

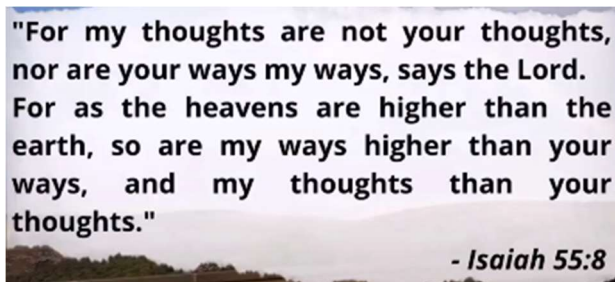
Session 51
Korach – The Heart of a Leader
13 June 2021

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIQix0y_SBs

Ari

Forgive me, I'm sorry, there's a very good reason that this is all happening. And I'll tell you about it in a second. The truth is that it's really been a crazy week for me. My wife, Shayna, said I should consider not even doing the fellowship. But that just did not feel right to me. I wanted to be with you particularly during this time and to share with you. Because it's not only for me, it's been crazy for the whole country. I feel like it's been a week of Divine communication. And while I believe that everything that happens is from Hashem, we've talked about this a lot on this fellowship, everything is a message from above. Sometimes the messages are louder and clearer and sometimes they take a little bit more of a listening, gentle, sensitive ear. And this week, something happened to me in which I know Hashem is speaking to me very loudly. So loudly that I still can't fully hear it and my head is still spinning and that may explain why this fellowship is a little bit different.

So anyways, you know, I've shared with you my belief regarding the holistic totality of our lives being orchestrated from Hashem to put us in a situation to give us the maximum opportunity to grow and come closer to Hashem. And therefore, to see the events of our lives as communication from Hashem. And so, I've been working on that with this crazy thing that's happened to me. But people often, you know, respond in disagreement, saying that we can't know Hashem's thoughts and we can't know what He's saying to us. For example, in Isaiah chapter 55:8, right? It says:



**"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the
earth, so are my ways higher than your
ways, and my thoughts than your
thoughts."
- Isaiah 55:8**

So that's a truth, but we can't fully understand Hashem's ways. However, I really think it's incumbent upon us, we need to try. We need to go with humble hearts and seek to understand what Hashem may be communicating with us. And I think this principle alone warrants an entire fellowship of its own on the subject of humbly seeking this understanding of God's message to us. But I'll tell you that I found that during my journey on my walk through this world, that there are times when I'm seeking this understanding and I just don't get it. And other times, I get it and I feel it in my bones. I feel as if I've arrived at a truth. And often with

this feeling of how perfect it all is. How there couldn't have been a clearer or a more perfect way for this lesson to be taught to me. And this is, it's a very personal thing. I wouldn't want to convince anyone of the truth of my personal convictions and I wouldn't even try. But we're on this journey together and we're family here. So if I can't really put it on the table with you, who can I put it on with? Because this crazy dramatic event just happened to me now. Now there's part of me, I'm sure you like, just tell us the story, Ari. But I need to say that there's a part of me, I will confess, that was conflicted about sharing it with you because it's more than a little bit embarrassing to me. You see, we all have to leave the world in some way, and it's always been my desire that if I have to leave the world anyways, I prefer it being in a heroic sort of act, like Roi Klein who jumped on a grenade to save the life of his fellow soldier, or my friend Ari Fold who was stabbed in the back by a terrorist and with his last breath shot the terrorist, preventing further attacks that the terrorist was doing.

But what happened to me on Friday morning was the opposite of that. And a little embarrassing. But anyways, I'll share it with you. You guys love me, I love you anyways. And if I can't share with you, who can I share with? The last thing before I share it, is that this is raw and real and I still don't know what message Hashem is sending to me. Some of them I figured out, but others I haven't. It's very real time.

So I'll get to the story. Friday morning, I woke up and I prayed the special Rosh Chodesh prayer for the new moon because we're now in the new month. And chodesh tov to all of you. That's the happy new month the Jewish people bless each other with. Anyways, I packed up all the gear and all the equipment, the drone, the cameras, the microphones. And I headed out to Rujum-anaka. Remember Jeremy made a video about it? And I was going to record my version of the story that happened to me out there. And I'll tell it to you later, later in this program. But I wanted to interview Alon Glick, the holy hero that is settling the place.

But on the way out I stopped at the Tatzpit, a lookout spot in Ibe Hanachal. If you remember, Ibe Hanachal is that beautiful little village closest to our farm here on the Judean frontier. People have to drive through it to get here. Anyways, I often go to pray or to thank or just to take a break. I parked about 30 meters away, I got out of the car and I started walking towards the lookout spot. And after about 20 steps, I heard some rustling behind me. I heard some moving behind me. I turned around and I saw my car picking up speed and starting to roll down the hill.

And it looked like it was going to roll directly down the hill, through the vineyard, into the streets and possibly hit another car. And if not that on the car there, then it would hit the settlement of Ma'ale Amos, across the street and go right into the settlement. Who knows what type of horrible, horrible things could happen? God forbid, I can't even think it, I don't even want to say the words. Because obviously, I just, I forgot to put it into park. Who does that? Who just gets out of the car when it's in drive? You want to know who? This guy.

Anyways, I immediately took off running as fast as I could and miraculously, I got into the car and successfully opened the door. And I was able to lunge at the wheel and I tried to pull myself up on the wheel. But it was already going so fast that I fell out of the car, slammed to the ground and the car ran over my right leg as my body hit the ground so severely that it totally and completely dislocated my shoulder and knocked it out of the socket all together. It was like there was a bone and then nothing. It was just...my arm was just hanging there.

But you know when my body hit the ground, of course, I looked up with dread to see the carnage that awaited and as the car continued to roll down the mountain, before it could even break through the fence of the village, it slammed into a ditch and came to a complete stop. So here are some pictures:



Now it's difficult to explain, but everything from that point on was so irrelevant. It didn't matter how bad my injury was, which I assumed was bad being there was a shoulder there at one point and now it was just a dangling arm that I couldn't move at all. But this just wave of gratitude came over me. I thought, I was just so happy that no one else was hurt. It could have been so terrible and I know myself. If someone else was hurt, God forbid, I would never be able to forgive myself. It would haunt me for the rest of my life.

So, I called someone to bring a medic, and then I called Jeremy, knowing that he would wait at least until he knew I was really ok before making fun of me. And everyone drove out to see me put in an ambulance and driven away. Shayna was really shaken up by the whole thing. I told the medic how stupid I felt, and he said that actually this type of thing happens frequently, but they needed to get me to the hospital. I didn't realize how badly my arm itself looked.

So this is pictures of me that Jeremy took getting into the ambulance.



So, they threw me in the ambulance and it was the longest 45 minutes of my life. And I'll say I've been burned, I've been stabbed, I've broken bones, I've ripped ligaments, but this pain was the worst I can ever remember feeling. It was non-stop, excruciating. But even as I was being driven to the hospital, thinking that I had an injury that would never fully heal. And my most valuable material possession, it was just head first in a ditch, I was just so happy and grateful that no one else was hurt. That the damage was limited to me alone. It was a strange experience to be writhing in pain, drenched in sweat, but authentically happy and grateful. It just shows again that it's all about the perception, the eyes through which you're seeing things. And I'm telling you as weird as it sounds, I was nearly unconscious from pain, but I was in an authentically good mood.

And then the medic told me that they could actually possibly just pop it back into place at the hospital, and not only would I heal, but I would heal in short time. And it was hard for me to imagine such a thing, considering how terrible it looked. But what could have been one of the worst, most horrible days of my life, I realized at that point, I could be laughing about it in the afternoon.

So, we pulled up to the hospital and I rolled into the emergency room and I was more than ready to have anyone, someone, pop my shoulder back into place. I didn't care if it was the janitor, the pain was just unbearable. But of course, there was some other accident and all the doctors were called away and I was sitting there in the waiting room, filled with all these other injured people. There were Jews, Arabs, religious, secular, just waiting for medical help as well. And the longest two hours I can remember. Between gasps of pain and yells, I was just engaging everybody else in the waiting room. You could ask Jeremy, that's just what I would do, what he would do. And I was asking them what happened to them through gritted teeth. And I was praying for them and they were praying for me. I'm talking Jews and Arabs alike. We were sitting there in the halls of the emergency room, each of us was broken in one way or another, just experiencing the fragility of life together. And we were praying for each other. And it was really beautiful because there's nothing that brings people together more than the

shared reality of what it is to be human. Just we're a soul and an all too human and broken body.

I didn't know if I was going to share this, but I remember jokingly telling the medic, really loud, I told him to go to the doctor who after hours had yet to arrive, and tell the doctor that I was a terrorist injured while committing an attack in hopes that they would arrive and help me faster. And everyone burst out laughing, even the Arabs were laughing because Israel is known for providing immediate medical care for victims as well as the terrorists who committed the attack. So I know it was dark humor, but for some reason I was blessed with a series of just back to back funny jokes that kept everyone laughing. And that helped not only me, but hopefully all of them as well. Because one thing I learned during my whole experience as a medical clown is that a truly great medicine is laughter. And I really hope I provided that for everybody there.

So finally, these two little American born female doctors rolled me into the room and said they were going to fix me and I was really skeptical about it considering the size differential. They were just like as big as my thigh. These just two tiny little doctor girls. But she grabbed my arm, pulled it back and twisted it in one swift, confident motion and just snapped it right back into place. I would show you, but I'd probably just pop it back out of place. And so, they gave me all these doses of morphine, but right after that, so much of the pain disappeared and I was fixed. And that's the least how I felt I was fixed. I've learned that I have a few months of physical therapy that I should do, but thank God I'll be ok.

So, the ambulance drove me back home and I went into Shabbat. I was very sore in this arm sling, and I was just happy and grateful and that's when the potential scenarios really started flooding my mind. I may have actually made it into the vehicle and not succeeded in stopping, in which case I could have been killed or had much greater injuries. Or the vehicle could have hurt someone else, or someone else could have been in the car, God forbid. I was just so grateful and in such a good mood. And it lasted through Shabbat until this very moment when I'm able to share this story with all of you which I was actually excited to do when I decided I was going to do it.

So anyways, I was praying for the injured, myself; I was praying for the perpetrator, myself. I had no one to blame but myself. Think about it. I was run over by a car and I found myself on both sides of it. And you know, if it's true that mankind is all one, well then this helped me arrive at that truth. So there's a lot more to share about it, but I'm going on and on, and I just wanted to share it with all of you, as an explanation of why the technical problems are happening. The internet may be in and out, and I'm wearing this crazy sling over my neck.

And I don't think it was a coincidence by the way that I was taken to Shaare Zedek Hospital. Because that's where one of the great Divine communications happened this week which I

want to share with you, but before I do, I want to introduce Jeremy, who's in Jerusalem right now. And he's going to open up with a prayer and share a really powerful teaching with you that he really brilliantly gleaned from this week's parsha. He's already shared it with me. So, Jeremy, please.

Jeremy

Hi guys, that's such a story. I got a call from Ari on Friday and he's like, Jeremy, quickly. I don't know what's happening. I couldn't...the reception wasn't good. I didn't know what was happening, but I heard it in his voice. And when I got there, I saw the car was down the cliff. And as soon as I saw that Ari was ok, I got to take all of those pictures. And I was really like, you know, in his face, taking it up, taking it back, taking it this...and immediately he started laughing. I started laughing and I think that's really the...as long as we can laugh about it, it'll all be ok. I think that's really an important lesson in life.

And so, Ari, you're looking much better now than you were looking over Shabbat. You keep on looking better and better. I keep on getting greyer, you keep on getting darker, I don't know how it's happening, but you look great, you're just a great guy. Bizrat Hashem, you'll be back to yourself soon enough. You should have a refuah shlamah, a speedy and full recovery. And just watching how many people here were laughing, just in that story, you've brought so much laughter into the world, just into this fellowship. That's such a funny story because I don't know anyone that just walks out of the car without putting the car into park. I mean, your mind is so high in the heavens, thinking about Godly things and worldly things and who knows what's on your mind that you get out of the car and forgot to put the car into park.

Well anyways, everyone's laughing and you're a great man and so we're all happy that you're well, as long as you're well, we're all well. So, let's now take this moment together and lift up a prayer from Israel, that is somehow from the hearts of so many people around the world. It's just what times we live in.

Hashem, Master of the Universe, thank you for protecting Ari. Thank you for protecting all of us. (muted)

Oh, is that working now? I'm going to start that all over again. I don't know why I was muted. Let's go at that again. Ok.

Hashem, thank you for all of our healths. Thank you for all of our lives. Nothing is taken for granted. Every day. Our health, our families, life is such a narrow bridge and disaster lurks at every turn. Thank You for guiding us and straightening our path. Thank You for bringing this fellowship together. It has made me and so many of its members stronger, better, wiser, and closer to You and Your ways. Thank You for guiding us on this path. Thank You for Shabbat, thank You for allowing us to start our week on Sundays, placing Your ideals in our hearts and

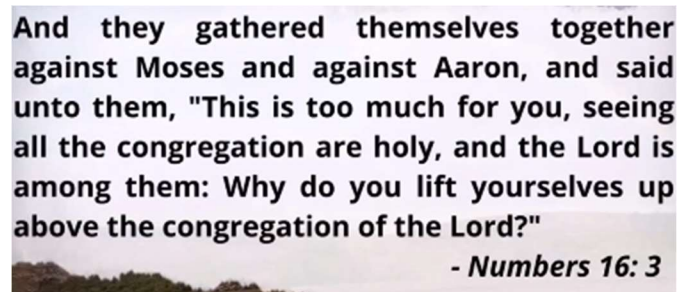
aligning our goals and our lives with Your vision for our lives. Bless every member of this fellowship from the Land of Israel. Bless their loved ones, guide us and protect us and please continue to bring us together. Bring us together in this Land. To show Israel what has emerged in these times and thank You for allowing all of us to be a part of it. Amen.

Ok, so after that real story, now we're going to go a little bit deeper into the Torah and maybe try to glean some wisdom for our lives, for what's happening right now. And this week we learn about Korach. It's the first and most extreme debate and challenge to the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The book of Numbers in Hebrew, the book is called Bemidbar, which means in the desert. And like its name, it's the book that tells over the saga of the Israelite's journey through the desert.

Now it seems like most of the recorded journey through the desert was just filled with mistakes. In 40 years of travel, the record that were saved, these like turbulent times, I mean it's there's no question, there were more bad times than good times in the book of Numbers. In the book of Bemidbar, it's just a pretty ugly history. But was that actually the case? The answer is no. That wasn't the case. Most of the time in the desert, the 40 years in the desert, the people of Israel were growing, the people of Israel were thriving, the people of Israel were learning, and you can see how much Israel was loved. In next week's portion, when Bilaam tries to curse Israel and all that comes out are God's feelings and blessings towards Israel. But the idea of Bemidbar is to learn the lessons we need to learn before we enter into our Promised Land.

And so, the lessons are lessons that are hard learned. We learn them like through our blood, through our mistakes. I can guarantee, Ari is never going to leave the car without putting it into park again. He learned that lesson, but he had to learn the lesson and learning the lesson is sometimes painful. And so everyone can learn from their own mistakes. But only a wise person learns from the mistakes of others. That is like the theme throughout the Torah, throughout the prophets of Israel. It's to allow us to learn from the mistakes of our past in order that we're able to rectify our future.

And so, let's look at Korach for a moment. We see that Korach and his followers say to Moshe in Numbers 16, verse 3. Can we get that up on the screen? Thank you.



And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, "This is too much for you, seeing all the congregation are holy, and the Lord is among them: Why do you lift yourselves up above the congregation of the Lord?"

- Numbers 16: 3

And you know, it's remarkable that that's the claim against Moses. But to really understand the irony of that verse, you need to know that the word in Hebrew, to lift yourself up, *titnasu*, means that you've become arrogant. Now thinking that you're better than everyone else. You've lifted yourself above everyone else. You are so arrogant, you've become that way, Moses. How could you be so arrogant? And it's like, imagine that? The one thing we know about Moses, and we don't know a lot. We only know one thing. It doesn't say that he was the smartest of all men. It doesn't say he was the bravest of all men. It doesn't really give almost any of his attributes. We only know one of his character traits. That's it. Look at Numbers 12, verse 3, just two parshas ago:

**Now Moses was very humble,
more than any other person
on earth.**
- Numbers 12:3

That's the one attribute that we're given about Moses. That out of all of the people that have ever walked on earth until his time, maybe beyond his time, he was the most humble of all people. And now, they're coming to the claim that he's arrogant and lifting himself above everyone else? It's like, what? Of all of the claims, they're taking his greatest virtue, his greatest attribute, and they're saying that that's what he's failing at? That he's become so arrogant that he doesn't deserve to be the leader? And this is just one of the most important lessons about evil.

And we're learning now about evil as all of us are trying to get into the Promised Land. Because when they go in and when we all try to enter into where we're trying to go, towards our destiny, evil is going to come and when evil comes, it doesn't just lie with fake news. It will lie in the most perverse, backwards way. It will call the most humble man on earth arrogant. It'll attack Israel by calling its greatest virtue, our greatest evil. I mean the haters of Israel call Israel an apartheid state. Imagine that. The only democracy in the Middle East where Christians, Muslims, Jews, Baha'i and everyone in between have equal rights. They point to the one free country in the entire Middle East where everyone is actually treated free and all the other countries are surrounded by dictators with no freedom. And they're calling us not democratic. They're calling us the apartheid state. They're calling us Jews in Judea an occupying force colonizing the West Bank, as if we're some sort of foreign entity disconnected from the Land.

It's like, could there be a greater lie? The only place where Jews belong, the only place, he has a God-given right to be free, is the one place the world is hell-bent on removing him from. That a Jew can't live in Judea. Imagine the lie. Trying to turn us into a foreign power disconnected from that Land. It's like taking the one truth in the world and on that truth, splitting it up and calling Moses arrogant of all things.

So, the lies and the manipulations, it's like in Korach we see how evil operates. And they will manipulate the most basic truth to accomplish their goal. But not only that, we also learn how truth and good manifests in the world. And that's even more important for us. You know, this was the first debate and challenge for leadership in the Torah. It's recorded in the sages of Israel as the archetype of evil debates. Of an evil argument, a debate that's not for heaven's sake. The sages of Israel say it like this. Every argument that is for heaven's sake will endure. And every argument that is not for heaven's sake will not endure. Which is an argument for heaven's sake? The argument between Hillel and Shammai, two giants in the Talmud and in the Mishnah. Which is an argument that was not for the sake of heaven? The argument of Korach and his company.

Now, what does that mean? Perhaps here, the distinction is that the argument with Korach against Moses wasn't for the sake of truth. It was for the sake of victory. With Korach, what's at stake wasn't the truth, but power. It wasn't a debate of you know, possible opinions that we're trying to figure things out. He wanted power, he wanted control. He wanted everyone else to be equal. He would be the leader of all the equal people. How convenient. And how reminiscent that sounds of so many Marxist movements today. It's almost like the roots of communism and the evils that are in it were already rooted here in the Torah. Whenever a leader says, everyone should be equal, everyone is holy. Right there, you can already see that the leadership of those equal people, they're not exactly equal. They want the other people to be equal. But they themselves will be lifted up amongst those equal people.

But here we see that on the side of Israel, the sages of Israel say something, it's just counter-intuitive. It says that an argument that's for heaven's sake, will endure. I mean, wouldn't we want the argument to be solved? I mean, there's two sides, if it's for heaven's sake, let's get to the truth of it. It says, no, an argument that's for heaven's sake, that's going to stand. And we're taught something really, really deep here. A debate between people who aren't trying to win, but are arguing for heaven's sake, who are arguing to grow closer to the truth, closer to each other, closer to who they could be, who are arguing to learn as well as to teach. There's an inherent value to the debate itself. The argument isn't resolved because the argument is making us better. The diversity is actually an ideal in holy and therefore, it should endure.

In the vision of the final days, Isaiah says there's a house of prayer for all nations in Jerusalem. People are streaming into the city to do what? To learn the ways of God. I mean, there's many nations with many opinions and everyone is still learning and growing. No one has the final solution. It seems as though no one has all the answers. Even in the Messianic era. But everyone knows that to seek the truth, we all need to turn toward Israel. We all need to turn toward God, we all need to turn towards Jerusalem

But there's an ideal here, to have many nations with many opinions, and create a space of love and respect where everyone can feel welcome and everyone can feel blessed. That is the

Temple experience. Unconditional love, no matter what the debate. And the debate and that love, that's what endures.

In preparing for this fellowship, and I pray for this fellowship, and I'm constantly interacting with people from this fellowship. And reading about like the evil arguments and the arguments that are for heaven's sake and then really thinking about that. Friends, there's nothing like our fellowship anywhere in Israel or anywhere else in the world. There's nothing so close to that ultimate vision of Jerusalem. So many nations, so many backgrounds, so many opinions. And we've created a space of unconditional love. And created an online community, like a giant, beautiful, holy argument that makes the world more beautiful. That makes the world more loving, that makes the world more accepting, more Godly. We're like the first example of what a Messianic gathering in Jerusalem might look like. A House of Prayer for all nations and we're just getting started. Who knows how far Hashem may take this fellowship? It's not about winning the argument, but it's like holding a space where we can all pray together with one heart, shoulder to shoulder. Because of the arguments, it makes this fellowship more beautiful. It's the argument that actually endures.

And so, we're so fortunate. We're so fortunate obviously to be alive and to be healthy and to be well. But we're so fortunate that we join together every week, taking another step closer to figuring this out, to modeling ourselves after the vision of the prophets, and helping create this light in the world.

And so, thank you for helping us bring this gift that hasn't been seen before, and thank you for helping us rebuild the Land of Israel and truly taking a part in restoration and in redemption. It's like, this is a virtual gathering, but soon it's going to take us all physically to the ultimate gathering we're all waiting for in Jerusalem. Amen. Alright, Ari, you're on.

Ari

So Jeremy and I started our podcast again. People could hear us bicker and argue, so that's a fun thing. And then, Jeremy, thank you for sharing that. Thank you for being there for me, again for the 10,000th time that I've needed you in a crunch. You know, that's when you know you have a really good friend. When in the middle of the night, when you're stuck on a highway somewhere you know who you're going to call and that's Jeremy.

So, anyways, we're talking about these Divine communications and that one that happened to me, and I wanted to discuss with you the other great event that happened also at Shaare Zedek Hospital, but this time it was not in the emergency room, but out in the parking lot. And the connection to the Torah portion this week, the Torah portion of Korach, was so obvious that anyone who had the eyes to see it, anyone who sees the world even sort of through the prism of the Torah portion to what's happening, they saw it immediately.

So out of nowhere, this past Monday, this is what happened, let's play the video. The ground opened up and swallowed a large chunk of the parking lot along with the cars that were above it.

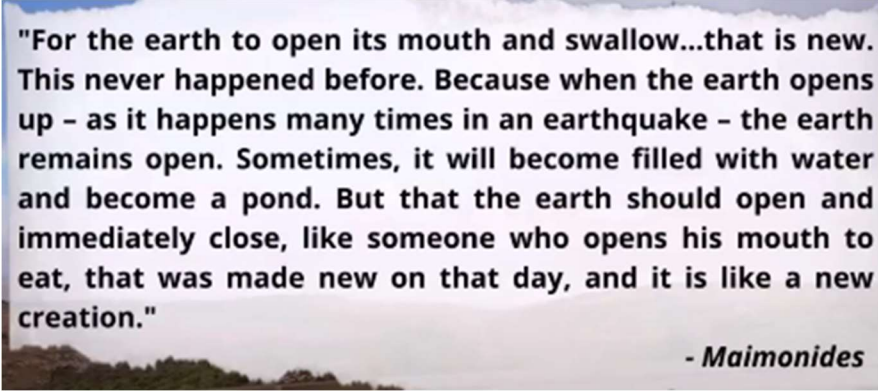


There was no sign that such a thing would happen, nothing in specific caused this. The earth just opened up its mouth and swallowed the cars. Baruch Hashem, thank God, thankfully no one was hurt. Jeremy, if you're still on, please mute your phone. Mute the computer because I can hear the phone ring. Anyways, now of course the connection to the Torah portion couldn't have been more obvious or direct. When Korach and his fellow rebels joined together to challenge Moshe and Aaron for what they perceived as positions of power and leadership and prestige, the earth opened up and swallowed them alive.

Here it is in the text, Numbers chapter 16:

But if Hashem will create a phenomenon, and the earth opens its mouth and swallowed all that is theirs, and they will descend alive into the pit - then you shall know that these men have provoked Hashem. When he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their household and all the people who were with Korach and their entire wealth. They and all that was theirs descended live to the pit; the earth covered them over and they were lost from among the congregation.
- Number 16:30-16:33

Ok, so that is the dramatic, unforgettable scene. And the great sage, Ibn Ezra, he asks, well these things do happen. There are earthquakes, and when they happen, sometimes people fall inside it. Is this new? Well, the Ramban, Nachmanides answers the question. He says, I'm sorry, I wrote Maimonides, but this is actually Nachmanides:



"For the earth to open its mouth and swallow...that is new. This never happened before. Because when the earth opens up – as it happens many times in an earthquake – the earth remains open. Sometimes, it will become filled with water and become a pond. But that the earth should open and immediately close, like someone who opens his mouth to eat, that was made new on that day, and it is like a new creation."

- Maimonides

So why, asks Rav Biederman, why is it necessary that Korach and his followers die in this special way? It's because Hashem wanted the story to be remembered. If they died naturally, people would forget. There's a lot of stories like that. But there was something important about this that people needed to remember. People needed to remember, says Rav Biederman, the terrible sin of Korach and his men who sowed discord and discontent. This disingenuous, this insincere argument among the Jewish people. I mean, Rav Biederman goes many pages into how we should go to great lengths to stay away from arguments. Even if it means admitting you're wrong when you don't really think so. But argument is such a terrible thing. And the definition of the insincere, disingenuous argument, that's Korach.

And as I sought to understand the connection beyond merely the earth opening up during the same Torah portion in which it happened, I couldn't help but draw the same conclusion that many others in Israel did. And I know a lot of people are very reluctant to go in this direction, but it's naturally the way my mind works. And I look at the events in our life sometimes, even politics. So the connection to what's happening in the government of Israel as we speak right now. I couldn't help but to see it.

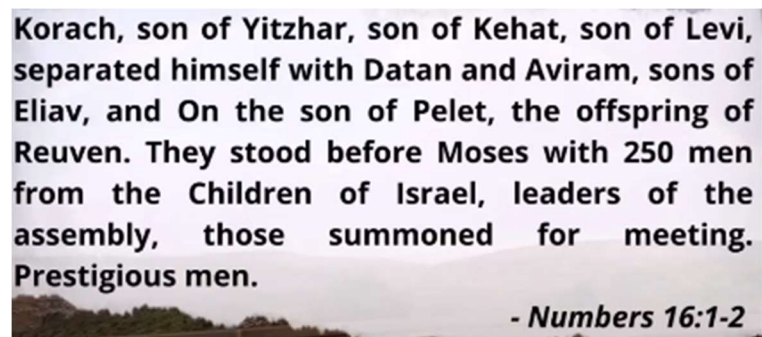
So as you know, a new government is being sworn in in Israel today. I even think it may be happening around right now. And while there are many different takes on everything, I'll share mine with you, which of course is just mine and may very well be wrong. But once I saw the connection, I just couldn't unsee it. Ok, so a little background, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been Prime Minister for 12 years now, and during that time, he has made no shortage of enemies. And that's the fate of any Prime Minister. You're going to step on toes, particularly considering he was well known to be one of the trickiest politicians in Israeli political history. And you know, after all, staying Prime Minister in Israel for 12 years, a country in which Golda Meir said something to the tune of, a country where everybody is their own Prime Minister. Well, let's just say there's a reason he was the longest-running Prime Minister in Israel's history.

And as many of you know, Israel has gone to elections four times in the last two years, each time failing to form a majority of 61 seats of the 120 Knesset seats that would just agree to be

part of the coalition and make the government. It was a crazy thing because elections happen, we have a government. And all of a sudden, election after election after election...no government is forming. But now, after four elections, as the time was running out towards the fifth election, a shocking coalition came together which nobody could believe, as it was composed of the most unlikely bedfellows one could imagine. From the right of center, Yemina party led by Naftali Bennett, to the left-wing, really anti-religious Meretz Party which couldn't be more different from them and most like shockingly was the Arab Party, Raam, which is totally anti-Israel and anti-Zionist and is being dependent on to keep this fragile 61 seat coalition intact. I mean this whole thing made me realize there's something fundamentally broken about the system here in Israel.

And many people feel upset and scared and betrayed. Betrayed particularly those who voted for Naftali Bennett who explicitly promised not to join Lapid government, who in rotation, no rotation, he said it's against my ideology. The video has been played again and again and he just blatantly lied, at least on that front. And anyone in the country who's looking at this seemingly impossible and totally incompatible coalition, knows that what keeps them together is not a shared vision for the future, it's not shared values or desires, it's a deep, shared resentment. And it's for some, even hatred for Prime Minister Netanyahu. A lot of people say the same thing happened in America. That it didn't matter who. People who just came together and said, anyone but Trump.

So anyways, well while I don't think anyone would compare Prime Minister Netanyahu to Moshe Rabbenu, the similarities between the new government coalition and Korach's coalition, those are hard to miss. So let's think about for a moment, about who was in Korach's coalition. The participants can be found listed in the very first verse of the parsha.



Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of Kehat, son of Levi, separated himself with Datan and Aviram, sons of Eliav, and On the son of Pelet, the offspring of Reuven. They stood before Moses with 250 men from the Children of Israel, leaders of the assembly, those summoned for meeting. Prestigious men.

- Numbers 16:1-2

Let's just keep that for a second if it hasn't been there. So we're talking about prestigious people there. Now Rabbi Sacks beautifully lays out these separate grievances of each of the parties in this rebellion. And the reasons they have for their resentment, the first Korach. I mean, you could see it clearly from his genealogy that's spelled out right there in the first verse.

But a midrash spells it out even more clearly from Korach's perspective from his own words. He says, according to Numbers Rabba, this is a midrash:

My father was one of 4 brothers - Amram (the father of Moshe) was the first born. Of his sons, Aaron was awarded the priesthood and Moshe was given the kingship. Who is worthy of receiving the next honor if not the second brother (Yitzhar father of Korach)? I, Yitzhar's son should have been made prince of the clan, but instead Moshe appointed Elitzaphan son of Uziel (Uziel being the 4th and youngest brother). Should the youngest of father's brothers be greater than I? I will dispute with him and undo whatever he does.
- Numbers Rabba 18:2

Meaning they just skipped over Korach's father. He was just committed to undoing whatever Moshe Rabbenu did he was going to fight. And he wasn't going to say what it was really about, which was his own prestige and his own insult and humiliation. Now Rabbi Sacks goes on to explain other grievances. So there was Datan and Aviram and On, the son of Pelet. Each of them were from the tribe of Reuven. And it isn't hard to imagine their issue. They were descendants of Reuven, the firstborn. Every since Reuven's sin regarding his father and the concubine, Reuven lost his firstborn status and clearly his descendants never really accepted or came to terms with it. And there's debate about the grievance of the 250 princes. Some say that they were prestigious leaders who felt like they should be in charge and others said they were firstborns who never accepted losing their status to the tribe of Levi around the sins of the golden calf, if you remember that whole deal.

So, anyway, either way there was no shared vision there. Any one of them, emerging victorious, would have meant a victory for them, but not for any of the others. But it didn't matter. Their shared resentment was so strong and so blinding, they just couldn't see anything else. And this parallel was so compelling that memes like this were circulating all over the internet. Could you put that up?



Anyways, I don't know if you can see it, but it shows all of the coalition is sitting around the table and under that it says, what is it? Korach and his assembly. It just talks about them and makes the direct connection and everybody has been talking about this. And it's not that often that just mainstream Israelis are so deeply referring to the parallels of the Torah portion to what's happening in Israel today.

And that's the thing. So they all came together out of a place of resentment and jealousy. They wanted something that wasn't theirs. And as Rav Shlomo Katz points out, when you want to take someone else's place in the world, what happens? You lose your own. You lose your own place and they did. And the earth swallowed them up because their arguments weren't sincere. They were just pretext. There's nothing truthful about it. For when your argument is about truth, the sages point out, if you win, you win. Because you were right. So you won. But if you lose, you win even more. Because now you've dispelled a falsehood that you once believed in. Which we all have. And you're even closer to the truth and we have learned that truth is God's seal.

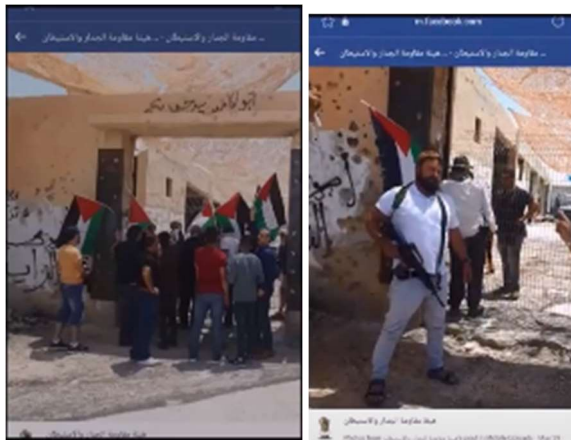
And fundamentally, that's where Korach and his rebels went wrong. And that is where the current government may be going wrong as well. I'm not saying this is all definitive. I'm just saying this is my heart on the issue. Because the idea of leadership in the Torah is not about control or power or prestige. It's about service. It's about humility. It's about serving as a vessel to bring the nation to a greater service of God. To bring the people of Israel into a deeper and more loyally, loving relationship with God. It's not a coincidence that Moshe was the most humble man ever and he was the ultimate leader. The two go hand in hand. The less there is of self, and one who serves God, Rabbi Sacks beautifully explained, the more there is of God. The less there is of the self, and one who serves God, the more there is of God.

And that's why I've always felt that there's something inherently contradictory about elections in general. Because the real leader, the true leader, the leader we've been waiting for will not be jumping up and down asking to be a leader. A true leader doesn't think they're worthy of being a leader and doesn't have aspirations of power or prestige or title or control. And so again, why I appreciate Prime Minister Netanyahu and believe he's done very many great things for Israel and I'm not comparing him to Moshe Rabbenu, but this crazy coalition of malcontent, the coalition of resentment we see taking power today, certainly does summon images of Korach and his rebels both in shape and in style.

Now what Korach and his men didn't understand, which Moshe and Aaron did, is that a true leader understands that he's there to serve and not to rule. To help the nation fulfill their potential and not for him to fulfill his own ambitions. And this is why Moshe didn't even address their complaints against him. When he realized they were so disingenuous and that

their real issue had nothing to do with the words coming out of their mouth, he just didn't even address them.

Which brings me to another crazy story, which I wanted to share with you. A story that Jeremy mentioned last week. That I was on the way to Rujum-anaka to tell you from there. Anyway, so last week, are we ready for this crazy story? Two stories in one day. Last week I had my 15 minutes of fame in the Arab world. At least in my neck of the woods. I was all over the Facebook pages of the surrounding Arab villages. Here's some, a few of the pictures that you can see, of me standing there being surrounded by Arabs, of Palestinian flags, and I have this M16.



They say a picture is worth a thousand words. This picture should be worth two thousand. Because by just looking at it, you see me standing there with an M16, surrounded by Arabs with Palestinian flags, it looks so adversarial, like another tragic image coming out of this conflict, torn region. But that's not what it really was, at least not for me.

So here's the back story. There's this old Jordanian cavalry base deep in the Judean desert, built in the 50's, and it was abandoned by Jordan after Israel's miraculous victory in the Six Day War, and it had been abandoned for over half a century now. It's littered with graffiti and it just reeked of old urine and vomit for decades. Anyways, it's situated on the mountain of this critical strategic important overlook, and it overlooks large swaths of the Judean desert. When you all come here in person, we'll bring you out there. The views are magnificent. It looks like the Grand Canyon. Anyways, there were two holy brave Jews who got permission to rehabilitate it and make it into a Jewish outpost, a Jewish village, which is a great blessing for Israel and a game changer to this enchantingly beautiful Judean desert. And to make it more accessible for Jews, because Jews have been, many of them afraid to go out there, and it's so beautiful. I can't wait to show it to all of you. It's magical, but that's for another video.

Anyways, last Thursday they moved in and started setting up. All right, now I'm trying to drop 20 pounds, and on Shabbat day, Saturday afternoon, I sat there eating my ketogenic cholent

stew. No carbs at all. My beloved wife, Shayna, she made it for me. And as I'm just launching into it, I was so excited, my partner Yossi pulls up to the house, which of course doesn't happen as we don't use electricity on Shabbat, we don't drive on Shabbat. And he said, we need to go. I just got an emergency call. The guys in Rujum-anaka are being surrounded by an Arab mob. And there are two of them, there are 50 hostile Arabs. We need to go help them. Get in the car. So I grabbed my weapon and jumped into the car, of course. Because to save lives, you're not only permitted to violate Shabbat, but you're required to. It would be a violation of Shabbat not to violate Shabbat to save lives.

Anyway, we had to go because even though there were 20 minutes away from Rujum-anaka, we're the closet Jewish village to them. And so, Yossi drove up this rocky, unpaved desert like a madman. It's the only time throughout this whole ordeal I really thought I was going to die, from his driving. And after a very long 20 minutes, we pulled up to the fortress and I saw that we were the first ones there. Before the army and their police and there was a very large Arab group of Palestinian flags surrounding the village of the entrance to this fortress when we arrived. Anyways, before the jeep even came to a stop, I jumped out and screamed at the top of my lungs (loud Arabic...).

Right now, of course, all of you know what that means, but that's about 85% of my vocabulary in Arabic, and it means, how are you my friends? I'm wonderful. Thank God, Allah should bless your hands. Allah should bless all of you.

And then, I just proceeded to shout blessings at them in different ways. Now I don't know exactly what they were thinking. What I could tell for sure is that they were definitely not expecting to get aggressively showered by blessings and good wishes. And I think they can tell that I wasn't just saying that. I was actually sincere. It really was coming from my heart. Because since moving out to Judea and working with Arabs every single day, I've come to learn that much of what I thought about them from a distance, simply wasn't true. At least not in the way I saw it. Because it's easy to box you know, the other, into a homogenous group. Even subconsciously from a distance. And when you get up close and personal and develop working relationships and friendships, you see that they have just as much of a wide variety of opinions and personalities and ideologies as there are among Jews. Maybe not as much among Jews, but it's hard to have as many different opinions as Jews have. But bottom line is they see things differently, but their media and government just doesn't allow it to expression. But it's there and of course it's on a different spectrum altogether.

But without getting into all the details, I've come to believe with my whole heart, as Jeremy and I have shared with you before, that this Arab/Israeli conflict isn't going to be solved, we've said it before, it's only going to be transcended. That it's not a political conflict and it's not even about Land in and of itself. It's a spiritual conflict, the roots of which go all the way back to our forefather, Isaac, and their forefather, Ishmael who were brothers. Son of none other than our

shared forefather, Abraham. So we're cousins, right? We're family and as any honest person can testify, families can be dysfunctional.

And if we really dig to the root of it with our Arab cousins, without Western involvement, which doesn't really understand the conflict at all, and by getting involved in it, they only aggravate it and amplify it, maybe intentionally so they can sell weapons to both sides. Maybe not. But it doesn't help anything. We don't look at it through Western eyes.

But if we infuse this conflict with God and spirituality and approach it as indigenous Jews with Jewish values in our indigenous homeland of Judea, then I believe with all my heart that we won't need to settle for this temporary cease fire. But we can arrive at real mutual respect and mutual understanding in which will not only be able to coexist, but actually grow and thrive together. Maybe it's Messianic times, maybe not. But I believe it can happen. But it's not going to happen by surrendering our tiny little state or compromising on the truth and the justice of our presence in our homeland. We've already seen with the Abraham Accords, that's it's possible through honor and respect, we can achieve peace. It doesn't need to be through concessions to terror or suicidal and unjust Land surrenders. It doesn't need to be Land for peace. It could be peace for peace. And for those that say that this is a political conflict and you can't bring God into it, well they would be very, very wrong. Because while the God argument may not carry weight in Western leftist liberal circles. Maybe not in the Biden government. In this neck of the woods, it certainly does carry weight. In some ways, it's the only argument that carries weight. And maybe that's what they're really waiting for the nation to do.

But anyways, back to the story. I jumped out of the van and I started showering them with blessings. And it definitely felt like things were somewhat diffused. I don't even think they wanted it to be diffused. But if it wasn't diffused because of the spectacle of this bearded settler Jew with an M16, barraging them with blessing, then by mere virtue of the fact that it's hard to have a hateful fight with someone who's showering you with more blessings than your Imam gave you that morning at the mosque.

And as I looked around and I saw that there was a number of professional cameramen, documenting and filming everything which was somewhat of a relief to me that it meant we weren't like in a lynch or a riot, but that this was really a media event, which would hopefully remain peaceful, right? They don't want to have their riots and their lynchings filmed. And so there I was, surrounded by these angry Arabs hurling accusations that we're thieves and occupiers. And of course, I wanted to tell them that we can't occupy our own Land. That a Jew can't occupy Judea. And they should consider the fact that Allah is with us and blessing us in our return to our Land, which may be why we've emerged victorious in every war we fought against them.

But just like the arguments of Korach, I knew that that's really not what they were upset about. That it's much deeper than those boring talking points that they were throwing at it. So, I just kept blessing them in a real, in a sincere way, in a real way, and it was from my heart. And that's really the tragedy of the whole thing. Because while I of course believe that God gave the Promised Land to the Jewish people and the Land is ours. On an even deeper level, I believe that we belong to the Land. And if they want to live with us in peace and respect and honor and prosperity, then they can belong to the Land, too. We'd love that. That's the reason that after the great wars of Israel, we didn't transfer them out as they would have done to us. They would have just killed us, probably. But they wouldn't have even transferred us out, they would have just killed us. But we didn't do that. Because we've never given up hope that such a day of harmonious coexistence would come. So the tragedy is that we don't need to kill each other and we don't need to hate each other and that we can love each other, and we can bless each other.

You know, when I'm a medical clown in the hospital, I don't care if it's a little Moshe or a little Mohammed. I love them both and I want to bring joy and laughter to both of them. But nonetheless, I need to walk around with a Glock 19 and an M16 because while I want peace, while all of Israel wants peace, if I need to defend myself or my family or my neighbors or my country, I will fight like a lion. I will fight to the death to defend and to protect.

And so, every Jew would do the same thing. Soldier, reservist in the Israeli army, that's what we would do. And so after about 10 minutes of heated blessing, the army arrived and then the police. And shortly thereafter, the Arabs left without violence, by their own accord, and they just went home. And before I returned home, which by the way I'm not actually sure I was really allowed to do because at that point, the danger to life was over. Maybe I should have spent the rest of Shabbat there. I really need to look into that.

But before returning home, I sat down with my friend, Alon, who's the brave pioneer that is settling Rujum-anaka, and he told me that he was sad, too. He said that if they would have just come peacefully, he would have invited them in for tea. And they could have talked things through and heard each other out. And while they probably wouldn't have settled a millennia-old conflict over tea, they could have at least emerged with a little bit of understanding and recognition of each other's basic goodness and humanity.

And that's another tragedy. While Western media portrays these settlers as angry and as militant, there's just nothing further from the truth. When you all come out here in person, please God may it be soon, you'll see it yourself. If you come there in peace and goodness, you will not receive a more Abrahamic reception anywhere in the Middle East than you will in the home of a Jew in Judea.

So while my Arab cousins may be able to force me to carry a gun or even to fight them, one thing I will not let them do is to make me hate them. I refuse. It's just the hatred and the anger, it's corrosive to the soul. It's also an illusion because all of us, all of mankind are brothers and sisters and we're created in the image of God. And I believe that consciousness will shine forth from Jerusalem to the entire world. But until that day comes, I along with my fellow Jews and all of you here in this fellowship, we can only yearn for the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets of Israel. That we will beat our swords into plowshares and that the nations will not lift up sword against nation and will not learn war ever again.

And so, my friends, I'll bring the fellowship to an end with that. But I want to bless us all that very soon a true leader will arise in Israel with a humble, a humble heart and a selfless heart who will lead both the Jewish people and the world to a day when we can leave our resentments and our anger and our conflicts behind and become a world of love and peace, filled with the knowledge of God as water covers the sea.

And now, let me just say goodbye by blessing all of you with the priestly blessing. I'll try to lift up my left hand which hurts a little bit, but it's worth it for all of you.

Aaron blessing (Hebrew)

May God bless and protect you. May He shine His light and His countenance upon you. And may He give you peace. Amen.

Love you, my friends. Stay in touch. Reach out to me for anything. Love to hear from you, and I can't wait to see you again. Stay safe.