

VT-987 to VT-988 Transcriptions

Kula, Irwin. Lecture at the Wexner Heritage Foundation. [San Francisco, Calif.]. 4 December 1996.

(chatter around room)

Q: OK, let's do this. [00:01:00] OK. Thanks. Great. OK. In many ways, the basic themes of Jewish life we've already established. Everything now is going to be application, almost everything, right? So the basic themes of the image of God, the basic themes of the fundamental questions, how to be a blessing, the fundamental question is what it means to be a blessing is to be able to respond yes to the question am I my brother's keeper. Can you create a community in which the sense of obligation to answer yes on that question is so overwhelming that you can actually be a blessing? The rest is, right -- and then the [00:02:00] two events that, in a sense, bring that to a head is Exodus, which says, look, right, at the fundamental core of the universe, can you believe that almost deep within the cosmos is a move towards freedom, a move towards hope, a move towards order, a move towards light, a move towards life, right? And that in response to that unbelievable

experience in which you feel worthy at your core, can you live and regulate that moment in the ordinary life of a community, right? Which is Sinai. Now, that's fine, and it's really wonderful ideas. In theory it's fantastic. But everything is about application, and the rest of the Torah, the rest of Jewish history from literally -- from the moment you walk away from Sinai, the rest is about application. Because in real life, how do you do that? How do you live day to day structuring a society that people will answer yes to those questions? How do you keep alive in the cultural DNA of that community the notion that it's worthwhile saying that because that's the destiny [00:03:00] of what it means to be human, if you want to fully play out? How do you do that? And at different eras, different moments in history, you're going to live it out differently, right? So the beginning of the story, all right, really becomes -- the first moment of living this out is as they're traveling through the desert. And I don't want to spend a lot of time on that, because we get very little, right? All we get is this insight into this -- the only thing we really get is that this is going to be very hard, the journey. And, in fact, to be able to maintain faith in this understanding of human life is going to be

really complicated. And so you have ten times -- just like you had ten commandments, right, you had ten applications initially to remind you this thing needs to be applied in real life -- what'll happen to the Exodus story and this theory of being human, that you're an infinite value? What'll happen to that theory?

F: It will fade out and die.

Q: It will fade out and die. So you get ten applications. The journey story, which we do not have time to do, is built around ten events, right? How would you characterize [00:04:00] those ten events, the whole journey story, book of... What?

F: (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: How would you characterize it? If you had to describe the journey story, how would you describe it? As it's reflected from leaving Egypt all the way through the end of the book of Deuteronomy. How would you describe the Jewish people? You read the book of Numbers. If you had one or two sentences, one sentence to describe them, how would you describe them?

F: Whiny.

Q: Whiny, good. What else? (laughter) Good, very nice. What else?

F: Ungrateful.

Q: Ungrateful. What else? Good.

M: Stiff-necked.

Q: Stiff-necked --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- which, by the way, is a good quality and a bad quality, right? At this point, for the Jewish people, all these qualities are available. To be stiff-necked after what they experienced in Egypt is actually to say they still have what?

M: Slavery.

Q: They still have spunk. They still have spunk, to be able to be stiff-necked, right? Of course, if it's not applied properly, [00:05:00] stiff-necked, it can actually undermine the covenant. It's central in the covenant because what's the chance of the Jewish people surviving long-term with this kind of vision? Almost none, unless you're very what?

M: Stiff-necked.

Q: Stiff-necked. So stiff-necked is a -- and God's going to have to learn how to love, right --

F: Stiff-necked people.

Q: -- the quality, one of the central qualities of this Jewish people.

M: Right, stubborn.

Q: Right, this kind of stubbornness.

F: Disbelieving, I think.

Q: Good, right? Complaining, grumbling, mumbling.

F: Kvetching.

Q: Kvetching.

F: And they don't believe. They don't have faith.

Q: Right, I'll move this, I'm sorry. We're now being told about how complicated this is going to be, this journey, right? And this becomes the metaphor for every other era, right? You're trying to change X in your institution, right? But that's amazing, right? You're trying to change, you're trying to change, but half the people are doing what most of the time?

F: Digging their heels in, and going backward.

Q: Being what?

M: Stiff-necked.

Q: Stiff-necked. And the other half generally are doing what? Complaining. Right? This is [00:06:00] exactly the journey. This is -- I mean, I don't want to sound reductionist, but it's not an accident the first major block of stories are

ten complaining events, right? That's what they are. You have to look at it. I don't have time to do this. The most important book on this is a book by a man named Aaron Wildavsky -- W-I-L-D-A-V-S-K-Y -- and it's called... Hmm...

F: Was he a recent death? He passed away.

Q: Right, he passed away over the last two or three years. OK, I don't remember the name of the book. It escapes me right now, right? But it's Moses and... God, it's blue and white, and I (inaudible).

F: Blue and white.

F: Has he published many books?

Q: He published three or four books, but I know exactly where it is in my library, you know? You know, I could tell you the top shelf, fourth book from... And I know what it looks like. It has a blue and a white... Oh my God, and the letters are in black, [00:07:00] and I just -- I have a block.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Yeah, John helped me -- the rock band from last week -- John helped me -- was Phish. (laughter)

M: Phish? What song?

Q: (inaudible). (laughter)

M: Remember them, they're going to be a one-hit wonder.

(laughter)

Q: No, they actually may (inaudible) -- serious, they may even be a serious band to play (inaudible). So what you're really getting there in the first story is how unbelievably complicated it is going to apply this theory of being human. And that begins as a golden calf story, as a spy story. There is a Korah rebellion story. There are two water complaint stories. There are two food complaint stories. There is a --

F: (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: [00:08:00] OK. But the very fact that there are ten -- the very ten -- there are ten either insurrection, rebellion, complaining, grumbling stories, right, is the author's way of saying, look, you think -- application's going to be everything here, and every time you apply this stuff, know that you're going to have reactions. It's not like you're going to find clear applications and this is going to be a smooth journey. Right? That's the whole purpose of that whole Numbers piece. That's on the macro level. The micro level is you want to get these people ready to go into the land. But all that means is for one generation to move on the journey, they're going to have to go through this. And

then you're going to have the same kinds of difficulties the next step, which is the conquest of the land until you move to kingship, and then you're going to have all the same issues of kingship in which the people are not going to -- you're never going to get there. And, of course, where does Deuteronomy end? Prove that point. Where does Deuteronomy end? [00:09:00] The book ends where?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Where physically does it end? Hmm?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Hello? Everybody knows, you know. Where does it end? Where does it not end? You would think it ends (inaudible) --

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, you would think it ends in Israel. It doesn't end in Israel, it ends looking in. Now, if you were writing the story, English 101, we learned in the first literature class we ever took, right, is that there's a beginning, there's a middle, and there's an end. That's how novels work, right? Here, the beginning is very clear. The beginning is there's a promise. This people playing out its way of being human who wind up being a great nation living in its Promised Land. That's the initial promise, right? The middle should be about what?

M: The journey.

Q: The journey. And the end should be what?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Getting there, but --

M: They set it up for a sequel.

Q: But what happens? (laughter) Of course, the decision to canonize Torah where we did, that's a decision that comes after the destruction of the first temple, [00:10:00] somewhere around probably between 450 and 550 BC. The decision to end Torah at the end of the book of Deuteronomy, and not, what, at the end of what book? Torah really should've ended, what, if you were writing the story? After which book? It shouldn't have been five books. It should've been six books.

F: Joshua.

Q: Joshua, which is written very much like the book of Deuteronomy. It's probably written by the same authors, right? It's written in the same kind of language as the book of Deuteronomy, anyways. Right? It should've ended there, and you finish Joshua, and you're living where? In Israel. And then you go on with the rest of the story, what it means to live in Israel. But that five -- in fact, it was originally the Pentateuch. It was really a Hexateuch.

And so (inaudible) Biblical scholars, Hexateuch must've been six books instead of five books. But what happened mid-400s, 500s BC is the decision was made to canonize Torah as five books. Why? Why would you want to do that? And where are these people living? They're living in Babylonia, right? They're not living in the land anymore, because they've been exiled from the land, post [00:11:00] the destruction of the temple in 586. So you canonize the Torah where?

M: When you're looking back in.

F: Outside (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: When you're looking back in, right? Which allows every generation to experience what when they read Torah?

F: (inaudible).

Q: That they're not what?

F: Finished.

Q: That they're not finished. That they're not finished. Right? And especially when you read the Torah -- and the worst situation you could possibly be is that you're like who?

F: Everyone else.

Q: Moses. The worst you can be is like Moses. And what's going to happen if you're Moses?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: You may not get in, but...

F: Everyone else will.

Q: Next generation will. Now you understand the obsession with the next generation in this culture. That's why we're so worried about children, or why we're so worried about continuity the way we (inaudible). Most communities are not as obsessed with the next generation, but right from the start we recognize that the dream is so big that it can't possibly be fulfilled, at best even if you're Moses. And we'll come to Israel and (inaudible) no one ever got to be like Moses. Even if you're Moses, [00:12:00] even if you're Moses, at best what you're going to do is you're going to get a glimpse and look in. This is a very counterculture understanding in America of success, right? It's a very counterculture understanding of... I turned 39 two days ago, three days ago.

F: It was awful.

Q: And --

F: (inaudible).

Q: (laughs) And it's amazing how many -- (inaudible) -- it's amazing how many people in the last five or six days, you know, friends who knew it was my birthday, made jokes

about, you know, "Oh, you're 39 for the first time," all this stuff, which I'm not in that space, so it was a new space for me.

M: Rocking chairs, old age, those kind of things. (laughter)

F: First 39th birthday.

Q: It was more there's a sense in the culture that if by 40 you haven't accomplished X, you're a failure, and --

M: I'm a failure.

Q: No. (laughter) But if you think about that, isn't America -
-

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: No, it's very American kind of --

M: Sure.

Q: -- if you haven't made senior partner, if you haven't made X, if you haven't made Y, [00:13:00] right...

F: (inaudible).

Q: Well, of course, we have a counterculture message in the system, right? Not only the ages, because no one lived that long anyhow, that's all made up ages, but the very -- well, Rabbi [Keeb?] is a different one; Rabbi Keeb is a model. But the very notion that on a macro level in this story you never reach your dreams, you never get where?

F: The Promised Land.

F: To the Promised Land.

Q: You never get to the Promised Land. What the Promised Land is is can you die with the security knowing that the next generation is going to continue the dream, and continue the conversation? That is a very interesting understanding of success. So Moses can die looking in, right? And say, OK, I've actually accomplished... And the culture can make a judgment on him. The one major thing he was supposed to do was get the people where?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: To the land. The one major thing he doesn't do is what? Get them to the Promised Land. He himself doesn't go in.

[00:14:00] This could be the great story of failure. But the culture doesn't designate it that word at that. This is... Right? Now, this sets us up for recognizing that we really have to embrace the journey itself. That's really what numbers and Deuteronomy is about. We have to be intoxicatingly (inaudible) with the journey. That's a very hard thing to do, because most of us want to get there. And, of course, you can't be so in love with the journey that you don't move, right? And that'll always be a tension in the system. Giant --

F: And it's not a journey.

Q: Giant dream, and the Promised Land dream. (inaudible) affected, every human being in the image of God. Everybody will have the Exodus experience. That's a pretty big dream, right? Pretty big dream. And at the same time, absolute multiple journeys. (inaudible) love applications. We love to apply, right? And every era will have its own challenges on how to apply and [00:15:00] move towards the dream. And, in fact, what we learn from the journey is sometimes you'll take two steps forward and what will happen?

F: Take one step back.

Q: You have to take one step back. You'll have to make certain moves in the journey that actually seem to undermine the covenant, and we're going to read about one, right, pretty soon. Right, one is you're going to have to kill a lot of people in the early parts of this continental experience. That's the story of Joshua. But what's this culture been about? What did we just experience? We just left a place where we were what?

F: Enslaved.

Q: Enslaved. And what did we wind up doing? The book of Joshua. Well, there's two parts to the book of Joshua, right? One is the first 12 chapters, first 11 chapters, which say we went into the land, we killed everybody, and

we won it all. That's one strand. The other strand is the last twelve chapters that say this was a very slow process and we never accomplished it all. So even in the memory of the people, there were two understandings how to exercise power, right, as one began to establish your presence on the land and rebuild the society, right? Well, that's the beginning of [00:16:00] what we call an ethics of power. That is the problem is you have to balance the ideal and the real. The ideal is the dream. [You know?] the dream. But the real is unless you conquer the land, what's going to happen to the dream?

F: The journey.

Q: What's going to happen to the dream if you don't conquer the land?

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: If you don't conquer the land, what happens to the Jewish people?

M: (inaudible)

Q: Yeah, and so now you have a problem. In the conquering, what do you have to do?

M: Kill them.

Q: Kill them. It's the first tension in the system, that very often to move on your dream you have to undermine some of

the principles of the dream. But we learned that where first? Remember? That's *kashrut*. That's where we learned it first. That God has a great dream, and just remember, God can be internalized if you don't like it externalized. The God's dream is what?

M: Or externalized [00:17:00] if you don't like it internalized.

Q: Same thing. (laughter) Right? Poof, right? God wants it to be, you know, perfect, this world. Right? He wants (inaudible), right? And life has to be so revered, you know, there has to be so much reverence for life that even animal life that it's not a continuum ought not to be killed to sustain you. And yet, what happens?

F: Joshua.

Q: The desire to kill, and the desire for the meat, and that bloodthirstiness of human beings is so central.

M: Some.

Q: Some human beings, less (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: Yeah, I was going to say, less (inaudible).

Q: Some less (inaudible), right?

F: (inaudible) fish.

Q: And that's a laypeople problem, (laughter) that bloodthirsty quality.

M: Sacrifice (inaudible).

Q: So what happens there? There's a compromise with the ideal, OK? The real is that human beings can't move that quickly on the dream. Therefore, you compromise with the ideal, set up for this -- [00:18:00] right? You compromise, right, because of the real, while trying to build in correctives that remind you of the ideal. Right? And that's the methodology of the culture. That's really what *Halakha* is. *Halakha* is, right, you keep the ideal in mind, but right now how do you apply it? That's what you wrote. How do you apply that ideal right now? You can't apply -- you can't -- very rarely do you apply the ideal immediately. Reality doesn't have the give for that.

M: Well, the world would be perfected if (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: The world would be perfected, exactly. The world would be perfected, right? So the book of Joshua -- how many people, when you read the book of Joshua, you say, "Wow, that's us?" How does it make you feel, the book of Joshua?

F: (inaudible), I don't like it.

F: (inaudible).

Q: That's us? But of course, yes --

M: That is --

Q: That is us.

M: I read it as that's us.

Q: That's us, right.

M: Because we're so used to looking at it from the other side of the prism that we can't deal with it.

Q: In fact, the book of Joshua wasn't even studied in most places until the Six-Day War.

M: That makes perfect sense.

Q: Because there was no reference framework. [00:19:00] And now you read the book of Joshua, the first two events of the book of Joshua, the first city that you conquer is what?

M: Jericho.

Q: Jericho. And the next? Is Hebron, very nice. Those are the first two cities you conquer. Look, Jericho was the first city we gave back, and Hebron we're going to have a civil war over. (laughter) No, this is a very serious thing.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Understand this is that it's not an accident. We're going to have a civil war over it, and some people are going to be killed, and I don't say it lightly because it's so central to who we are.

M: And the first 12 chapters of Joshua have a lot to do with the ideology of the --

Q: Exactly.

M: -- of the nationalists right in Israel.

Q: The first 12 chapters are the ideology of the right, right? It has a view of the other -- the only way that you can survive on the land is...?

F: Without.

Q: Is without them, very good, without (inaudible) --

M: The whole concept of (inaudible).

Q: Without the other. This is a very powerful thing. By the way, is it wrong? We don't know.

M: We don't know.

Q: Leave it open.

M: I mean, read --

Q: Read every other -- well...

M: -- Samuel...

F: Right.

M: Yeah. No, not Samuel. Who did Saul have the big fight with over not killing (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

Q: When I say "wrong," I mean, these are really alternative readings [00:20:00] to the structure of reality, and you're going to have to make your argument on the ground.

M: [Hebrew], right.

Q: What?

M: [Hebrew].

Q: [Hebrew], right, we're going to read that in a second.

M: Right, he doesn't kill everybody and he's punished for it.

Q: He doesn't kill, but the text is (inaudible). He doesn't kill [Agav?] and wipe out [Amalek?], and Amalek makes a return, right, a few centuries later, in who? In Haman.

F: Haman.

Q: That's the --

M: Well, that's our gloss on it.

Q: Doesn't matter.

M: Right.

Q: Everything is our gloss on it. What does that mean? As opposed to what? Exodus? Exodus is our gloss, too.

M: Right, that's true, but --

Q: It's just that's a larger gloss.

M: But no, no, no, I'm saying that you can justify --

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: -- forget that later reading --

Q: Correct.

M: -- to justify why [Jahul?] should've done it. What was more interesting to me is that he, in fact, has sinned and is punished for --

Q: Well, we're going to have to talk about what that sin is.

M: -- not wiping everybody out.

Q: We're going to have to talk about what that sin is, because it's one of the central principles of leadership, that sin, right? And people think it's about (inaudible), right? But it's much more complicated than that. But in any event, right now, two different [00:21:00] possibilities of application as you begin to build this dream out on the land: one is really a radical take on what's going to be necessary, which you're going to have to wipe out the other. By the way, America was founded that way, too, right? You know, so this is not brand -- this is not all -- you know, this (inaudible).

M: That's our post-Vietnam read.

Q: Well, I mean, the Native Americans probably had a read a little before that. Ours, ours, yes. We have -- we've come to --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- have a great sense of the ideal of what the principles of the country were. Is America -- I always ask this

question: is the world better off or worse off that
America's here?

F: Much better off! (laughter) (inaudible).

Q: There's no...

F: It depends on who you --

M: Well, it's sort of --

Q: I'm asking you.

M: As a Jewish American --

F: I would say yes --

F: Yes.

F: -- because my father's a Holocaust survivor, and America
let him in --

M: (inaudible) --

Q: Etc., etc., etc., right.

F: -- and saved his life. My mother's from Morocco and escaped
from Morocco.

Q: OK, right, and I think that [00:22:00] most -- since the
vast majority of the world would like to come to America,
since America in so many areas, right, is the most free,
etc., whatever its problems are -- and of course, because
America hasn't reached its ideal yet, either, right? We
intellectuals always tend to get down on the real, right?
But --

F: But if you're a fundamentalist Muslim sitting in a
fundamentalist country with believing something else --

Q: Correct.

F: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: I don't care about -- I'm asking us. I'm asking us.

M: We're talking about us.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Americans have to answer the question, right? I'm asking as
American. I'm asking an American. Is it better off? Yeah.
If there was no other way, if there was no other way for
America to come on the scene over the last 250 years,
except through the process of a kind of Joshua 1-12, is the
world better off? Are we better off or not? You don't have
to answer it, but that's the real life or death question
(inaudible). And it's asking right up front. Now, of course
you want to say we hope you never have to ask a question --
answer the question [00:23:00] that way. That's a very
heavy way (inaudible) answer the question. But your culture
at the initial stages, at very initial stages, is asking
the harshest question: what are you willing to kill for,
and what are you willing to die for? And here you have the
Jewish people initially who say, OK, we will do whatever it
takes. Now, you want to (inaudible) being like that. And

even the tradition had a second reading. The first 11 chapters is we'll do anything. The next 12 chapters of Joshua is this was a slow, incremental process, in fact we never wiped out everybody, all the way through the end of the first temple period, right? People are still doing what? What were Israelites doing well through the destruction of the temple?

M: Serious idol worship.

Q: Serious idol worship, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: Asherah...

Q: Asherah and Baal and Canaanite gods, which means they never really did what?

M: (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, they were never fully monotheistic. They never fully wiped out the other. They never fully wiped out the other.

M: I have a (inaudible). [00:24:00] It seems like one of the themes that Jewish people are best at is assimilating and surviving, as a people. When you look at the periods in the '50s and '60s of this century --

Q: Good, that's another model.

M: -- the threat of assimilation, and yet the Jewish community emerged stronger.

Q: Very smart for a minority culture to be teaching that message. That is -- yes, that's the other read. The other read is that we always somehow manage, right? As opposed to there's a thrust inside us that ways wipe out the other so that your culture can fully win out, there's another thrust that says, no, the only way to work with the other, right, is to interact, assimilate that which you can, shape what you can, try to correct in a much slower, incremental process. These are two different methods.

F: And you always go for the same one.

Q: Who has...?

F: Yeah, because you take -- no, it's true.

Q: I tend to go -- yeah.

F: (inaudible) do it in the contours, in the context of (inaudible).

Q: My read on the Torah is the Torah (inaudible) sides with that read, but [00:25:00] I have to leave open that maybe it doesn't, because sometimes (laughter) we actually don't do that. But by the way, this same internal desire to either wipe out the other because they're not there yet and go clean and make it yours, or to work incrementally, is whose dilemma? Whose dilemma is that in the Torah, most interestingly?

M: God's.

Q: God's. That's God's dilemma. So all we've done is we've projected that fundamental dilemma of how to construct a society on the, you know -- our universe (inaudible). You know, we've projected that. And so God sometimes wants to do what?

M: Wipe everything out.

Q: Wipe out, and sometimes wants to work step by step. Because when you have -- or another way of putting this and then we can move on is that when you have this kind of very, very, very serious dream, the dream has such a compelling quality that parts of you will want to wipe out everybody to make that dream alive. That's what all revolutionary [00:26:00] cultures do, whether you're Ho Chi Minh or you're Stalin or you're Hitler. We have all the capabilities of doing that is what the text's telling us very early on. That's the power. That's the dark side of an intoxicating, very, very, very major dream, or holistic dream, or worldwide dream.

M: The old Zionist slogan of "people without a land for a land without a people."

Q: Good, but the next page of that is -- right, a land without a people, even though what?

M: Even though it was populated.

Q: Even though there was a people there, exactly. Or another way of saying it is a dream --

F: And people talking about it.

Q: -- actually blinds you. A dream actually blinds you. So you can actually have a dream in which every human being is an image of God, and in the process of reaching the dream you wipe out your (inaudible). But on the other hand, sometimes you do have to wipe out (inaudible), right? So there's a real judgment calls always, right? Now, here, interestingly enough, you make the judgment call to wipe out a lot of Canaanites. By the time you get to [00:27:00] Rabbinic Period, the rabbis say there are no more -- you can't use the category of Canaanites. They don't exist anymore, which essentially, basically says that this dilemma you should never have. You should never get yourself in a position where the choice is you have to wipe out the other.

M: Of course, by the Rabbinic Period you're also not included in position wipe --

Q: Correct.

M: -- anyway.

Q: Exactly. And so now you come back -- exactly, so you wind up creating what I call an ideology of passivity, right? And then you get to the contemporary period, right, the

Zionist, in which all the same dilemmas of the book of Joshua reappear, and we have no mechanism of conversation. Because we're a people that did put just Joshua 1-11 and Joshua 12-24 in the same book, which means both of these moves are essential (inaudible). And those of us who were - - it was very important for both federation people and educators. Part of our job -- and this is very rare that I can actually say something that ties both of them together [00:28:00] (laughter) --

M: Who's chapter 1-11 and who's chapter 12-24?

Q: Right. No, what you have going on in the Jewish community is an argument, right -- the argument about security is not about security; the argument about security is a vision of the world. And you really do have two competing visions of the world, right? And what's important for us to be able to do -- so if you're a Federation person, and you're soliciting somebody who is freaking out about what Israel's doing now at \$9 million a day, right, income is not coming in, you have 60% unemployment on the West Bank, in Gaza right now, which this is going to destroy the peace process if we don't get a handle on that piece of it, and you have a person who's freaking out, saying, "I don't want to give you any money because I don't want \$1 to go to Israel," and

we are having a few of those people probably, right? It's very important to be able to help that person understand that these are two really different worldviews of the Jewish people. And remember: the only way in which we're going to be a Jewish people is if we -- [00:29:00] if you take your position solidly inside the community, because this has been a problem since the beginning of the story, right? And what that person has captured -- and that creates a way of dialoguing and a way of having a conversation that's much bigger than "I feel X." That person -- you're really right. Do you really understand that that is a fight we've had since the very beginnings of this people? This is a real fight at the core of what it means to be Jewish. So if you feel that, you are at the core. You are, like, living in the book of Joshua, right? You are like Joshua. That's what you're doing by finding this out. And that's what real Jewish continuity is. And you want to feel (inaudible) you're arguing about it, and be a participant inside of a community that argues. And you're right: the life or death of this people will go down on it. That's why it's so important to be involved and contribute: because the life or death will go down on how we answer this question, you are right. But the one thing

you can't ever do is pull out of the debate. You pull out of the debate and Joshua 1-12 will win. Joshua 1-11 will win. [00:30:00] Now --

F: By default.

Q: -- now, if you happen to be a Joshua 1-11 person, you have to say the same thing. Right? If you really firmly believe, OK, that an educator's job is to help sort out that these are impulses within all of us, these are not (inaudible) bad guy (inaudible). We have those impulses, too, because if we really are one Jewish people, those impulses are my impulses. That's why it's in the same book. That's why it's in the same book. Because the culture could have decided to make Joshua how many chapters?

F: Eleven.

Q: Eleven, or 12 chapters, and chosen one milieu. Right? But it chose not to. The decision to place both traditions inside of one text is highlighting for us that these are real, serious impulses (inaudible).

F: You know what?

Q: And you have to help people feel that. You have to help people -- if you're a Genesis 12-24 person, you have to help people understand [00:31:00] that Genesis 1-11 is a real impulse in a culture with a large dream. Sometimes we

have a really large dream, right, and we want to get there right now. And on the other side, you have to help people who are Genesis 1-12 people to understand --

M: Joshua.

Q: -- that sometimes -- Joshua 1-12 -- you sometimes undermine your dream itself. These are the two impulses that you're fighting (inaudible). Another way of putting this: here is an exciting moment in Jewish history as the book of Joshua. Wow. Think of it: in the last 40 years we've been through the Exodus, and we're (inaudible) the book of Joshua. And just like Joshua had a lot of sleepless nights outside of Schechem, so have we. This book is more alive at the end of the twentieth century than it has been 2,500 -- since really the year 1,250 BC. That's 3,200 years this book has gone on, the book of Joshua, 3,200 years, all the dilemmas of the Jewish people. And if you're a rabbi, or if you have access to rabbis, you want to help them, right, so a rabbi [00:32:00] who's watching this division and this emerging civil war of the Jewish people, right, needs to be able to get up there and not say "This is how it should be," because that's not a helpful comment when our community's really... (laughter) First of all, you only wind up -- politically, it's not smart to do. But it's not helpful

educationally. What the rabbi wants to do is highlight that these different vectors, desires, trends, impulses, are both part of who we are at the deepest level, and that's what we're discussing. Right, this is a battle for what it looks like to be Jewish. And that's why we're so fierce about it. And the more fierce you are about it, of course, then you have to make sure that is the discourse and the fierceness such that you're going to undermine the dream? So you need ethics of debate, and ethics of conversation.

F: Death of Rabin.

Q: OK, it's that -- right, the death of Rabin is very... The death of Rabin is about this. It was Joshua 1-11 killing the Joshua 12-24. [00:33:00] By the way, interestingly enough, even though Rabin, right, the moment of decision for him is probably the breaking bones policy, which he really operated like what? Joshua 1-11. So Rabin is the wonderful -- what I call -- he's the first rabbi who understands power, because he understands there is a time for Joshua 1-11, and then recognizes the move from 1-11 to 12-24. I don't think it's an accident that 1-11 comes first. I don't mean -- obviously chapter one always comes before chapter 13, but what's going on in 1-11 is not (inaudible) in 12-24 (inaudible). Yeah.

M: I think also Begin recognized that after --

Q: I think so, too. Very nice.

M: -- (inaudible) Yitzhak (inaudible).

Q: Right. That's a very good example. In fact, there's a very important document that I have a unit called Ethics of Power, and they establish the Kahan Commission, in which the Kahan Commission uses Jewry -- Kahan Commission's a secular court, right? -- uses Jewish texts to create a category that doesn't exist in international law called indirect responsibility. [00:34:00] It doesn't exist in international law, but it uses the -- but they use the [Hebrew], you know, the [heifer?], if a dead person's found in the middle of two towns, who's responsible? Really no one's responsible, but both towns' leadership comes, and they offer a sacrifice, saying, "Anything that I may have (inaudible) responsible anything I may have done," and that -- and the Kahan Commission, which is a secular document, which is obviously one of the most important continental documents on the ethics power, right, says there is a category, and we don't care of the rest of the world understands this category. It's an internal Jewish category to our own culture. It's called indirect responsibility, and therefore we are indirectly responsible. And of course,

the whole of the Deuteronomy text, right, and it says [Sharon?], etc., a whole bunch of people are indirectly responsible, and therefore (inaudible), right? (inaudible) that they've come back (inaudible), OK? But so this is how the culture works at its best. Now, whatever happens, then, whether you're country or not, this is also a cultural issue, and that is what is the best way to deal -- and this is really your point -- what's the best way to deal with an alternative culture? It's really hard [00:35:00] to wipe out other ideas by killing the people, because you close your windows, the ideas come through the door. You close the door, the ideas come through the window. And, in fact, the only way is to compete in the marketplace through the educated process. And God has to learn that, too. And the expert (inaudible) who understood, right, people have to do this step by step, step by step. OK. That, in many ways, is the central issues of the book of Joshua. What I want to move to is Samuel, because here's the first time that you're on the land, and now you have to make a decision. Oh, go to Joshua 24. That's what we'll read first, Joshua 24. Joshua 24. Now, the people are in the land. They're firmly in place on the land. And this is towards the end of Joshua. [00:36:00] And what you have in Tanakh is every

time the people kind of accomplish a major step, there is what's called a covenanting ceremony, right? And this happens -- it happened right before [Moshe?] dies. It happens right now. It'll happen when the temple is built. It'll happen during Ezra's time, different -- Josiah's time in 612. It'll happen at different moments where there's a sense that there's been a leap in the journey, and there needs to be a reconsolidation, right, or what I'm going to call a retelling of the story. You have a covenanting ceremony. And watch how covenanting ceremonies -- and the reason I'm picking this out is obviously I'm going to suggest that we're in one of these right now.

F: But that's why we had one at the Wexler Institute.

Q: Yes, that is why it's created a covenanting ceremony --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- right. Whether it should be done at the Wexler -- whether it should be done there or not is debatable, but that is why he created that ceremony. He recognized we were in a moment of transition, [00:37:00] right? And therefore needed to recommit. Right? We had reached this point, right, and now, having reached this point, and telling our story, da-da-da-da-da-da, in the beginning, da-da-da-da-da-da, and in our own era, da-da-da-da-da-da, therefore I

recommit to... That's how recovenanting ceremonies -- that's how covenanting ceremonies are. But it's really interesting to watch how it works here. Chapter 24. Remember, you've got this whole group of people, and if you remember, if you read Bright, which I know is somewhat complicated, if you read Bright on Joshua, what you learned is the slow method of conquest was very dependent on people from the inside, right? That the ideology of a powerless -- for the ideology that the Jews were bringing in, an Exodus ideology, spoke to which groups of people on the inside?

M: Dispossessed.

Q: The dispossessed. Therefore, the first story in Joshua is about who? Who's the hero, or heroine?

M: (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: The prostitute, Rahab, is the first hero, right? Think about it. [00:38:00] Think about what it means to say the conquest really doesn't happen without a prostitute. Most cultures say what about the prostitute?

F: They're the other (inaudible) --

Q: They're the absolute other, and here the prostitute is central to the conquest of the first city (inaudible). Right? It's just, you know, the Torah's little jokes about how to categorize people.

F: No, but you know what else it is? It's not only that. It's also the whole thing about real --

Q: Oh, yeah. I'm just playing. (laughter)

F: Of course. No, I know you are, but --

Q: But yeah, it's already saying that even in the midst of conquest you're going to take the prostitute who seems to be undermining the central ideals regarding at least sexuality and family life, and you're saying what? No, there's no such thing as irredeemable people, even in the midst of you're saying you're going to have to kill everybody, right? Even in the Joshua 1-12 story, there's already a move, right, away from that story. So Bright suggests -- really, it's a man by the name of Mendenhall who Bright is quoting, right -- who suggests that really this was about another ideology [00:39:00] that was able to connect to the dispossessed inside of these vassal Canaanite states, right? Having the insurrection from the inside allowed a less technologically sophisticated culture, right, called the Israelites to conquer a far more sophisticated culture, and we know because the Canaanite villages that we now have from archeological all had sewer systems. The Israelite cities that were built upon that had no sewer systems. We knew they had different kind of arms.

And so you have to account for how this small group of people managed to displace, right, a sophisticated culture that had been there hundreds of years. Part of it was the ideology that -- I mean, part of it, part of it, right, was the ideology that said that it was able to kick off that whole group of people on the inside.

F: It's like guerilla warfare.

Q: Right, it's like guerilla warfare. And it takes them a few centuries to do this, right? But in Joshua, at least, by the time you get to Joshua 24, you're dispossessed enough, and you have enough control of the land. [00:40:00] But the problem is what kind of people do you have? You have Israelites, you have people from other cultures, and what do you have to do to this group? What do you have to do? Say it.

M: Bring them together.

Q: You have to bring them together. It's a motley crew. They've managed to accomplish their goals of conquest of the land, to some extent, but it's a motley crew. How do you bring them together? You have to give them a common...

F: (inaudible).

F: Experience.

M: Ideology.

Q: Common what?

M: Ideology.

Q: Right, you have to give them a common ideology, a common story that they can all share. Now, watch how it works here. Yeah?

F: Can I ask a question? I wanted to read it in Hebrew, so I brought the Hebrew --

Q: Good.

F: -- and I can't find it.

Q: Joshua 24 you can't find?

F: (inaudible)?

Q: [Hebrew].

F: (inaudible) Joshua. Oh.

Q: OK. So let's read, right? [Taren?], maybe want to read?

M: Where.

Q: You can start verse two, chapter 24. Or start one, I guess. Who's reading? Anybody want to read?

M: [00:41:00] "Joshua assembled all the tribes of Schechem. He summoned Israel's elders and commanders, magistrates and officers, and presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, from olden times your forefathers, Terah, father of Abraham, and father of Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates

and worshipped other Gods, but I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates, and led them through the whole land of Canaan, and multiplied his offspring. I gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir as his possession, while Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.' "

Q: That's four verses that summarize the entire book of Genesis. This is a very, very interesting insight for what education really is. Four verses, and for Joshua that is enough for the average Israelite to know to assure that they're what? [00:42:00]

F: (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible). Right? Now, I'm not saying we should -- that's what we should educate. All I'm saying is it's an interesting understanding of what it means. It's absolutely necessary information. These people now place themselves -- and look what happens here: there's a little bit of a shift between this telling and the Genesis telling, right? It says that God does what here? "I took Abraham from there and led him to there." Is that what happened in the story, in Genesis? No.

F: Not really.

Q: What happens in the story?

F: (inaudible).

Q: And what does Abraham do? It says [Hebrew]. What does Abraham do?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Here it says that God did what?

F: (inaudible).

M: (inaudible).

Q: Took him.

M: Right.

Q: That's a different read to this story.

M: Right.

Q: Right?

F: Or teach him to have choice.

Q: It's a different way. It makes almost the going out of -- from the going out of -- from one side to the other going out as a mini-Exodus. God takes them out, [00:43:00] just like God took who out?

M: Joshua.

F: The Jews.

Q: Right. So this is a subtle, subtle retelling, but you get the whole story in four verses. OK? Next. Watch. Now we're going to have four verses of the whole book of Exodus. Keep going.

M: "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with the wonders that I wrought in their midst, after which I freed you. I freed your fathers from Egypt, and you came to the sea. The Egyptians pursued your fathers to the Sea of Reeds with chariots and horsemen. But they cried out to the Lord, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians. Then he brought the sea upon them and it covered them. Your own eyes saw what I did to the Egyptians. After you had lived a long time --"

Q: All right, up to there. Right, up to there? Now, that's what --

F: Exodus.

Q: -- that's three verses? Three verses you have the whole book of what?

F: Exodus.

Q: Exodus. Isn't that amazing?

M: The original Cliff Notes. (laughter)

Q: Right. No, the other issue is it's saying that Judaism -- right, we've made Judaism... If you think a culture works [00:44:00] because everybody's a PhD in the culture, right, or everybody's a rabbi, or everybody's a Talmudist, you're wrong. That's not why cultures work. Cultures work because

you have a kind of very, very skeletal shared story that enough people can connect to.

F: And we don't have that anymore.

Q: Well, let's put it this way --

F: We have it, but we don't --

Q: We've not told it.

F: Of course we haven't.

Q: Remember, the whole book of Joshua you don't have one telling. At the end of this period, when you have to reconsolidate this people, the leader -- that's what leadership does, right? The leadership is able to frame the story in a way that allows a lot of people to what?

F: (inaudible).

F: Connect to it.

Q: Connect to it and access to it, right? Right, Joshua is standing in front of everybody saying, "This is who we are. We're the children of da-da-da-da-da-da. We experienced..." And he picks out more then. What's missing from...? What is missing? He does the whole Exodus in three verses. What's missing? What story?

F: Sinai.

Q: Sinai's missing! You know why? Because obviously Sinai wasn't central to the memory of the Jewish people early on.

[00:45:00] Because Sinai's not -- between me and you, would you put Sinai in?

F: Yeah.

Q: Right, it seems big. Right? I don't even mean in the journey. The journey's going to be there. I meant -- right, I meant Sinai, the Mt. Sinai experience. You would think, "And he took us out, and he took us to Sinai." And you would -- let's say, since we get three sentences the whole book that have six words -- "And he took us to Sinai and we received the Ten Commandments," or "We met God," or (inaudible) dedicated to being a kingdom of priests in the holy nation. That would've been enough. That's not there. Why?

M: It describes the journey (inaudible).

F: They haven't fully committed yet.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: That's an interesting comment. Let's go with that one. Right? What does that mean, "They haven't fully committed yet"? First of all, you're understanding that Sinai is fundamentally about a commitment to do, right? It's a commitment to act. Sinai is not central here, because you can't make the commitment... The commitment to do is something that has to be re-experienced [00:46:00] and

recommitted to every single era. So Sinai yet did not have its own independent status in the culture. The end of this story is going to be, "Therefore I commit to doing X," which, in a sense, is their own what?

M: Sinai.

Q: Is their own Sinai. Right? Now, Sinai became much more of independent status post destruction of the temple in exile, when the culture got scared and needed to hold on to a set of experiences. Sinai does not appear in the memory of the Jewish people until post-destruction.

F: So it's the same reason why we finished with --

Q: Yeah, the same --

F: -- Deuteronomy, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: It leaves it open all the time, right. It leaves it... By not incorporating it into the memory, you can never get fixed on that to do, which is true. The (inaudible) is always what?

F: I'm finished. (inaudible) be done.

Q: (inaudible) change. (inaudible) change. The to-dos on how to make Exodus alive and move on this culture are going to be different in 1400 BC than they are in 1100 BC, which is different than 1996. [00:47:00] The question is do you

always stand at Sinai and hear what the to-do is. But that to-do will be very culturally contextual.

M: (inaudible) not be as important if you have either a [Mishgan?] or a place you can go to where you think -- at least you think God's presence dwells.

Q: Yes, I think that's also (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: So it's sort of like -- it's inherent: why talk about something that's self-evident?

Q: Sure, I think there's a truth to that, too, right? Although you do -- it is a pretty large event not to have been incorporated.

M: Yeah, but --

Q: There was a decision made not to incorporate it. The assumption was that you didn't need to incorporate it because if you had a sense that you were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's descendent, and you had a sense that you were the Exodus people, right, it was a given that you had something to do. The only question is what?

M: How to do it.

Q: What to do. That's the only question. And that, the previous Sinai can't answer, because the what to do with

the previous Sinai may not necessarily link to the what to do right now.

F: But one of the central themes [00:48:00] of Sinai is that we were all there, and that every generation to come was all there, and that...

Q: I guess the early (inaudible) culture didn't want to make Sinai that important. It wanted to leave the to-dos radically open, because the to-dos were going to be different than what you heard at Sinai.

M: And you know also --

Q: It's a very heavy thing to... When I first realized that Sinai was missing, I said, "Oh my God, Sinai is always..." Sinai is the central experience for the rabbis. The rabbi makes Sinai much more important than the Bible does. Why? Because the rabbis are most concerned about mitzvah, about the law. They're most concerned (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: Yeah, but they've got to be, because there's no physical structure.

Q: Yeah, great.

M: Then [Girin?] called --

Q: Great.

M: -- orthodoxy a nation in a suitcase.

Q: Good, OK then, fine. All right, let's go.

F: Could it also be that the previous 23 chapters describe a kind of people that seem quite opposite from the Sinai type of people, but the Sinai experience was trying to (inaudible)? Isn't it...? There seems to be a --

Q: But do they? They seem to be doing it.

F: -- dialect there between --

Q: They seem to be doing, you know... [00:49:00] They seem to be doing pretty well. They conquered the land, right? Now they're recommitting themselves. Joshua's telling the story of what he wants them to believe. By the way, Moses himself --

F: But the way in which they did it, particularly chapters 1-11, describes a pretty bloodthirsty people that --

Q: On God's command.

F: -- seems to be... OK.

Q: Right?

F: But still it seems to be -- it's bringing out another side of the people that doesn't necessarily jive with the --

Q: OK.

F: -- Sinai Israelite.

Q: It's possible.

F: It's another face.

Q: Possible.

F: So maybe he doesn't want to confuse them.

Q: It doesn't jive with the Sinai piece. OK. I think there's a notion that you have to recommit to Sinai in a very different way in every generation. Therefore, you never allow the story to take hold as the central story. Another way of putting it is notice there's one holiday with almost no rituals: that's the holiday. Every holiday has at least three or four or five major rituals. Rosh Hashanah has shofar. Shavuot has no rituals, [00:50:00] right? It has no rituals, not... Right? I know everybody's going to say stay up all night and study Torah. That's, first of all, late. That's not more than 500 years old, that ritual. It's very late. There are no rituals.

F: (inaudible).

F: (inaudible) dairy.

M: Eat the cheese. (laughter)

Q: There's no... I mean, that's also late, and I would not say that's the most sophisticated ritual.

M: And then all the Kibbutzim branches, you know, displayed (inaudible).

Q: Yes, and that has nothing to do with Torah, right?

(laughter) So in other words, why is that? See, even though

-- as important as Sinai was to the rabbis, they understood that you have to be very careful that the one experience that you had to repeat was your own commitment, right? Exodus you don't have to commit to. You have to feel the experience. You have to sense it in the world, that the world moves towards freedom, right? But Sinai is the only time you have to say what? You as a person have to say what?

F: Amen.

Q: Amen. You don't have to say amen in Exodus. No one has to say amen in Exodus, right? [00:51:00] No one has to say amen to feel Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Either that's your parents or not your parents, right? But you have to say amen at Sinai, and it's almost as if the Torah wanted to make sure that every generation had to answer that question on its own. And the rabbis picking it up said, "Yes, of course you're going to celebrate the receiving of Torah, but what you're going to be forced to do? There's no ritual escape. What do you have to do on Shavuot?"

F: You have to say "Here I am."

Q: You have to say "Here I am." You have to say amen. Which now gives you a real understanding of the what the total

reading on (inaudible). By the way, the fore movement understood this, and therefore placed an event on that day.

ALL: Confirmation.

Q: Confirmation. They understood that. Right? It's not crazy.

M: People still do confirmation?

Q: It's not crazy what they do.

F: Yes.

F: Everybody does (inaudible).

Q: It makes sense, though. It makes sense on Shavuot. But, of course -- and this is the most seriousness weakness of Reform Judaism -- is that in some sense it had exactly the right impulse, [00:52:00] and created exactly the wrong move. Right? The right impulse was Shavuot is about what?

M: Commitment.

Q: Commitment and confirmation. The wrong impulse is exactly the opposite of what Torah did, and exactly what the opposite of the rabbis did. It localized the "I do" to one day and one point in your life. In other words, the worst thing you could do is confirm one group of people on Shavuot. Who's supposed to be confirmed on Shavuot?

F: Everyone.

M: Everybody.

Q: Everyone. So you needed to confirm whole families. You needed to... Now, you could've used the kids as an opportunity to make the confirmation, but you need to extend that confirmation to everybody, right? And of course that doesn't happen.

F: It's also a ridiculous age. (laughter)

Q: That's technical stuff, yes.

F: Well, but developmentally, teenagers --

Q: Tenth grade.

F: -- I mean, it's like that's when they're going away. That's when they're moving out.

Q: Conceivably -- no, no, by the way --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Conceivably -- not necessarily.

F: That's why we do it.

Q: Right, conceivably it could be read --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: -- just like before you go into the land, (inaudible) it could be. [00:53:00] What you're saying is that that doesn't seem to be the way it's articulated.

F: Right.

Q: And, of course, (inaudible) is 100% accurate. So the impulse -- they sensed, those early reformers, they

insisted the impulse that Shavuot was about getting people to say amen. They understood that, but they did it in the most narrow way, and actually undermined (inaudible) in that respect. So you want children to say amen, right? And amen means "Here's the story. You are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Da-da-da-da-da-da, da-da-da-da-da-da. Your last 15 years have been da-da-da-da-da-da. I am now going da-da-da-da-da-da. Therefore..." Therefore what? Right? Five things that are going to be about your life in the next stage when you stop coming to this Hebrew school, when you stop... Five things, in which you are going to integrate anything that you learned about who you are in the last 10 years, and you commit to those five things. And then they do it, but the whole congregation has to do it. Parents, who now are free from the -- [00:54:00] they are no longer da-da-da-da-da-da, the whole story, and I raise kids, and I have my kids, da-da-da-da. Therefore [Hebrew], and now, therefore, what's my Sinai, right? Boards should be doing, right? I have been the board, da-da-da-da-da-da, and boards basically change over, right? May/June, very often, most boards, right? At least the board -- I shouldn't say most boards -- the board (inaudible) change over (inaudible), right? Right? I'm a board member now,

right. I have da-da-da-da-da-da. My father brought me into the synagogue. I was bar mitzvahed, da-da-da-da-da, and now I am a board member. Therefore, what's my Sinai? What's my (inaudible)? What's my Sinai? Right, that's Shavuot. Shavuot is how many -- and every constituency has a somewhat different story. There's a shared story, but there are the individual applications of Sinai. Or the campaign (inaudible) at the beginning of the year, or at the end of the year, needs a covenanting ceremony, right? [00:55:00] A ceremony in which we say, "We are in this together," right? "We have da-da-da-da-da-da story." This is what a caucus does, by the way. A caucus gets you to share your story, and say, "[Hebrew]." And caucus is the word, right. And therefore, I am in, there to the tune of. But it's still... (laughter) It's a very, very important in, right? Therefore, I am one. And that's a different therefore than the therefore of a school board. School board has a different kind of Sinai experience. So you never have one Sinai experience. The story, right, gets you, if the story is compelling enough, the story gets you to make the Sinai experience in your own (inaudible). The Jewish people have their Sinai. It was a big one, because it came post-Exodus. Our Sinais tend to be a little smaller, right, because we

don't have the same large Exodus stories, although we did. That was our parents. You know what our parents had? Their story was [00:56:00] we're the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and we went from one ocean to the other ocean. We went from a place of darkness to America, a place of light and freedom and power and affluence. We experience that as a tremendous gift. Therefore, we will assure that by the end of our life the entire Jewish people will be free and secure. Now, because they have been telling the story, right, they've created meaning. Because it created meaning, they heard their Sinai clearly, and their Sinai clearly they accomplished, they ensured that for the foreseeable future the Jewish people will be free and secure, right? They accomplished more than any other single generation since Biblical times. That's where we're having a little problem, because how do you -- what do you do? That's the question that you're supposed to do there at Sinai. So now, having accomplished all that, we have to ask. We are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Murray, and Jerry, and da-da-da-da-da, (laughter) all the way down, right? [00:57:00] Right. And by the way, you see the first thousand years goes how fast? You should be able to do it in how many sentences?

M: Four.

F: Four.

Q: You do the first -- right? You should be able to do it in four. It only begins to be more when you get what?

M: Closer to your own.

Q: Closer to your own, right? So we'll do Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Exodus, and we were exiled. That's six sentences, right? Always maintaining the hope that things would be different. And our parents came from Eastern Europe, from Morocco, da-da-da. They were a ragtag bunch of survivors and impoverished people, without educations, with minimal skills, to be able to deal with the challenges of living in da-da-da. But, right, lo and behold, miracles of miracles. From darkness became light. From death became life. They rebuilt themselves. They integrated. They (inaudible) people. They assured their children went to colleges and became doctors and lawyers and educators and businessmen and entrepreneurs. They became central in the culture called America, and central in building a state. They built the state. They resurrected a people, [00:58:00] right? We live as the most free and powerful and affluent and successful, right, and healthy generation in the history of the Jewish people, [we'atta?], and therefore.

And that's the continuity question. We don't have a therefore. We don't have a therefore. That's the Sinai question. That's the fundamental Federation question. It's not clear what the therefore is, and it's what do you do with it all. And in this respect, the previous generation deserves a lot of respect. Before we make fun of them, (inaudible) keep them, they had a story, and they had a Sinai, and they accomplished it. Right? Now, the downside of having accomplished it is we have to what?

M: (inaudible).

Q: We have to figure out what to do, and it's an incredibly tough act to follow.

M: (inaudible) one book too far.

Q: What?

M: They went one book too far.

Q: What's that mean?

M: They should've just stopped at --

M: Looking in at the Promised Land (inaudible).

F: (inaudible) sequel.

Q: Another way of putting it is [00:59:00] they are now experiencing what most experienced: that they thought, this new generation, especially the leading families of

this community, the leading families of this community actually thought until very recently that they what?

M: They had reached the Promised Land.

F: That they had reached --

Q: They had reached the Promised Land. And lo and behold, they found out -- they reached the Promised Land, but almost all their grandchildren didn't come. Now, this freaked them out, right? That was defined as the 52% figure in San Francisco, probably a little higher, right? That figure freaked them out, because they reached the Promised Land, they looked back, and their own families weren't there. So the first, they have to be adjusted and recognize that the Jews never reach the Promised Land. So now they have to step back and they have to look in again, right? And they to give a closing speech to the Jewish people, just like Moses did. And I'm not saying [they should die?]. They have to give a closing speech to the Jewish people, right? "My greatest hopes." And then they have to support to the tunes of levels [01:00:00] they are not used to supporting to the building culture. They're just not used to it. They're used to --

F: But don't they --

Q: -- resurrecting physically the Jewish people, but the *we'atta*, and now -- and now, I am going to create a Judaism of freedom and power and affluence, a Judaism that responds to da-da-da... I am going to use this power, use this affluence to make the largest transformation in human life in history, because now we're positioned to do that. We're going to become whatever the *we'atta* is.

F: But doesn't it have to do with -- and I see this in multiple generations, from the Joshua 24 to now -- and I say this with the social worker hat on -- it has to do, I think, with the ownership of the to-do by the people. So seeing in a Joshua 24 --

Q: Beautiful.

F: -- do... They don't own it. That's why Sinai isn't there yet. When I said they haven't committed yet, they don't own it inside. They don't know what it means. That's why it couldn't be here yet, because I don't -- or maybe --

Q: Good, great. No, I think that's a great point.

F: -- they didn't take it -- they hadn't really internalized it, [01:01:00] whatever the modern word is.

Q: Great.

F: That continues on, and that's why you see Jews wandering and not necessarily, quote, "getting it" --

Q: Beautiful.

F: -- if you want to apply a judgment, and you have some leader, who may or may not hold them together. This whole question of leadership then comes up, because is that the one person who gets it trying to shepherd the group, to now, where you can use this generation who perhaps made it to the Promised Land, but do they get it? And if they don't, then, therefore, how can this generation, the next one get it or own it if yes, they have their story, and they told it, and they acted on it --

Q: Right.

F: -- but... So you say, "And therefore," and I would add the "but."

Q: Good. That's fine. I agree. But you're going to have to do different things with different generations.

F: Right, right.

Q: The senior generation is going to need more of the "but," because they actually think that they got there. The next generation is not going to need so much of a butt. They're going to need a first "to-do," right?

F: Right, but there's a scene going on.

Q: By the way, this is exactly Moses, right? Moses really wants to do what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: [01:02:00] And what does God have to say?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: (laughter) But that's not how it works. That's not how it works. Because that'll screw up the Jewish people forever and ever if we let you in, right? So I'm going to give you -- I'm going to be giving a speech today to, let's say, some of the major givers, and this speech is about what the unbelievable success, right, that they actually reach the Promised Land. They accomplished -- my generation, we will not accomplish what they accomplished, and we're going to have to... It's just, you know, that was the great -- the great tragedy of Joshua is that, in fact, he never really could be Moses. This is the great tragedy in the book. You know the name that appears most in the book of Joshua? Is Moses, right? Which is just Joshua's way of saying, "I can't be Moses, I can't be Moses, I can't be Moses." So you've got to get over it. Sometimes you can't be Moses, right?

M: I'm not sure Joshua wanted to be Moses.

Q: Yeah, Joshua wants to be Moses. That's the whole first chapter of the book. He wants to be Moses, right?

F: Moses wannabe.

Q: Now, he understands -- he comes to understand what his real role is, and that's why he's able to covenant at the end. But this is -- it's OK, right? You know, [01:03:00] Netanyahu would love to be Begin. (laughter) He's not going to be Menachem Begin, either.

M: And Begin always wanted to be Jabotinsky.

Q: Right, and Begin always wanted to be Jabotinsky.

M: And Jabotinsky wanted to be Mussolini, see? (laughter)

Q: But the major piece of the talk is going to be able to help them experience, right, how their accomplishment of the...

END OF AUDIO FILE

VT-986

F: It just seems like quite a leap to take, just sort of going on what Katherine said, I mean you're really down to the essential question of why be Jewish, because the other -- our parents' generation sort of made it to the Promised Land through assimilation, and through, in some ways, not being too Jewish.

Q: No, no, no, no. That's not fair. That's the judgments that I hope I'm beginning to break here, right? How much about being Jewish did these people know?

F: Not much.

M: Not much.

Q: They know seven verses of the whole story. Now, there is not one person in the senior leadership -- actually, because this is a test today, and then Seth can come back next week (laughter) -- there is not one person in the senior leadership who if I said the name Abraham would say "Who's Abraham?", right? There's not one of those senior leaders who if I said Exodus could not tell you one sentence of Exodus. Probably three of them they could tell you. [00:01:00] They could probably tell you who was the hero, and what happened, and what was the movement, and where did (inaudible), right?

F: They won't forget Sinai. (laughter)

Q: And they wouldn't forget Sinai, because you know why? Because the rabbis --

F: (inaudible).

M: They wouldn't forget Sinai, necessarily.

Q: No, no, no, right. Because the rabbis, right, had a vision of the to-do of Sinai that had nothing to do with the creation of an American Jewish community. Right? Then, right... So Sinai of the culture got disconnected from the Sinai of the senior generation. The senior generation knew exactly what the Sinai was. What was it? Build the state,

build a philanthropic infrastructure, build a political infrastructure, and ensure that your children can have the very best so they can make a difference in the world. That's a pretty intense Sinai. (inaudible) they worked. So we have the most impressive philanthropic infrastructure in the history of humanity we've built in the last 40 years. We have the only people in the history of humanity to return to its land, recover its language, and build a political infrastructure, and a national political [00:02:00] framework after not having been around, the only people in human history, so they accomplished that. Right? And they created the next generation. In three generations, they're the only ethnic group in the United States to accomplish what they have accomplished. So I would say that they knew exactly what it was they had to do. In fact, they were so fucking clear about it that they were able to accomplish it. And they knew that they needed new institutions, so what institutions did they build? Federations and APACs and American Jewish Committees and Congresses and ADLs and JCRCs, and they built all the institutions necessary to do what? Commit on their Sinai to do their Sinai. Now, having accomplished it, there's a whole set of new challenges. Don't be surprised. They don't

have the faintest idea what those challenges are. Why should they? It's not their Sinai. It'd be like saying to... It'd be like saying to the people who are leaving Egypt, "You know what your Sinai is? You must go in and conquer the land." They weren't what? Ready. What are you talking about? First we have to become a people a little bit, right? [00:03:00] So the Sinai shifted on them. That's not their Sinai. Or another way of putting it: no wonder they don't access to the issues of spirituality. The senior generation should access the issue of spirituality, you know, what kind of margins you have to have to be spiritual, right? (laughter) It's amazing, the margins you need to be able to go off and spend a week in a retreat.

F: What do you mean, margins? (laughter)

Q: Security margins.

F: The wherewithal.

Q: It's not only about your psychological security, but, you know, psychological security comes from not being beaten up all the time. Psychological security comes from having a home. Psychological security comes from having a job that you're not going to be fired if you take off a week, right? That's real psychological security, right? So do you want them to understand spirituality?

M: Yeah, absolutely agree, because you're on dangerous ground here, because that would mean that only affluent societies are spiritual.

M: No.

F: No.

M: No, no.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: I didn't say affluent financially.

F: Secure.

Q: You have to have a sense of existential security.

M: [00:04:00] You can't have a feeling (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: That's Moses. How come Moses... Moses is the only one who really understands spirituality. Why?

F: Well, he experienced God.

M: Yeah, he talks to God face to face. That doesn't hurt.

(laughter)

Q: He doesn't talk to God face to face until he's experienced what growing up?

M: The burning bush will do that.

Q: Living where? In the palace. In the palace. He has a sense that he's actually worth something. And when you have a sense that you're worth something, you have a sense that

you're connected, and being connected is what spirituality is about.

F: Well, it's saying --

Q: I'm not saying it's the only thing, but the rabbis were able to create an ethics of spirituality, right, under very, very --

M: Right, exactly --

Q: -- oppressive conditions.

M: -- and that's one thing.

Q: That's tremendous, a tremendous accomplishment. No one --

M: It's a particular achievement, so --

Q: -- was able to do that. Right.

M: -- you can't... All I'm saying is --

Q: But that --

M: -- the argument's good, but don't let folks off the hook.

Q: I'm not letting them off the hook.

M: I don't think they saw it as important.

Q: Hey, what do I tell them? I'm going to say to them their job now -- and it's completely unfair, but it's their Sinai -- there are going to have to be two Sinais in your life. They accomplish more. You're going to have to hear about the Sinai. And it's completely unfair for me to say that. I wish I was [00:05:00] 65 and saying that, because then we'd

be peer to peer, but I'm 39, right? And I'm going to say, "You have to get another Sinai." It's that Sinai, is building a culture, because there is no way, right, the Baby Boom generation will be able to do that. But if you don't build the culture, and it's something that you're not good at, you will never be good at it, the kinds of levels of trust you're going to have with people to do that -- I mean, obviously it's a little self-serving, because I'm one of those people, but there's no choice. That's your Sinai. And you hear it. That's when we talk about synagogue reimagining, reimagining, JCC imagination, and real leadership training, and creating a new generation of rabbis, a new generation of educators, a new generation of professionals. That's what we're talking about. And whole sets of new institutions, just like were built to realize the last Sinai. So I'm not going to let them off the hook. (inaudible), and you're never going to feel most of the stuff we get to feel. You won't feel it (inaudible). I'm going to try to connect them to the feelings that they should have had when they operated in the previous (inaudible).

F: Some of them have --

Q: That's where the rabbis fucked up. The rabbis failed to explain to those Jews that [00:06:00] it was being motivated by the same spiritual feelings that was motivating the culture always. Or another way of saying that that was (inaudible) secularity.

M: (inaudible).

Q: Like, they didn't take the rough, quick insight seriously. Yeah.

F: Well, I guess what I was getting at was that when we talk to that generation of donors who are committed, and who did do all this amazing stuff, they throw up their hands and say, "But how come my kids aren't doing it?" And we wonder, what was the unspoken message they gave to their kids about success, and about what it meant to be a Jew.

Q: I'm not sure that's the best tack to take, because it tells them they're what?

M: Failures.

Q: Failures. And I'm not sure you generally get the best out of people when you do that, pedagogically.

F: No, but that's what they tell us, you know. So I'm wondering what's our response.

Q: Well, I mean, I tell them straight up that they're not failures, that, in fact, they're the most historically

accomplished generation in the history of Judaism. But what they accomplished so changed the context of the way they live, that now Judaism [00:07:00] has to be reimagined, right? It didn't have to be reimagined for them, because they pragmatically reimagined much of what had to be done, but culturally, or I say the religious imagination in the culture has not caught up to their actions. And that's the catch-up. That catch-up's going to take... We're not going to see it. Maybe, if we're very lucky, there'll be processes in place for our children. We won't see that. We're going to live in this generation of transition. We're really going to live like the desert generation.

M: But they were also forced, in a sense, to do that. I mean, the Holocaust forced them to do that, and anti-Semitism forced them to do that, and part of the problem that we have is there's nobody forcing us to do anything like that.

Q: That's part of the reimagining.

M: We could go away right now, and except for a few people's internal mechanisms that (inaudible) go away --

Q: Good.

M: -- I mean --

Q: But that's part of the reimagining.

M: Yeah.

Q: Part of the reimagining is now you've got to build a culture for freedom, which we didn't have to do. They didn't have to do that. They were lucky. Right? That was their good fortune, right? Or, that was one of the great, (inaudible) terrible, terrible things about being Jewish: [00:08:00] that it wasn't your choice. And what our parents -- see, it's all how you tell the story. What our parents really accomplished is for the first time in Jewish history you really get to choose whether you want to be Jewish. What world would you rather live in: a world in which you really get to choose, a world in which you're forced? Which one would you rather live in? Don't think of yourself as a fundraiser now. Think of yourself as just a human being. Which kind of world would you rather live in? What do you think, long-term, for the history of this culture that speaks of every human being as an image of God, the history of this culture, there's this exodus (inaudible) experience in which you're supposed to be free, what do you think is going to bring out the best in this culture? When Jews have to make choices about being Jewish, even that most fundamental choice, or where we're forced. That's what our parents accomplished for us. It's a gift. But with that gift comes a whole new set of what? Challenges. Or, another

way of putting it: with that unbelievable gift, did you do anything to earn that gift, anyone in this room? You're a little maybe, you know... [00:09:00] No. I look around. There's not one person in this room. Did you do anything to earn that gift? How many of us went to college? Good, right? How many of us live nicer than our great-grandparents? How many of us basically have decent medical care? (laughter) How many of us go on vacation? How many people have time -- how many people have a library? You know, it's the first time most people have a library. How many people have time to think about what's the purpose of their life? (laughter)

F: Let's not get carried away!

M: I wish I didn't!

Q: OK, that's... You know, almost none of those things -- we did nothing to earn almost any of that. That was our exodus. That's what the previous generation did. But the downside of having exodus is you have to have a Sinai again, because one Sinai doesn't do it, which is where we start this segue. And that's really hard [00:10:00] to get people to do.

F: I want to tell an inspiring story --

Q: All right!

F: -- about a couple from that generation who had lots of choices, who were born in America, who chose to go and fight the War of Independence, come back here --

Q: In Israel, (inaudible).

F: -- in Israel, you know. Anyway, become very successful, whatever, have done their thing. I just got an agreement from them making a 100-year commitment to give to Shaarey Zedek a million dollars over that period of time, I mean, to, you know, the next century. I mean, I looked at them and I couldn't believe it. So this is a couple that are also very, very spiritually developed, that understand, you know, the need for continuity, and to take care of their people way beyond their lives. So --

Q: How much work do you think you put in with that company? I'm just curious. I'm asking now a technical question. Were you a person who was relating to them and [00:11:00] dealing with them for a while?

F: Well, since I've been in the job for four and a half years. I mean, they --

Q: They didn't show up one day and say, "Here's a 100-year commitment," right?

F: No, I mean, they're longstanding donors. We're one of their favorite charities. I can't take total credit.

Q: I mean, the system called Shaarey Zedek spent some time nurturing them over the years?

F: Yeah, definitely. I mean, they're very, very involved in our organization. So --

Q: And, of course, Shaarey Zedek is one of those -- that's one of those institutions that'll make it to the next era. Why? Because with power and affluence comes an increased commitment to heal the world, not less. In other words, you're never satisfied, until Shaarey Zedek and Hadassah and all of them are able to really use all of their talent, etc., etc., to do a massive healing, their job's not done. So there's still a Sinai to be heard there. That's a great story, great story.

M: You said that the Baby Boomer generation can't finance this next Sinai, and I'm curious as to why you said that.

Q: [00:12:00] Well, they're going to participate in the financing.

M: Can't or won't?

Q: But the trick --

F: What did you say?

Q: That they can't or won't.

F: Right.

Q: I think that long-term they'll be able to, right, but in the short-term, what's necessary to access them, right, is going to cost a lot, and I don't see our generation doing that. The sense of entitlement is so amazing, right, that I don't see that change happening.

M: That's what I'm trying to get at. Are --

Q: I mean, (inaudible) what --

F: So as a practical kind of (inaudible).

F: It wasn't. AMERICAN JEWISH

F: Also we don't have (inaudible). ARCHIVES

M: Because they're unable or they're unwilling? That's what I'm asking.

Q: One is they don't have the same kind of wealth as the senior generation, right?

M: Well --

Q: That's one. But two is that you're going to have to access them, you're going to need institutional change to access them so they can experience their Sinai, and I just don't see -- they're not going to buy their own experience. It's going to be very hard to do that, right? Plus, I'd like to -- [00:13:00] before this transition of wealth really happens, right -- and the transition of wealth is what I'm really worried about -- we're going to have to take off a

whole portion of this wealth, plug in to rebuilding the culture, so that then we can have a community and institutions that connect many of these people, in which case what I do think will happen is I think the Baby Boomer generation will give extraordinary sums of money when they move towards more senior, more settled positions, for the challenges of the next generation, and that's how it's always worked.

M: You made one of the two points I want to make as a follow-up, which is that somewhere between \$8 and \$12 trillion is going to be transferred to this Baby Boom generation, and they're, in fact, going to be the wealthiest generation in the history --

Q: But it hasn't happened yet.

M: No, it hasn't happened yet, but it will in the next 20 years, and just --

F: (inaudible) they do it.

M: -- to help me understand how much money that is, if we take the low number and say it's \$8 trillion, you know, if we got a million dollars a day every day of the year, it would take 22,000 years to get to \$8 trillion. So it's a lot of money. But the other smaller point [00:14:00] I wanted to make --

F: He's figured it out. (laughter)

Q: It's very powerful. Very powerful.

M: How do we know these numbers are accurate?

M: John's counting the whole thing on his hand.

M: I'm lost.

Q: Shh, shh, shh. (inaudible).

M: The other point I want to make --

Q: Shh.

M: -- is that in my community, perhaps more uniquely than in most other communities, is that discrepancy, or that dynamic that you've described, if it's the people over 65 that have the money --

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) that don't --

M: Right.

M: -- it's, in fact, the opposite. It's people between, you know, 35 and 55 who have --

Q: And, of course, that's why --

M: -- billions of dollars.

Q: That's why you're having -- I'm not saying this the best way -- the problems are so deep in your community.

M: Right.

Q: Because in the end, your community is an example of these kinds of issues (inaudible) generation.

M: Right.

Q: That's why speaking to the senior generation becomes such an important issue, because, after all, who's speaking here (inaudible). Look at your first one. Who's speaking?

F: The next generation.

Q: The next generation, right? The next generation [00:15:00] is understanding, and therefore you. Not us. Why? Because we're going to be what? Dead. We're going to be dead. So when you disconnect, when you have communities, that's another thing. We're facing levels of mobility that make the whole continuity problem -- forget about what you're teaching, what you're studying. The very fact that a senior generation is not present in the panel -- and we know that older, generally speaking, the more responsibilities you have familiarly, the more philanthropic you are, right? The lowest philanthropic class of people in America -- not Jewish, this is general -- is single men. They give the least amount of money. The second is single women, right? Then the jump between single and being married, right, is unbelievable. Giving happens. And then the jump between being married and having children, it jumps again,

exponentially. Because the more you learn about levels of responsibility and where you're capable of giving money, even though you would think that when you're married with children you would actually give less, [00:16:00] because you have more expenses, but it's not true. When you do the study in philanthropy, it's just the opposite.

F: That's true. Anyone giving (inaudible).

Q: Well, I'm sure plenty are giving even more so because --

F: No, it's actually the opposite. A single woman without children is the most (inaudible).

Q: Is that true? A single woman without... Right, they don't give to the campaign, right? That's the problem with widows. They don't --

F: The demographics are very different.

Q: All right. So let's finish this up, because we've got four verses for Exodus, four verses for Genesis, and now verse eight. Let's go, verse eight.

M: "I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan. They gave battle to you, but I delivered them into your hands. I annihilated them for you, and you took possession of their land. Thereupon Balak, son of Zippor, the king of Moab, made ready to attack Israel. He sent for Balaam, son of Beor, to curse you, but I refused to listen

to Balaam. He had to bless you, and thus I saved you from him."

Q: That's the only story of the [00:17:00] entire book of (inaudible) is the story that somebody -- is (inaudible), right? That they wanted to curse you, but you're fundamentally what?

F: Blessed.

Q: Blessed. You can understand why that story made it. Because you have to experience -- the whole purpose of telling your story is to make you feel what?

F: Blessed.

Q: Blessed, right. The whole purpose of telling the story -- and this really answers your question -- whenever senior generation, whenever anybody, right, explain, articulate something about their life in which they feel their life somehow is not a blessing, pedagogically, what you do if you want to reconstruct their story, is to construct it around blessing, because if you feel blessed you have the capacity to bless. So I'm always looking for what they were successful of, right? It's not helpful to critique. The critiques -- you know what? They know the critiques a million better than you do, because their children, grandchildren, right, are not going to be Jewish. And this

is a great tragedy. That's the tragedy of this story. Moses not getting in is Moses's personal tragedy. Their personal tragedy [00:18:00] is many of their children will not be Jewish. The only question is how many. And so every generation has its Sinais it accomplishes and its tragedies and failures. Go, verse 11.

M: "Then you crossed the Jordan and you came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho and the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites fought you, but I delivered them into your hands. I sent a plague ahead of you --"

Q: Good, good, good.

M: "-- and it drove them out before you, just like the two Amorite kings, not by your sword or by your bow. I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and towns which you did not build, and you have settled in them. You are enjoying vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant."

Q: Now, think about how different the last covenanting ceremony was when Moses was speaking to the people and he says, right, you had your father, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and you went down to Egypt, the same initial story, right? And I took you out of Egypt, [00:19:00] and I

brought you to this point. Therefore, [Hebrew], be strong and da-da, and go into the land, and conquer the land, da-da-da-da-da, right? Here, the situation is entirely different. They went from landlessness to what? Landedness. They went without any real power to what?

F: Powerful.

Q: They control the land now. They control the land. This is a whole different context in which they live, right? Notice, it's perceived as you've accomplished this. It seems to be one (inaudible) you've accomplished is not simply by your own what?

F: By your own doing.

Q: By your own doing. Can you see deep within your own doing? And obviously, it was more their own doing than the journey to the desert. There's no manna. There's no miracles of war, besides Jericho. That's the only war. Every other war, actually, people get killed and you have to fight. But can you see the deeper "we," that there's been a partnership in this journey all along? If you can feel that and feel that blessing, well, then you're ready for verse 14. We had three verses on Genesis, [00:20:00] three verses on Exodus, three verses on the conquering of the land, right? And now, [we'atta?] --

M: "Now, therefore, revere the Lord --"

Q: That's the key to the Sinai moment: now, therefore. Go.

M: "Revere the Lord, and serve him with undivided loyalty. Put away the gods that your forefathers served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Or, if you are loath to serve the Lord, choose this day which ones you are going to serve."

Q: OK, great. This, therefore, is (inaudible). Now you know what was the animating issue of that early group of people settling on a land. What was the most important issue? The issue of what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Idolatry. The issue of idolatry. The issue is would your culture win out, now that you have, right, now that you have a country. Right? Now you can have the freedom. Will your culture win out, or will you -- right, will the Canaanite view of the way we are human win out. Right, that's what idolatry's about. [00:21:00]

M: So they're facing the same challenge we're facing today.

Q: Whatever -- yeah, we'll have to define that. I don't think we can use the same language, "Therefore this god went out and that god went out," right? But for them, when they say God, do you fundamentally believe that -- right, and you

have to say that -- here is the god that moved the world from this to this, that you are implicated in a process of building freedom, da-da-da-da-da, and every human being is an image of God. Right? Do you believe that, or do you believe Canaanite culture, in which there really is a difference? In Canaanite culture, if you kill an aristocrat, you pay with your life. If you kill a peasant, you pay a fine. Right? It's a really different understanding, that the more you can produce for the god, the more you're worth. The less you produce to the god, the less you're worth. You have in Canaanite culture a real hierarchy in which the king -- first of all that you have a king; here you don't even have a king, because the presumption in this culture is that who's the king?

F: All of us.

Q: [00:22:00] No. Who's the king?

F: Which culture?

Q: God. Right? By virtue of God being God, the Israelites are all what?

F: Equal.

Q: Equal. Right? By the way, that's why when we ask for a king the system freaks, because it's basically asking for Israelites to be here, but once the Israelite's here, it's

too dangerous. One, the Israelite will displace God -- that's, of course, the kingship problem -- or the king will do what over the people?

F: Lord.

Q: Lord. Right? So this is going to be a tremendous -- we're going to study this move in a second -- this is a tremendous move, this move to kingship. Here you have that kingship. So this is a very different -- it's really asking the cultural question. Now that you haven't, which culture, right, is going to win out? In many respects, this is the exact same (inaudible) as you said. The senior generation accomplished much of what they accomplished here in Joshua. Now it's the cultural question. That cultural question is so fucking obvious to the senior generation that they don't even understand the question. It never dawned on them that there's any question, cultural or what.

F: [00:23:00] (inaudible).

Q: They had no choice. Yeah. Did it ever dawn on them that they weren't Jewish?

M: No.

Q: Did it ever dawn on them that they could walk away from being Jewish? Even when they did? No.

M: They couldn't (inaudible).

Q: They couldn't -- there was no way to walk away. You'd be jumping out of your skin. You couldn't do that. But they produced a world, just like Joshua produced a situation in which really what could happen? If you wanted to, what could you do, post-Joshua's time? And we're going to read the whole book of Judges. We're not going to read it, but the whole book of Judges is about doing what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: By doing what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, whatever god is worshipping, and every judge has to emerge, and this judge says, "You can't do that." This judge says it, but the people would do (inaudible). They would do what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Well, they (inaudible). This is exactly the same moment, right? It's exactly the same moment. And that's a big job. Do you imagine this is the culture? OK, good. Now, OK, so that's the *we'atta*. And, of course, the only thing [00:24:00] missing now, once he says "And therefore," right, "you must do," the only thing missing to close the story is that people have to say what?

F: I do.

Q: I do. So watch verse 16.

M: "Reply the people declared, 'Far be it from us to forsake the Lord and serve other gods, for it was the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, and who wrought those wondrous signs before our very eyes, and guarded us all along the way that we traveled.'"

Q: OK, fine. Right? So in other words, what do they do? They recapitulate the central piece. They said, "Yes, we feel fundamentally blessed. Therefore, what?"

M: We, too, will serve the Lord.

Q: We, too, will serve --

F: And that's Sinai: I brought you ought --

Q: Correct!

F: -- and therefore I am the Lord.

Q: And therefore... You got it! It's a straight repetition of Sinai. And that's why Sinai doesn't exist in the story, because Sinai has to be recreated, and you have to say, "Yes, you took me out, I'll therefore do this. Yes, you made me the most successful generation in the history of America, therefore I'll do X. Yes. I have a state for the first time in 2,000 years thanks to you. You did it.

Therefore I will what?" That's it. Well, right, it's not so easy, obviously.

M: Right, [00:25:00] especially if people don't even understand that there's an external, or some sense of you, right? "You did this, therefore." Well --

Q: Well --

M: -- I question whether the first part of that formula even exists in the minds of (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) being God.

M: Does it matter whether we want to... I don't need to have an argument with you whether it's internal or external.

Q: I believe that most of our generation could -- let's leave San Jose out, because I don't know those people well.

M: Come on down. (laughter)

Q: You know what?

M: Right on the corner. Right on the corner.

Q: I've buried enough of those parents in the last ten years, buried enough of the senior generation --

M: Yeah, that's definitely --

Q: -- to know -- you know, but when I bury them, I haven't talked to them after they're dead; I talk to their children -- that it's amazing the gratefulness (inaudible). Now, if

you can access the gratefulness they feel to their parents, right, then you have therefore.

M: So [00:26:00] don't worry about the... First of all, forget the discussion of God; second of all, don't worry about the master story? All you're saying is if they're grateful to their parents, that's the place to start.

Q: Gracefulness means what?

F: Responsive.

F: Blessed.

Q: I feel blessed. Right. Now, what I'm fairly good at is chances are when they articulate what that blessing is, I will be able to integrate that blessing into a larger (inaudible). I happen to believe that. That's --

M: So that's the entry point.

Q: That's the entry. But that's just asking, OK, what really were the experiences that made you who you are? That's -- I told you the [Don?] story, right? This guy from Denver.

M: I don't know.

F: You did.

F: (inaudible) his name, though.

Q: I'm allowed to use his name now, because he closed on the gift two days ago. (laughter)

F: (inaudible).

Q: This is \$400,000 -- no, that I haven't disclosed yet. That's in January. (laughter) But 400,000 over three years, this guy, 60 years old, completely peripheral Jew, hears a speech that I give in Aspen, which basically I did [00:27:00] a kind of version of this, in which I said there are whole new ways in which we're playing out being Jewish that is not being mentioned by this society. And I gave examples of philanthropic situations outside of Jewish life. Quotation marks, outside of Jewish life, right? I get a call from this guy. He only came because it was in Aspen, and one of his friends said, "Come here this guy, da-da-da." He wasn't interested at all. He calls me two days later, he said, "Are you coming to Denver?" I said, "Yes." Did I tell you this story?

F: No!

Q: "Are you coming to Denver?" He said, "Can you come to Denver? I want to meet with you." So I said -- you know, I didn't know who he was, exactly. I said, "Who are you?" Tells me who he is, right, "I am da-da-da-da-da-da." Right, I do some checking on him. I call him back. "Yes, I happen to be coming to Denver." (laughter)

F: As of five minutes ago.

M: (inaudible).

Q: I happen to be, I happen to be coming to Denver. That was the joke. And I meet with him, I sit with him, 60 years old, very hard, tough guy. I mean, this guy, he's the owner of Cuban Industries, and Continental Can, and he owns 11 banks, and he's worth about \$425, \$430 million. And I'm sitting with him, and it's a very, very intense --

[00:28:00] it's very intense, because he's really -- you know, he's saying to me, "You know, I never heard anybody talk about Judaism this way. There are all these different ways of being Jewish, and I kind of feel that way." I said, "Listen," I said, "tell me a little bit about who you are." But I said, "Listen, I've got to ask you one question: why did you give \$5 million to the University of Denver?" And the community had come to me, key leadership in the community had come to me and called him a traitor.

M: In the Jewish community.

Q: Right, because he's not giving... It's so bad, but, you know, it is a real life feeling. On the other hand, if you're working inside of a system, and you're trying to feed the community, and you're trying to build the Jewish community, and these wealthy guys give \$5 million to the University of Denver, and they're giving you \$5,000 --

F: Which is a Jesuit university.

Q: -- right -- it does make you feel... You know, sometimes a part of you, like God, wants to do what?

F: Wipe them out.

Q: Lash out. So it's real stuff. So I said to him -- but apparently he was very hurt by that, and I heard -- is this really on tape, this thing?

F: [00:29:00] Do you want me to turn...?

Q: (inaudible). (laughter) And he had [heard?]. And so I said to him...

(break in video)

Q: -- story, the best of being human, right? So what do we have to say about that story. That's the first thing I said to him. "You know, this is really an amazing thing. How did you feel? How did you feel when you gave that \$5 million?" He says to me, "I felt like I knew who I was. I was paying back (inaudible)." And he gives to me all this language that sounds to me so covenantal, and so religious, and so (inaudible). And I said, "You know, it's amazing: for the last 2,000 years these people have been saying, [Hebrew]. Study the Torah, study, study, study, study, study, study." And then you get to the (inaudible) twentieth century, and here's this guy, Don (inaudible), and he recognizes study and education is so important he's ready to put \$5 million

to the University of Denver, and the program was specifically for remedial reading, so that the inner-city and poverty people can actually go to college. It was all devoted to that. So I said, "This is an [00:30:00] amazing thing. What you did is you took [Hebrew] and widened what we mean by Torah, and understood that if you can't read, there's no way that you can [be in there?]. There's no way that you can function as a human being. So you're creating (inaudible)." He says, "Yeah." I said, "You know what? I've got to show you something." I pull out (inaudible), because I'm always carrying a (inaudible). I pull out a (inaudible) and I say, "This is a blessing, that three times a day Jews have been saying, six days a week for the last 1,600, 1,800 years. It's the fourth blessing of the central prayer of the Amidah. It's [Hebrew], meaning those words, (inaudible), right, which is just what an amazing gift, [baruch?], blessed, right, [honen hadath?]. What an unbelievable... *Honen* is who bestows, but "bestows" is bad English. Who graces you? Who gives you the gift? God. What's God?

F: (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible). And it struck me, why doesn't that [*baruch*?] say *honen* [*dath*?] (inaudible). [00:31:00] Could it? Well, what does it say?

F: (inaudible).

Q: *Honen dath*. In other words, the same first request after the first three [Hebrew], the first request you asked for is the capacity to discern things, the capacity for knowledge. I said, "Here's a [Hebrew]. Now, I'm going to transliterate this, and I'm going to say this, because this [Hebrew] said, which you've lifted up, right, *baruch* [Hebrew]. It takes transliteration." And he says to me, "I want you to know, this is the first... I've always known I'm Jewish. This is the first time anybody ever made me feel Jewish."

F: Wow.

Q: Why did I tell you this story? That's the therefore of his generation, right? And he felt grace -- oh yes, this is why -- he felt blessed by his father, and he was able to connect to that, and so that before his father died, and then when he came to die what am I, who am I -- because you don't really have to ask that question, [00:32:00] ask the generation past -- who am I? He says, "Well, I'm the son of my father, who was the son of his father, who was the son

of his father, going back all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a people always committed to education, we'atta. Therefore, I, Don [Sterling?], give \$5 million to the University of Denver." Now, the goal here is to extend -- if he's really concerned about that, he has to help the Jewish community understand. Now he has to go back into the Jewish community, understand there's wider understanding of Jewish identity, there's wider places to play out, because he has to rebuild the culture to be able to deal with that kind of Jew. OK, so it's locate the blessings, and if you feel blessed, you'll always (inaudible). What we do, generally, is we always do what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible).

F: Don't feel bad for the things they don't do.

Q: Look at this: at a covenanting moment, the last thing you can do is (inaudible). He doesn't say, "I'm going to tell you all the ways you fucked up along the way." [00:33:00] Locate the blessings. OK, so now go to Samuel 1, chapter 6 -- 8. Eight or seven. Yeah, eight. Chapter 1, verse 8. What time is it?

(inaudible responses around room)

Q: Good, I'm doing OK. OK, now you're on land. We're going to see the first --

F: Hold on.

Q: -- the first leadership change, the first leadership type change in the people. OK? Now let's read. OK, let's read from verse four. Who's the leader? Samuel 1, chapter 8, verse 4. Who's the leadership at this moment? We're in the land about 120 years, right? Until this moment we've lived as a tribal confederacy, with leadership emerging in a somewhat [00:34:00] as needed, ad hoc fashion. As you were attacked in one part of the country, leadership emerged. Those were called the Judges, right? Samuel's a transition figure, right? It's not that he's designated anywhere. As the different crises emerged, this kind of leader emerged. It's a charismatic form of leadership. It is a much more spontaneous form of leadership. Its authority base is much more fragile and transitional. It's really dependent on his capacity to deal with whatever the issues were. Generally, they were military issues. And now we're on the land about 125 years and what happens? Verse four. Somebody read. You see where we are, by the way?

M: What, 8:4?

Q: Samuel 1, chapter 8, verse 4.

F: "All the elders"?

Q: Yeah, "All the elders."

F: "All the elders of Israel assembled and came to Samuel at Ramah, and they said to him, [00:35:00] 'You have grown old, and your sons have not followed your ways. Therefore, appoint a king for us to govern us like all other nations.' Samuel was displeased that they said, 'Give us a king to govern us.'"

Q: OK, what's going on here? What do the people ask for?

F: A king.

Q: A king.

F: (inaudible) like everybody else.

Q: Why do they want a king?

F: They want to be like everybody else.

Q: Right, what does that mean?

F: They want to be something that...

Q: Why do you need a king?

F: To tell you what to do.

Q: OK, what does a king make you feel?

F: They're somewhat in control.

Q: They're somewhat in control. They're just secure. They're just stable. And the most important thing a king can do (inaudible) was that he could protect.

F: It takes responsibility away from (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: He could create a centralized army, right? And ensure that you can fight a battle. But (inaudible) shifted up to now how the battles were formed. Everything seems to have worked fine as long as they depended on what?

M: God.

F: God.

Q: God. So what do you see, [00:36:00] going on in these people?

F: (inaudible).

F: Displacement (inaudible).

Q: So one possibility is the displacement, right, itself of God, and actually it's not sufficient to depend on God, and they want what? A human king, right? That's one read. The other read is that this community is beginning to take more and more what?

M: Resources (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: As a human community. As a human community, they are not as comfortable depending on God. No, that's very nice.

M: But what if --

F: You could say they're taking less responsibility.

Q: Well, of course, that's the ambivalence about the desire for a king. Samuel looks at their desire for a king, and his reaction is?

F: (inaudible).

Q: This is terrible, right? This is terrible. (inaudible).
Keep going.

F: Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord replied to Samuel, "Heed the demand of the people in that everything they say to you, for it is not you that they have rejected, it is me they have rejected as their king."

Q: This is God at his psychological best. (laughter)
[00:37:00] You know, he feels that the real problem Samuel's feeling is what?

F: Feeling rejected.

Q: Yeah, he's feeling rejected, right? So he says, "No, no, don't worry, this is an old thing that this people" --

F: (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: -- "they're always rejecting, they're always rejecting."
Yeah, let's go.

F: "Like everything else they have ever done -- like everything else they have done ever since I brought them out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and worshipping and gods, so they are doing to you. Heed their demand, but warn

them solemnly, and tell them about the practices of any king who will rule over them."

M: I have to interrupt for one second, brief point. The language here to me, and often, actually, when God speaks, is highly amusing, because I basically imagine him in, like, a suit over a cup of coffee talking to Samuel. I mean, it's not very highfalutin language. You know, it's like, "Ever since I brought them out," it's like...

Q: Ever since I brought them out, we've been negotiating how to be on a journey that's special, and yet how to be able to feel secure.

M: Right, but the language [00:38:00] makes God very perceivable.

Q: Yeah, well, that's the beauty of the Bible, right? It's not some abstract character. It's a character through a (inaudible). The character is really you, right? Because what you're really getting here, it's not that some God is speaking to you, saying, "Hello, folks, you can, you can't." What's happening here? You're witnessing, in a literary way, a debate that was happening inside the Jewish people at a moment of transition in leadership. A good portion of the Jewish people, right, decided that we needed a different type of leader. We had to move from

charismatic, transitional, to a centralized kingship, right? Or, for lack of a better -- we had to move from a rabbinic, synagogue-based, to a more centralized politically federation-based continental leadership.

F: Or from religious to secular.

Q: Or from a less overtly religious to a, right, more covertly religious. [00:39:00] Good, right. And you're witnessing in here the different pulls in a moment of leadership transition. Another group, a small group of people, said this change will do what? They represented -- Samuel is the paradigm here. This change, this leadership type will do what to the covenant?

F: Weaken it.

Q: It will weaken it. It will undermine the credibility of covenant, because the credibility of covenant is dependent on all Jews feeling what?

F: Connected with God.

Q: Connection to God, equal connection and equal to each other. Where did we learn that? What place did we learn that?

M: Sinai.

Q: Sinai, exactly. We learned at the covenant of Sinai that you are all a kingdom of --

M: Priests.

Q: -- priests, and there is...

F: One God.

Q: One [*memech?*]. And then in [*ashra?*] you say [Hebrew].

(inaudible) everlasting kingdom, and you endure it throughout all generations, right? [00:40:00] And then we learned, even in the book of Judges -- we didn't study this, but in the book of Judges you have [*Gidon?*]. In the book of Judges there's actually a story in which they try to name a king, and it goes back, because the king, he goes, "I'm not going to be king. I don't want to be king. There's only one king." So here, right in a moment, this is a real -- and now we're setting up the conflict between two leadership types, right, for the rest of Biblical history, king and what? Well, God is -- let's use a human leadership type. The king is always going to be fighting with who? The prophet, right?

M: (inaudible) prophet, judge, priest.

Q: The king and prophet are always going to be fighting.

Prophet's also going to be fighting with the priest, right?

The priest and the king will tend to get along, right?

Prophet represents what I would call pure covenant, right?

But without a king, what happens to the Jewish people?

[00:41:00] What do you think would've happened without that move to leadership, this leadership type?

F: It would've disbanded through it.

Q: It would've been destroyed, correct. The Philistines would've destroyed them, without the capacity to centralize an army and to build a real national political framework, and once you start building a national political framework you're very much like who?

F: But that's not what it says here. It says they're assimilating.

F: (inaudible), yeah.

Q: It's going to say dissent. It's going to say they dissent, right? Well, no, we know the view of the king. In the end, who's the most important king? David. David becomes the ancestor to who? Messiah. That's, in the end, the Bible's (inaudible) on the importance of kingship. Without kingship, what happens? Kingship was the absolute necessary compromise to move the covenant along. And, of course, that's why God says what about it?

F: Go ahead and do it.

Q: Go ahead and do it. Right? God says, "Go ahead and do it." So it's like repetition of what event? That's like *kashrut* again. "All right, go ahead and do it, but..."

M: Here are these --

Q: Here are these what?

F: Provisions.

M: Limitations.

Q: Good. Here are these correctives, and the dangers. You'd better be on the lookout when you're moving this direction.

[00:42:00] Right? And that's, right, the ethics of kingship. The ethics of kingship. So let's read a little bit more. First of the warnings. Right, another way of putting it is kings balance budgets. Right?

M: Well, actually, I think no --

Q: Prophets --

M: -- kings throw budgets out of whack, because they acquire wives and chariots and armies and --

Q: All those are for what purposes?

F: Protection.

F: Protection.

Q: Right, those are all about -- you're going to have ethics of kingship in a second. That's Deuteronomy. If you go to Deuteronomy 17, you'll see the first ethics of kingship. Prophets believe that there's unlimited resources, right? They never had to balance a budget in their life. They're the idealists.

M: They didn't have a budget.

Q: Right? They're realists. Right? And this is the balance between the ideal and real. If all you have is prophets, could you imagine? First of all, prophets never accomplish anything, right? Every single prophet in the history of the bible except for one, Jonah, fails. Every single one.

[00:43:00]

M: They write a good story.

Q: Yes, they write an excellent story. They've decided to take prophets as their dominant lead, right? Because the prophets do have one insight that is essential to being Jewish, and that is that morality has to be factored in, (inaudible), and that was unheard of. Most histories of people -- if you're a Marxist, the only thing that's important is what? Economics. If you're Hans Morgenthau, the only thing that's important is politics. If you are Freud, the only point if you really want to understand the culture, look at all the --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- what? Sexuality, and the repressed, right? If you're a prophet, you say, no, if you really want to understand where the destiny of the people is going, look at the moral quality of the human relationships. This was a

fundamentally new insight. It's still not -- it's still debated. It's still debated whether, in fact, morality makes any difference in the destiny of the human race. It's not clear. It's not clear. Right, real politics demands that you don't take [00:44:00] morality into account in the relationship between nation states, and if you start to do that, what'll happen?

M: You'll get destroyed.

Q: You'll get destroyed. So this is a real, fundamentally different read on what makes a nation. Now, the Jewish people looked at this early on and they said, "I think we need an army, too. (laughter) I think we need a king, also." The danger of the king is, of course, what happens when you assume power this way? Power very often does what?

F: Corrupts.

Q: Corrupts. That's got to be a warning. But what these people understood is that they had a sense that prophets really, in some respects, were powerless, and they were afraid that powerlessness would equal what?

F: Destruction.

Q: Destruction.

F: But couldn't -- I don't know, but would this work in this case, as it did before, where if we go back to that Sinai model, and here are the people --

Q: Good, good.

F: -- and I'm not quite sure where I come out on this, [00:45:00] but yes, they want a king, and maybe because they want to be like everyone else they don't want to lose control, so they realize they need someone to hold them together.

Q: They need an army, or they need a real --

F: They need an army, or --

Q: -- military.

F: -- or because they aren't sure of their commitment, and they aren't really sure of who they are, they can't really get at themselves, so they're, again, asking, and they're flailing a bit. And I'm not sure where they are, if we use that Sinai backdrop, where they fit, if they've actually done the Sinai at this stage, or if they're still --

Q: Well, I think they're figuring out how to live on the land, and when you figure out (inaudible) you have to develop a judiciary, you have to develop a political system. Real life demands, right, not saying everything will work out.

F: Right, so it would be (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Up to now everything has worked out, because God would take care of things, but now you're living on the land, and what are they beginning to recognize? That that's not how life works.

F: So they need to take their own responsibility.

Q: They need to be able to figure out what does their political system look like. And then -- that was your point, [00:46:00] really -- once you ask a real-life question, don't be surprised that whatever you come up with will be basically in light of the context of the day. And then the only question is when they take a king are they assimilated?

M: That's your question.

Q: Right? Are they assimilating, or is this...? No, because they're assimilating, yes, the idea of kingship, but they're going to do kingship in a --

F: Jewish way.

Q: -- Jewish way. That's always the question. I mean, could they have figured out some other completely novel form of government? No, no one does!

M: That's right.

Q: Right? By the way, we're in the exact same period. We're in a leadership transition period. We are moving right now, at

the end of the twentieth century, from a rabbinic model of leadership to a lay model of leadership. This is non-democratic. Do you know why this is working in the Jewish people today, this has emerged? Because we're living where?

F: In a democracy.

Q: In a democracy. So don't be surprised. Our leadership and governing structures, our governance structures, are going to be [00:47:00] influenced, or assimilated -- that's a good question, always -- are going to be influenced by the dominant governance structures of the society in which we live. Now, the only question is most rabbis -- by the way, that's including reform rabbis -- can't stand the idea of what? Democracy! And do you know what democracy means? You are really going to make some decisions about what your Jewish life's going to look like. Now, the upside of this, the upside of democracy, is (inaudible) empowerment. What's the downside? What's the warning? Here, OK, let's finish the warning. So what's the warning? Oh, watch. Great, this is great. Watch the warning. "And God said to (inaudible), 'Listen to them, da-da-da-da-da, they've always been like this, you know, they're never really happy with my leadership,'" right? Verse 11. Now watch the warning.

F: "He said, 'This will be the practice of the king who will rule over you: he will take your sons and [00:48:00] appoint them as his charioteers and horsemen, and they will serve him as outrunners for his chariot. He will appoint them as his chiefs of thousands and fifties, or they will have to plow his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons and equipment for his chariot. He will take your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. He will seize your choice fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his courtiers. He will take a tenth part of your grain and vintage and give it to his eunuchs and courtiers. He will make your male and female slaves, your choice young men, and your asses, and put them to work for him. He will take a tenth part of your flocks, and you shall become his slaves. The day will come when you cry out because of the king whom you yourselves have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you on that day.'"

Q: Mm-hmm. So what do we have here? By the way, all this he's describing is what? Exactly right.

F: What's going to happen.

Q: Right. Anything bad? The truth is, this is what kings do. What do kings do?

F: Taxes.

Q: They tax. Why do they tax? If they're doing it right. Let's say they're doing it right. Why do they tax?

F: [00:49:00] To fund services.

Q: Because they have to provide services. They have to run a government. Now, we're going to learn Solomon over-ween, right, overextends, I should say. He taxes too much. What happens to the government? What happens? Kingdom splits. But this is what kings do. They build armies. If you have to build an army -- and they have courts. And you know what the upside of having a court is, and a palace? You can be living 100 miles away, but you know what?

F: The flag.

Q: The flag, right. And you feel what?

F: Protected.

Q: Secure, and protected, and inviolable. Is that worth paying to live for?

F: Yeah.

F: Oh, you'd better believe it.

Q: Sure. That's what centralized power does. Do you know what will happen when we really have a serious continental community? Every community won't have to worry about funding every single little thing in their community. But if we really have a continental community, there'll be fair

share, and taking care of our common issues. If we really have a continental community, there'll be a fair share in taking care. San Francisco has many more immigrants from the Soviet Union than Des Moines. [00:50:00] Des Moines spends no dollars on that. You know why? Because no Russian immigrants move to Des Moines. (laughter) But here in San Francisco, you have an extreme number.

M: They default under pressure. (laughter)

Q: It is because we fundamentally don't have a national --

M: (inaudible).

Q: -- continental community. We don't.

M: Of course we don't.

M: Many federations around the country defaulted under pressure --

Q: Right.

M: -- and they prevent them (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
--

Q: Which indicates what about the internal governance of the Jewish people at the end of the twentieth century? We have a governance problem. (laughter) We have a governance problem. We're at the exact same moment. Why? Because we're in a shift in what the demands are. A shift in demands calls very often for new kinds of governance structures.

But you know what? We're learning. It's really hard to have new governance structures, because local communities, the last thing they want to do is what?

M: Give you power.

Q: Right. Well, what do you think Samuel's feeling here?

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Right? And in the most positive way, if I let a national organization, a continental community, dictate to me, [00:51:00] I'm really --

F: Using power.

Q: They're lording over me. [Hebrew]. I know what's best for my community. And in some respects (inaudible) what?

F: That's true.

Q: That's true.

M: That's the national political discourse, too. We're moving away from it.

Q: Don't be surprised -- that was really the smartest point today was that whatever's happening in the general society, chances are we're going to what?

F: Reflect it.

Q: Reflect it, mirror it. Now the only question is: is that assimilation, or will we do it differently?

F: Influence.

Q: By the way, we have a tremendous thing to offer America. If we could figure out -- because we have our national and state, too. We have our federal and state. We're the only community like that in the country. Catholics have a little bit, right? But not as serious as we do. Really, really have a national framework --

M: But they don't (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: -- which is like our federal government, and we have a state, which is our local federations and local initiatives, right? And we are not figuring out how to divide responsibilities between the federal part of our country and the state part of our country. If we could work out what that mechanism is, we'd be a model to the governance structures of America.

M: (inaudible) distinguish between pejorative and non-pejorative assimilation, also, the direction --

Q: [00:52:00] Good.

M: -- of assimilation.

Q: Great. Well, and, of course, it's all in the percentages, right? It's all in percentages.

F: And that's what you did with the man who you closed the (inaudible), because instead of taking his assimilation as pejorative --

Q: Well --

F: -- you took it as something positive. You gave it a... Why is that Jewish?

M: I wouldn't characterize what the man did as assimilation. I would characterize it as his journey.

F: Oh, that's... No, that's --

Q: Let's not --

F: But he had experienced it in the community as assimilation. Everyone who comes down here --

M: Right. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) experienced it that way. He was (inaudible).

Q: He was damned for mitzvah, but you're calling that a mitzvah. Do you understand there's only pieces of the Jewish community that say, "When you call that a mitzvah, right, you're really indicating assimilation?" It's very nice (inaudible). You know how radical it is to call that a mitzvah? That's what you --

M: I don't think it is. Yeah.

Q: You have to feel that, because it'll make you... That's the expansion of where covenantal behavior happens.

F: Because the prophet talks of unlimited resources, and there you're being a prophet. And we're talking about kingship

you've got to balance the budget, you've only got so much money and you (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Now, of course, you need both.

M: That's why people default on their Fair Share payments.

Q: [00:53:00] Yeah, right.

M: No, they do.

F: Well, but they default (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Let's -- I only wanted to -- my goal is not --

F: It's just like (inaudible) local.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Shh, one person, please, one person, one person.

F: People don't give money to the next generation because it's not their Sinai --

Q: OK, great.

F: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: I don't want to... All I'm interested in -- the point I'm making here is that we're in a similar moment in which internal governance questions, which are central to how covenants are going to play out in the next period, right - - the whole religious community was against Zionism because the notion of having -- right, the ultra-Orthodox community was against Zionism, because the notion of having --

M: So were the Reform Jews.

Q: -- right -- a political, national framework responsible for the protection of the Jewish people was somehow an undermining of the covenant, not a movement on the journey. That was a very similar. In many ways, the Federation rabbi problem is a king/prophet rabbi. [00:54:00] It has a similar kind of quality, right? So that's why if you work in Federation -- just those of you who work in synagogue and educators can appreciate this -- when you work in the Federation, and been on Federation boards, people come in and they talk about reallocation of dollars, right? And they say, "You have to give X number of dollars to synagogues, towards educational programs." They say it in a way as if there are, like, all of these dollars floating around, and if you just... (laughter) They sound like prophets. And, of course, what do you do with prophets?

M: You kill them. (laughter)

Q: You kill them! You kill prophets, because they haven't the faintest idea about how to live in the world.

F: I think --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Now, remember, I did this in Boca Raton. I did this in Boca Raton. I met with all the rabbis, and the rabbis were

freaking out about they wanted to allocate funds, so I brought to them, right, the needs that were not being met, just for the elderly in Boca Raton area, the needs that were not being met. I said, "Let me ask you, right, [00:55:00] tell me: where would you cut from right here? I know, you think education is so important, your shul is so important. Tell me, where would you cut, just in the needs of the elderly? We're not talking about any other needs in this community, just in the needs of the elderly. Do you think that's a Jewish need, taking care of the elderly?" And they say [Hebrew], right, the whole relationship of the -- and all [*hashel?*] stuff about reverence for the elderly (inaudible). You think this is an important Jewish need? (inaudible). That's the real issue. Kings are the ones in the end who knew (inaudible) --

M: So where did they cut? (inaudible)? (laughter)

Q: Alls it did -- yeah, that's happening around our country.

M: Sure, of course.

Q: But let's hold up --

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Their only purpose was prophets have to be sensitized to the real issues of realism. Now, of course, the danger of kings, right, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

F: High overhead.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). (laughter)

Q: High overhead, good. High overhead. That's a not proper use of the resources that you're -- and, by the way, that's Solomon.

M: Only 10%. Only 10%.

Q: That's Solomon.

F: That's not the perception.

Q: That's Solomon. That's Solomon. And also, the danger of power [00:56:00] is that you forget about the larger range of needs, because you enjoy the status quo so much, so that the kings actually think, the way the budget is now is just perfect. Because where am I?

F: On the top. (laughter)

Q: And that's where you have to be very careful.

M: It's good to be the king.

Q: Right? That's where you have to be careful.

F: Well, the king also has the wider vision, right? Because he, theoretically, or she --

F: Well --

F: Yeah, well, but --

Q: Well, the danger --

F: -- they would know how much money they need, so they're maybe callous in wanting more, but they see hopefully the wider picture.

Q: Hopefully, right? In fact, when it's working right, right - - in fact, prophets are supposed to have the largest vision.

F: They would hope. That'd be (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: And remember, [Hebrew]. I mean, he was no dummy, so talking about why (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Right, but if you look at the first story, he had very bad advisors. (laughter) Very bad advisors, right? When the prophets are working right, a Nathan can speak truth to David, who's exercised what? Power. That's when it's working right. The prophet can bring truth to power, because it never dawns on the prophet [00:57:00] that it's done inside the system. And, of course, what you have in the American Jewish scene is everybody's either inside or outside, or it's not one table. So the average rabbi, it never dawns on him that it's his community. He thinks that it's his shul, the rabbi's community, so the Federation is the other. It's a giant joke, the Federation is the other. The Federation's doing everything that he's talking about.

In fact, if the Federation went out of business, the synagogues would float right down under, because how can you talk about Pesach, and get people to God, and read Torah, without acting on anything? And no synagogue acts on anything. Collecting cans is not social justice.

F: Well...

Q: No, no. On a large scale, it's not. It's like sending around a *pushke*. It's sacrilegious to send around a *pushke* at the end of the twentieth century unless you recognize that it's truly symbolic, it means nothing, except the symbolic of what you really have to do with affluence (inaudible). Sending around a *pushke* is actually a [Hebrew]. It's actually a [Hebrew] if it's not done very, very carefully. Now, sending around a *pushke* when you're (inaudible) [00:58:00] is not a [Hebrew]. Sending around a *pushke* (inaudible) is to say no matter what, even if I have nothing, I can't approach God without getting what? Stuck. Then it's actual noble. Sending around a *pushke* at the end of the twentieth century (inaudible).

M: Wearing a red ribbon.

Q: It's the same thing.

M: And that being --

Q: It's the same thing.

M: -- that being the extent of your statement in the fight again states is a disgrace.

Q: Same thing.

F: (inaudible).

M: It's the same thing.

Q: Now, not necessarily. It doesn't have to be that way.

M: Right.

Q: Right? That's the danger of all what?

M: Rituals.

F: Symbols.

M: A *pushke's* more complicated than that for two reasons: one is it accesses a whole lot of memory on how we (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) I like it, that's nice, very nice.

M: And second, it depends who you pass your *pushke* to.

Q: OK, I --

M: So if you're a kid -- no, no, no, because --

Q: You're right.

M: -- we all know that if your kids put something in the *pushke* --

Q: Good.

M: -- every Friday night, they're more likely to give a whole lot when they're older.

Q: I meant specifically a *pushke* at minyan, right? No, I agree, there's a lot of conservative congregations that do the *pushke* at minyan business, [00:59:00] right, but it doesn't take a serious responsibility of making sure that every single person see (inaudible) Federation.

F: Because hardly anyone goes to minyan.

M: Yeah, the only people at minyan are probably the people who are going to give anyway, so...

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: But, you know, the real issue is when synagogues -- the synagogue that I founded, it does 100% of its own solicitation for the Federation. Right? Hundred percent, every single person is solicited for the Federation. Because you cannot be involved in a local -- you can't be a local community unless you are being responsible to the board, right? And we made a decision that the Federation shouldn't waste one dollar on outreach for our synagogue, because there are so many people that are not affiliated. You should be figuring out how to nurture them. Plus, the best money you get is when you -- it's in your own community, and it's one family asking another family,

people who (inaudible) together. And our Federation pledge is all done on one Shabbos morning, not the Federation Shabbat in which somebody comes and speaks "Give to Federation," but the entire community takes (inaudible) Torah and makes their pledge. Therefore, Torah's connected to what?

F: Giving.

M: (inaudible).

Q: To giving. Right? [01:00:00] There's a cultural context about (inaudible).

F: And what kind of giving patterns do they have?

Q: Chicago east side is the largest per capita giving congregation in the city of Chicago. The largest per capita. Of course, because it's a healthy way of giving. You're not being called by anybody that you don't know. You're being called by the congregation. Plus, there's all the pride. You know, you play off a lot of other things. You want to be the best, so you're playing off that. But that's OK.

F: They had to be the best to start off, and then you're just maintaining (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Now, OK, I don't want to make -- this is not a pitch for Federation as much it's a pitch to understand this problem

or stress between leadership types has been going on for a long, long time, right? And here was the first move of the change. Now, go to the Saul story. What time is it?

F: Ten thirty.

M: Ten thirty.

Q: Good. We go to 11:30, right? Go to --

M: We'll go to 1:30.

Q: Now, the first story, go to 15, chapter 15, and you're going to hear -- oh, just so you understand that the Torah's written from the prophetic perspective, [01:01:00] go to chapter nine.

M: I'm sorry.

M: (inaudible).

M: Chapter nine (inaudible).

Q: Right. And here's your introduction to the first king. There was a man from the house of [Yamin?], [Vihamin?], which is the smallest tribe, verse two. Right? And he had a son. His name was Saul. Good guy, right? And what is he? Very good looking. And he what? He was a head taller than everybody else. You're already getting a prophetic view of the danger of kingship. What's the danger of kingship?

F: Displacement of God, someone who's going to be --

F: Better than.

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Here the issue is -- before displacement of God, here the first issue is what?

F: Class issues.

F: Displacement.

F: No egalitarianism.

Q: You're a head over the people. Is there any such thing of one person who's a head over every single Jew?

F: No.

Q: What kind of nonsense is that? That's a metaphor. That wasn't a statement of height. It wasn't like the (inaudible) he's 6'3", the rest of the Jewish people are 5'8", right? It's not a statement of height. It's a statement of what?

F: Stature.

Q: Stature.

F: Superiority.

Q: Right. It's a statement of superiority. Right? This is the prophetic critique (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: You know, the French came up with a simple way to solve that problem. [01:02:00]

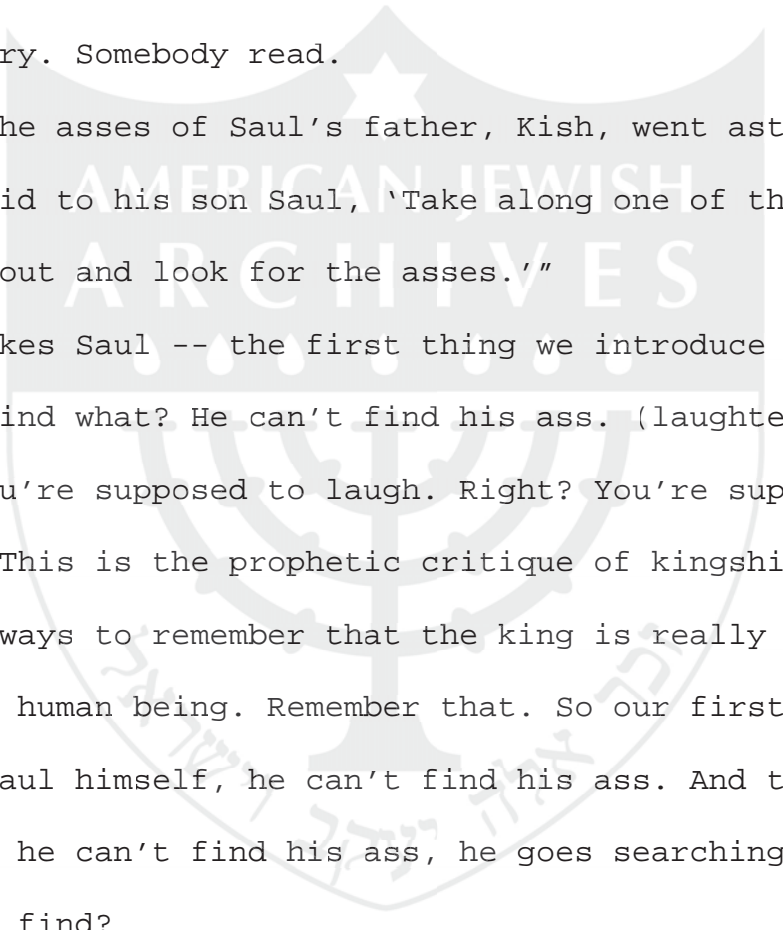
Q: Yeah, cut off their head. (laughter) Chopped off a lot of kings, right? Now watch, this is beautiful. Verse three. This is the first king. Somebody read.

M: Fifteen three? Because I'm...

Q: Nine three.

F: Nine three.

Q: I'm sorry. Somebody read.

F: "Once the asses of Saul's father, Kish, went astray, and Kish said to his son Saul, 'Take along one of the servants, and go out and look for the asses.'" 

Q: What makes Saul -- the first thing we introduce Saul is he can't find what? He can't find his ass. (laughter) By the way, you're supposed to laugh. Right? You're supposed to laugh. This is the prophetic critique of kingship. Right? It's always to remember that the king is really just another human being. Remember that. So our first story of Saul, Saul himself, he can't find his ass. And this is a person, he can't find his ass, he goes searching, and what does he find?

M: (inaudible).

Q: The kingship. He finds the kingship. And this is, of course, [01:03:00] a wonderful literary judgment of the kingship. Or, in other words, this is very healthy chapter

two reading for people who become the chair of things. It reminds them, they don't stand a head over, but, in fact, sometimes a hell of a lot of -- you know, they can't even find their ass, but they wound up being the chairman, you know?

F: We have no leaders.

Q: No leaders. (laughter) Right? And, of course, this is --

M: Oxen and sheep, camels and asses. "Saul mustered the troops and --"

Q: Now, why is this? Amalek represents the paradigmatic evil. What did they do? They attacked the weakest link right after the exodus. They attacked the most vulnerable people. So attacking the most vulnerable people gave them the image in the culture forever and ever as the paradigm of evil. And what do you do to evil?

M: Wipe it out.

Q: You wipe it out. So now watch. So that's set up so you're not supposed to feel sympathy for Amalek. It's not just anybody, right? Amalek goal was not power. Amalek's power was to destroy the vulnerable. But that's a reversal

[01:04:00] of what story?

M: Destroy the vulnerable.

Q: To destroy the powerless.

M: A reversal of what story?

Q: What story?

M: The exodus.

Q: That's the absolute reversal of the exodus story. So Amalek -- and, of course, forever and ever Amalek becomes associated with who? The next Amalek is [Khamenei?], right? Amalek is Hitler. Amalek is Arafat. Amalek becomes -- if you want to say paradigmatic evil, name them Amalek. OK, good, let's go on.

M: "Saul mustered the troops and enrolled them at Telaim, 200,000 men on foot and 10,000 men of Judah. Then Saul advanced as far as the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the wadi. And Saul said to the Canaanites, 'Come, withdraw at once from among the Amalekites, that I may not destroy you along with them.'"

Q: OK, so this is to show that there are distinctions. It's not that they wanted to kill everybody. The Canaanites were not this kind of tribe, right? They were not going to get destroyed, really because of the kind of people Amalek was, right?

M: "'You showed kindness to all the Israelites when they left Egypt.' [01:05:00] So the Kenites --"

Q: Verse eight.

M: Oh, OK. "So the Kenites withdrew from among the Amalekites." Keep going?

Q: Yeah, keep going.

M: Oh. "Saul destroyed Amalek from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is close to Egypt, and he captured King Agag of Amalek alive, and he prescribed all the people, putting them to the sword. But Saul and the troops spared Agag --"

Q: Now, the word "spared" in Hebrew here is [Hebrew]. [Hebrew] only appears one other time before this. It's what the daughter of Pharaoh does for Moses, [Hebrew], and she had a life-embracing pity, right? So now we're learning that there is no emotion that automatically is... There's no such thing as objective good emotion, right? The same empathy that Pharaoh's daughter offers winds up in exodus. This empathy, if you empathize with Amalek, potentially it would lead to what? The opposite of protection: destruction. Right? [01:06:00] And, of course, the great moment in the twentieth century with his was people that had the opportunity to assassinate (inaudible) and made a decision not to. There are some times when, in fact, you have to kill them. It's not a facet of this culture. Now, of course, you have to be careful about that, right? Now we're going to have to ask a question: if he was ready to

kill everybody, right, men, women, and children, you have to ask about (inaudible). Why didn't he kill the king? You would think, right, if (inaudible) everything is the relationship, who would you have had empathy on when you come in to (inaudible).

M: The babies.

F: (inaudible).

Q: The babies. Let's just start the babies. Let's say everybody under two. Because it's hard to imagine under two being what?

F: Evil.

Q: Evil. Right? In fact, if there was one person -- let's say you really were only going to kill a few people, you probably would kill who?

F: The king.

Q: The king of Amalek. [01:07:00] So there's something very odd that he had empathy on the king --

M: It's not odd at all. It makes perfect sense.

F: No, because he (overlapping dialogue; inaudible), because -

-

Q: Good, it's not odd at all because why?

M: He's the king.

F: -- (inaudible) --

Q: So now we recognize that Saul -- and this is the great tragedy of Saul's kingship -- Saul, as king, has greater empathy for another king than he does for who?

F: The people.

M: The people.

Q: And, of course, this is the end of kingship. This is the danger of a king, right? That somehow he has more in common with another king than he has with the king's command, which is specifically related to the defense of the most vulnerable part of his own people. So even when he shows empathy, he doesn't even show empathy to the most vulnerable parts of their people, right? Because, in fact, it's not about empathy at all. And the use of the word [Hebrew], you're supposed to say, "[Hebrew]? I haven't heard that word in a long time! [Hebrew]. Oh yeah, the daughter of Pharaoh." And you're supposed to say, "Ooh, wow, the daughter of Pharaoh -- Saul did the same thing [01:08:00] to the king of Agag as the daughter of Pharaoh did to Moses?" And you know the daughter of Pharaoh to Moses with a kind of emotion that led to the absolute redemption of the Jewish people, and it's almost like a -- it's almost pornographic to use this word here, right? And that's the author. I know it's only one word. It's hard to

pick that up if you don't speak Hebrew, but it's almost pornographic to use that word in saving Agag. Even if you want to save Agag, right, to use [Hebrew]... Of course, this is saying Saul, his mind --

F: He was sad.

Q: -- Saul's mind (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: Yeah.

F: But if you say, you know, the first (inaudible) was put to death and to be gotten rid of, and look what -- and then basically Moses comes up and saves the Jewish people, and look what happens to Egypt. Well, so here the same thing happens. They're supposed to get rid of these people, and they don't, with the king, and they come back to haunt us also. So [Hebrew] may have a very different meaning.

[01:09:00] It may mean "saved, but with consequences." And then, in both cases, it would be an equal use of the word.

Q: No, it's an equal use of the word, but one kind of empathy used in the wrong place is one type of destruction; another use of the right word ends up in redemption. It's a purposeful use of the word.

F: Right, but if you take it out of the judgment of good and bad in terms of redemption of both those people and just

use it as a technical term, then this is perhaps why it's being used.

Q: OK, I mean, it's not a technical term. It's a --

F: As my teacher (inaudible) used to say, "God is not a blabbermouth."

Q: It's not a technical term.

(laughter)

F: There's no accidents.

Q: When you only use a word twice in the whole Torah, you're using it because you want to make a very serious point about what empathy means and what empathy doesn't mean, right? If you use empathy in the wrong place --

F: Yeah, but that's not my point.

Q: -- there'll be serious consequences.

F: That's my point.

Q: Oh, fine.

F: That's my point, that you take it away from the good or the bad, and the fact that Egypt basically -- Moses comes up, the Jews leave, and Egypt goes down the tubes [01:10:00] is the same lesson of what could happen but opposite if Amalek would have been associated (inaudible) gotten rid of.

Q: OK. As long as we recognize that if you use empathy in the wrong place, right, very heavy duty consequences to you.

M: (inaudible).

Q: Right? And now (inaudible).

M: It's like, who's (inaudible) the most powerful --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: So Saul --

F: Should've killed him.

Q: Right? Less powerful. So Saul has now -- if this is not bad enough, in fact, he should lose the kingship just for this, right? Because to have pity on a king, a fellow murderous king, as opposed to people, that's already bad enough, but watch what he does, right? He had pity on the king. Go verse nine.

M: OK. "But Saul and the troops spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the second born, the lambs, and all else that was of value --"

Q: So what did they do? They took what?

F: Booty.

M: Spoils of war.

Q: They took booty, spoils of war. But what spoils?

M: The best.

Q: The best.

M: The best, right.

Q: But what was the -- you were supposed to --

M: They would not --

Q: According to the command, you were supposed to what? Not to take anything.

F: Not take anything.

Q: Because you were not supposed to get [01:11:00] any [Hebrew], any benefit from the evil of this nation, right? Next.

M: "They would not proscribe them. They proscribed --"

Q: OK, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: "-- only what was cheap and worthless."

Q: Right. They messed this up. They messed this up.

M: What's the Hebrew? Oh, even the translation's not messed up.

Q: Ten, "And the word of God came to Samuel, said, 'I regret having made him king.'" Right?

M: Right.

Q: Verse 11: "I regret that I made Saul king, because he has" what?

M: Turned away from me.

Q: "He has turned away from me in my words," right, and Saul was very angry, and he cried out the whole night. Right, and Saul got up in the morning, right, and he went to go visit Saul, and said to -- and it was said to Samuel Saul's

coming, right? Who's going to stand by you? He's coming. He hears you're coming." And Samuel said -- and now go to verse 13. Now this is where (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: You want me to keep reading it?

Q: Yeah. Samuel comes to Saul.

M: "When Samuel came to Saul, Saul said to him, [01:12:00] 'Blessed are you of the Lord! I have fulfilled the Lord's command.'" AMERICAN JEWISH

Q: And, of course, the very fact that... I mean, you know, this is literature 101. The lady protests too much, you ever hear that? His first comment is, "I did everything I was supposed to do," which is an indication that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: He knows he didn't do it.

Q: Right? But now watch. Samuel says to him, "Yeah, well, what's this --"

M: "Then what," demanded Samuel, "is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen that I hear?"

(laughter)

Q: And now, this is where Saul --

M: Great line.

Q: This is really where Saul loses the kingship (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: "Saul answered, 'They were brought from the Amalekites, for the troops spared the choices of the sheep and oxen.'"

Q: What's the problem with that?

F: (inaudible).

Q: What's the lie?

M: That he bought them.

M: No, it's not a lie. They did spare the choice of the sheep and the oxen, but they weren't supposed to.

F: Right, and they were probably not going to sacrifice.

Q: Who spared?

F: He did.

M: He did.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Who's missing?

M: Saul.

Q: He didn't take any responsibility, and it was very clear early on in verse nine that [01:13:00] who spared?

F: Saul.

Q: And here he excludes himself from what?

F: Responsibility.

M: The people.

M: Right, it says here in verse nine, "But Saul and the troops spared Agag."

Q: He distances his interest from what?

F: From those of the people.

Q: From those of the people, for the only purpose of a kingship here. It was a compromise specifically to ensure that the king would what?

M: Serve the interests of the people.

Q: Serve the interests of the people. Right? There's a divorce between the king's self-interest and the people's interest. And what a leader has to do is these things have to be -- right, these things have to be the same. That's the first definition of leadership we have here as a king. Your self-interest and the people's self-interest has to be the same. We can study this story, but the best example of this is Moses, who says that the golden calf, fine, if they're going down, do what to me?

F: Take me.

Q: Take me out of the book, even though Moses made the offer to be what? Start a whole new people with him. How many of us would've taken that offer?

F: [01:14:00] Unbelievable.

Q: We would've taken that offer. What makes Moses such an amazing leader is he says, "No, at that moment my self-interest is equal to the people's self-interest."

M: And by definition, so is God's.

Q: That's the definition. Well, that is such a powerful, compelling lesson that God learns it.

M: Right.

Q: That's why [Moshe?] is verbatim, because [Moshe's?] -- the hour is good, too. [Moshe?] is God's teacher. So leadership -- can you imagine if your self-interest and the people's interest was really the same? You could always have the people's interests coterminous with yours? It's a very powerful thing. But Saul distances himself, and this is very dangerous for -- this is not so dangerous for your average person. Why is this so dangerous, if your self-interest and the people's interest, there's a gap between, and you're the king, why is that very dangerous?

F: Because you're the one who's representing them, so if you -
-

Q: More than that.

M: You have power.

Q: You have power. Right. You have power. So you really, if your self-interest -- there's a gap, [01:15:00] right, you

can actually damage the people. If you're Jerry Schwartz, you know, and you're one of the people, and your self-interest is different, how much damage can you do? But for the king? So watch what -- it gets worse.

M: OK.

F: [Hamal?] appears again.

Q: Again, it's the same thing.

F: But it's funny that it appears in terms of taking pity on sheep.

Q: Yeah, well, that's what I was saying before.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) that's wrong.

Q: In the end, what's happened to [Hamal?]?

F: It's become --

F: Useless.

F: It's lost its --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: It's lost its what?

F: -- (inaudible). It's lost its (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Yeah, good. I don't even know the word. That's why I used the word "pornographic." It's lost its [mahud?]. It's lost its essence of what it is. It's lost its --

F: Meaning.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: It's just --

F: Its relevance.

M: -- what happens to language all the time.

Q: It's debased.

M: Right.

Q: [Hamal?] has become debased. It's a very dangerous thing when empathy gets debased. OK, let's go. And Saul said, verse 16.

M: "They were brought from the Amalekites, for the troops spared the choices of the sheep and oxen for sacrificing to the Lord your God." Yeah, right.

Q: This terrible thing. Oh, right. [01:16:00] (inaudible) right. In other words, now, he's not only distanced from the people, right, but the whole thing is beginning to be a lie. But this is the worst thing the king could do, because the more power, the more you have to be what? Accountable. Right? The more power, the more accountability, right? So as power increases, accountability has to increase. Now, by the way, the best example of this of a king is going to be what story? This is the whole story. And what was the next king?

F: David.

Q: David. Right? David and Bathsheba, right? And really, what happens is his self-interest is completely -- he uses his power completely in his self-interest, so much so that he kills and commits adultery. I mean, this is the ultimate break in the self-interest, and he actually -- that's what Nathan says to him. "Hey, listen." You know what? We'll do that in a second. But --

M: David recognizes (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: What does he say? It's only one word. What does he say? As soon as Nathan says to him, "Hey, listen, you know, this is out of control," what does he say? A second, one word. Think of how many words Saul has said. He says one word.

[01:17:00]

M: (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: And so he says what?

F: (inaudible).

M: (inaudible).

Q: This is why King David winds up becoming the greatest king.

M: (inaudible).

Q: It doesn't matter -- it's not so important... Every king, by definition is going to abuse power. That's what power does. The question is: can the king, who ultimately it's

very difficult to hold accountable, can you confront him at his court, truth to power, and say what?

F: You're guilty, (inaudible) --

M: (inaudible).

Q: No what?

F: No excuses.

F: No apologies, no lie, no --

Q: No excuses, no lines, no...

F: -- ducking.

Q: And this is exactly the opposite of Saul, right? Think about how many chairmen the board can do this. Think of how many rabbis. Think of how many (inaudible). For more power, a higher level of accountability. The more power, the more you have to be able to say (inaudible). You know why? Because the average person doesn't have enough power to do any real damage. He can do some damage in his family. But a leader? [01:18:00] Now, of course, that's why you understand why the Jews have so much guilt about all this, because the Jewish people, as a people, are supposed to be what?

M: (inaudible).

Q: Leaders. The whole people are supposed to be leaders. So that's why it stings, becomes so hot (inaudible) people. OK, let's go. And Samuel said to him, "Stop (inaudible)."

M: OK, "Samuel said to Saul, 'Stop, let me tell you (inaudible). (laughter) Stop, let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.' 'Speak,' he replied."

Q: Now, of course, this is where he (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: "And Samuel said, 'You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel.'"

Q: And do you know what it means to be [Hebrew] Israel? To be [Hebrew] Israel is you have to -- you can never separate yourself. You may think that you're small, and you're some little guy, and that people did all this, but even if they did, it's not their responsibility. It's your responsibility. Right? You have to be accountable. Now watch.

M: "'The Lord anointed you king over Israel, and the Lord sent you on a mission, [01:19:00] saying, "Go and prescribe the sinful Amalekites and make war on them until you've exterminated them." Why did you disobey the Lord and swoop down on the spoil in defiance of the Lord's will?" And the other translation is "Do what was evil (inaudible)."

Q: (inaudible).

M: "Saul said to Samuel --"

Q: Now, Saul gets another chance. Watch what he does.

M: "-- 'But I did obey the Lord. I performed the mission on which the Lord sent me.'"

Q: Who obeyed, by the way?

F: I.

Q: I obeyed, not what?

F: We.

Q: Good, we.

M: They.

Q: Or we. He's never with them in the same... Yeah, go.

M: "'I captured King Agag of Amalek, and I proscribed Amalek, and the troops took from the spoils --'"

Q: Who took?

M: The troops.

Q: They took. I mean, look, he does the same -- he hasn't heard.

M: "'And they took some sheep and oxen. Some sheep and oxen.'"

Q: OK, (inaudible) --

M: "'The best of what had been proscribed to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal.' But Samuel said, 'Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in

obedience to the Lord's command? Surely obedience is better than sacrifice, compliance than the fat of rams.'"

Q: A nice prophetic critique [01:20:00] of sacrifice. Verse 24? Then Saul finally says --

M: OK, "Saul said to Samuel, 'I did wrong to transgress the Lord's command and your instructions.'"

Q: And now the worst thing that came (inaudible) --

M: "'But I was afraid of the troops, and I yielded to them.'"

Q: So, of course, this is the --

F: They made me.

Q: In other words, what we have here is don't -- you're supposed to feel sorry for Saul, but you're not supposed to think it's unfair, because when you really understand the dynamics of this story, the way he behaved undermined the credibility of the kingship, and the worst thing a leader can do is (inaudible). You can't --

M: "They made me do it."

Q: No, you can't say they made you do it, because the very fact that you're a king means that you really... Of course, that means he's no longer king.

M: Aaron's kind of the same way with the golden calf.

Q: Yes, Aaron's very similar. It's leadership problems. We all have a problem, too, you know.

F: But he's lying, too, right? I mean, didn't he take it and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

Q: Yeah, I think he's lying here. But even the fact that you lie by saying that is a continuing distance of the people. [01:21:00] I mean, I think he's lying also because it says... You know what happened. He had pity on the king. He decided this would be a great -- let's take the best -- this will be a great war. I'll have more power by doing this. But that was exactly undermining what kingship is. Kingship is protecting his people, ensuring that they understand who God is, what their real role is, and he undermines it. And all of his lying only further means -- even the lie says -- to lie this way, he assumes this lie would work, but the lie itself shows that he further doesn't understand what it means to be what?

F: King.

Q: King. Because the last lie that a real king would use is what?

F: That he's afraid of the people --

Q: "I'm afraid of the people." That's the worst lie you could possibly make, because that lie actually says what about your kingship? It's weak. It's not credible. You're not doing what you're supposed to do.

F: Well, you've said that already.

Q: So yes, it's a lie, but the lie itself indicates the weakness of the kingship.

F: Right, it shows he's a coward.

Q: Right. But he's [Hebrew] Israel. He's [Hebrew] Israel, right? Real cowardice is not saying [Hebrew]. That's another way of putting it. Real cowardice is not saying "I stand." So now let's go to [01:22:00] David and Bathsheba's story, and you'll see that story, and that's... Oh no, first let's go to chapter two, verse seven.

F: Can I...?

Q: Yeah.

F: (inaudible) just reading a little farther, Saul says (inaudible).

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

M: Samuel, too?

Q: Yeah, (inaudible). Good, right. He's (inaudible). He's lost it. He's lost it. Right, he's lost it. Chapter two, verse -

-

M: In what?

Q: Samuel 2 --

M: Oh, OK.

F: Samuel.

F: Samuel 2.

Q: Sorry, 2 Samuel, chapter seven. Good, let's go. Now. We are now the year about 1,050 before the Common Era. You're living in the land about 200 years, a little more than 200 years. We are now going to have an institutional change. We had a leadership change. We're going to have an institutional change. Until now, the tabernacle was the central institution. [01:23:00] We are now going to move from tabernacle to temple. We've already moved to palace. That was the move to kingship, right? David, who's the most Machiavellian leader of anywhere in the Bible now wants to do what? He wants to consolidate two forms of power. Which forms? Political and religious, right? Kingship and --

M: Priestly.

Q: -- at least, priestly. He wants --

M: (inaudible).

Q: Right, he wants -- because, by the way, if you could bring those two together, you've got a lot of power.

F: That's church and state.

Q: That's church and state, yeah, with the prophets being this kind of weird category who never have any power, except what they wield --

M: Moral authority.

Q: -- moral authority. But you know, moral authority without a gun is of a limited use. (laughter)

M: So it's (inaudible).

Q: Yes. So, now, this move is very serious.

M: How many divisions (inaudible).

Q: Shh, shh. This move --

M: Well, you have a lot of divisions.

Q: He had a lot of divisions.

M: Well, the Pope at one time --

Q: Yes, the Pope had a lot of divisions. This is a big thing for the Church to understand: how it's going to convey its message in the times of powerlessness. We have the exact opposite. [01:24:00] They were a culture designed for powerlessness that wound up with most of their history having power, and they've so abused it that it's not clear that Catholicism can ever recover from the [moral stain?] of the last 1,800 years. We were a culture designed for having power, because we live on land in our own formative time, but wound up for a good piece of our history living off the land, and a question for us is will we be able to retool the culture, right, when we're in power. It's just one of the flukes of history between these two peoples, right? The tabernacle --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- is about... (laughter)

M: Spoken from within the culture.

(multiple conversations and laughter; inaudible)

Q: Tabernacle. Mobility, right? What's the advantage of a tabernacle?

F: It's mobile.

Q: It's mobile. Why is that an advantage?

M: You can go anywhere.

Q: You have a sense that God's where?

M: Everywhere.

F: Everywhere.

Q: Everywhere, right? You can't really -- there's maximum flexibility.

M: Get a piano, quick. [01:25:00] (laughter)

Q: Right? What's the advantage of a temple?

M: Centralized.

Q: Centralized. What else?

F: Rootedness.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Rootedness, good, what else?

M: You want to impress it.

Q: Right, and impressive, which creates security.

M: Majestic.

Q: Protection.

F: A sense of belonging.

Q: Belonging, good.

F: And (inaudible).

Q: Belonging, right?

F: Ritual.

F: History.

M: (inaudible).

M: Edifice complex. (laughter)

Q: Ritual each give you. No, no, no, it's not... Edifice complex is speaking to something that's really real. Why do we want to have edifices? Because it gives us a sense of what?

F: That we'll live on.

Q: That we'll live on. It's a sense of, I mean, that --

F: The future.

Q: This does have a certain fragility.

M: Permanence. Permanence. Fragility versus permanence.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Permanence, right? What's the danger of temple?

M: Gets destroyed.

Q: People actually think what?

M: It gets destroyed.

Q: People actually think what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) think that God lives there.

M: You do think God lives there.

Q: That's the perfection. You thought God only lived there. You know how it is. You can be great in a shul, be a son of a bitch in the street. [01:26:00] Right? That's the danger of the temple, right, that God'll actually live there.

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: On the other hand, this move to a temple, necessary?

F: Yes.

Q: Yeah. In fact, without this move, we probably wouldn't have survived, right? Watch. OK, just hold it like this, and now let's read. Chapter two, verse five.

F: Chapter seven.

Q: I'm sorry, chapter seven, verse one. I don't know what (inaudible). (laughter) Right? And the king was what?

F: Settled.

Q: In his house. This is a very important word. The word for house?

F: (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible). This is going to be the key word here, right?
He's settled in his house. Right, go. Janet, why don't you read?

F: "And the Lord had granted him safety from all the enemies around him. The king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Here I am, dwelling in the house of cedar, while the ark of God abides in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --'"

Q: What's the implication?

F: Well --

Q: What's the nice implication first?

F: That --

Q: The nice implication. That David feels what?

F: Feels bad.

F: Yeah, he feels like it's unfair.

Q: Right. (inaudible) --

F: There's something wrong with this picture.

Q: This is the beautiful thing about David: [01:27:00] David is so -- you never know if David is lying or David is telling the truth.

M: Or he's doing both simultaneously.

Q: He really is.

F: He's the perfect politician.

Q: He is the paradigmatic leader, and you only learn it's OK at three or four moments in his career when push comes to shove and he has to decide, and he always, always, always commits himself to the people, right? That's the genius of David. He will sell his mother for the kingship, this guy, but when push comes to shove, he won't sell out the people. It may look like it, it may look like it. His own ego is so big, David. He believes the whole world he's entitled to, right? But on the other hand, when push comes to shove -- and there are three or four scenes; we're only going to study David and Bathsheba -- when push comes to shove, he'll know what's wrong.

M: And the guy can write poetry.

Q: This is the greatness of David. This is just the greatness. So you don't know, is this the David saying, "After all, I know I'm the king, but who's really the king? God. And if I'm living in a beautiful palace, how can God live in a...?"

M: Tent.

Q: A tent, right? Or is this the David saying, [01:28:00] "I absolutely am concerned about the centralization of my authority to assure that I will always have," a what? A place.

F: Place.

Q: Good. A place. A (inaudible), that my house will live what? Forever. We don't know which David is it. So let's read it. It's great. Such a great character.

F: "Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.'"

Q: Well, that night Nathan had a return vision, verse five.

F: "But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan. 'Go and say to my servant David, "Thus said the Lord, 'Are you the one to build a house for me to dwell in?'"'"

Q: Buy it, again, go.

F: "'From the day that I have brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, to this day I have not dwelt in a house.'"

Q: (inaudible), right.

F: "'But have moved around, moved about in a tent and tabernacle.'"

Q: In other words, this is a God that doesn't want to be what?

M: Don't fence me in.

Q: Don't fence me in, right? Because the danger here really is idolatry, that you can actually define God, right? Here, [01:29:00] this is more of "I shall be what I shall be." In fact, this is really, in many ways, the God of who, the God of where?

F: The desert.

Q: This is the God of the desert. So now give me the location when I say "the God of the desert." The God of...?

M: Sinai.

Q: Sinai. This is really the God of Sinai.

M: God of the journey. That's why it's nice to be Moses.

Q: This is really the God of Sinai, and that's why Sinai happens where? Outside the land. If you were telling the story, you would've had Sinai either in Egypt or in the land, right?

M: Right.

Q: Because in the land --

M: And then build a temple on Sinai.

Q: And build a temple on Sinai, right. You would've built the temple on Sinai, exactly. But here is a very important cultural moment. It really wants to unnerve the centrality of the land, at the same time that it says you absolutely need a what?

M: Land.

Q: A land. You absolutely need a land to be able to fully play out your covenant, to fully create a society for the rest of the world to look at and say, "Wow, what a wise and discerning people this is." (laughter) You actually need

[01:30:00] a land, because you can't play off... In other words, that's the importance of Israel. The importance of Israel: it's the only full place to be a living laboratory for the playing out of our values. Right, that's its most important one, right? Because no matter how great we are here, no matter how value-oriented, we're really fundamentally not responsible for all parts of society, right? And that makes Israel the most interesting. That's why people want to be involved in the project, because you feel it. It's a big project. It's a really, fundamentally big project. But [Julia?], if we don't ensure that that nation can actually do that, right, it undermines the credibility as a whole, because, as it says, Judaism only works when you have synagogues and a place of teaching, but if you really have to build a society, what?

F: Society --

M: (inaudible) --

Q: It doesn't work. Me, I'm out of it, if that's the case. I'm not interested in being part of a society in which we have to do it OK because we could pray about the dream. Personally, I would walk away from being Jewish and do something else. I'll let you know upfront, that's how serious the state of Israel is. Because the values of the

whole culture, right, are only truly tested in a living situation, and to me, the last 1,800 years [01:31:00] was just about if you can keep the values alive to actually test out. Now, I want to test it out here, too, but I think to be this free also allows us to test out a wider range than we ever tested out in the diaspora, right? But if you can't test it out really, if you can't build a penal system, a judiciary system, a welfare system, a system of minority rights, a system of democracy, if you can't really take Judaism and make it a living in the full dimension of the culture, then you're saying Judaism is 90% and 10% reality. Serious condemnation. So here, right, here -- so you boast you can absolutely do what? You're going to build a temple. What mountain?

M: (inaudible).

Q: Shh. What mountain you going to build the temple on?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Give me another name. Mount --

F: The temple mount, the --

F: [Orion?].

F: [Orion?].

Q: (inaudible), right? Right? Zion. These are two different mounts, right, with two different ways of experiencing

being Jewish, right? And now we're going to see. [01:32:00]

Watch how different this will be. Keep going.

F: You want us to read?

Q: Yeah.

M: Where are we here?

Q: Verse seven. "Wherever Israel was, I always went." Don't you understand that my mobility is central to who I am, right? Keep reading.

F: "As I moved about wherever the Israelites went, did I ever approach any of the tribal leaders (inaudible) take care of my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Further, say thus to my servant David, "Thus said the Lord of hosts, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be ruler of my people Israel. I have been with you where you went and have cut down all your enemies before you. Moreover, I will give you great renown, like that of the biggest men on Earth.'""

Q: This is a (inaudible) section.

F: ""I will establish a home for my people Israel and will plant them firm, so they shall dwell secure and shall trouble no more.'""

Q: This is God as a perfect psychologist.

F: ""Evil men shall not --'""

Q: He says that he hears David asking -- what's David really asking for?

F: Millions --

Q: Am I going to be what?

M: A great king.

Q: Am I going to be known -- [01:33:00] am I going to be known as a great king? And David thinks the only way I'll be known as a great king, or God's read of why David wants -- (inaudible) -- why David wants to build a temple is because he wants renown. What does God say to him?

F: (inaudible) --

Q: Look, don't worry about it. Don't fence me in. I promise you what?

M: You'll be great.

F: (inaudible).

Q: You'll be great. Now watch what happens.

M: He keeps his promise.

F: ""'Evil men shall not oppress him anymore as in the past, ever since I appointed chieftains over my people Israel. I will give you safety from all your enemies. The Lord declares to you that he the Lord will establish a house for you.'""

Q: OK, so in other words, look at that! David says, "I will establish" what?

M: A house for you.

F: House for (inaudible).

Q: A house for you. The offer says what David really wants is...

M: To build a house for himself.

F: A house for David.

Q: Ensure that there's a house. A house is another word for dynasty. Right? And there's the confusion of the word [Hebrew] here. The word [Hebrew] appears about a dozen times here, half a dozen times, right? David is using [Hebrew] as dynasty, right, and also house for God. God is using the word "house" and saying, "It'll be a secure place for the people, and you'll have a dynasty." [01:34:00] And then watch.

F: ""When your days are done and lie with the fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your (inaudible), and I will establish his kingship. He shall build a house for my name --""

Q: Again, house.

F: ""-- and I will establish his royal throne forever.""

Q: Now, very important coming up, verse 14.

F: ""I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and the affliction of mortals --""

Q: But -- and this is the most important line here.

F: ""-- but I will never withdraw my favor from him, as I withdrew it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you. Your house and your kingship shall ever be secure before you. Your throne shall be established forever.'""

Q: OK, good. Established for what? Make sure everybody heard that.

F: Forever.

Q: Forever. Now, these are two different types of covenants, right? This covenant at Zion, (inaudible) in Jerusalem, says that I'll be there what? This is a covenant between God --

F: Forever.

Q: Right. What do they have to do? Even if they screw up, what'll happen?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Which means --

F: Unconditional --

Q: -- fundamentally it's an [01:35:00] unconditional covenant. It's an unconditional covenant. Sinai, conditional. If you,

da-da-da-da-da-da; if you don't, da-da-da-da-da-da.

Conditional. This is the Sinai. This is Zion. These are two competing -- what?

M: This is conditional in a way, it's just conditional in a declarative way. "You shall build a house in my name and I will establish (inaudible) forever."

Q: Forever. In other words, no matter what. Is there anything that they could do? Is there anything that the --

M: The one is consequential of the other, it's just that he is presenting him with a declarative rather than a conditional.

Q: Here's what I mean: is there anything possible that David's family and the Jewish people can do that would undermine this covenant --

F: No.

Q: -- fundamentally?

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: What?

M: Not build a house.

Q: No, build a house -- I promise you will build a house.

F: "I will never withhold my favor from you."

Q: Your kingdom -- I mean, your kingdom is forever. It's so forever that we wound up projecting that David will be the ancestor of who?

M: [Shir?].

Q: Son of [Shir?].

F: Isn't this one of the ideas for Jesus, also?

Q: Good, hold it, [01:36:00] yes.

M: Yes, because (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Hold it for one second.

M: -- legitimate from [Shir?]--

Q: Hold it for one second.

M: -- he's got to descend from the house of David.

Q: Right? Who's the key character of the Sinai covenant?

F: Moses.

M: Moses.

Q: Goods. That's Mosaic. Who's here? That's the --

F: David.

M: David.

Q: -- Davidic, right? This is Jerusalem. Now, another way of putting it, Eric Fromm calls this father love, and calls this what? Mother love. Right? Don't understand in a sexist way, because fathers are capable of mother love, and mothers are capable of fathers love. It's not a sexist,

it's a construct to help you understand two different types of love, right? The Sinai love -- you know what the Sinai love is? You call up your father and say, "So tell me, what did you do lately?" Right? And your mother love is, "How are you?" That's the two different kinds of love. It's not that fathers can't ask the other questions, but Erich Fromm is understanding the psychology, right, father love and mother love. These are two components. If you only have the Sinai covenant, [01:37:00] you only have unconditional love -- if you only have conditional love, what kind of human beings do you create?

F: Scared.

Q: Scared. On the edge. Therefore, you have this covenant, right? The people want to know that this is going to be long-term, forever and ever and ever, and that security will allow them hopefully to do what? What?

F: Be a blessing.

Q: To be a blessing, actually, to live up to the conditions. Right? If you only have unconditional love, Zion --

F: You have anarchy.

Q: Well --

F: It's only (inaudible).

Q: -- or sloppiness. (laughter) You have a great deal of sloppiness. Yes, potentially people think they can do anything and they'll always be what? Inside the covenant. That's the danger of --

M: So they have prophets.

Q: Now, these two... Prophets are on which side, for the most part? Prophets tend to emphasize which covenant?

F: The Zion.

F: Zion.

M: Zion.

Q: They tend to emphasize this covenant.

M: Correct, but they're kind of in between, too --

F: The live in Zion.

M: -- because Moses has a prophetic role --

Q: They tend.

M: -- and then... Right.

Q: Right, no, just they tend.

M: Right.

Q: Right? To emphasize the prophetic, because --

M: But you need them more in the other [01:38:00] paradigm, because that's where the slop--

F: That's what I mean.

M: -- because of the sloppiness (inaudible).

Q: Well, these are always in a dialectic.

M: Right.

Q: Right? These are always in dialectic.

M: Oh, I see.

Q: Now watch, in a contemporary era. What's the Law of Return?

F: Zion.

F: Zion.

Q: Right, the Law of Return is a Zion. (inaudible).

F: Well, sort of.

Q: No, it means no matter what.

F: If they're Jewish, no matter what.

Q: Right now, that's everybody.

M: Yeah, you don't even have to be Jewish.

Q: You don't even have to be Jewish.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: All you have to do is say what?

F: "I'm Jewish."

Q: "I'm Jewish." Now, hold it: what you're hinting at is that this is up for debate right now, and this is why it's creating such stress, right? The Law of Return is the contemporary application of the Zion covenant, of the unconditional covenant. Another way of saying it is this is

demand, and this is promise. Right? The Law of Return says no matter what, you are always welcome [01:39:00] where?

M: (inaudible).

F: [Here?].

M: Unless you're a gangster.

Q: (inaudible) yourself, (inaudible) yourself, that's one person. You're always welcome where?

M: In Israel.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Because it's your?

F: Home.

M: Home.

Q: Home. You are always welcome home, forever and ever and ever. For the last 1,800 years Jews would pray, but they would pray in what direction?

M: East.

F: Jerusalem.

Q: East. By praying east, they confirmed that they, even when they weren't home, in some kind of deep, existential potential, they were where?

F: (inaudible).

F: Home.

Q: They were home and secure. They could always feel this fundamental kind of love. When you begin to play with the Law of Return, what you are really suggesting is that this covenant does not apply where?

M: To everyone.

Q: To everyone. That is undermining the Davidic covenant. Right? That's why missions to Israel become so powerful. When you step in the land of Israel, people experience what?

F: Zion (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

F: (inaudible).

Q: Even though they what? In terms of their Jewish behaviors, Jewish observances, Jewish knowledge, Jewish...? They don't do anything! [01:40:00] They don't fulfill one condition! And yet they come to Israel and they feel what?

F: Jewish.

Q: Jewish.

M: That's the Zion covenant.

Q: That's exactly what the Zion covenant, the covenant of Zion tacks it to. Right? It's very, very powerful. What we're scared about (laughs) is if that's the only covenant, right, what happens to the -- what do you do with those feelings? What do you do with those feelings? And there's

always a move between these two, right? *David Melech Yisrael, chai, chai* what?

(multiple people answering at once in Hebrew)

Q: In other words, for how long?

F: Ever.

F: Ever.

Q: Forever. *Chai, chai vekayam*. No wonder Jews sing that, and then it goes *David melech Yisrael*, right, and then it always addedly goes what? Into *Am Yisrael* --

MULTIPLE: *Chai*.

Q: -- *Od Avinu* --

MULTIPLE: *Chai*.

Q: Right? That song -- I mean, [Hebrew] really wrote that, right (laughter) -- emerged from -- that only came after the return to what? To the land. It was post '67. Right? He went to the former Soviet Union, just to share how it affects the culture, even, [01:41:00] he goes to the former Soviet Union post-'67, and he sees Jews who, in terms of they're acting Jewishly or what?

M: Not assimilating.

Q: Nothing! Nothing! Zero! And he writes a song called what? "*Am Yisrael Chai*," which becomes the anthem for a whole generation, right? Because this is so -- and this is post-

Holocaust, don't be surprised, post-Holocaust -- which covenant is inevitably -- are we going to need more, let's put it that way?

F: Zion.

Q: Of course you're going to need Zion. Because post-Holocaust, you feel such a breach of love, you need a -- because a place is just a sign of love -- you have such a breach, post-Holocaust, that to make this covenant alive, right, is the ultimate healing. Don't ask me for anything, just what, after the Holocaust?

M: Love.

Q: Just love. Just love. Just love.

F: That's why people reject the whole thing, though, post-Holocaust, because it was unconditional --

M: Reject what whole thing?

Q: Reject what whole thing?

F: Well, the whole idea of God having unconditional love.

Q: No, it's no problem they reject God; [01:42:00] that's for good reason, right? But what don't they reject? They don't reject the land. The land becomes a substitute for what?

M: Right, return looks a whole lot better than exile post-Holocaust.

Q: Right. Of course they reject God, but they don't reject... That's why the most assimilated Reform Jews freak out when the Law of Return is touched. Right? Of course. They don't believe in the God who gives the land. They don't believe in any of that. But what they do believe is that fundamentally, in some court, they want to be what? They want to be Jewish! They want to be Jewish. And therefore, the one place that tells them "You will always, no matter what, be Jewish" is what?

MULTIPLE: Israel.

Q: Is Israel. Now, we understand that won't be sufficient carrier of identity. That's what we know. And that's just another way of saying it is not a sufficient way to experience being human, to only experience the pull of being human as one of unconditional love. You also need what? To do something. Or another way of putting it: this is being, and this is doing. [01:43:00] This is being, and this is doing. Now --

F: This is also, like, a very fundamental conflict that I see in the synagogues --

Q: Good.

F: -- is that we're saying to people, "We'll take you, we want you, but only if you do X, Y, and Z. You can come, but you

come, you have to wear certain things, and you can't bring in your food, and you can't..." We have a lot of restrictions, but I'm someone who supports those restrictions, because if we only have the other side, then what's --

Q: Right, good!

F: -- there?

Q: By the way, the synagogue --

M: You've also got shuls that don't do that.

Q: Janet -- but let me just take this; this is a fantastic point, of course.

F: What?

Q: This is a fantastic point, of course. What did Janet say? Janet says when one looks at the institution called the synagogue, you get the feeling, us who are involved in synagogues, whether you are a rabbi of a synagogue, whether you're an educator of a synagogue, we tend to spend so much of our time -- and we believe there should be standards, there should be what? Conditions. Otherwise --

F: Standards.

Q: Standards, let's use "standards" for now. Standards is just a contemporary way of saying *mitzvah*, right? We don't use the word *mitzvah* [01:44:00] and we'll use the word

"standards." But standards are -- in fact, the synagogue, as institution, it seems to embody which covenant more seriously?

M: Sinai.

M: Sinai.

Q: Sinai.

F: Sinai.

Q: It seems to embody -- at the very least, Jews are experiencing -- let's put it that way -- Jews are experiencing their institutions -- this is across the board -- as being far more on the Sinai orientation than the Zion, the Zion orientation, right? Now, our fear is that if we really recalibrate, and go towards this, anything will go. That's your point. It'll be what? Anarchy. Well, how do I run a school in which unconditional love is...? What do I do? How do I do that?

F: Well, I mean, it's just that kind of balance between participation being democratic --

Q: Good.

F: -- and egalitarian, and everybody at every situation, and having kind of, like, a home, like a (inaudible), [01:45:00] in that other way. For example, reading Torah.

Q: Good.

F: You know, when you read Torah, if you make a mistake --

M: You get it correct.

F: -- it should be corrected. And in the synagogue I belong to, in many, most Conservative synagogues --

Q: Right, but when you correct --

F: -- however --

Q: -- sometimes people experience it as?

F: As (inaudible).

M: An embarrassment.

F: As embarrassment, or as --

F: Humiliation.

F: Especially when people -- when it's not just the rabbi that's correcting you, but the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: The whole congregation yells.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

F: [What can you do?]? That's just an example of that --

M: (inaudible).

Q: That's a great example!

F: Should we let everyone participate at any level, or should we have a standard, and --

M: Good question.

F: -- we look at people?

Q: That's now what we're saying, is now we come to the end of the twentieth century, just like somewhere in the neighborhood of 1050 --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: -- shh -- in 1050 we are getting a glimpse into the moment of the internal governance of the people. And at that moment of the internal governance of the people, you're giving us a glimpse into the internal governance of a shul, but it doesn't make a difference. It's macro/micro, right? Internal governance of this people -- [01:46:00] there were two poles, one that wanted to make people, no matter what they did -- David could commit in the next few chapters adultery and murder, but no matter what, David would know in his deepest existential way that he would always be what?

F: Jewish.

Q: Jewish --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- the king, da-da-da-da-da.

F: Chosen.

Q: He would always be chosen. That's good, very nice. Right?

F: (inaudible).

Q: He would, for a purpose, blessed, but for a purpose, chosen, but for something, right? He would always feel that. And there was a desire, the deepest desire inside of the Jewish people to feel that kind of security, because they've been on the scene for, like, say, 300, 350, 400 years, they're in the land, and what do they want to finally feel?

F: [01:47:00] They belong somewhere.

Q: They belong somewhere. That they belong somewhere. They finally want to feel secure and safe. And Jerusalem will never be conquered. It's inviolable. By the way, you teach this strongly enough, that Jerusalem and Israel is inviolable, and don't be surprised, this is 1050 BCE. Go to 1996, [*Gushem Rumin?*], and don't be surprised if Jerusalem is fundamentally, at the core, inviolable. When we say Jerusalem, we mean the land. The land is fundamentally inviolable, what kind of politics can you have?

M: Not very (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Politics that don't seem to take -- let's not judge it --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- don't take what into account?

F: Other people.

Q: Realism.

M: (inaudible).

Q: Like, the fact is, we're going to get killed! (laughter)
Right? Just the realistic politics of living in a place in which there are 190 million other people. At some point -- it may not be this year, right? Forget about it. They're going to go with the Israeli Army.

M: (inaudible).

Q: [01:48:00] Because at some core, the land is what? This is a promise that'll always be what? It'll always be -- this is a promise that'll always be what? It'll always be yours. Jerusalem will always be yours. [Hebrew] will always be yours.

M: More or less.

Q: [Hebrew] will always be yours.

F: What do you mean, they're going to go with the Israeli Army? They'll be killed by the Israeli Army.

Q: I'm saying, they're going to go after the Israeli Army, right? Now, your point, which is a very important point: at some point, right around post-destruction of the temple, around the destruction of the temple period, right, a group of Jews, under the leadership of Jesus, or Paul -- doesn't make a difference right now, it all collapsed -- if you -- I had you read Matthew for a reason, really only for one

reason: the first verse of Matthew traces David, traces Jesus to who? Traces Jesus to David. At that moment, the people would feel it. Right around the destruction of the temple, the people will feel incredibly what?

F: [01:49:00] Down.

F: Terrible loss.

M: Well, the promise is broken.

Q: The promise seemed to be broken.

M: Right.

Q: Right? Christianity emerges by emphasizing this Davidic covenant in the person of Jesus, and saying fundamentally, your life, if you connect yourself to Jesus, and to that kind of level of faith, your life is fundamentally graced. [Hebrew] is a fundamental condition of your life. It's on an internal level, not an external level, because the world obviously was coming down around them. Inevitably, they deemphasized the Sinai covenant, or deemphasized *mitzvah*, because -- and that's why I had you read that little selection on Paul, that Paul says the law in the end is a curse. Why? Because it creates what kind of condition? If I give you all these conditions, it inevitably creates in you what kind of psychology? That you're always feeling what?

F: Inadequate.

F: That you're not --

Q: Inadequate. You're always feeling guilty. You're paralyzed by guilt. You're paralyzed by sin, [01:50:00] "sin" meaning miss the mark. You're always going to miss the mark, because how many conditions are there?

F: Too many.

Q: It's infinite, until the world's what?

F: Perfect.

M: Perfect.

Q: So it's infinite, which means you're always missing the mark. But if you're always missing the mark, you'll be paralyzed. You'll never feel what?

F: Loved.

Q: Fulfilled, loved.

F: Or hopeful.

Q: Right? So they deemphasized Sinai, right -- and the best example was by doing away with [Hebrew]; that was the biggest example, right -- they deemphasized Sinai, they emphasized the Davidic, the church is built, and the church is the new --

F: Jerusalem.

Q: -- new Jerusalem, or new Israel.

M: The rock.

Q: Right? Right, it becomes the new Israel, the new... And inevitably, during the next 2,000 years --

M: It was the new covenant.

Q: -- the next 1,500 years, since Judaism and Christianity in many places are rubbing up against each other, if Christians wound up emphasizing the Davidic, we wound up emphasizing what?

F: Sinai.

Q: We tend to emphasize Mosaic. Or another way of putting that is you go to a shul for the last 1,500 years and you'll almost never hear the word "love" [01:51:00] preached. In fact, if I use the word "love" and "grace," you'll think I'm what?

MULTIPLE: Christian.

Q: Christian, even though *ahava* seems to be a pretty Jewish word, right? Grace, *grace*, pretty Jewish word.

M: Right.

Q: What word do we almost always hear from the pulpit? *Mitzvah*. When I say *mitzvah*, you may hear about obligations, what you have to do, but I'm using it in a paradigm, right? You'll always hear *mitzvah*. Then you come to the end of the twentieth century and there's an explosion of Jewish life, right, off of the establishment

of the state of Israel. And it generates -- Jews who wouldn't step foot in a shul are ready to give millions of dollars and travel to Israel for three days. I know people go to Israel on two-day, three-day visits. It's unbelievable (inaudible). Do you know how much wear and tear that is for a 50-year-old to do that? For what?

F: A shot in the arm.

Q: Because what do they experience? When you say a shot in the arm, what do they experience?

F: Invigoration. [01:52:00] Belonging.

Q: They experience the unconditionality of their identity.

M: Yeah, they enter a Jewish time and space.

Q: They experience it. That's why even to this day, you know, Perry London and Steve Cohen have shown really definitively that given all the other possible transformative experiences, the most transformative experience for our teenagers is still the trip to Israel. Now, that doesn't mean you shouldn't do more stuff. It doesn't mean all the problems educationally. But the single most transformative experience, you go around young leadership also, right -- do this with your young leadership of 30 to 45 and ask them, "Tell me the most important Jewish experience you have ever had," right? It will split generally three

quarters/a quarter. Three quarters will say something having to do with Israel, and a quarter will say something having to do with their parents. That's the power still, right. That's the power. And now you understand why people are freaking out about the Law of Return. I mean, who cares about the four converts. That's not the issue. Four converts that happened (inaudible) may not be able to make it. You think they would allow them [01:53:00] in Israel? If everybody was quiet, believe me, they'd let them in. But at a deeper level, this is about is this home to everybody. Is it home to every single Jew, no matter what? That's a really serious question. We imagine --

M: Well, the question is: are you Jewish enough to call this place home?

F: Or (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: See, that's --

Q: No, no, no, no. The most --

M: Sure, because redefining -- no, no, because redefining the Law of Return is really defining who's Jewish enough to get in.

F: That's what the order (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible).

M: Right, but it's not is this home to all the Jews.

F: But the way you said it sounded like it was an individual decision.

F: Right.

M: No, no, no, no, no.

F: What you're trying to say --

M: Jewishness is being defined --

F: -- is it's an institutional decision --

M: Right.

F: -- but the way you said it --

M: Oh, no, no.

F: -- made it sound like it was individual.

Q: That's why I reacted. That's exactly why I reacted.

M: The institutional definitions are trying to be redefined and drawn in a different way to exclude, and that's --

Q: This is who controls the home.

M: Yeah, I don't think it's about that.

M: Right. Oh, yeah, I think it's absolutely about that.

M: I don't. [01:54:00] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Shh.

M: I think what it's about is not who is a Jew, but, as somebody smarter than I am said, it's about who is a rabbi. It's about power.

M: You know, it's about that --

M: It's not about the individuals.

Q: That's on the political level, but it's not how Jews are feeling. Right. You're right.

M: No, I agree, but that's what I'm (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: You're right, it's that, too, but they don't contradict each other.

M: They don't contradict. You're the political level is exactly -- it's about who is rabbi, and that's why the people in many ways who are fighting about it are the rabbis, but it has real implications for why it can gener-- if it was just about who was the rabbi, when a Reform rabbi got up and was agitated about it, he wouldn't be able to get any get from his people. He wouldn't be able to get his people unless he was animating them to...

M: Right.

F: Right.

Q: So while it's who is the rabbi, the average Reform Jew couldn't care less about his rabbi.

M: But what I mean --

M: (inaudible)

M: -- what I mean is not from the Reform side, why are they reacting to it, it's because he was a rabbi. I'm saying

that the place that it's coming from on the other side is about power and who is a rabbi.

Q: Of course. Oh no, don't misunderstand that. It's not about who is a rabbi for them. It is about power, but it's not only about that. It's about who is going to control [01:55:00] who's inside the people and outside.

M: Right, it's who's a Jew (inaudible).

Q: That's not only the rabbi. It is (inaudible) Jewish. They believe --

F: You have to draw the line somewhere, though.

Q: Good. That's Janet's point in toto.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: That's Janet's point.

M: That's a good point.

Q: You have to draw the line at something, but then, you know, somewhere --

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: -- that's where the prophets --

F: -- but you have to draw the line somewhere.

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) draw the line.

Q: You have to draw the line somewhere, but someone said for King David --

M: That's the fight.

Q: -- for King David, where was the line drawn for King David?

F: There wasn't one.

Q: There wasn't one. So when you -- there was nothing David could do -- and if, in case you didn't believe that, next story: adultery and murder. What could you have done worse than adultery and murder, right? Nothing. There's nothing worse that you could do. Adultery and murder. Just so you understand, where are the lines? There aren't. That's the whole purpose of the story. There are no lines. You will always fundamentally be inside this covenant.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Well, I know that's a scary thought. (laughter) That's Janet a little, little level at the shul, (laughter) right? Right? It's a scary thought in our shul. This is about life! About how you experience yourself [01:56:00] as a human being! That no matter what you do and produce, at some core level, you have to feel the pull of human experience. You have to feel fundamentally what? No matter what you produce. I know the danger of that. I have it in King David, a murder/adulterer king. If I was writing the story, what would I have done to the murderer -- what would you have done to the murderer/adulterous king? That's it.

F: But does it still hold that if David had gone and... Well, I guess Bathsheba wasn't Jewish, but is Bathsheba... Right, OK, but --

Q: Doesn't matter, (inaudible).

F: -- I'm saying did David go when he married someone who's not Jewish and have children, are those children by David's lines because they're Jewish.

Q: Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh, you're asking biologically.

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) wasn't a child.

F: I'm talking about where the line's drawn for Law of Return, and you're saying that there are no lines, and everyone's included, but I'm saying even in these times is that --

Q: No, there are no lines here at all. In fact, there are no lines... There you're asking a patrilineal or matrilineal question, right?

F: Well, I'm just trying to draw -- I'm trying to find some example of --

Q: Here, there's no matri-- there's no patri-... Here it's the most (inaudible).

F: So he could marry an Amalakite woman, have children, and they would be considered Jewish.

Q: [01:57:00] Well, we have the best example of that is his great-great-grandmother, is who?

F: That's right.

M: Ruth.

Q: Is Ruth. And she's a what to (inaudible)?

F: She's a Moabite.

F: She's a Moabite.

Q: She's a Moabite. She's a Moabite. And in Deuteronomy it says "Thou shalt not" what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Doesn't mean anything, right? Yeah, she throws her lot in with the people, but until the end of time she's named a what? Until the last verse.

M: Ruth the Moabite.

Q: Ruth the Moabite. And what do we have in Deuteronomy? You're not allowed to marry into the Moabite family until the tenth generation. What do we have? Marries a Moabite and out of that union comes what? King David, right? So there's a part that's saying there are no lines. I'm not saying that's the only part, because Sinai says there are a hell of a lot of lines. (laughter)

M: But, you know, it's --

Q: Our issue as leadership is to try to figure out how do you create Mt. Zion experiences for our people, and when to do what, and when our institutions, or our boards, or our

committees are out of whack, when our education systems are out of whack, and that's a very complicated thing to do. [01:58:00] I mean, there's no answer. It's not like this is... What leadership does is it's constantly aware of where the recalibration has to happen, right? And is sensitive to historical moments, not only in your own institution, but there are historical moments, apparently, where there needs to be recalibration. Post-Holocaust, don't be surprised. People are going to need to feel so fundamentally loved to restore credibility of the culture and the dream in terms of their identity. Not the God part. You know, of course the God part. But there's going to have to be a restored credibility to it. That's why, wherever you go -- how many times are you in a lecture, right, you hear the lecture, somebody raises the question inevitably - - it could a lecture about anything, but someone asks a question about what.

M: The Holocaust.

Q: The Holocaust. What do you think that's about? It's because they can't make sense of that event in terms of the sense that your love. Why is it worth being Jewish? Now, how to balance these two things, that's a complicated question. That's the [01:59:00] question of the journey. It's one of

the central questions of the journey: how to balance the poles of the human experience, right? Or how to create a living dialectic and dynamic in the whole of human experience, between our absolute need and the existential truth we are fundamentally loved, and the absolute need and the reality that you will construct peace in the world, but there are conditions. At least two mountains. That's why every mission, you get off the plane and you go where?

(multiple answers; inaudible)

Q: Jerusalem. You do not go to Tel Aviv. You go straight to Jerusalem, right? And you are reminded, yeah, right, that's who I am. (laughter) And after you create an experience like this for people in which they feel that, you could ask them for what? Hopefully you should be asking them for more.

F: You could take them to Tel Aviv and go dancing. (laughter)
[02:00:00]

Q: You probably won't be successful unless, right, they tap into something else, and then finally the Jewish people can be one.

F: (inaudible).

Q: And then if you're tapping into that, the move is from abnormality to normal --

F: Although --

Q: -- and that's a very powerful move.

F: -- we once did a mission landing at Eilat --

Q: Wow.

F: -- and took four days to get to Jerusalem, sleeping in the desert the whole day --

Q: Good, so you played it the same way.

F: -- and -- we played it the same way --

Q: Yeah, right.

F: -- and it was even more powerful --

Q: More powerful, right.

F: -- because we built two --

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

F: -- Jerusalems.

Q: Good, you do it right.

F: That's why I go to Poland and then to Israel.

Q: Right, that's why... You just -- the more you can build the movement, the psychic movement from that --

F: Right, so we brought them.

Q: Right.

F: Right.

Q: That's what you're doing. You're bringing them. OK, what time is it?

(multiple answers; inaudible)

Q: Oh, OK. So those of you who -- you got [to be?] five minutes now, those of you want -- I'm going to give you (inaudible), but it's one --

F: (inaudible) starting to sweat (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: -- this is worth it -- 165 BCE, you've lost the temple, [02:00:00] you have the most dynamic -- shh -- you have the most dynamic -- next part of the journey. You have the most dynamic culture that you've ever lived amongst, and that's the Hellenistic culture. It is so dynamic in terms of math and science and architecture and music and philosophy and art and reason and logic, and it is the most dynamic culture, it is the first universal culture in the history of the world, right? It is a real universalist culture in which you can be absorbed by it and still worship your own God, because it's a polytheistic culture. It is so compelling, right, that it takes over the whole world inside of 100 years, the whole known world. Aristotle conquers in what, 330, 320, something like that, right, before the Common Era?

M: Alexander --

Q: And then Alexander the Great.

F: Alexander the Great, 333.

Q: Alexander, 333?

M: Right.

Q: And within 50 years the whole empire's Greek, the whole Middle East, ancient Near East is Greek. This is a tremendous accomplishment.

M: From Afghanistan to Spain.

Q: What?

M: From Afghanistan to Spain.

Q: From Afghanistan to Spain. This is unheard of in human history. That's how compelling the culture itself is, right? At that moment, Jews living across [02:02:00] (inaudible), but we're going to focus in on Judea, are figuring, how the hell do I maintain my distinctiveness and go about my journey at the same time, right? It's a very common -- basically, the journey's always had two: when they want to kill you, how do you live; and when they love you a lot, how do you live, right? How do you live in distinctiveness? And this is the story of Hanukkah. I wanted to show you quick four stories of Hanukkah, right? First story of Hanukkah is there was a wicked -- finish the story.

F: King.

M: King.

Q: Vain Antiochus. That's the wicked (inaudible), right?

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: He had a lot of what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: OK, yeah, what did he do? He had a lot of power, and he did what?

F: Abused us.

Q: He oppressed. In fact, he's very much like who?

M: Pharaoh.

Q: Antiochus is very much like Pharaoh.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right? Next. Right? And what happened? There was a good guy, (inaudible) the good guys, right? Who? Matityahu and Judah Maccabee. What do we do? We fight a war against him, [02:03:00] and we win, right? This is the dominant, traditional telling of the story. It's a story that most of us know, right? It's --

M: Book of Maccabees.

Q: Right. That is one part of the Book of Maccabees.

M: It's the first part.

Q: That's one... (break in video) OK, a wicked shoot sprouted from -- this is Maccabees 1, verse... (break in video)

There are a group of Jews who are anti these Hellenizers.

Who are they?

M: Hassidic.

Q: Judah Maccabee, Matityahu. There's another group of Hassidic. They are even to the right of Judah Maccabee. They won't even fight on Shabbos, right? Eventually they decide, right, to join a coalition, and they go to war with these Jews. Menelaus calls in who? Menelaus, who do you think he calls in?

M: Antiochus.

Q: Antiochus. He calls Antiochus and says to Antiochus what?
(multiple answers; inaudible)

Q: There's a revolt, there's a revolt. The Jews -- right, right? He doesn't say the Jews are going crazy, because who is he, Menelaus?

M: [02:04:00] A Jew.

Q: (inaudible) Jews. He says there's an insurrection against who?

M: You.

Q: Against you. Antiochus comes in at the behest of -- this, by the way, is Elias Bickerman's read. These are different reads, right? I mean, this is [Chercover's?] read, this is Bickerman's read. They both flow out of the Book of

Maccabees, Book of Maccabees 1 and 2, right? They call in -
- this is basically the civil war story, right? And what
happens in that civil war? In the end, the first time Judah
Maccabee's put down, then he's called to [Partheon?] to put
down another revolt, Antiochus. Judah Maccabee, again --
this is a civil war against. Judah Maccabee wins, right?
They're happy to pay tribute to the Greeks, to the Syrian
king, because he couldn't care less, right? And by the way,
you know why this story is probably the original story?
Nowhere else in the empire are Jews oppressed, which means
that Antiochus, it wasn't about suppressing what?

M: Judaism.

Q: Judaism, because there would've been somewhere else to
suppress. They would've been suppressed [02:05:00] nowhere
else. The only place Judaism was suppressed was here. Why?
Because it wasn't Judaism it was suppressing. He was
suppressing a revolt, right? And it was Menelaus, right,
and the leadership -- this was the aristocracy. This was
the urbanites in Jerusalem, right? And if you look at
Maccabees 1 verse 11 --

M: (inaudible).

Q: -- "At that time all this men arose in Israel and seduced
many with their plea: 'Come, let's make a covenant with the

Gentiles around us, because ever since we have kept ourselves separated from them we have suffered many evils.'" He got so favorable a reception that they're probably building a mausoleum in Jerusalem, according to the customs of Gentiles, that underlined the operations, disguised the circumcision, rebelling against the sacred covenant. They joined themselves to the Gentiles and became willing slaves to evil-doing. And then, if you continue into -- in chapter two, the end of that chapter, right, many Israelites came up to greet the king's officials. When he had finished uttering these words, Mattathias saying "Everybody come with me," a Jewish man came forward on the side of all the others to offer a sacrifice. [02:06:00] Mattathias saw him and he slew him. Which means the Hanukkah story's really about the killing between who?

MULTIPLE: The Jews.

Q: This is the question. This is the question, is where is the line, right? And, of course, the irony about this story is if you look at the end of Maccabees 2, right, "Maccabees, with his men led by the Lord, recovered the temple in the city of Jerusalem," da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. The joyful celebration lasted for how many days?

M: Ten.

Q: How many days? You don't have this. Eight. Very good guess. Eight days. (laughter) It was like -- now listen, this is Maccabees 2: "It was like the Feast of Huts, Sukkot, for they recalled how only a short time before they had kept the feast while they were living like wild animals. And so they carried garlanded wands and palm fronds and branches with their fruits." In other words, the first Hanukkah was really what?

F: Sukkot.

Q: Sukkot. The only reason it's eight days --

F: The whole thing is because of the war.

Q: Because of the war, right? What's missing?

F: The oil.

Q: The oil. That's the third story. This is the rabbinic story. This is the rabbinic story of the Talmud, right? It's the oil legend. [02:07:00] Four hundred BC is the first time it appears. What's that legend about? It's another telling. This is the civil war telling, right? And of course, by the way, even the declaration of a festival, Judah Maccabee does the first post-Torah festival declared. Where does he learn how to declare a festival? Guess from who? The Greeks, who declared military festivals in honor

of their emperors. So Judah Maccabee takes a Greek custom.

Is that assimilation?

M: Yes.

Q: That happens to be --

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) very similar.

Q: But that (inaudible) --

F: Other way.

Q: Oh, that's a culture... The fact that he was willing to create a holiday called Hanukkah --

M: That's synthesis.

Q: -- winds up being that in 1996 we're still celebrating that Hanukkah. That is a pretty good move or bad move?

M: Good move.

Q: Good move. Right, so you never know where is the line. Right? It's very complicated to make those judgments, because Judah Maccabee himself declares a festival, and, in fact, in declaring that festival and becoming more connected to Greeks, there's a break between the Hasidim of the time and that coalition breaks down. And we know within 30 years what happens? [02:08:00] The Hasmonean become the most politically corrupt... Right? In other words, they abuse what?

M: Power.

Q: They abuse power.

M: And they combine priesthood and kingship --

Q: Priest--

M: -- for the first time.

Q: Priesthood and kingship they unite, right?

M: Because they're priests.

Q: They set out the people, and Hanukkah stops being celebrated for about 150 years. Why? Because the last thing you would want to celebrate is the holiday a matter of what?

M: These jerks.

F: (inaudible).

Q: These people winning. By the time we get to the Talmud, there's a question: why Hanukkah? What the hell is Hanukkah? Because in the cultural memory is this holiday.

M: And who's the last Hasmonean king.

Q: What do they want to -- let's finish this -- what's this oil about? Obviously they didn't believe that oil for one day, eight day --

F: Miracle (inaudible) --

Q: -- I mean... Right? So if I took --

F: Well, it deemphasizes --

Q: How many people --

F: -- the whole civil war --

M: The military.

F: -- the military aspect.

Q: Right. So this is the de-emphasis of the military, a concentration on the spiritual, miraculous, right, but what's the miracle? What's the miracle?

F: Survival.

Q: The miracle's not the oil, right?

F: We survived.

Q: How many people here believe that if I had enough oil for one day, no matter how many times I tried, it would never last [02:09:00] eight days? How many people think it would last eight days if I tried it enough times?

M: You never know. (laughter)

Q: If you were betting.

M: I would bet against you.

F: I wouldn't bet high.

Q: You would not bet high, right? The rabbis knew that, too. The story didn't appear anywhere until the Talmud, right. This wasn't a literal -- this is a metaphor, just like the burning bush. What's the metaphor? Who's the oil?

F: We are.

Q: Yeah, the oil is what?

F: Anti-assimilationists.

Q: The oil is the Jewish people after that. The oil is the Jewish people, right? The Jewish people look what?

M: Weak.

Q: Weak and --

M: Small.

Q: -- and small.

F: Fragile.

Q: Right? And fragile. But what's going to happen?

(multiple answers; inaudible)

F: (inaudible) burning.

F: (inaudible) going to be destroyed.

Q: They're going to -- good, very nice. They're going to burn brightly. Right, why? Because of?

F: (inaudible)

Q: Because of?

F: A miracle.

M: God.

Q: Because of God. Because God what?

F: Protects us, blesses us.

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: God loves and protects us. Nope, (inaudible) is this story. (inaudible). So the issue (inaudible) if you look at the

[mouse?] through the second paragraph is -- [02:10:00] the first paragraph is the Rock of Ages, da-da-da, he'll save me every time, the next one is Rock of Ages you will save me from Pharaoh, da-da-da. The next paragraph is Rock of Ages, who will save -- right? You will save me from Haman. And the fourth paragraph is Rock of Ages, from the Greeks. In other words, that's a perfect telling of this. All you have to do is keep telling that, and (inaudible). And Rock of Ages, from Babylonia. There are five verses in it. And each is about a different what? A different oppressor. And that's been the Jewish telling to this day. The [Kud?] will do the same thing. What's the [Kud's?] oppressor today? What's the --

END OF AUDIO FILE