

Session 79

Va'eira – The New Name

2 January 2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7Ze_03a81Q

Ari

Shalom, my friends. Can you hear me? Give me a wave. So good to see you, I can tell you what song is going to be stuck in my head all day long. What I just heard from Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel. Jeremy...you really...you keep bringing it. You got new songs in English, that's very bold. Anyways, it's just so good to see you. I love this part where you're all logging in and I'm getting to see your face. Really, like gives me an internal piece. And while I know it hasn't been that long time since we've seen each other. It feels like a really long time to me. I don't know if it's this way with you, but when I'm sick, I enter this very disorienting vortex in time and lose most of the sense of just, you know, time going by. So, it's been a rough time for me, for Shaena, for Dvash. We all...it was worse than Corona, this bout with the flu was just so much more difficult than that. We're so grateful for your prayers big time.

And so, yes, it's so good to see all of you. Rick, it's good to see you. You're like my father-in-law. He's always the first one at minyan in the morning. You're always like the first one in there. Janet, shalom, Janet, good to see you, although I can only see the top of your head. Shalom, Donald my friend. Hi. And Mark and Lori, it's good to see you. You guys are cute, you guys are a cute couple. Shalom, Brandon, you know Brandon is the only one that doesn't just send me messages, but video messages that he records for me. It's really, really personal. It's great, you can all feel comfortable...welcome to do that. I love that. Anyways, I have a feeling that I'm gonna go over time, so I can't go through everybody, even though I'd love to. Shalom, Ardelle, hi! I want you to know I spent much of Shabbat thinking about Jaxon. It wasn't my decision, he's just on my heart for some reason. I want to send him a video if you think he'd watch it. I would love to share that with him. Umm...Ed, Julie, Ryan from Colorado, I can't see you at all, but I see that you're there. Hi, Tara, Marilyn, Tom, Brian, Mo, Nancy. Nancy where's Tar? Is Tar with you? Anyways, and Stephanie, Esther, it's good to see all of you. I said I wasn't gonna do it, now I'm doing it. Ok, I'm gonna stop.

But it's good to see all of you and I think that it's therapeutic because when I see your faces, it just reminds me that we're all together in this. That we're seeking together and searching together. Because you know I make no secret of the fact that I approach this fellowship with the sense of awe and responsibility. And more often than not, I just...I feel pretty unworthy to be at the helm of such a truly extraordinary group of people like yourselves. Really, I really mean that. There are times when I just want to veg out and watch NBA highlights or just do worse stupidity than that. And while it's not a grievous sin, I think about all of you and the level that you're holding at. And about my responsibility to you, and I can't just show up here on Sunday evening, Judea time and share some Torah ideas. It just won't cut it for this fellowship.

I feel like Jeremy feels this also. We need to dig deep and put in the time and the heart and really give it our all because that's just the esteem that we hold you as. You know, I read your questions, and I don't think I've ever received just a simple little question from you. They're almost always challenging me deeply, and they demand real thought and reflection and I welcome them. I love them. Bottom line is that you're seekers in the truest sense of the word. And I'm honored to call you my friends, and seeing your faces puts me in the best possible place for spiritual connection and abundance to just...to flow. And why? When that day comes when we're in Jerusalem and Judea? Hard to imagine. It'll be great. I mean such powerful things have come from just brief meetings that we've had. I know that I told you this, but you know we met...I met Charlene in New Jersey and we sat in the hotel lobby for just over an hour. And now her name is mentioned every day in my home. And here's just a small example because I know Jeremy loves it when I do this. Tabitha, can you play the bear video?



What's the bear's name? What is the bear's name?

Dvash
Charlene.

Ari
Charlene, right. You want to give Charlene a kiss? Huggy. Oh, very nice.

Shaena

Now you could say, "Thank you, Charlene."

Ari

Say, "Thank you."

Dvash

Thank you, Charlene.

Ari

Good girl! How cute is that...Thank you, Charlene! I watched that video a thousand times. Anyways, so now that your hearts have been softened because that's what Dvash does, I thought I would introduce a very beloved friend of mine and Jeremy's. And now, he's a fellow spiritual warrior working here at the farm with us. His name is Moish Feiglin. The Moish Feiglin. Hopefully you'll all meet Moish and find out more about him later on. But for now, I just wanted to invite him to share a prayer meditation experience with us and really in a way that only he can. Shalom Moish, are you there?

Moish

I'm right here, Ari. This is...can you hear me? We're just down the road. This is so moving. I hear you and Jeremy talking every Sunday. We've got the fellowship. We've got the fellowship, we can't meet, we can't you know...it's just, your mind and your heart and getting ready, and now I'm seeing what this is. Looking at all you beautiful people from across the world. This is real...I'm genuinely moved, this is so special. So thank you for inviting me to share for a few minutes. I've started working at the farm as head of tourism, and I was just being with Ari today and saying, when is all the fellowship people gonna come and spend time with us? We can't wait till Israel opens up and we can welcome you and show you what it feels like to be out there in the hills.

So just wanted to share a short thing. I had this experience recently, I was traveling in Australia and I went for a walk to the beach. And it's a place I used to visit in my childhood and as a walk from the road to the beach, it's about a 10 minute walk. And as I was walking through that, I was overwhelmed by the beautiful nature. It brought up so many memories and feelings, you know that when you visit where you come from, often it can evoke all these memories. The gum trees and the feeling and the wind and the color of the light. And I had this overwhelming sense that in nature there's this feeling of perfection. Like this moment was perfect. I was right there in the moment. There was nowhere I needed to be, nothing I needed to be doing, just breathing and being present.

And the thought came to me that the truth is that that is reality. Reality is that this moment is perfect. What gets in the way is our pain and our suffering and our challenges. For some of us, it's our past, for some of us it's anxiety about the future. But there's a way to tap into the moment. Just like this picture of nature is perfect, then I can realize that every moment, that perfection is here. And that is bringing like Hashem, God's Presence into this moment, into my heart. And today I was sitting out...my wife surprised me to visit me for a few minutes. She brought me a cup of coffee and I shared that story with her. We're looking out at the valley. She's like, "What are we looking at? We see these hills and these rocks and is that real? Is it not real?" And we were just right there. So special, so...I thought, maybe I'll just guide you through a little experience like that, we can do together. Really dropping into the present moment and opening our hearts to whatever's, whatever we're dealing with. And I know there's no person in the world who's a stranger to suffering and pain. None of us are free from the anxieties of the future. But right now, we're here and if we can truly arrive and feel that sense of HaShem's Presence in our hearts.

So, this is something that I do, I'm going to invite you to join me. And then, maybe I'll play a song as well, connected with the theme. So I just close my eyes and take a moment to feel my heart in my body and gently breathe in through the nose, and out through my mouth. And with each breath in and out, I remind myself that this is exactly where I need to be, doing this thing with you for a few minutes, and you being with us...being connected. And the sense that this moment really is ok, is perfect. And letting go of the confusion, letting go of our struggles, just

for a few moments and tuning in through the breath. And when I do that, I can't help feeling the gratitude for the gifts that I have, for the gift of being right here. So just take three more mindful breaths, just breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Just two more. I'm really feeling present and available to give and receive.

Wow. Thank you for whoever joined me in that. I'm gonna just get the guitar now. I'll now share with you a short sort of song. And I wrote this song which is on the same kind of theme that there's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to be doing, just being right here.



Song

There's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to do but to follow You. There's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to do but to follow You into the night, into the dark, into the cold, under the stars, under the moonlight, into the end of time. There's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to do, but to follow You. There's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to do, but to follow You, into the night, into the dark, into the cold, under the stars, under the moonlight, into the end of time. There's nowhere I need to be, nothing I need to do but to follow You.

So, that's how I feel, you know with the breath and with the song, just this feeling of being willing to follow, being willing to be present and see what happens. And with that trust, it feels like anything's possible. And I just sort of finished something I was talking about with Ari today and I know he's going to talk about it tonight. I was sharing with him, I was learning on Shabbos morning. I have a small study group. And we were learning about Pharaoh, about Paro, and it was contrasting the difference between a king, like a flesh and blood king, and our great King, HaShem, God. And we're saying that with the king, when you strip away all their tools...you know a king has to sit on a throne and a king has to wear a crown and a king has to have a scepter...if you sat on that throne, you're threatening the king's authority. If you take his scepter, you take away his crown, and then what's left? You have no king. The king relies on all these symbols, all these like external objects to remain the king.

But with HaShem, we are those things, we are His throne, when we sit in a way, when we honor the way that we sit with people, with respect, when we act, you know, with the scepter. When we extend ourselves towards someone else. When we carry ourselves in a certain way. All these things, it's the opposite. When we take these garments, these like Divine attributes, we become God's instrument in the world. And this is sort of like the true aspect of what it means to have a king. And I feel that personally when I walk, you know, in Israel, when I feel connected, when I'm not in my mind or about future tripping or thinking about the past. I'm like, I'm part of this great majesty.

So that's what I have to share today, Ari. And I really, really appreciate being here and seeing everyone and seeing what the fellowship is all about. And again, I can't wait we can open up our doors to you, our gates to you and show you all the amazing things that we're cooking up on the farm in the next coming months. So shalom.

Ari

Hey Moish, that was beautiful. What a gift you are. What an absolute gift. Thank you so much, it really, really deeply touched me. And there's something about your voice, it's just a calming soothing voice all the time. Maybe it's the whole Australian accent thing, you know. That's an...that's probably something there. But either way, really you're such a gift. Thank you, Moish.

And you know, I'm actually really grateful that Moish started, particularly in this Torah portion, because in this Torah portion, something new begins. In some ways, it's like a new type of Genesis, like Bereshith, it's the beginning of a new experience and a new understanding of the world. Because in the very first verse of the portion, we're introduced to a completely new manifestation of HaShem's essence. And let me tell you we could theoretically spend the entire fellowship just trying to comprehend and internalize the first verse of the Torah portion. And I'll try not to let that happen, but I certainly cannot guarantee it. And you know what? If we're able to really immerse ourselves wholeheartedly, even in that one verse, it would be a successful fellowship. But no matter how much time we put into it, and really how hard we try to fully understand it...we would fail. Because it's impossible for us to fully understand. It would be impossible to do so because the very nature of this Name implies transcendence. And the very fact that we are created means that we cannot possibly understand the Creator.

I think I've shared this with you before, is my first earliest spiritual crisis. I was in kindergarten. I still remember where I was sitting. And this massive, six-foot seven-inch rabbi of my community whose very essence was just loving kindness and goodness. We had all just finished singing the song about HaShem, right? HaShem is here, Hashem is there, HaShem is truly everywhere. Up, up, down, down, HaShem is everywhere. Which is a mind-blowing idea in and of itself. And then he went on to tell us that HaShem always was and always will be. I know I've shared this with some of you before. But you know, the "always will be" part didn't bother me for some reason, but I remember thinking "He always was?" What? How could that be? And there was a short circuit in my brain. That that's impossible. Everything had to be created by something. He could have always been.

And I still remember the psychological, physiological response to that thought. It was like my brain slammed into one of those glass closing doors, which by the way I have done numerous times, also at the house of Rabbi Shlomo Katz, from my sheva brachot, but that's a different story. You know, it's funny, if I allow myself to really meditate upon that idea, even now I have the same response. And you know, there are people who try to say the Name, who try to

pronounce it. And you really aren't supposed to even try. But the good news is that even if you do, you can't really say it correctly because it's really not pronounceable. If you speak Hebrew, it's readily apparent that there's no way to articulate or enunciate. It's almost like it's an impossible series of breaths. The Hebrew speakers here know what I'm talking about. Anyways, HaShem's ineffable tetragrammaton Name is impossible to comprehend, to pronounce, in one word, it is impossible. It transcends the human grasp of possibility itself. And that's why I'm happy we started with Moish today. Because while I fully intend, I'm trying to grasp just a few messages of the Torah portion that we're blessed with in this parsha. At the core, we're being confronted with transcendence itself. And so, music and meditation, these are just such important ways that we can touch, even for a brief moment the depth of the unfathomable greatness of HaShem, of God.

Now, before we dive in, I want to make on more introduction to my beloved friend and Rebbe Jeremy Gimpel, who's going to share with us undoubtedly something illuminating and inspiring. I don't know if it's about the Torah portion or not, but Jeremy you there?

Jeremy

Yes, I'm here. One second.

Ari

No you're in, you're good, you're good.

Jeremy

Yeah, it's ok? Everyone can hear me? Well, excellent. Alright, Ari, I am just really proud of you. I'm thrilled that you brought Moish on because we keep on talking about how we want to like experiment with the fellowship, to do new things, maybe create new sections. We brought on Yishai Fleisher last week. You brought on Moish, like all of these characters that are adding so much to our lives here in the Land of Israel. And when we found Moish, or when Moish found us, or just he sort of like appeared on our mountain, and we were looking for someone to help run all of the logistics behind all the tours that are still happening, even though it's mostly now from within Israel. And you know, most people would look for sort of like a logistical coordinator to help run schedules. And Ari and I are just no logistical, coordinator-like people. And all of a sudden, we found just this amazing person of the spirit. Just a spiritual man, a musician, an artist, a teacher, an educator. And he's just brought already so much light to the farm. And I'm just so happy now we get a chance to share him with you as well. And as soon as this Corona nonsense sort of moves on and people can come back to our Land, hopefully, he will be the one that will help book your tours, set you up. And we'll be able to really function as our mission statement calls us to be a place like Abraham's tent, open to everyone from every background to transform Judea into a center for spirituality and transcendence. A global headquarters instead of people running to India. That happens a lot in Israel. People are running off to India to find spirituality. It's like we are in the mountains of the heart of where

God rests and reigns. And this should be the global headquarters for spirituality. So Moish's going to be our top guy to help us make that a reality, hopefully very, very soon. And second, great video about Dvash. I love that video. That was just delicious. She is just the cutest. So, thank you for sharing that. That's awesome.

Ok, so what I wanted to talk about today, I wanted to give a little bit of an update of the amazing, wonderful things that are happening on the farm. Now of course, everything that we do always seems to be interrelated with the Torah portion. It's almost like the Torah portion is constantly speaking to us, guiding us, so it's very connected. So, I'm going to start off with what I've been wrestling with since last Torah portion and what I'm wrestling with this Torah portion. And I just see like these are the life lessons that I've come up with because this is what's happening.

Why does Israel have to start off as slaves? Why did that have to happen? I mean, I'm...you know, I have a little bit of like a beef to take with God here on that one. And I have that beef on a lot of different issues because why does it gotta be so hard here? Why did we have to start off as slaves? Why did we have to live through that struggle? I mean, it's kind of like the same question of like, "Why did You have to make the snake in the garden? I mean You made this amazing Gan Eden, this amazing Garden of Eden, this amazing paradise. Why do You gotta put the snake in there? Like if he's gonna ruin it, like why does there need to be this struggle? Why does there need to be this challenge? Why is that happening? Why do we have to struggle through all of it?" That's the fundamental question.

And I mean, you see it throughout the whole Torah. I mean at the very end of the Torah, Moshe is giving a whole speech through prophecy. And he's saying, "I want you to know, Israel. You're going to get into the Land, it's not going to be pretty. You're not going to follow God's ways and you're going to be exiled. And then one day, you're going to return to the Land." It's like...ahhh...why? Why did we have to go through all of the hardships to make that happen? You already brought us into the Land. Can't we just live happily ever after? Like that's how other story books end. Why is it for us, it's like you're entering into the Land and it's not exactly going to be happily ever after. There's going to be an exile and struggle and pain and growth and all of these issues that are going to go through and then one day you're going to make it back to the Land of Israel. And it's like, ok, and just in our own lives, we find ourselves in Mitzrayim all the time. In Mitzurim, all the time. We find ourselves in constrictions, we find ourselves in prison. We find ourselves in all of these struggles.

And then the Torah portion says, "I want you to know, outside of this slavery, once you get past this refining fire, Israel will be born. The Torah will emerge and be given to the world and change the trajectory of human history. Somehow the Torah was brought forth through that experience. It like prepared the nation to be able to accept the Torah. And sometimes in life, I just feel like, "What? I'm just...how did I get myself into this?"

So here's the latest thing that had happened. Well, you heard about our fiasco with the vineyard. So we had to get a flock of sheep to protect our Land. I went on a speaking tour to meet all of the beautiful people that I possibly could in the fellowship because I had a feeling like, who knows? Maybe they'll lock down the skies again. If I have an opportunity to get out and then just to like hug the people, touch the people, I want to make as many connections as I can with them. And I was so lucky enough to meet so many of you. And I came back and all of a sudden, the truth is, I just...there was girls working on the farm. That's what happened. Her name...well the first one, her name was Nechama. And there were all these other girls because Yossi's daughter was getting married and there were all these girls helping around for the wedding. You guys saw that wedding, we aired that on the fellowship. And I...we all of a sudden just had these girls here.

And then like some of the girls stayed and as I got to know them a little bit more, I saw that almost all of them didn't come from simple backgrounds. And in fact, just recently, Tehila with her legal mind was able to structure two of the girls staying on the farm and she's actually now defined it as a part of their national service. So the State of Israel has now found the Arugot Farm important enough that it's an alternative to an army service, you can also do what's called National Service. So, it's not a military uniform, but you can serve in a hospital, you can serve in an old age home, you can serve in a school, and the country has defined the Arugot Farm as a strategic asset for the country so far. And they brought us now two positions that we're able to have two of these girls now that sort of are High School dropouts that come from a little bit broken homes, that weren't sort of in a proper structure to have an actual job now that's recognized by the State of Israel. And in fact, their slots are defined as a national service that's defined for youth at risk.

And so, it's amazing, they get all these benefits now and they'll get benefits when they get married for serving the country. And Tehila is just a queen for figuring out all the bureaucracy to figure that out for these girls. And she sure helped them. And, but on the same time, now I love these girls, Ari loves these girls, you can't not love these girls. They are the most beautiful souls. They are so wonderful. They are like, you know they don't want to have smartphones, they want to be close to the Land, they want to be close to nature, they want to learn Torah. We study about once a day together. And they're just the most marvelous, beautiful souls that just kind of got dealt a rough deck, you know they're a rough hand in life. And they found their way to our farm and as far as I'm concerned, this farm is their home for as long as they need.

But I did find myself in a little bit of a prison. And it's a prison that I'm grateful for because I love these girls, but on the other...I'm like, well I gotta feed these girls now. I have to take care of them. As if like the farm wasn't big enough and the project heavy enough, now I got like a whole little team of girls I got to take care of. What am I going to do now? And so, over the last few months, you know we have a small flock of sheep and we have a small herd of goats. And the girls have become experts at making milk, cheeses, and yogurt from our goats. And our

goats are so special...I don't like goat yogurt or goat milk because it tastes kind of goaty. I like cow milk, but these goats are so special, you can't even tell that they're goat milk. They just taste like regular milk. And our girls started making all these delicious cheeses and yogurts. And so, you know, I was like, it got to the point where I'm like, "ok, I don't know how I'm going to feed these girls anymore. This is really overwhelming. I'm going to send out a WhatsApp to my friends in the area. And I said, 'hey, if you guys would like, we're starting to sell goat yogurt and the girls here will deliver it directly to your home once a week.'" Oh my gosh, I was over...I was flooded with WhatsApps. People say, "I want those goat yogurts from the Arugot Farm, are you kidding me? We get to support the farm and we get to support the girls. Done. Sign me up. I'm in."

And all of a sudden, like what, 20 families now around Gush Etzion in our area are starting to get delivered goat yogurts for us. Can we show the video of the girls here with the yogurts? But I just took a few pictures just so you know.



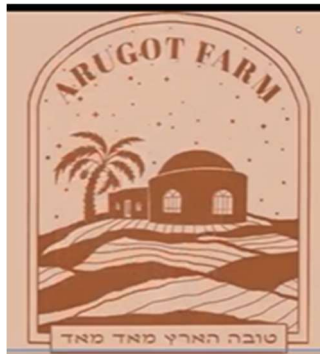
There's Yishai Fleisher, his family ordered. He posted it on his Facebook page.



This is one of my friends that posted his yogurt and his cheese. This guy had a night with his wine and cheese they sent me.



That's one of our girls. Her name is Talia. She's so cute.



That was our first bottle of yogurt that she put out and that is our branding on our yogurt. Look at that, the Arugot Farm. And the subtitle of the Arugot Farm is *Tovah h'aretz meod meod*, the Land is very, very good. And that's what the Torah says about the Land. Because when we first came to the Arugot Farm, people said, "Ahhh...where are you going? The desert, there's just thorns and there's no water. Who's going to go there?"

We're like, "No, no, no. The Land is very, very good." And now when people come to the Arugot Farm, they can see that, they can feel that. And what has happened is, you know there's one thing about giving charity, but the highest level of *tzedakah* is to facilitate someone else providing for themselves. That's how it's defined in the Torah. You can give money without the person knowing, that's a higher level of *tzedakah*, but the highest level of giving charity is actually giving someone a job.

And all of a sudden now, these girls that sort of didn't have a place in the world found a home. And somehow through just our activities on the Farm and through just our fellowship network here, the girls now have jobs. And they're now sustaining themselves through their own work. And I'm like, "Wow, as if our farm couldn't get more beautiful, it got that much more beautiful." And it was only because of the sort of constraint that we were put in. We were put in to...I was put into a little bit of a prison. I felt like, ugh, I got to figure this out, I'm sort of tied up here. I have these girls I need to take care of and out of that now so much light and so much beauty has come to the world. And our farm has become that much more beautiful.

And so, I don't have the answers of why the snake is in the garden, but I do know that the outcome is that if we're able to see past the challenge and somehow break through, even a more beautiful light somehow emerges. And even more goodness and more *mitzvoth* are brought into the world. And so, I was thinking and I don't exactly have it yet because I would

love to send our fellowship yogurt, but I think it'll get spoiled by the time it arrives. Sometimes the Post Office here is like not exactly like the most...I don't think we can send yogurt. I don't know what we'll have. I'll probably get arrested. But these girls are so creative, they're constantly creating things. And so, maybe soon, we'll be able to like offer gifts and presents to our members. But just kind of planting that seed that hopefully we'll be able to arrive at such a place that our own products and our own creations will come out to the world from the Arugot Farm. And so for whatever prison that we're in, if it's an illness, if it's a struggle, if it's just...everyone has their own mitzrayim that they have to deal with. That's just the part of the structure of reality. That snake is there, that challenge is always going to be there. But if we're able to somehow break through, we just know at the end that a greater light is on the horizon. So we should be blessed with strength and courage to break through and to find our light.

Ari

Jeremy, that was absolutely beautiful. Suzanne said that maybe you could dehydrate the yogurt into little balls and send it to people around the world in the fellowship. That's what Suzanne said. There's some options here that people are throwing out, good ideas. I think Miriam from Cape Town, she said it best. She said, "A Land flowing with milk and honey and yogurt and cheese." It's beautiful, it really is. HaShem is definitely in charge. Who else could make that happen? And I think really it does illuminate a little bit about what happened in this week's Torah portion.

So ok, let's dive in because we have a lot to discuss here. So let's review how last week's Torah portion ends, right? Moshe Rabbenu is trying to understand why his attempt to usher in redemption is bringing so much darkness. Right? Jeremy had the question, he had the question. Remember, Moshe followed HaShem's commandment to go and demand that Pharaoh release the children of Israel. And he did it with courage and faith. He really, really spoke truth to power. Or at least to the illusion of power. But at the time, Pharo in Egypt was unquestionably the most powerful man in the world. And what happens? Pharaoh responds to Moshe and demands that the Jewish people go and make their own...he just makes their life so much harder. They have to make the same quota of bricks, but they have to gather their own straw. And so they spread all over Egypt, scavenging for straw, and they were just afflicted.

And they approached Moshe and Aaron with anger and with grief. And they accused Moshe and Aaron of putting a sword in Pharaoh's hand to murder them. Those are tough words and as you can imagine, I think Moshe was a very sensitive man. He was a sensitive soul. And it must have distressed him very much. I mean we see the love that he has for his people that he was willing to throw away a life of luxury and comfort and royalty. Royalty! In order to protect two Jews from an Egyptian taskmaster and those Jews ended up turning him in! Anyway, so Moshe turned to HaShem and he said in chapter five, he said:

"Moshe returned to Hashem and said "My Lord, why have you done evil to this people, why have you sent me? From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in your Name he did evil to this people, but you did not rescue your people."
- Exodus 5:22-23

What was Moshe doing here? If you think about it, it was sort of...you know, it was very bold, brave, you know, many of the sages say that he's actually like criticized for not having faith or as Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov did. But he was trying to understand. He had a question and he asked it. And what, my friends, is the answer that he receives? So let's turn to the first verse of this week's Torah portion.

And ELOHIM spoke to Moses and said to him "I am HaShem".
-Exodus 6:2

That my friends, is the answer that he receives! And Elohim said to Moshe, "I am HaShem." The answer is, I am Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey. I actually realized I didn't even make that main, primary slide, so I just wrote it up here right now. I hope you can see it.



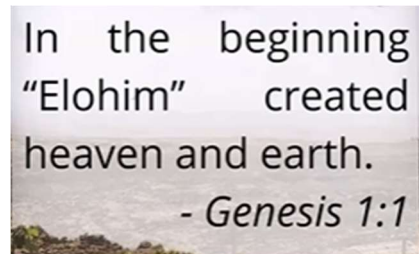
Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey. I think it's coming in and out. Anyway, that was the answer. Now the reason that Jews referred to God in general and this name in specific is HaShem is because HaShem literally means The Name. HaShem. The ineffable, foundational root name of God. And Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey, that I just showed you, that is The Name. That's the answer to the question.

Now to even scratch the surface of this, we have to really go to the original Hebrew right? And Elohim said to Moshe, and He said to him, we just did this pasuk, Ani Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey, I am HaShem. What's going on here? This is hard, so HaShem, please, please, give me the words to express this. The first verse starts by saying, "Elohim said to Moshe, I am HaShem." So what is the name Elohim? Elohim is the name of God which conveys His connection to the natural world. His mastery over nature, His creation of nature. Sometimes I wonder how a non-Jew that doesn't know Hebrew would read these verses because these different names of HaShem in Hebrew are so clear. But in English it would just be the Lord and God, it's just difficult, I don't understand how that would even translate.

So, Elohim, it's a plural word, Elohim. It's a plural word because nature contains multiplicity. And there are forces of nature that are so powerful, that they were worshipped, right? The sun and the stars and the wind and the sea. And the name, Elohim itself conveys the idea that yes, all of those things, all of them, Elohim created them all. And controls all of them. Which in and of itself is just a world-changing paradigm shift for the ancient pagan idolaters. And it

challenged everything that they knew of the world. But still, Elohim is a lower-level manifestation of God's name.

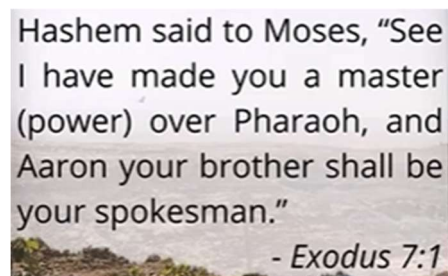
And it was the one with which the world was created and the Torah begins, right? Let's look at the first verse in the Torah, Genesis Chapter one, verse one:



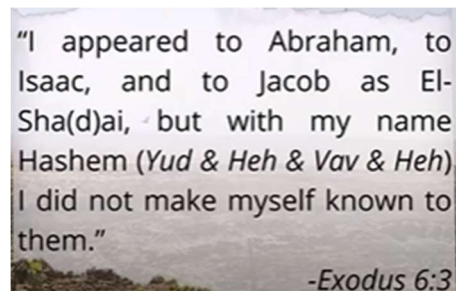
Now I actually had a thought when I was going through this. I'm sure it's not original, it's been thought of before, but it was original to me. I thought that this verse could actually be read, "In the beginning, the name Elohim was created along with heaven and earth." Jeremy, have you heard that before? Or is that a new idea? Meaning that in the beginning, the

lower-level understanding and relationship and manifestation of HaShem known as Elohim was created. Rabbi Kahn actually talks about this. He says, "Elohim is a name which is a referential name." Right? What do I mean by referential? It's a name which is said only in reference to mankind. And it describes a very specific and particular type of relationship with man. But it doesn't describe HaShem independently. Right? It doesn't explain anything intrinsic about HaShem. It only helps us understand His relationship to that which He created. Right? It expresses His power.

As a matter of fact, to strengthen that point, as I was going through the parsha, it just stood out to me. That later in the parsha, right before the plagues begin, HaShem tells Moshe in chapter 7, verse 1:



Master, the word is actually "Elohim." So there, Moshe is actually called Elohim. We see that Moshe's called Elohim over Pharaoh because he was imbued with HaShem's power within him over Pharaoh. Now let's go to the next verse of the parsha which includes even another name and further expands this really beautiful truth.



El Sha(d)ai, we write the name like that with the parentheses because we want to break the name up because you really shouldn't, we're very careful about writing and pronouncing God's names. But this is a good context to do it here. But with my Name, HaShem, Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey, I did not make Myself known to them. Right? I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov as El Sha(d)ai, but with my Name, HaShem, Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey, I did not make Myself known to them.

The Rambam, Maimonides, talk about the next name that's mentioned, right, El Sha(d)ai. Have any of you heard that name before? Is it familiar to you? The first part of the name, El, comes from the word Elohim, meaning "God of." And the name Shaddai, comes from the word, dai, which I actually think was the first Hebrew word that Dvash came home from her daycare. Right? Jeremy could say this, every little kid, they're like...dai, dai. She does this thing with her shoulders, just dai...like enough, enough. And that's the name which actually conveys the facet of God that places limitations on things. Where God voluntarily constrains Himself and His miracles to within the laws of nature that He Himself created. That is the name which Hashem sort of remains in bounds. Right? This is really the extent of the miracles performed for the forefathers up until this point. And that's also the name by the way that's written on the mezuzah that we put on our doors, just as the Israelites in Egypt put the blood of the lamb on theirs. So we do the same thing. Here's a picture of actually an ancient mezuzah with the name Sha(d)ai written on it, just as it's written today.



Can you see that? It's like on the opposite side of the cloth, but it's also often written exactly on the mezuzah itself. And why dafka, would the name be used on our mezuzah? Because it's saying to the angel of death, to the dark forces of the world, dai. Right? Until here...do not come into this home.

And so those were the names which God actually, in practice, manifested in the world. Exclusively. Up until this great moment of redeeming the nation of Israel from Egypt. So the name Yud Hey Vav Hey is the name that transcends time and space, the name that defies comprehension, the name that reveals that HaShem's adherence to His own rules of nature is a choice. Right? It's not a compulsion, He's not bound by them, He chooses to abide by them. But in truth, the rules of nature are as much a miracle as the parting of the sea. It's all the same to Hashem. So perhaps, that's why HaShem chose to reveal this Name to Moshe at the burning bush. Remember in last week's Torah portion, Moshe happens upon this bush that's engulfed in fire, that's not being consumed and he struggles with understanding God's Name. And in chapter 3, verse 15, God says:

"Elohim said further to Moses, "So shall you say to the children of Israel, 'Hashem (Yud Hey Vav Hey) the G-d of your fathers, the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob has dispatched me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation".
-Exodus 3:15

So why was this said to Moshe at the burning bush? The Rabbi Khan points out just this beautiful idea. That the burning bush itself conveys this dichotomy, this transcendence of God over nature. Yes, God created the natural world and He created the bush composed of flammable wood and leaves, but nonetheless, He's above the laws of nature which He Himself abided by from the beginning of the history until now. Think about it. Is that beautiful?

It's really beautiful that the burning bush that's not being consumed is a physical demonstration of the truth of this unfathomable Name that HaShem is trying to help Moshe understand and to grasp. Again, it's the fact that we are confined to time and space which prevents us from understanding a Creator that's above it. For the Name itself, right? Let's look at it. I think this is actually a slide that Jeremy made:

Past - *Haya* - היה
Present - *Hove* - הווה
Future - *Yiheye* - יהיה
Hashem - יהוה

So, Hashem on the very bottom you see, you see Yud Hey Vav Hey, that's the tetragrammaton. On the top is past - Haya. The present - Hove, and the future - Yiheye. That within HaShem's Name, is the past and the present and the future. They're all within it because HaShem, Himself is above the very concept which I've come to believe is really at

the core of so many mysteries of the Torah and of life. Particularly the whole issue of free will and destination. But that's just, that's a subject for an entirely different fellowship.

Now again, let's remember the name Hashem, Yud Hey Vav Hey, was expressed to the forefathers beforehand. That Name was in the Torah, but it was more like a promise. It was never actively manifested before the eyes of mankind. HaShem is saying with this verse, that now, at this point, the deepest truth of His Name and therefore, the deepest truth of His essence would finally be expressed. And so, the plagues begin, and the illusions start getting peeled back one by one. The idols start getting shattered, one by one. Right? The Nile turns to blood and why the first plague emanates from the Nile? Well the Nile was their god. It was like the source of their fertility. They worshipped the Nile, they placed their faith in the Nile. They didn't need God. They had everything that they needed. Or so they thought, right? And then, this great god of theirs, this great and mighty Nile turned to blood. Right? It was like the Nile itself was slain, like it was killed. And this is not... it not only shattered their belief in the Nile, but it started chipping away at their belief in Pharaoh, himself.

But then, just in case that anyone thought perhaps this was a plague of the god of the Nile and that he only had power in the Nile, well then came the frogs. Now what are frogs? They're

amphibians, which start in water, but then venture out of the water and cover the face of Egypt. In every room, in every home, in their ovens and in their furnaces, and it became clear that this Deity has control and autonomy, not only over the Nile, but over land itself as well. And this is how it kept going, right? This plague by plague. The falsehoods of the Egyptian worldview were becoming exposed. Shattering these belief systems, bringing down the haughty, just humbling the arrogant, and it was a process. Right? Because anything real tends to be a process. There was a reason that the Jews needed to travel 40 years through the desert. Because human nature takes time to integrate and internalize these new realities. This one cataclysmic plague, it was not enough to have one plague. It needed to be done step by step.

And I always wondered how the general population of Egypt responded. Because we don't really hear that much about it. Were they like as obstinate and stubborn as Paro? Were they like, "Why doesn't Paro just back down?" Was there disagreement among them about how the nation should progress? I don't know, but we don't hear that much about them. But who do we hear about? We hear about Paro, himself, about his reaction. About the process that he went through.

Now, I'll tell you it seems like a shame that friends of mine that I went to grade school with look at the Torah and they say, "I know it, I know it. I read it in school. I went to a Jewish day school. I know these stories." Because they know these stories through the eyes of a first grader, on the most simple and remedial level. But being that the Torah is not a book, but a living teaching, as we change and we evolve in our journey through this world, the Torah speaks to us in completely new ways. And it imparts these radically new wisdoms and truths that we need exactly when we encounter it.

So I've noticed that as I'm experiencing the Torah in my adult life, the characters cease being black and white, right? They stop being good and bad. They develop this complexity to them. And I start seeing myself in those other characters as well. Alarming. Alarming, I find myself empathizing with the pain for example of Esav. Upon finding out that he traded his birthright for a bowl of soup. For who of us have not betrayed HaShem in some way for a fleeting moment of a forbidden pleasure? Right? Trading in true closeness to God, which is the greatest joy and pleasure imaginable. We trade that in for illusions and stupidity. Right? Seeing this conflict within him of hating his brother Jacob, but loving him at the same time, it was just very real and very human. Well, it's the same with Paro. There's real room for empathy and compassion for Paro. I know maybe that's a contentious, controversial thing to say. It doesn't mean that he was anything other than profoundly evil, right? It doesn't mean that he didn't deserve every single thing that he got. But it still means that we can empathize with him, or at least, I feel like I can. Okay? I'll speak for myself. I couldn't help feeling it as I'm going through the Torah portion. And I intentionally didn't say sympathize. Because when you sympathize with someone, you feel compassion for what they're going through. You feel bad

for them. But empathy means that you can actually see yourself in them. And I think that if we all dig deep into our hearts, we'll see that we all indeed may have a little bit of Pharaoh in us. Perhaps we have more than we'd like to admit. And by the way, I believe that the mystics tell us the very same thing. I should really have called Jeremy and asked them because I couldn't find the source. But I believe they tell us that there is a spark of each character from the Torah within us. That it's all within us.

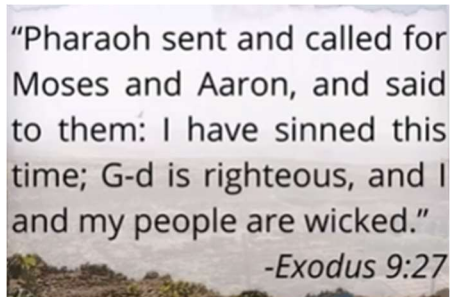
Now these ideas I'm about to share with you were very much inspired by a Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, may his memory be a blessing. And he was just such a giant and he's so missed from the world. I feel like we're just increasingly an orphaned generation. Anyways, so let's think about Paro for a moment. He was born as the son of Paro, the Paro before him. And he was raised being taught that he was a god, whose brothers were the sun and the moon and the Nile. And that's why he had to say no to Moshe. And Moshe's request that the nation of Israel go to worship God in the desert. Because number one, he's god, so how could he let them leave and worship another God when he himself, is the most powerful god.

Number two, letting them go would be a tacit recognition that the people of Israel have a certain degree of independence. And that is not a joke for Paro politically, any leader politically. Right? That is exactly what could lead to untold numbers of rebellions and revolutions. We see even today that I think the next world war could very much be sparked by exactly that same scenario. Right? Whether it's Taiwan seeking independence from China. Or Ukraine from Russia. Will the world get involved? Will America get involved? Will it spark a global war? But it's all coming from that same root. So there's no such thing as an isolated situation. Everything can be a precedent. So, of course, Paro had to say no. For in his mind, he was god and Egypt was this uncontested superpower of the planet that's what it always will be and always has been and that's just what is. And you really can't blame him for it, right? It wasn't only what his family told him, but the rest of the world really seemed to affirm this truth.

So now, we may not have been raised believing that we are literally god, but I think that sometimes the Torah gives us this extreme example of certain attributes to help us understand underlying truths about ourselves that are true. To a lesser degree obviously, but they're true. It's just that we need to see it in the most extreme manifestation to understand this truth about ourselves.

And so, who is the pharaoh within us? The pharaoh within us is the voice that knows the way things are supposed to be. Right? The pharaoh within us is the one that's sometimes furious, that's righteously indignant at the way things have turned out in some aspect of our lives. Things were not supposed to turn out this way. Why? Because we know, right, the pharaoh within me is that voice that just stubbornly refuses to accept the fact that we don't know, that refuses to accept the truth that HaShem runs the world and not us.

So Rabbi Steinsaltz points out this very powerful truth. He explains that while Paro does seem to yield in certain ways throughout the initial plagues, you know, after which he backtracks and rescinds his decrees and says they could leave and now they can't leave and the whole thing. We know the story. But there seems to have been a much more fundamental and profound shift within him after the sixth plague, the plague of hail. So, as opposed to yielding for pragmatic reason, like just putting an end to whatever plague they were going through, Paro expresses an entirely different sentiment after the sixth plague. Right? Chapter 9:



"Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them: I have sinned this time; G-d is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."
-Exodus 9:27

It's hard to believe that Paro was saying that. Something has really changed in his heart. Yet, he definitely, he definitely never experienced hail raining down on Egypt amongst thunder and lightning. That doesn't happen in Egypt, if you know that terrain, that territory, the weather there. Let alone the coexistence of fire and ice which are two completely antithetical elements within the hail. Yeah, this in and of itself must have just rocked him to the core. At this point, he must have just been a bundle of frazzled nerves at this point.

But in his words, you can see that something deep within him has been shattered, right? He speaks of sin. Sin, which is like an objective right and wrong that exists outside himself. He recognizes God, but even more powerfully, he recognized that God is righteous and his people are wicked. He and his people, right? He isn't just talking about the Egyptians alive today at that time. He's now reassessing his ancestors, the people before him. If there is a God and Pharaoh is not him, then everything that his life has been built upon has been a lie. That his entire nation has been built upon falsehood and illusions and it's just...it's hard not to feel bad for him. His whole world is shattering before his eyes. His father and his forefathers are now being exposed, not as deities, but as frauds.

And this, my friends, isn't just relegated to Paro. This is the story of each and every one of us to some degree or another. Because we have all inherited lies. Right? Lies that have penetrated their way into the very prism through which we see the world. And so, even we, every Jew in our prayers and confessions on the Day of Awe, right, we say, that we will, that we can't stand before HaShem and say that we are righteous because we and our fathers have sinned. That isn't just what Paro said, that's what we say as well. The Torah itself has built this into the process of confession which we actually learned before on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It's in Leviticus, right?

"They will then confess their sins and the sins of their fathers."

-Leviticus 26:40

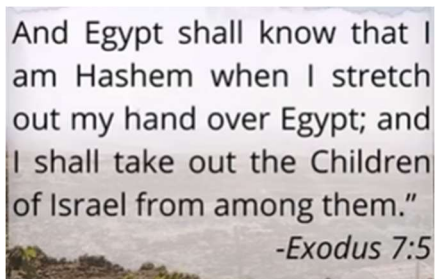
That that's part of confessing is recognizing how deep that goes. That's why he says, "I and my people." The whole story of Egypt has been a lie. What we're seeing happen before our eyes is Paro himself doing teshuva, sincere teshuva. Because when teshuva is sincere, Rabbi Steinsaltz points out, it penetrates to the very root of things. And it encompasses the entire picture. It rewrites the entire story. And perhaps, perhaps that's the reason that all of this happened. Jeremy started by asking, "Why did this have to happen? Why did we have to go, we're constantly trying to figure that out."

So maybe that's the reason for the descent down into Egypt, the horrific genocidal slavery and the eventual redemption leading to the giving of the Torah in the Land of Israel. Perhaps all of this happened for the story, right? For the story...as a storyteller, I can tell you. I'll try to tell you what I mean. Over Shabbat, I was at my sister's house in Modi'in, and I was able to sneak away and go to synagogue, and I ran into my friend, Daniel, who I had not seen in eight years since he left Israel and moved back to America. He was here on a visit over Shabbat. Finally, for the first time in eight years, he hadn't been back to Israel, although according to him, he didn't even know why he was here. And he opened up and the story just came pouring out with so much emotion. He said that his life in Israel had been very, very, very difficult. Unusually and remarkably difficult. He spent seven years fighting with all he had to make life in Israel work, but he simply couldn't. And he returned with his family to Florida a broke, defeated, broken man. And he said he still loved Israel, but he had failed. The entire thing was a failure. His aliyah was a failure. And he went back to America after...and after a couple of very difficult years there, he said HaShem blessed him. And his building business took off and he made a small fortune. I don't know how small it was, he seemed to be really grateful, I mean he told me about the home he lives in. But still, he looked back with regret and what he said was an absolute failed aliyah. Anyways, we spoke a little bit more and he gave me a hug and he started walking away and I said, "Daniel, could you wait for a second? Can I ask you just to give me moment here. And please consider reframing one small part of that story." Right? He said, "Sure, I'm open, tell me about it."

I said, "That when you're serving HaShem, no amount of effort is for nothing. Nothing is wasted, nothing is discounted. And so, perhaps your aliyah wasn't a failure at all. It just broke you and shattered you and humbled you to make you into the person that you are now, right? You left when you felt like you had no other choice. And you spent every day since yearning to return to the Holy Land. Perhaps your aliyah wasn't a failure, but it was a tremendous success. Making you into the person that you are. Who's now positioned in a place where you can now...now you can return to the Land of Israel and successfully plant roots and grow and thrive and without that first aliyah, the second upcoming one would have been impossible."

And we had a moment there, you know, and he stood there for a moment. His eyes really filled with tears. And I think he just opened his heart to looking back on the story of his life with entirely new eyes, at least on that chapter. And he said, "Yes, perhaps my aliyah was indeed a great success." And what I saw in his eyes for that moment was the light of redemption. And believe me, I was grateful and humbled that HaShem used me to help bring such a sweet and holy Jew even a fleeting moment of redemption. Because ultimately the story we tell ourselves of what we've been through on a personal level, on a national level, well that very, very powerfully and fundamentally directs where our story is proceeding into the future.

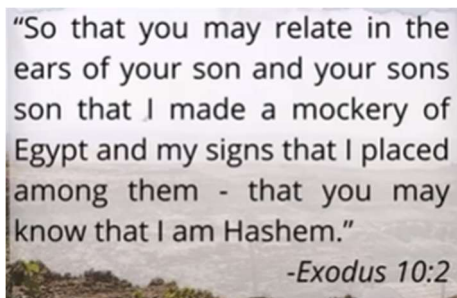
Because there's been a lot of debate throughout history as to why the ten plagues needed to happen like they did. And Rabbi Yossi Ives, he actually compiled this beautiful teaching about these. I'm sorry, we're going over time, I tried not to make it happen, I'll try even harder next time. I'm winding it down, I'm almost done. So, he explained that many have said that the ten plagues needed to happen to bring the Egyptians and the entire world to know that Hashem is God of the heavens above and on the earth below and there's just...there is no other. And yes, it's hard not to admit that at least is one facet of it. When you consider HaShem saying in Exodus chapter 7:



And Egypt shall know that I am Hashem when I stretch out my hand over Egypt; and I shall take out the Children of Israel from among them."
-Exodus 7:5

Egypt shall know that I am HaShem. But that doesn't explain why there needed to be ten, grueling plagues. It doesn't explain why there couldn't have been one big plague. Or just a redemption without any plagues at all. So Maimonides says it was about punishment. That the Egyptians needed to receive their full measure of punishment for their evil. And so ten plagues were necessary. And then the Sforno, he says

that the plagues were necessary to deconstruct the Egyptian illusions and bring them to a knowledge of HaShem which also makes sense. But the Lubavitcher Rebbe, he says that the real purpose, the deepest purpose wasn't really about the Egyptians at all. All of that was a fortunate and meaningful byproduct, or a side effect. But the real purpose, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said was so that the Israelites themselves should know. So that the Jewish people could know our story. So he actually, he quotes the second verse of next week's parsha, what does he say?



"So that you may relate in the ears of your son and your sons son that I made a mockery of Egypt and my signs that I placed among them - that you may know that I am Hashem."
-Exodus 10:2

And it makes sense, right? Where are the Egyptians now? The land exists, but the nation is extinct along with all these other empires that have risen and fallen. But we're still telling the story. It's our story, right? The Rebbe says that the real reason that Egypt happened was for the Israelites themselves. So that they will know their story and tell it from generation to generation. And with that

story defining us and our mission in life, we can go on and bring light and redemption to the world because of that story.

And so, that's why God revealing His deepest essence, His ineffable Name through the plagues in Egypt was perhaps the most pivotal point in world history because that moment defined our story. And we cannot possibly fulfill our mission if we don't know our story. And we can't possibly know our story if we don't know who the author is. If we don't understand the author. And in this week's Torah portion, the author revealed Himself to His nation and to the entire world. And now that we know who the author is, our greatest singular mission is to see His authorship, His Divine orchestration in absolutely everything that happens to us. Our sages say, what our sages say...everything is in the Hands of heaven, other than yirat shamayim, which some define as awe or fear of heaven, but it really means seeing Hashem. Seeing HaShem in our lives and in our history. It isn't just a difference. It is THE difference, it's all of the difference.

Because now that we know that HaShem, Yud, Hey, Vav, Hey, transcends time and space and that His fundamental attributes from which everything flows is love and compassion, then we can understand what it really means for Him to be behind everything. And that everything in our lives is perfectly orchestrated for us, for our growth, and for our character, even the Pharaohs that afflict us. Especially the pharaohs that afflict us. Because without Pharaoh's slavery, we wouldn't have become worthy, or ready. We wouldn't become the humbled nation that we needed to become to bring the entire world to a knowledge of God and usher in redemption. Right? When we know the truth of HaShem's Name and internalize that truth from our heads to our hearts, we can vanquish the Pharaohs from without and perhaps even more importantly the Pharaoh within.

Ok, so friends, I've done it again. I'm sorry, I've gone over time and there's a lot more I wanted to talk about. Particularly, I really wanted to do a prayer session together. For there are like so many prayer requests coming in and of course I want you to know that I have a group with Jeremy and we share them, all the prayer requests, whoever gets them and we immediately pray for everyone. But we don't have time to do that now this week, but we will do it. Because bizrat HaShem, please God next week. But the good news for me is that we're together next week, me and you. Why? Because we owe Jeremy and Tehila a very big mazel tov. Mazel Tov Jeremy! Your beautiful daughter Eden, right? She's getting bat mitzvahed, and she's becoming a woman of Israel. I probably get very emotional about it if I talk about it too much.

Jeremy

Yeah, can I just really quick. It looks like because...it might be pushed off until the spring time now. That might have been a decision that Tehila might have made just today. Because it seems as though the Corona, Omicron, I don't know what is spreading, spreading, spreading, spreading so fast that they may not allow public gatherings. And so it may be that

we might have to push it off for a couple of months. But Eden is such a sweetheart of a girl. She's just taking it in stride and we're just looking forward to when we're allowed to. So that...we just found out that today, so I'll be around next Sunday. I won't be at a bat mitzvah.

Ari

Now it's still my fellowship. I've called it. It's my fellowship, either way. Eden really is...I mean I've loved this delicious little girl since she was an infant. And now she's getting bat mitzvahed. You know I'm definitely not above time and space. It feels like I'm just speeding through it. Can you believe she's getting bat mitzvahed, Jeremy? It's just so crazy. She's so sweet. So anyways, we will be together next week. And so, I want to request please that you pay close attention to the emails that we're sending out this week. Because we're going to be trying something a little bit new and more interactive in this coming session. Jeremy and I are talking about doing this together and we're really excited about it. But we'll announce it in the email. We'll go into the details there, so read it closely. But for now, my friends, it is my greatest honor and joy to bless all of you with the Cohanic blessing that Aaron the High Priest and his descendants blessed Israel and continued to do until this very day.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless you and protect you. May HaShem make His Face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May HaShem lift up His countenance to you and give you peace. Amen.

I love you my friends. Stay in touch. Reach out. We love you. Can't wait to see you next week. HaShem should bless you, stay strong!