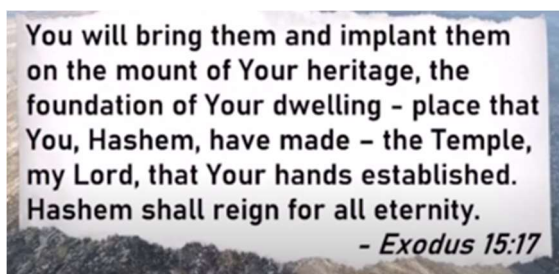
It's like the Torah here. It's God's wisdom, transmitted through words to a people that are still trying to grasp it. Still trying to internalize it three thousand years later, it's like such divine wisdom that we've been pouring over this text for millennia. The smartest people in human history and we're still unraveling the mystery and the wisdom of it all and when you look at the overarching message, the Bible is a call to adventure. It's telling those young men to stop playing video games, to get out of your parent's house, and start living. It's like the world outside of Eden.

Life is not easy. And the Torah is saying the best antidote is courage and faith to venture into the unknown. The Torah tells us to go beyond ourselves and into the unknown. That's where we will live up to our God-given potential. It's like outside of our comfort zone, beyond ourselves is the only place that we can actually fully express ourselves to be who we need to be in the world, who we're meant to be in the world. That's the fundamental story of Abraham and here it's repeated again in Exodus. Now on a national level.

The story is a call to adventure. A call to journey into the unknown with the goal of arriving at your paradise, at your promise. That's like amazing that every person has really a paradise that's really set up for them. They have their destiny that if they could actually only imagine it. It's there for the taking. It's there for the thinking, it's there for the journey and look at that, it's like listen. You know at first, there might be forces that are trying to hold you back and when you break free, the first steps toward that destiny ... you're probably going to run into trouble, challenges, and hardships. That seems to be the blueprint here, but life in this world is a wild ride whether you like it or not. There's covid outside, there's political unrest, there's who knows what, instability. It's like we're marching into the unknown whether you like it or not.

So the Torah says choose the adventure. Life is coming at you. What is your strategy for living? Doing nothing and staying passive? That's just not a good strategy for life. The story tells us that Egypt is chasing after you. What does that mean? It's like life is coming at you. The Torah is saying, it's happening. Pack your bags and get going, either you're walking ahead and moving forward, or you're staying still and falling behind. Egypt is always catching up to you. It's like you have to proactively direct your life. Make a vision and start working toward that aim.

Now fellowship sessions two and three really delve into this practically. It delves into the Hebrew truth of this. Absolutely worthwhile checking those two out, but the life guidance there is also right here. Look what happens in this Torah portion. It's so marvelous. The children of Israel do exactly that. Look at the end of the song that they sing as they cross the sea. Exodus chapter 15 verse 17:



The people of Israel, they don't know how they're going to get there, but as they cross the sea into the unknown desert, they're already singing about the temple in Jerusalem. They already

have a clear vision of what they're working towards, where they're walking to. It may take them 40 years of wandering into the desert, but they already have their eyes on Zion. It's like their father, Jacob, established a place called Beth El. He made a promise, there's going to be a House of God in this place. And then he made that promise, one day that house is going to be built.

And the children of Israel, they never lost sight of Zion, which in Hebrew literally means their target, meaning as soon as they're crossing the sea, they immediately establish their aim. And already there, their aim is like going for the gold, all the way to Jerusalem. Now listen, they fumble and they fail and, in the desert, they wander and they mess up, but from the beginning of their journey, they have the end in mind. They have Jerusalem in their aim. They have Jerusalem in their sights.

It's like, you know, every movie has a theme song and as they're singing their freedom song, their hopes and dreams and goals are crystal clear. It's like a house of God in the city of peace where God will reign for all of eternity and liberate the world from their own slavery. That's the goal. So here the Torah says, it's true that in life you are marching into the unknown, but if you hear your calling and walk in God's light, you're not walking alone. God will provide a cloud of protection, a light to guide your way and you can only discover that by living that out. You can only know that by knowing that. That's why the Hebrew word for know is da'at, but in the Bible that word da'at, which is with knowledge, it also means relationship.

In Genesis, it says that Adam knew Eve. He had knowledge of Eve. The Torah in the Hebrew teaching us there's a knowledge you can gain from information, but there's a knowledge you can only know in relationship. You can only experience that da'at, that relational knowledge after you take your first steps into the desert. That's what King David says. That's what he means when he says, in your light I will see light. It's like you can only really see God's light when you're already walking in it. That's when the guidance appears.

Listen, when I first came out to the mountain, I mean there was nothing here. There wasn't a single tree. There was no water line, no electrical infrastructure. I came out and I don't know how else to describe other than being inspired by the Spirit of God. It was the most...my soul was just dancing as I came out to this mountain, even though there was nothing here. Just looking at the mountains, the views, the valleys, the Dead Sea, the desert...it was the most inspiring thing I had ever seen in my life and maybe one of the most spiritual moments in my life.

And at that moment, I just had a deep calling in my heart that was calling me to this mountain. I didn't know what I was supposed to do here. I didn't know what my job was here. What this place was meant to be, but what I knew that I had experienced something I was meant to share that experience with as many people as I could. And at that time, I had no idea what that



would look like or how that would happen. All I knew was that, well, I've been given a calling now. Something has really pulled me out of my comfort zone. Something's taken me out of the ordinary and it's calling me towards this mission that I don't really understand now, so all I can do is be obedient to that.

That's all we can do, so try to walk in the light of that guidance. How could I have ever known that we were destined to build one of the most beautiful places in all of Israel? How could I ever have known that God was planning this place for a global fellowship of believers from 40 countries all around the world who have it in their hearts and see this Land as their spiritual home? It's like human nature, our vision, it's just so limited. But following light that's given from beyond, it like expands our vision to possibilities we could never have imagined with our limited minds.

The people of Israel saw the sea on one side and saw the mightiest army on the other side. With their vision of how things worked, it's like what could they have done there? That's just the lesson there. It's like God's imagination is greater than ours. Stay true. In some way, He is going to make a way. And so like as a testimony to that truth, I made this video that I filmed all throughout the week this week here on the mountain. And watching it come together for me, it's nothing less than a manifest miracle. It's for me in this environment where our farm is shut down from all tourism, I mean to me this might as well be the splitting of the sea.

And so I just want you to enjoy this miracle because this is your miracle, a miracle that God has somehow mysteriously manifested through our fellowship and the generous people that are here that are contributing of their own to make this dream come to pass. And somehow these gatherings that are so spiritual in their nature and are virtual in their practice. Here we are like virtually on the web, but somehow, they're building up Judea in a very real, concrete way, so thank you to every single one of you and just our work in Judea is manifesting through you.

#### Video

So all right, well I promised an update. I'm right now on the second floor of our center here in the mountains of Judea. The view from here is just absolutely spectacular, but I wanted to tell you guys the good news. The workers have just left and now as you can see right here behind me, we're starting now putting on the roof. The roof is going on, it's pretty exciting, so I'm going to show you in here. These here are going to be four studio suites that the people who come to attend the seminars, the retreats, the weekends, the time in the mountains, this is where they're going to stay. Look right here, it's still open to the sky, so there's a tiny bit more work that needs to be done.

And then on top of this structure, that's where the cement is going to go and then from this roof, we're going to move on to that roof and then that roof is done and so, we are slowly, but surely accomplishing our mission of building this stronghold, this diamond in the crown of

Judea that will be a global destination for spiritual seekers to connect to the mountains of Judea to connect to King David, to connect to prayer to music, to the holiness of this place.

And so, just as you can see right here, the roof is going up and we are taking this to the next level. So thank you all for your support.

Hey fellowship, I'm just out on my morning run and here I see that we've brought the crane right in the morning here and they're now lifting up the metal structure that's going to hold our roof together on our educational center. So this is a beautiful marvelous day and in a couple of days we're going to lay down the concrete and the roof of our retreat center is going up.

Hey guys, it's a rainy, kind of cloudy, little windy day, but it is a beautiful day as you can see behind me here. We are now laying down the concrete on the roof of our retreat center. Somehow, we keep on taking these steps forward to manifesting this dream that very soon people from all around the world will be able to come to the heart of Israel to the mountains of King David and experience this Land in a way that can't be experienced anywhere else in Israel.

So thank you all for taking part in this and somehow together we are manifesting this reality and so yesterday was the day that Auschwitz was liberated and it was recognized all over the world, especially on social media. And I find it so significant that our response is building and just in perfect timing. We're now finishing one of the most important parts of this project, laying down the roof of our retreat center, the diamond in the crown of the mountains of Judea that will soon be a blessing for the whole world.

All right friends, here I am on the roof. This is actually happening. Here we are. There's a massive crane here. There's about three cement trucks and the cement trucks bring their cement in and come through this crane into this boat and then they're dropping it down here in between. Here we go, you can see it now. The roof is going up. And it seems that nothing is going to stop us. Jews just keep on building in Judea. Pretty soon, we're going to bring this blessing to the entire world. What a wonderful thing to be happening! (end of video)

I hope you enjoyed that video. I love that video. It's like we started this fellowship and man we are building up Judea! You know we started the fellowship the week after the holiday of Shavuot and in perfect time we completed the roof of our house of prayer, right as we launched this fellowship and I took that as a real spice cart. Last week, our 500<sup>th</sup> member joined the fellowship. Five hundred families from 40 countries around the world, like a real milestone in our work in the world. And in the same week, we laid down the roof of our educational center, it's like every time I look around our mountain, I see the hidden hand of God guiding our steps and helping us along the way. It's just so beautiful, we're not just learning and praying together, we are rebuilding Israel together quite literally. Creating a Garden of Eden-like oasis at the edge of the desert.

And soon Israel will open her borders and there's a place in Judea that you can't just, don't just visit it. It's like you've built it. It's like your place in the Land that was made for you. It's just unprecedented. There's nothing like it anywhere else in the world, it's so awesome! And so I want to just end with this one idea. You know I look at the Bible and we're going into tough times now. We have the Bible now as a medicine and this portion in particular. And I see a thread across all the heroes and their journeys in their lives, the journeys prepare the way toward their destination. Each episode, each victory each failure is growing the people of Israel into who they need to be.

The people of Israel walk through the desert and they complain and I don't think that's a bad thing. I think a lot of early Christian commentators enjoy just the alley-oop slam dunk. The Jews are so annoying, anti-Semitic thing. Look, the Bible even says that they're complaining all the time. The Bible says so. But, when you look at their complaints, the Jews aren't punished for complaining, on the contrary, they complain for water and they get water. They complain for food and they get food. They're not punished for it, they're given what they asked. For three days, I mean I can't go three minutes in the car without my kids asking for water. It's like, you know, they're slaves just not used to freedom. Two hundred and ten years of slavery, it's like, where was God for 210 years?

And now, they're like, just figuring it out and I think that's pretty legitimate. It's like on a deeper level, they're just discovering what does God mean for them in their lives. God battles empires, and pharaohs. Is he actually going to take care of my personal needs? If I get covid am I going to be healed? I need to know what's happening here on me personally.

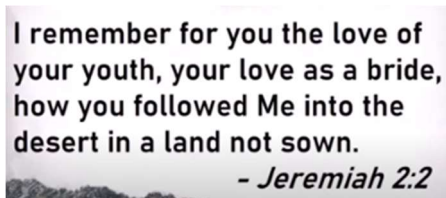
And they're figuring it out and that's like the message of the Bible, that God is a personal God. And when you look at the map of the Middle East, the journey from the Red Sea to Israel, it's a three-day journey. It's nothing. It's like they walked for 40 years. Those 40 years were training. Those were years of preparation. They spend their time wandering around the desert. That journey, it's not always pretty. It's like a lot of mistakes and there are sins, but they're being groomed and every mistake is a life lesson learned.

You know, a slave, he knows one thing. He knows that tomorrow is pretty much going to be the same as today. A slave lives with a certain level of security and certainty. It's like you know, so many of their complaints were about food insecurity that they had in slavery. They weren't used to it. The first thing they had is like no certainty at all. They have no idea where they're going today. They have no idea where they're going tomorrow. You know they break away from slavery and immediately they're put into a boot camp of faith in uncertainty because really like what is faith if everything is all measured out? They were put through that boot camp for us that we should know that when we go through uncertain times, we have a blueprint, a map to look at and to learn from.

You know a slave may not have freedom, a slave may not have a hope for a bright future, but he has certainty. He knows that he's going to have food today. He knows that the Egyptian master is going to provide his food tomorrow because Egyptians want to make sure their workforce is productive. They gave their slaves food stamps and free health care. You know they want productive slaves.

So perhaps maybe when leaders start offering free food and health care, you should question like what exactly are these leaders doing? Is that somehow taking away my freedoms? That's a real important question and for the Israelites, the transition into actual freedom is beyond unsettling, understandably so. No food on the horizon, water is scarce in the desert. Three days, they don't have any water. It's like, what's going on here? Where is God?

And so, they even say to test God. They were like testing to understand, that's not necessarily a bad thing. But I think that they're a little bit annoying in their reading it. So we know what it's like when we're complaining. It's like a mirror to us. I think it's wrong to see Israel is annoying to God. That's just not true. God says in the book of Jeremiah that as Israel wandered after Him in the desert, that's when He fell in love with Israel as a nation. Look at the book of Jeremiah in chapter 2:



**I remember for you the love of  
your youth, your love as a bride,  
how you followed Me into the  
desert in a land not sown.**  
*- Jeremiah 2:2*

God loved the people of Israel for following them into the desert. It's like they're continuing to follow the pillar of fire in their life. They continue to grow in faith. They begin to see manna provided for them every day and as they walk in the light, they begin to see the light. And like in particular, the next generation that grows up free, liberated from Egypt, stronger in faith. That nation is being groomed to go into the Land of Israel. They train themselves to walk in God's light, follow His guidance, train themselves to trust that He's going to provide for them every day. They train themselves to live in uncertainty.

And know that as long as they're aligned with His mission, walking in His light, then they're on track. They also learn that when they veer from the path of good, when they veer from the path of righteousness, they're going to be corrected. Their journey is preparing them for the destination. You know the Passover Seder, it's the oldest surviving ritual in the western world. It dates back to the first Passover. Maybe in the reign of Ramses the Second, 3300 years ago and the story of Passover is the archetype for living. Every Jewish holiday, every Biblical holiday including Shabbat, it's a commemoration of the exodus of Egypt. It's like Biblical living is telling us to live towards transition. Every year in Passover, we see ourselves as a part of transition.

Expect the transition, love the transition. We should embrace the transition, because the world right now is transitioning. The world is actually giving birth to something new. The prophets call the time before Mashiach, birth pangs, and we're quite literally living through birth pangs that are going to bring a new era into the world.

And if you don't hear the footsteps of Mashiach now, expect salvation to come now more than ever. It's like you know when you type in destination into Waze or into Google maps, you can click and get the map overview and see the entire route from beginning to end. We just don't have that privilege nowadays, but they didn't have that privilege either. The children of Israel wandered in the desert. They had no idea when they were going to go left or when they were going to go right. They just followed God's light walking them into the unknown.

The journey, then, was preparing them for their destination. And the journey now is preparing us for our destination. You know there are a lot of people saying consciously and subconsciously, just take us back to Egypt. I just want everything to be the way it was. Give me the vaccine and hopefully everything will go back to normal. I'm sorry, something is being birthed now. It's like a mother giving birth. In the middle of contractions, she's like, I don't really want to give birth now. I'd rather just be kind of skinny, because like sorry, the birth pangs have begun and the contractions are happening. It's like the birth canal of the Red Sea has birthed the nation of Israel. And it's opening right now in our generation. And all we're asked to do is to walk in the light that God gives us. And now, know that whatever we have, come to us. On this journey, is preparing us for our destination. That's the key.

And know for sure that you are blessed from Zion. Thank you all so much and I can't wait to hear from you and I can't wait to see you next week.

Aaronic blessing

Shalom, my friends.