

Session 78

Shemot: The Greatest Story of all Times – The Exodus

26 December 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAz8HA-E2Dk>

Jeremy

Hey everybody, welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship. I am just so happy to see all of your beautiful faces. It is so good to be here on Sunday. It was an unexpected event. I didn't know that I would be hosting the fellowship this week, but Ari has become, I guess what's the word? Ill? But he's doing better. He's doing good. But in the meantime, I had to pick up the slack, and it could not have been more perfect timing. So, I'm just thrilled to be here.

And until now, we've never invited any guests on the fellowship until now. It just didn't seem like what we needed to do. And this is our first time ever inviting a guest. And I'm just so happy to bring this team together. So Yishai Fleisher is here with us for the first time on the Land of Israel Fellowship. For those of you that don't know Yishai, Yishai Fleisher is one of the greatest spokesmen for Israel alive today. He is the international spokesman for the Jewish community of Chevron. And as you all know, the Arugot Farm is the coolest place in Judea. I think that's pretty fair. I think that's undeniable. But Chevron is the capital. And Yishai is the voice of the capital of Judea. So, I just, with all of us here together, I want to take this opportunity to share a tefilla together.

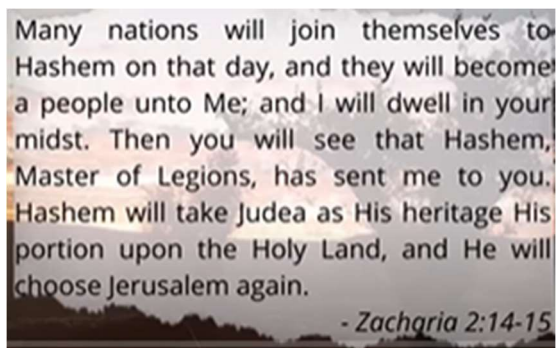
And so, HaShem, Master of the World, the contractions are hitting us in Israel. We feel it coming on, stronger and stronger, faster and faster. Please may these contractions give birth to a new era. Give us the strength and courage to do what needs to be done as a nation. Give us the strength and courage to do what needs to be done in our own lives. We're here, every week, starting off our week, dedicating this time to You, dedicating this week to You. Help us build up our inner world strong enough to weather any storm You may bring the world around us. Help us bring the Torah we learn today from our heads into our heart. Guide this fellowship, bless every family in this fellowship. Help us find our way, somehow to come back to a rebuilt Jerusalem with Your Presence there. And let us rejoice in the courtyards of a peaceful, whole Jerusalem. And everyone around the world said, "Amen."

So, although Ari has been sick for a few days, I want you to know I saw him hobbling around today, so he's doing better. At the same time, while Ari's been sick, Yishai and his beautiful family spent Shabbat on the farm with us. And at the same time that he spent Shabbat with us, we had another man named Eugene Kontorovich on the farm. Now Eugene Kontorovich, he is an advisor to the Prime Minister's office, a tenured professor, a world-renowned expert on international law. He is constantly fighting Israel on the international arena, the EU, the Hague, the international court. We just had such a fun Shabbat – me, Yishai, Eugene, and Tehila and Malkah and all of us together. Just so many conversations, so many interesting ideas, so many dreams, so many problems, so many

solutions...it was just the most fun Shabbat that I've had in a long time. And it hit me just like a ton of bricks that I need to bring the people that are separated from Israel during these crazy times, I need to bring people to help them connect to the heart of Israel. And there are few people that can give over the heart and the Torah wisdom of Israel like Yishai Fleisher.

And I think one of the threads that ties all of us together ultimately, is that we all love this Land. And all of want to figure out how we can guard and settle this Land for all future generations. That really is in my opinion, the calling of this generation. I mean every generation has its calling. Every generation has its mission. It's like a chapter in the book. And, you know, sometimes it was to fight the Nazis, sometimes it was to establish the State of Israel, sometimes in the 80's and 90's, it was to absorb more immigrants than any other country per capita in the history of the world, in this amazing wave of the first ingathering of the exiles. Why do I say first? Because the last wave hasn't arrived yet. But the mission of this generation, in order to be ready when we need to have the second wave of the ingathering, we've got to inherit the Land of Israel. And you can also see it's just direct prophecy. You can see the foundation is already in the Torah.

Look at what Zecharia says at the "end of days," and really the work of the Land of Israel Fellowship. Sing and be glad O daughter of Zion for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, the Word of HaShem....



It's like, could it be more clear? It's like the vision is that so many of the nations...I'm like looking through the chats here, it's like shalom from Norway, from Mexico, from Canada, from America, from South Africa, it's like there's going to be all these people from the nations. They're going to come together and they're going to align themselves with Israel. They're going to become a new people, we're going to like this massive, macro movement of believers. A movement of believers just

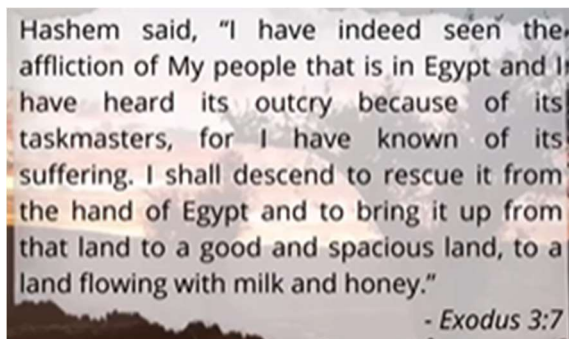
like those who left Egypt. They just walked with us into the desert, into the unknown land, on their way to the Land of Israel.

And then, at the end of days, it looks like the Jewish people, some will be like, "Call in the calvary." And it's like David's army, non-Jewish believers joined David's army. And they joined this huge movement that takes Israel's strength and influence to an entirely new level. And as that's happening, what happens in the generation of the redemption?

This is what it says...HaShem will take Judea as His heritage, His portion upon the Land of Israel. Now look at that. That's really remarkable, to see that now, 3,000 years later, the enemies of Israel's entire focus is to take Judea and Samaria away from the Jews. This little sliver of land, it's like so illogical, like Israel is already about as big as New Jersey. And the United Nations, and the

European Union, and the administrations for decades are just trying to take Judea away from the Jews. It's like...what?! It's like that is what's going to happen in the end of days and here we see it. No, no, no, HaShem is going to take Judea as His portion in the Land of Israel. And how does it start in Genesis? The Land of Israel, it's like lech lecha, go to yourself, Abraham. Go to the Land of Israel. The first commandment given to the first Hebrews – Go to the Land of Israel and build a country, build a kingdom. It's like in one breath, Israel was born, Judaism was born, Zionism was born, it's like the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it all happened in that one moment.

Exodus picks up right where Genesis left off by the way. Now you might think that Exodus is about Sinai and the commandments, the giving of the Torah. But look at the first encounter, the fundamentals here. Look at the first encounter with Moses. God appears to him in a burning bush. Look at how his mission is framed. This is Exodus, chapter 3, verse 7.



and world destiny is going to unfold.

That's pretty clear. Why is God taking the people of Israel out of Egypt? Not to give them the Torah, not to give them the Ten Commandments, not to inspire the nations, not for Shabbat, not for holidays, not for any other spiritual tradition. The main purpose is stated there – to bring them back to the Land of Israel, to the Land flowing with milk and honey. That's the basics, that's the fundamentals, that is where Israel's destiny

And with that, I want to introduce to you my dear friend, my soul brother really, Yishai Fleisher, one of the greatest warriors for the Land of Israel in the world today. And so, Yishai, if you could just share some of the Torah that you shared with us on Shabbat, I think everyone will absolutely just be filled with light.

Yishai



Jeremy, great to be with you on the show and what an honor...thank you so much for this wonderful program, the Fellowship is awesome, and it's given us fellowship and I see in the comments how many people understand that you're really revealing to us what is laid bare before us which is the prophetic reality of the Jewish people's return to the Land of Israel. That God is doing great things and not only is God doing great things, but Jeremy and Ari, and their families, are doing great things, Shaena and Tehila and the kids...they're just doing great things. And I got to milk

a goat on Shabbat, with Jeremy this Shabbat. That was great, that was a great feeling of being a real

Judean. So thank you for those opportunities, Jeremy. And thank you everybody, it's great to be with you on the fellowship, finally, I've like wanted to be here all of my life.

This week's Torah portion, last week's Torah portion, was the beginnings of the book of Exodus, Shemot we call it. And it has a very interesting kind of seemingly not such an important line, but it just says that the "land became filled with them." The land, the land of Goshen, which is next to Egypt over there, was "filled with them." Now there's this book that I love called the Ba'al Haturim. Ba'al Haturim. Now he's a great commentator on the Bible, but he's actually famous for Jewish law, Halacha – Jewish law. And his commentary, the Ba'al Haturim, the way it's mostly structured, is he will cross reference words from one place in the Tanakh and see how many more times is it found, where and what is the connection. Because of, friends, we believe that the Torah is written in perfection. Every word there, there are no extraneous words. It's meant to be there. And the usage of the word, the usage of the letters, is purposeful and therefore if it's found in just a few other places, it's meant to be giving us a message that there's a connection.

So he says, this Hebrew word, וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאֶרֶץ אֹתָם, v'temale h'aretz otam, that the Land was filled with them, there's only one other place in the whole Torah, and it's actually in the beginnings of the book of Genesis, in the Torah portion of Noah, that it says, וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאֶרֶץ חָמָס, same language, but it says there that the Land was filled with Chamas. Now, if you don't know Hebrew, you've heard this word, Chamas though if you're just following the American news, or any other news, and that is a violent organization, anti-Israel. It happens to be, coincidentally, that the word Chamas in Hebrew actually means "violent crime." And so, he says, "You see that in both these cases it says that the Land itself was filled either with them, the Jews, or earlier, back in Genesis, the land was filled with violent crime.

And he goes on to explain, "what does it mean, 'the land was filled?'" He says, "you see, in Egypt, and in Goshen, the land was filled with them, the Jewish people, because women would have six children at the same time." God blessed the fruit of the womb and there was a lot of babies being born. But there was an edict against the babies, and so what the Jewish mothers would do, is they would hide them in the ground. And the earth itself would grow them and they would come out as fully grown children, the earth would nurture them and that they would pop out like Cabbage Patch kids...remember those? And come out alive. And thereby, they were able to avert the edict, which was against the Jewish babies. So they hid them in the ground, and therefore when it says the land was filled with them, it means it literally. The land was filled with them, the Jewish people.

As opposed to that, goes on the Ba'al Haturim, and he says that in the book of Genesis the land was filled with chamas. How could that be? The land was filled with chamas because, he gives an example. He says, "Somebody, a guy would come to his neighbor and say, 'could you hold my wallet? I have to go on a trip. Could you hold like my money satchel? Here's my money satchel, here's also some special perfume of mine. Could you go hide it in your safe, in your underground hiding place?'" And so the unassuming neighbor would take this wallet and this perfume and hide it

in his hiding spot underneath the ground, in the tunnels underneath his ground where he kept his safe and stuff. And then the first guy, the guy that asked his neighbor to hold his stuff for him would follow the scent, towards his own wallet, but then steal the rest of the stuff that his neighbor was hiding for himself, was putting away for safe-keeping. And thereby, says the Ba'al HaTurim, quoting this Jewish lore, this Midrash, he said that "You see that the land itself was filled with violent crime."

So, here you have a juxtaposition. Either the land was filled with the Jewish babies and the land itself would nourish them, or the land would be filled with violent crime – Chamas. Now, I was reflecting upon this when thinking about the time that I spent in 2005 living in Gush Katif, that is the Jewish communities of Gaza, actually not so far away from Goshen. And we were living there and you could see that the Land of Israel was nurturing the Jewish children. You could see that there was fertility in the Land and in the air and from the heavens. You saw the cherry tomatoes and the cucumbers growing. You saw the fruits and the flowers and you saw the children just being kind of naturally born in the Land, and growing up with the Land, it was almost as though the Land, itself was raising them - וְתָמַלְא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם, v'temale h'aretz otam, the Land was filled with them.

But after the expulsion, so called evacuation, the eviction of Jewish people from Gaza, what happens? In that very place where it said that the Land was filled with them, instead we got – וְתָמַלְא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס – v'tamale h'aretz chamas, that Chamas had filled the Land. Not only did it fill it on the Land, but prophetically, we learned that it was Gaza's underneath, underground, the tunnels were filled with terror tunnels, of terrorists, murderers, guns and rockets, killing machines. So this beautiful blessed Land of Gaza became a cursed Land. A Land that was filled with Chamas as a society on top of the Land and also inside of it. It became profane, it became dirty and sullied, it became corrupted with chamas. Instead of the earth nurturing the Jewish people, it became filled, the Land itself, with Chamas.

And I think that that is absolutely a prophetic, a realization the Torah is telling us. And let me boil it down to you in the simplest of terms. There's two options in our time when the Jewish people are coming home. Either וְתָמַלְא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם, and the Land will be filled with them, just like the Arugot Farm that Ari and Jeremy are developing, where you can see the flourishing of the Land and many other such farms in beautiful places, and Jerusalem is flourishing. It's either the Land will be filled with them, or if we allow ourselves to get kicked out of this Land, the וְתָמַלְא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס – v'tamale h'aretz chamas, the Land will be filled with Chamas. That is a secret code that the Torah is letting us know. And we can see it now with our naked eye.

And for all of us, the realization is simple. We must fight to fill the Land with the Jewish people, and if not, it's not going to stay neutral, it will be filled with this cancerous, dark, negative force which is called Chamas –

וְתִמְלֵא הָאֶרֶץ חַמָּס – v'male h'aretz chamas. Let us pray, bizrat HaShem, and with your help and with the help of this program, and with the help of all the good people around the world that love Israel, that love the Bible, that love God, that indeed we will be victorious, roll back all of the mistakes we've made in the past and instead see a world that is blessed through this fact of וְתִמְלֵא הָאֶרֶץ אֹתָם, that the Land will be filled with them, with the Jewish people.

Jeremy

So I just want to say thank you. I loved that idea so much. You know after High School, I spent my first half a year in the sand dunes of Gush Katif. And it was sand dunes, it was called like the cursed Land, eretz garar, Arab locals called it a cursed Land. And from like the sand, there was just like blessing within the sand that emerged, 80% of Israel's organic produce was exported from the sand dunes. And then all of a sudden, inside the Land, the terror tunnels, the land will be filled with Chamas, quite literally, it just...the prophetic reality of the ancient Torah tradition. That's not necessarily in the written word, but in the oral tradition, just manifesting before our eyes. It just touched my heart and I wanted to share that. And the lesson is really simple. The Land will not stay neutral. Either it's going to be filled with light or it's going to be filled with darkness, and I just loved that.

And now, I want to bring on our scholar in residence. The wisest of all, and that is Tehila. She gave such a Torah and then since then, Saturday night, she was up I think until 3 in the morning. Then she slept for a few hours and was researching and studying and studying and studying and articulating and she came out with just the most interesting, insightful, prophetic...I just, the whole Bible is speaking to us in the most marvelous ways because the world is getting so challenging right now. It's like, it's giving us what to hold onto. So without any further ado, I want to introduce Tehila and you will absolutely love this Torah. Here you go.

Tehila

Hey guys. So in this past week's Torah portion, the portion of Shemot, of Exodus, Israel is introduced to evil for the first time. We've met evil in the stories of Genesis before – eating from the fruit, Cain killing Abel, the generation of the flood and so on. But this is the first time that on the international scene, Israel begins an actual face-off with evil. And that's going to be a pattern that repeats itself throughout our history. The people of the Bible, the value of the Bible versus the people who are not that, who are anti-that. And we know that there's always something really important hidden in the first time an idea appears in the Torah. HaShem puts a deep meaning when He introduces us to a new concept.

So, here's this showdown for the first time. How does it begin? I want to take a deep dive into those very first verses of the encounter between Pharaoh and Israel. I want to look closely and see what we can pull out of them. Let's start in chapter 1, verse 8. It starts with telling us that a new Pharaoh arises who didn't know about Joseph. And then he opens his mouth. What is the very first

thing that he says? It says in Hebrew, “וַיֹּמֶר אֶל-עַמּוֹ” v’yomer el amo, Pharaoh spoke to his people, his nation, and he said, “הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעָצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ” hinei am bnei Yisrael rav vatzum mimenu. At first reading, what verse 8 means, is that there are these children of Israel and they’re a people that’s going to grow and become greater than us, they might make a war against us and so we need to figure out how to stop them. But if you read it closely, the sentence can actually be broken down into two parts. And if you read the first part, the very first thing he actually says is just, הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – the children of Israel are a nation. He exclaims, “The children of Israel are a nation. I don’t like where this is going. Then they’re going to become more than us. They might make a war.” But the actual fundamental thing that bothers him is that Israel are acting like a people. That’s what bothers evil.

Now we know a very deep concept the sages always teach us is ma'aseh avot siman labanim מַעֲשֵׂה אֲבוֹת סִמָּן לְבָנִים, which means the things that happened to our forefathers in the Bible will be a roadmap for what is going to happen to us in the future generations. So the Torah is telling us, what is it going to be like to be in exile, to meet darkness? And the first thing that happens according to our Torah portion, here and forever after, is those first words of Pharaoh, “the children of Israel are a people.” The first thing that bothers Pharaoh is the people of Israel. They rub him the wrong way.

These children of Israel, they’re not acting like immigrant minorities. They’re supposed to integrate into society, assimilate, melt into the cultural melting pot. There’s something different about these guys. They’re not just a tribe of immigrants. They’re having their own rules, their own way of life. They’re an actual full-fledge people. I don’t like this. Now think about how this pattern’s going to repeat itself throughout history. That was the first exile in Egypt. When was the next exile? The next exile was after the destruction of the first Temple. We read about that in the book of Esther, under the rule of Ahasverosh. Israel is in exile once again and meets evil in the form of Haman. And what is the first thing that comes out of Haman’s mouth? In the book of Esther, Mordecai didn’t want to bow down. Haman does this whole lottery, wants to kill the Jews. But then he actually talks and what’s the first thing he says? The first thing, he goes to the King and he says in chapter 3, verse 8, he says, “There is this one nation and they don’t follow your rules, they’re dangerous, we should kill them, they have different laws.” But fundamentally, the first thing he says, almost identical to Pharaoh. He says, “these Jews you think they’re just a tribe of people. They’re just random immigrants. No. They’re a nation.”

And now, look at the last exile, when we’re in exile from the 2nd Temple. Who was the ultimate worst evil that we met in our last exile? I think that we would all immediately think of the Holocaust. There were 2,000 years of exile wherein the Christian and Muslim world, everyone was trying to convert the Jews and persecuted us for not converting. But what differentiated that ultimate evil of the Holocaust? It was that, it didn’t even help if you converted to Christianity. It was enough for you to be genetically, even one quarter Jewish, just one Jewish grandparent. It didn’t matter how German you felt or acted, it was as if you could hear the echo of Pharaoh and the echo of Haman saying, “There’s this people, Israel is a people, they’re a nation. We don’t like this.”

And now what's so mind-blowing is that if you look at the very first recorded essay written by Hitler, the very first writings that we have, that have been discovered from Hitler. It was an essay written on September 16, 1919, and it's the very first thing we have from him. And it's like a broken record. Look at the first words he opens up with. He says, "To begin with, meaning, first point that I want to make, and I'm quoting, 'The Jews are unquestionably a race, not a religious community. The Jew never describes himself as a Jewish German, a Jewish Pole, or a Jewish American, but always as a German Jew, a Polish Jew, and American Jew.'" And then he goes on to say, "Even the Mosaic faith, however great in its importance for the preservation of their race, cannot be the sole criterion for deciding who is a Jew and who is not."

Meaning the very first time Hitler sits down with a pen and paper to write something, that great evil force of our third exile, the first thing he wants to exclaim and tell people is the same thing that Pharaoh exclaimed and the same thing that Haman exclaimed. These Jews, they're not just a religion. They're a people. A people has a history and a future and that is not a good thing. And what's so shocking is that just like Pharaoh, in our portion that says, "Let's make a cunning plan," Hitler writes that the problem in his mind is emotional anti-Semitism. He says, "Emotional anti-Semitism has found its expression in the form of Programs. But then he writes, "Rational anti-Semitism by contrast, must lead to a systematic and legal struggle against the privileges that the Jews enjoy." And then he goes on and he says, "The final objective must be the total removal of all Jews from our midst."

So what we see is that the very first thing that Pharaoh notices, the very thing Haman notices, the very first thing Hitler notices – the Jewish people are a people. Step one – HaShem is giving us the roadmap, the side of darkness will be agitated and uncomfortable and angry when the Jews stand up and say, "We are a nation, we are a people." When we show that to the world, the side of evil wakes up. And look at verse 10 right here in our portion – Pharaoh says, "Let us deal shrewdly with them lest they increase and if a war befalls they will join our enemies and wage war against us and then depart from the land." What could be a more irrational argument then this? He says, "Well we have this tribe, we're the big super-power of the Middle East. We're Egypt. Maybe this little tribe, they have a pretty high birth rate. They're going to make a war against us. And overtake us." That's totally irrational in and of itself. Let's go with him. Ok, let's say he's right. Wouldn't you want them to depart the land? But then he says, "Lest they depart the land." If they're so awful, don't you want them to depart from the land?

So here we see it again mapped out. Step two. After noticing they're a nation, he goes, "This little nation, they're going to take over the world." Right? There's this paranoia. And then step three, you would think you'd be happy for them to leave you alone, but then...evil will say, they're going to leave, where are they going to leave to if not back to the Land of Israel? So we start by recognizing they're a nation, then this paranoia that they're going to overtake us, and then this fear that they're leave and make their own Land. What could be less clever and cunning? Pharaoh says, "Let's do something clever and cunning." But he says something that sounds absurd and completely unclever. He says, "These people are going to outnumber us and then overtake us and then go and make aliyah."

That is just a really weird argument. But maybe, while it sounds nutty, it's actually not so nutty at all. Maybe he's tapping into something really true and really deep that he doesn't know how to articulate it, but he feels it down in his guts. Maybe he feels something intuitively. Maybe the side of evil knows something intuitively. They might not be able to articulate it in a way that makes sense and sounds rational, but they mean something really deep. The Jews are a people, they're not going to fit in, they're not going to be one of us. They're not just going to assimilate and disappear. But in the bottom line, the greatest fear is exactly what Pharaoh says in the end of verse 10, "Maybe they will leave our land and go back to Israel and make a Jewish kingdom."

Why is that so scary to him? He doesn't tell us. But maybe he's expressing what he knows deep down. What always the side of evil knows deep down. That the Jewish people living in the Land according to the Torah and the Word of God will bring a light to the world that the side of evil can sniff out. They sense it and they don't want that. They're always going to be against that. And look how that pattern repeats itself. Haman gets Ahashverosh to agree to kill the Jews. But if they hated Jews so much, wouldn't they just want to send them back to Israel instead of having them with them in Persia? But instead, in the book of Ezra, we see none other than Ahashverosh himself putting a building freeze on the Temple, trying to shut down the reestablishment of our second commonwealth. He feels it, he feels it deep down.

And then look at the Holocaust, the great evil of our last exile. If the Jews were vermin like Hitler argued, if the Jews are taking over the world like the Elders of Zionists, the Elders of Zion propaganda was trying to teach the world, shouldn't they just have encouraged Zionism? Wouldn't they have just been happy? Get out of here! Get out of Germany! Clear Europe of the Jews! It seems totally irrational, but we know in reality that Germany locked the gates. They wouldn't let the Jews out. Not only then, the Jews that did manage to escape, the British were blockading the boats of Jews escaping from the gas chambers and not letting them into the Land of Israel. Everyone feels it, even if they don't say why. They don't want Israel to return to their Land as a people following the Word of God.

And we continue to see this today. Sometimes I watch the news and I get so discouraged. I see the lies, they don't even make sense. Like Jews are making apartheid state? The only democracy in the Middle East where any minorities have any rights at all? They're the aggressors? They're the apartheid? That doesn't make any sense. And then you see, rising anti-Semitism in the world, you think their response would be, "Great, go to Israel, make your own country, get out of here." But those same anti-Semites will still tell you, "No, give away your Land. You're occupiers in Judea." There's nothing coherent about it. But it's actually pretty smart because the side of evil knows deep down, even in ways they can't articulate rationally, that the resurrection of the people of Israel, living freely in their Land, according to the Torah will be a force of redemption and light. And the Torah mapped this all out ahead of time for us as if to say, "This is the blueprint. Get ready. This is the pattern. Be awake. Pay attention. Because when you see this happen, that's when you need to decide which side." There's going to be a line in the sand. Which side are you going to be on? And that's when you know, when you see this pattern repeating itself, that you are at the cusp of redemption and it's not a coincidence, it's part of HaShem's plan.

So, instead of you getting frustrated and discouraged by the evil, we look at the evil, we look at those lies and we say, “Good, I’m glad! I’m glad this is happening. I might have been upset, I might have been scared. But I already read the end of the story. I know that in just two more Torah portions, we’re going to get to the Exodus, we’re going to get to the splitting of the Sea, the redemption. I know where this story goes. And I know it repeats itself again and again throughout history and in every exile. Whenever there’s a showdown between good and evil, I know where this story is going so I’m not nervous. I’m just going to sit and wait with emunah and bitichon. With faith to watch HaShem’s plan unfold in the most beautiful, miraculous and redemptive way. So with that, I hope you guys all have a beautiful, inspired, and courageous week. Bye guys!

Jeremy

Thank you, Tehila. She’s just so awesome. She’s just so good. She’s just so right. It’s hard to be married to someone who’s always so right. But here’s the deal. I want to take that, what Yishai said, it’s prophecy that’s unfolding, we can see it. Tehila’s talking about it. I thought Mein Kampf was Hitler’s first writings. Only Tehila knows how to research and find Hitler’s first essay ever published in 1919. And then to connect that to the Torah portion of Pharaoh, and then to connect that to Haman and then show how it’s all interconnected. And then the BDS that are saying, “don’t go to Israel, destroy Israel, but stay in the country, don’t make aliyah.” It’s just like, wow! We’re watching something unfold that is just a prophetic blueprint. And evil is rising up, but ultimately we know that the sun is going to shine. Every empire has fallen and Israel is back in her Land.

But that really now comes to the heart of what I want to talk about today. And that is the very next section of our series that we’ve called Soul Map. Because the world is starting to shake a little bit and we’ve got to make sure that our inner world is strong. That our soul is revealed and that we’ll be able to weather whatever storm comes. And so, what is the Soul Map? What is it all about? It’s like we can actually see the structure before our eyes in the way the Torah is formulated. In the structure of the five books of the Torah itself. The first book, the book of Genesis, has almost no commandments at all. The Torah starts off with stories of our patriarchs. And it’s as if the mitzvot and the Ten Commandments and all of that, it’s like an afterthought. First the foundation is the stories of these spiritual giants.

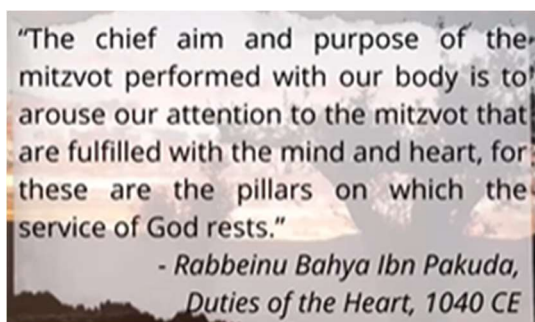
And last year, we were looking at Genesis and we were really contemplating. Like why did the Torah start off the entire book with the lives of these individuals? And we came to a really deep idea. The book of Genesis, we have these righteous men and women who are living in an intimate relationship with God. They’re dedicated to good and they’re living out covenantal, committed lives. They’re committed to the good, to justice, to mercy, to compassion, to spreading the light. But they don’t really have a religion or a law yet. It’s critical for the Torah to start off with individual role models who lived without any structured religion. By doing that, what the Torah’s done, it’s made a hierarchy, it’s created a model, a direction, an aspiration for every believer. Had we been given the law at the very beginning...the Divine Law, nothing could ever supersede a Divine Law. The law would be the guiding principle and the final say always.

But that's not what happened. We had generations of leaders, both men and women that lived by the spirit of the Torah before the Torah itself was given. The law, religion, is built upon the spirit that preceded the giving of the structured law. That's why Genesis comes first and that's why we now come to Exodus. The law deals with the details of each commandment separately. The stories deals with the whole of life. The totality of religious life. Before giving the law, we're given the meaning of the law. So first they lived a godly life, they lived as examples. They lived how you're meant to be in the world, what it means to live in covenant, committed to the ultimate good.

And the ancient name of the book of Genesis is Sefer Hayashar – the book of the upright. Because you can live by every single command, custom, and ritual in the Torah and just be a scoundrel of a human being. So Genesis says, listen, first sefar hayashar, this is the way to walk in the world. So we have the book of Genesis to teach us how to walk straight, how to be upright. First the Torah sets in place the spirit of the Bible, the Torah sets examples of believers who lived upright, who paved the path for us to learn how to follow.

So as the Torah moves on to Exodus, the laws are given to the nation, they're given into a context, they're given within the story, they're being wrapped in meaning, giving us consciously and subconsciously the spirit, the purpose and guiding principles of each command. We don't just have a list of laws. But laws are also given in the context of the story. Constantly the story's giving us the spirit between the law that keeps on reminding us that the purpose of performance is to transform the performer. The purpose of observance is to physically train us towards spiritual ends.

Rabbi Bahya Ibn Pakuda is the author of one of the first real treaties on Jewish ethics and spiritual living. It was around the year 1040 of the Common Era, the book is called, "The Duties of the Heart." This is what he says:



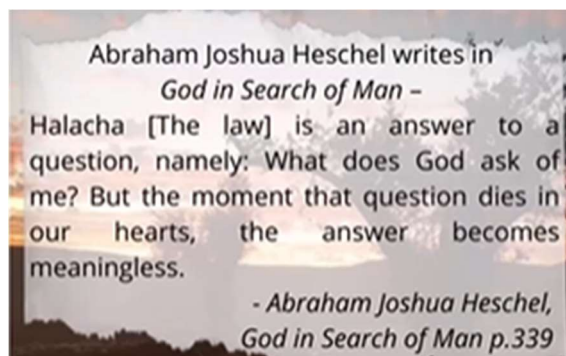
In other words, we have commandments that are directing our actions...build a sukkah, give charity, eat kosher. But then there are commandments of the spirit, the heart, the mind, to love God, love your neighbor. The chief aim of all the practical mitzvot is ultimately to bring us to a higher awareness of the mitzvot of the mind and heart. Meaning if you keep the letter of the law and your heart is hard, closed, you've done a good deed, but

you've missed the purpose behind the mitzvah itself. It's almost like the mitzvah wasn't accomplished. The mitzvah, the best way to think about it is like this, a mitzvah is a deed in the form of a prayer. It's like an action that we're giving over to God. The mitzvah is a deed in the form of prayer. That's just really beautiful. A prayer without heart, it's ok, but the purpose behind the prayer, it's like a prayer without wings. Can't really reach the heavens. And so in Proverbs, in chapter 6, verse 23. It says, the mitzvah is a lamp. The purpose of a lamp is not the act of lighting.

The goal isn't to consume the oil and to burn the wick. The real purpose is to produce light. The mitzvah is like the lamp that's meant to produce light.

So the purpose in performing the mitzvah is in its meaning. It's in the light that we create from it. So the mitzvot in that way are formative. Our souls grow by noble deeds. Our souls are illuminated by sacred acts. That's the purpose of the mitzvot. The purpose of all the mitzvot are to refine men to allow our souls to be revealed. They were like given to us to ennoble us, to discipline us, to inspire us, to connect us. But if the law becomes petrified, becomes some ritual that is just happening now, our observance becomes mechanical, it's like we've violated the Spirit of it all.

Abraham Joshua Heschel writes this beautiful passage in his book, *God in Search of Man*. Can we get that up on the screen?



It's like when we live by the Torah, it guides our actions. But more importantly, it empowers our spirit. It's like we live within teshuva. Now we've defined teshuva to be repentance, return, realignment. But there's another meaning to teshuva. Teshuva means answer. It's like we're living in teshuva, we're living in an answer. The question is alive in our hearts, in our lives striving to answer the question, what is God asking of us? My answer? The mitzvot. That's how I

want to do it. Take care of the orphan, take care of the widow, be kind, spread light. What does God ask of me? Be light in the world. How do I share the light? Here are the mitzvot. These are the lamps to share the light.

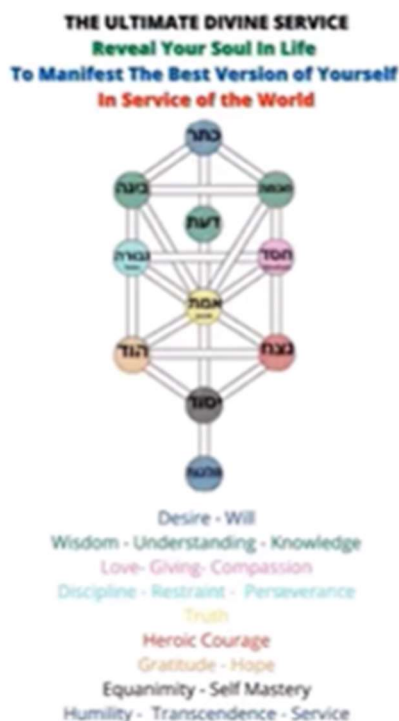
So, we could say, "Whooo...thank God, I got a rule book. I'll follow the rules, and I'll be doing what God asks me to do." And we say, "no." The structure of the Torah, the spirit and the guidance of each law is placed within the context of the story so we have every letter of the law is filled with a spirit. And in order to address that fundamental question, "how do we not lose the spirit?" If we lose the spirit, we've lost the goal of it all. The soul map was created for us. It's an ancient map organized in a methodical way, passed down by the prophets of Israel, and that's what we're learning here at the Land of Israel Fellowship. Because so many people here have different relationships with the Torah, different religious backgrounds. Different religious practices, different educations, different cultures, but what the soul map provides, it makes sure every believer is aligned with what a godly life looks like. Not in ritual, but in spirit. And so the goal is to show us how to live a soul powered life. How to live by the spirit and principles and values of the Bible.

Now there are virtues that we can express in our lives. They're like divine attributes that we can actualize. There are times when we see men and women and they're acting in the world and we're

like, whoa, that's not human, that's like super-human. That's like as regular human, unactualized or drinking bubbly sugar water and watching TV. That's regular humans. Super-humans, it's like there's a person that reveals his soul in his life and he shines this light that's honorable, that's filled with dignity and character, nobility...you can't deny it, it's just godly. And we can't always articulate it. But we admire them. And the entire purpose of the Torah is to guide us to become the people who express that godly light in the world.

So this map is nothing really new. But its value is in its clarity. Once we know the values, the virtues, we want to express, we can start molding our lives and aiming our hearts at becoming the people that we were designed to be. The people we were destined to be. So when your soul is fully revealed, that's it. You've actualized yourself. You've revealed for that moment in time, the best version of who you could be. You've chosen for that moment to be an agent of the Divine and channel the divinity within you into the world outside you. And that's what it is to reveal your soul.

So until now, we have discussed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and also Joseph. Even though Joseph was a little bit out of order, but that's what we were learning in the Torah portion. That's where we've gotten so far. So, can we just get the picture up on the screen for just a minute? This is the soul map. And here we go.



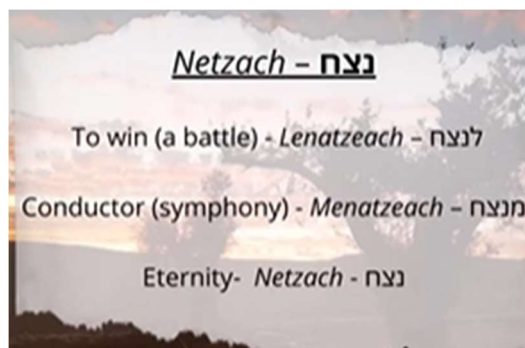
The goal here is to figure out how to reveal our soul in the world and manifest these virtues to really bring out our best selves. And so, Avraham, chesed, it's love and compassion. That's the first light. The basis of all of our lives has to be from love and compassion. And you can see the darker sides – they're operating from a place of anger, hatred, resentment...I don't want to sound too cliché, but the dark side and the light side of the force there. The light side of the force, it's like love and compassion. That's what it is to live by the spirit of the Torah. If you're operating from a place of revenge, anger, hatred, resentment, that's just...you've miss-stepped. The basics, Avraham, the first one of the lights, is love and compassion.

Then we have Isaac – self-sacrifice, restraint, discipline and perseverance. Then we have Jacob – presents truth. Now we spoke about Joseph, but now we arrive at Moses. The first leader of the nation of Israel and he represents the virtue of netzach.

And on today's fellowship, I want to explore this fifth virtue expressed by Moses. You can take the screen off. There we go. And, it's really important to realize, this virtue next to, and appears to us

in the book of Exodus. They appear to us during hardship. During tyranny, during hopeless and fear. It's like the context of these virtues to fully be expressed are specifically hard times. But they're the lights in our lives when we encounter hard times. Moses represent *netzach*. And after months of trying to translate this word into English, and I mean months...I've been thinking about this. You can ask Tabitha. I must have asked her to make a hundred different soul map pictures because I keep on changing the words over and over again. Cause it's just so hard to translate a word from Hebrew into English. Because Hebrew, it's so interconnected. Like every root is connected to other words so one word expresses multiple words.

So I finally came up so far, *netzach* represents the virtues of courage, heroic leadership and victory. Ok, so let's break that down in the Hebrew. It's impossible, I told you, to totally translate Hebrew. But if we look at the roots of the word, you can really take it apart and you can kind of unveil how we got to these ideas of heroic courage in leadership, heroism. So look at the word *netzach*.



That's the Hebrew word. So on one hand, *l'natzeach* means to win a battle. You're a soldier, you need to win. What does a soldier need to win in battle? He needs to be courageous. You need courage to win. The next one *menatzeach*, is like a leader, a conductor of a symphony. Like in Psalms when King David writes, to the conductor, a Psalm. *Lamenatzeach... menatzeach* is a conductor, so it's a leadership, but it's not just a leader that says, "Hey follow me cause I have rank." It's a leader that knows

how to put the different instruments in the right place. It's a leader that people are ready to follow.

And the last word of *netzach* is eternity. And so, I want to note something really interesting here. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, when asked, "What's the most important virtue a person could strive to embody in the world?" His answer, as a Greek man was courage. Now he's Greek and they valued war and glory and honor and the body and Hellenism. They're Olympian athletes and they're war heroes. Those were their national heroes. So in the Greek mindset, courage took the prize. It was the number one virtue.

Now the prophetic tradition acknowledges that courage is a virtue, it's one of the Divine virtues that need to be expressed in the world. It has to be expressed for you to really bring your best self to the world. But it's not number one. It's in there, but it's not the first. But, the blessing that God gave Joshua before he entered into the Land of Israel as the new leader was *chazak v'ematz* – strength and courage. It's like, if you want to win the battle of life, you want to conquer your demons, you want to banish evil from the Land, you want to banish evil from within, it's all the same thing, you're going to need strength and courage. That's why the book of Joshua starts with God speaking to Joshua and He says, "Listen, Moses is gone. I'm going to bless you now with His light. And his light was the virtue and the attribute that he brought to the nation. It was courage.

Joshua, you need to be the conductor now. You need to be the leader now. And what you need as a leader, I'm blessing you with heroic courage to go into the Land."

But if you look at it now, it goes a little bit deeper. In this parsha, this book Exodus, I want you to just look at Moshe's life here, from this angle, that he's representing now, this amazing attribute of courage and leadership and what it means. The first thing you need to know about a leader, cause Moses is our first national leader. He was our first hero. He stood alone. He grew up in Pharaoh's palace, he was an outsider. When he fled Egypt to Midian, he was alone. He came back, he always led one step removed from Israel. His tent was pitched far outside the camp. He stood before God alone at the burning bush, he stood alone before Pharaoh with the nation not really fully behind him. It seems like the Bible is telling us, to be a hero you have to be ready to stand alone. And we know that's what the word Hebrew means. Ivri literally means from our father, Abraham, "to be on the other side," ready to be alone.

But here is a beautiful piece written by Rav Soloveitchik, one of the greatest American rabbis of the last generation who helped build the American Jewish community after the devastation of the Holocaust. And in this essay, he's kind of sharing his insights into why the Torah tells us why Adam was created two different times. Why are there two tellings of the story in chapter one and chapter two? And here's what he explains. This is all a direct quote from him:

"A lonely man is a courageous man. He's a protester, he fears nobody. Whereas, a social man is a compromiser, a peace-maker and at times, a coward. At first man had to be created, levado, alone. For otherwise, he would have lacked the courage or the heroic quality to stand up and protest. Man was created a second time in chapter two of Genesis. He fell asleep, a lonely man and woke up to find Eve standing beside him. God willed man to exist in solitude, to experience aloneness. Moses was both the greatest loner who pitched his tent far outside the camp and at the same time the great leader, father and teacher to whom the whole community hung, in a word, man in order to realize himself, must be alone. But at the same time, must be a member of a community. The originality and creativity in man are rooted in his loneliness experience. Lonely man is free. Social man is bound by many rules and ordinances. God willed man to be free. Man is required from time to time to defy the world, to replace the old and obsolete with the new and the relevant. Only lonely man is capable of casting off the bondage to society. Who is Abraham? Who is Elijah? Who were the prophets? People who dared rebuke society with a new social order. The levado, the alone awareness is root of heroic defiance. Heroism is the central category in practical Judaism. The Torah wanted the Jew to live heroically, to rebuke, to reproach, condemn whenever society is wrong and unfair. The levado, the aloneness gives the Jew the heroic arrogance which makes it possible for him to be different. Did not the Jew display heroic arrogance by defying the world throughout millennia? Does not tiny Israel exhibit heroic courage in rejecting the UN?"

And that's what it is. The first step in Moses's life that he's teaching us, for us to be able to develop the virtue of courage which is a Divine light that needs to be expressed in our lives. We have to be

ready to be alone. And when people start scaring us and when people start doubting us, and people start telling us not to, that's when courage you need to have the power to stand alone.

When you think about it, Moses the first leader of our nation, he defied the injustice, the tyranny, and he fought for what was right, for what was true. He fought for the freedom of Israel and in giving the Torah, he fought for the freedom of all men and women. Teaching the world that all men and women were created in the image of God and therefore all of us in our essence are equal before God. When you think about Moses, he exemplifies the hero in the most amazing way. Cause most people, they just want to stay under the radar, pay the bills, make it to the TV, watch the next football game, let me just get through this day, get through this week...Moses just didn't stay passive. He actively walked away from all of the money, all of the power, all of the luxuries, all of the security, the royalty, to stand up for what was true, to stand alone, to defend the weak, the enslaved. Hero in Latin means the defender. So in Hebrew, the defender of Israel, the leader of Israel had enough strength for the other. Heroic courage means Moses gave it all the way to stand alone in defiance of Pharaoh and to become our first hero.

A leader isn't just a person who has rank. That's it. I mean, he relays orders and then...no. The conductor, *haminhatzeach*, it's really a great term. He's able to find expression for each person, for each instrument in the right time. Moshe was the only one who was able to divide the nation into tribes, formulate them, let them travel as a camp together, each with their own responsibility – the priests, the Levites. Decree the social structure of the entire nation that will work together as one body with one mission. That is to build the Kingdom of God on earth. *L'natzeach* is to win. To be victorious in battle. To win the war, you need to *l'natzeach*. You need courage.

And the Dictionary defines courage as the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear. No one faced the mightiest empire with a group of unwilling slaves behind him. Moses is standing before Pharaoh, he is empowering this small, broken slave people with enough courage for them to stand victoriously over their oppressors and gives us a map for our soul. You know, in the East, the enlightened live sort of a detached, inner peace. In the Bible, the believer is ready to stand alone in courage and help you trust your instincts. That's what we're all about. We have an intuition. HaShem speaks to us. Trust your intuition, you need courage in order to act on that intuition because other people won't necessarily understand it. Trust your gut, courage will help you follow through.

Courage also uplifts everyone else around you. In the IDF as a commander, when you go out into battle, you're the first in the line. You say, "*Acharei, kadima la'histar*, (after me, follow me, I'm the one first)." The courage of the commander empowers all of the soldiers to follow him into battle. Courage is contagious. So is fear by the way. And the more courageous you are, the more you uplift the people around you. And it helps us utilize the rare chances that appear in our lives. Spice carts come and there's a window of opportunity to act. Courage, when it's developed, allows us to capitalize on those opportunities. A courageous person is ready to step forward when that rare

golden chance appears. And courage is the promotor really of spiritual growth. It's like compost for your plants. It helps it grow. The more you exercise courage, the more your fear disappears. The less fear, the more faith can enter, the more calm, the more confident you become. Courage is like the healthy ground for faith to grow.

And every sphera, every light, every virtue that we talk about on the soul map, when you embody it, it brings a level of happiness because you've done your purpose in the world. You're revealing your soul in the world. God's light is shining through you. You're growing, you're flourishing, you're going to experience happiness through that growth. When you formulate your values and then you muster up enough courage to follow them no matter what, happiness follows. But courage is a critical ingredient, without courage you just can't do it. And really, courage is a way of life. It creates the lens through which you see everything. Netzach means eternity. It's like with courage, you just defacto have a positive attitude because you're ready to go out to battle with the hope that there's something eternal going on here. When there's no eternity...I'll just drink the sugar water, I'll just watch TV. No, eternity gives us what we're striving for, it let's us go, "Yes, it's hard, yes, it's scary, yes, it's painful. But I'm going all in, and I'm going to be Ok. I'm going to emerge victorious. There's going to be victory at the end." It's this lens through which you start to see the world. And as you see victory, HaShem brings the victory. Because your soul is lighting it up.

And so, fellowship, I want to bless you. I want to bless us with courage to become victorious. May you all be blessed with strength and courage. Courage to stand victoriously in life as who knows what is going to come out around us. But right now, we need courage to be strong for ourselves, for our families, and for everyone else around us. Give us courage to uplift your loved ones, HaShem should bless you. As Israel rises up, we all rise up with her. We take the world with us. And so, all of us have been blessed here with front row seats. Even better, all of us get to take a part in bringing this new light into the world and may we be blessed with strength and courage to not back down. HaShem should bless all of you...

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Shalom my friends.