

VT-989 to VT-990 Transcriptions

Kula, Irwin. Lecture at the Wexner Heritage Foundation. [San Francisco, Calif.] 18 December 1996.

Q: And I just want to start with an apology, that I'm doing all my (audio cuts out; inaudible). I come in by about 3:30 on Tuesday, and I stay until the red eye, and then I teach last night four hours, and this morning, and tonight, and then I (audio cuts out; inaudible) from four o'clock in the afternoon yesterday through the class tonight, I book every hour, hour and a half meetings. And a lot of people would call from all three of the classes, and it was always kind of, like, first come first serve as the thing got booked up, and there were a lot of people who I just -- I literally -- there was not... It's every hour and a half on the hour and a half I had a meeting, and there are people that somehow were not able to get on, and I didn't even talk to some of them. [00:01:00] Janet handles everything because I'm out of town so much. Those of you must know Janet by now, (inaudible) by now. So I apologize. It really is nothing personal. There was not another -- I mean, Seth was with me that day where he took me from one place to another place. I did his thing, and then he took me to

[Toven?], and Toven -- I went immediately to meet with somebody else at the hotel. They know me in the hotel. I sit there and I come in and out. So I want to apologize to anybody who... And I don't even know who they are a lot of times, because whoever called got booked in every hour and a half, so I just want to apologize. When Janet said to me there were a lot of people who, you know, called and I had nothing to give them, I had no moments, you know, so I want to apologize. And if anybody who wants to talk, there's no problem setting up a phone conversation. If you call Janet at my office and say you were in the San Francisco class, she will set it up. Probably can't be until mid-January, [00:02:00] (laughter) but she will set it up, and I'll be happy to have a conversation. I'm available, just it's amazing how things got booked up in San Francisco. But I do apologize, because I know it sounds... It's bad when you can't meet, you know, and I benefit by every one of these meetings. I've learned a lot about this community. OK. Now, where are we? (laughter)

M: Mid-January.

Q: Mid-January, yeah. Good. We actually [are back?]. Oh, we finished because we jumped to Hanukkah. We didn't do Ezra, though, right? OK, good.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, well, that was the math -- I gave you five tallings of the math, and we're not (inaudible) jump to that (inaudible) took care of that because it was right before time. OK. Did we do the King David story?

F: Yes.

Q: And Bathsheba? [00:03:00] We did David and Bathsheba. OK, great.

F: No, we did first (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- (multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: OK, so what I want to do is I -- this is what I want to do: I want to divide this class. We're going to do the David and Bathsheba story as a way of understanding what the real problems of kingship were, which has nothing to do with kingship. It has to do with all institutions inside of this culture, OK? The second thing I want to do is I'm going to give you a very quick four or five key prophetic insights that were central ideological breakthroughs that allowed the Jewish people to continue ideologically for the next few hundred years. Then we're going to do Ezra, Maccabees we'll skip, and then we'll do the rabbinic period. We should be able to actually accomplish this. So if you can

turn to Samuel 2, I think chapter 11. Right. Is that right, chapter...? Is that sound, is that there? [00:04:00]

F: "David sent Joab to the..."

Q: Good, OK, so let's read it. Start reading it.

F: I don't have the same thing.

Q: Oh, OK.

F: (inaudible).

F: "At the turn of the year, the season when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all of Israel with him, and they devastated Ammon and besieged Rabbah.

David remained in Jerusalem. Late one afternoon --"

Q: OK, so of course what's the problem already?

M: David stayed.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right. David -- this is the first time --

F: (inaudible) --

Q: This is the first time in the biblical story that the leader doesn't do what?

F: Doesn't lead.

Q: Go out with the people. Right? And, of course, this is one of the central tensions of institutionalizing leadership.

In other words, leadership is no longer mobile, right? The upside of having the king in Jerusalem is what when you're

fighting a war? What's the upside? Because there's a real serious upside.

M: He's safe.

Q: [00:05:00] Well, the king's safe. What else?

F: Jerusalem is. It fortifies --

Q: What's the advantages of -- when you go to war, you know there's a palace and there's a king. What's the advantage?

M: (inaudible).

M: Centralized authority, centralized control.

F: Headquarters.

Q: Right, headquarters. You have a real headquarters. There's a very powerful symbolic place that's not symbolic, I mean literal symbolic, that you're defending, right? There's a certain clarity, right? Things are coming from the center. That's a very powerful thing. The downside of it is that it becomes very separate from the people on the ground, and here we're going to see the central problem of institutionalizing leadership is that leadership itself becomes separate from the people that they're leading. I mean, don't you ever -- let's put it on the table. I mean, we know that.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: How many boards have no... We have an entire Jewish continuity issue now in which the last people we want to talk to are the people we want to...

M: Right, bring in.

Q: [00:06:00] Right, we want to bring in. Right? I mean, we've got nice words for it now: customer, you know, right, and donor sensitivity, and donor relations, and donor-centered, right, now. Donor-centered is another way of saying what? We better get out in the street and not be in our headquarters, right? Aish HaTorah knew this, right? Chabad knew this. We better not be synagogue- or beth midrash-centered. So what do they create? A mitzvah mobile. Do you have those here? Right, a mitzvah mobile. Aish HaTorah goes into the offices to teach. It's the exact same... That's a reaction to the institutionalization. Now, of course, without institutions, well, without their kingship, what happens to the Jewish people? If you didn't have a king?

M: (inaudible).

Q: Without a king the Jewish people probably wouldn't have made it to the next period in history. They absolutely needed a king. They needed to be normal, just like everybody else. We read that text, right? Right. They needed to be normal, just like everybody else, because you

need the basic institutions that everybody else has. But there's a downside. [00:07:00] So here, you're ready to stay home. Well, now we're going to see what happens to King David. King David is the most Machiavellian character in the entire Bible, the most vicious character in the entire Bible, and the most noble at the same time. So what does he do? Read on.

F: "Late one afternoon, (laughter) after Oprah, David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the Royal Palace."

Q: Of course, that's very good reading. What word did you use there, you know, kind of...

M: Strolled.

Q: Strolled. I mean, what's weird about saying the word "strolled"? Why is it weird to say strolled?

F: Well, it's very non-militaristic.

Q: What's happening?

F: I mean, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: He is strolling.

F: Everybody else is out at battle.

Q: He's strolling when everyone else is in battle, exactly.

He's strolling when everyone else is in battle. Good, go.

F: "And from the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful."

Q: Where is he standing?

F: On the roof.

Q: On the roof, indicating what? That is a metaphor.

F: That he's a peeping Tom.

Q: Well, yeah, but indicating what?

F: (inaudible).

M: He's higher up.

Q: He's higher up. Of course, that's the single danger of kingship, [00:08:00] right? Or, I would say, leadership in general, right? Somehow, the very fact of this kind of leadership and institutionalization is a compromise with the covenant, because remember, that's how it should be. That's the covenant formula. It's kind of a radical, right... All these people are equal. They're what?

F: An image of God.

Q: And that's on an individual level, good. And collectively, what do we call them?

F: Community.

F: Holy nation.

Q: A holy nation. And if they're a holy nation, right, a priestly holy nation, right, [Am Kadosh?], they're all what?

F: Equal.

Q: Equal. But once you have a king... By the way, it doesn't matter. Once you have a priest, once you have a rabbi, once you have a federation, except once you have... Doesn't make a difference. Once you do that and institutionalize that form of leadership, there is this [00:09:00] danger of separation from the people. That's what we're hearing here. And then somehow, some kind of compromise with the covenant, except it's absolutely necessary, because if you don't have it, can't run the people. OK, so now what's amazing is the text is willing to tell you, you know, in a rather graphic way the possible consequences.

F: "The woman was very beautiful, and the king sent someone to make inquiries about the woman."

Q: So he's basically having his own. You know, it says [Hebrew]. You can imagine, in military terms, they're sending out spies and doing it, and he's having his own little affair.

F: Spying.

F: "He reported, 'She is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite.'"

Q: That's very important, Uriah comes from what words? Ur-iah, what words? Educators in the room, you should be able to do this. Ur-i-ah. [00:10:00] Hello?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Ur, ur...

F: (inaudible).

Q: What does *ur* mean?

F: Light.

Q: Light, good. And *iah*?

F: God.

Q: Light of God is his name. Nice name. Indicates what about him?

M: (inaudible) [Joshua?].

F: Enlightened.

Q: Text likes him, right? Uriah. But he's a what?

F: Hittite.

Q: He's a Hittite. So here is -- look what you're going to have. You're going to have a story about the king of Israel, right, murdering a man who gets the name Uriah, an unbelievably, powerfully positive Jewish name, who's a

Hittite, which means he's a Hittite who's actually thrown his lot in with the Jewish people. And where's he living?

F: Jerusalem.

Q: Where in Jerusalem?

M: The palace.

Q: Obviously close enough to the palace, which means he's what kind of...? This is a guy, this is an outsider foreigner who has really thrown his lot in with the Jewish people so successfully, and so sincerely, and with such commitment, that he's winding up living in the palace, [00:11:00] or near the palace. All right? So you have -- of course, this is the poet's way of saying the other actual can be more covenantal than the king. (inaudible), if you understand the prophets wrote this book. I'm sure in the king's chronicles this story did not appear. Of course, we didn't save those books. You know, there were king's chronicles. You know, the prophets are filled with references to other books, books that we don't have, like, say, [Hebrew], the Book of the Wars. We don't have any of those books. The only books that we have that come down from that period are books written by the prophetic schools. You know what I mean? It would be like if there was a prophetic school today that critique the three central power centers, which

are the wealthy in the American Jewish community, the Federation system, and the Denomination system. Those are the three basic power centers of Jewish life. And imagine - - [00:12:00] and each of them have their own records, but imagine no Federation (inaudible) records were left of this period, no records of the wealthy class and all those family foundations, right, no records of any of the denominations. All that was left was a prophetic critique of those three power centers. That's what it's like. You've got to ask yourself about a people that only keeps its critique, because the prophets had no power. There was one prophet who had power in his own day: Nathan. Every other prophet was an outsider. No prophet had establishment power. No prophet had, like, an army. There were no institutions the prophets were associated with. It wasn't like there was, you know, Prophet USA, whatever. (laughter) They were really one-man shows. It was only because their ideology wound up being the ideology [00:13:00] that ensured the survival of the Jewish people, because their ideology was predominantly a critique of power. And so they had a full-fledged ideology in place when the temple was destroyed. Why was the temple destroyed? Because?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Because the people abused the power. Kings abused the power, da-da-da, and created treaties, etc., went to war, etc., abused their power of kingship -- just an example -- it's just the best example, right? And priests abused their power, how? Well, the temple became da-da-da-da-da. So what happens? Destruction. So the prophets already had an ideology in place (inaudible) destruction. Because otherwise you would have to say your God what? If you don't have an ideology in place and you get destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 in exile, you say what about your God?

M: He's dead.

Q: [00:14:00] Your God is not as...

M: Powerful.

F: Powerful as --

Q: Powerful as...

F: -- someone else's.

Q: As someone else's. That's how every culture in the history of the ancient Near East disappeared within a hundred years after they were conquered. Because what happens when you're conquered is you take on power -- your power and your ideology very, very often go hand in hand. It's very hard to create an ideology of power. It's a very complicated thing to do, because people generally think that if things

are going well with you, you're probably right, you know?
So if Moab conquered Ammon, Ammonites worshipped Moab gods,
because obviously the Moab gods were right. (laughs) They
were obviously right. So here was a prophetic class that
created an ideology that allowed for survival post-
destruction. OK, let's go, [Alison?], rough guy.

F: "David sent messengers to fetch her. She came [00:15:00] to
him and he laid with her. She had just purified herself --"

Q: He's a man of action, by the way. I don't know if it comes
up in the English, but in the Hebrew it's "And he sent and
he took and he came and he slept," right? You have one,
two, three, four verbs in six words, seven words in the
Hebrew, OK? And that in Hebrew it sounds much more
aggressively active. So David, who is really this great,
active, powerful character, he acts. And the only reason
we're told that the piece of data that she had just
purified herself is for what reason? Why do we need that
piece of data?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Correct, exactly. We have --

F: The right time of the month.

Q: Right, and not only that, we have to make sure that no one else has slept with her since. So this is -- she had just da-da-da-da-da-da.

F: We know whose child it is.

Q: So we know -- we need to know -- the leaders need to know exactly. OK, good. [00:16:00]

F: "The woman conceived, and she sent word to David, 'I am pregnant.' Thereupon, David sent a message to Joab: 'Wend Uriah the Hittite to me.' Joab sent Uriah to David."

Q: Yeah, he's a tough guy. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -
-

F: He's very Oprah-like, or one of those talk shows.
(laughter)

Q: It's worse, though, because it's the king of Israel. See, the thing about Oprah is that most of it's made up anyhow, but it's --

M: (inaudible).

Q: -- you know... (laughter) Here, it's the king. OK.

F: "When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab and the troops were faring and how the war was going."

Q: By the way, in Hebrew it's he asked about the shalom -- he asked about, you know, how it's faring. He asked about shalom Joab, shalom [Hebrew], shalom [Hebrew], right? Why

did he need to say it three times? [00:17:00] Well, read the next sentence.

F: "Then David said to Joab --"

Q: What's missing?

F: How are you.

F: How are you.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Never -- well. Well. Either he never got an answer, or by the text not including the answer what is the poet saying?

F: It seems like the answer's no.

M: It wasn't important.

Q: It wasn't important. In fact, David says, "What's the shalom of this, the shalom of that, the shalom," right, but really David --

F: Was making small talk.

Q: -- couldn't care less. Right. Exactly. In other words, these people are faring without (inaudible).

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. Good, (inaudible) --

F: "Then David said to Uriah..."

Q: One second.

F: Oh. (laughter)

Q: I always add to my notes when there's a -- I never put in -
-

F: You're being canonized! (laughter)

Q: Yes, yes, yes, (inaudible). I don't usually... [00:18:00]

No, I haven't. It sounds like kingly chatter. I wrote

"kingly chatter" in my notes, but "small talk" is better.

OK, he's made small talk of the lives, right, of his

people. Now, that's bad for a king to do. Of course, that's

exactly what Samuel said would happen anyhow. OK, let's go.

F: "Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house and bathe

your feet.' When Uriah left the royal palace, a present

from the king followed him. But Uriah slept at the entrance

of the royal palace, along with the other offices of the

sword and did not go down to his house. When David was told

that Uriah had not gone down to his house, he said to

Uriah, 'You just came from the journey. Why didn't you go

down to your house?' Uriah answered David, 'The ark and

Israel and Judah are located at Sukkot, and my master Joab

and your majesty's men are camped in the open. How can I go

home and eat [00:19:00] and drink and sleep with my wife?'"

Q: Now, you have to know that there is a prohibition on

conjugal relationships in the middle of (inaudible), right,

when the people are at war. So what you have here is that

this outside other, in a sense, is a more firm Israelite than the king, OK. And I think David's probably caught a little bit by surprise by this, right, because this elite guy, this elite guard, some kind of a captain, I mean, some kind of a major, first he's able to articulate about the holy war, and the ark. That's a speech that who should've given?

F: David.

Q: Right. Now we have it in Uriah's.

F: It's a role reversal.

Q: It's a role reversal, exactly.

F: Is there a reason (inaudible) in the Hebrew that he keeps mentioning down to your house, down to your house, the repetition of that?

Q: I --

F: [00:20:00] Was it for emphasis, as a contrast?

Q: Good. I don't know. You know, to me, the text is a little bit wispy of meaning, so what do you want to make of that? Make something of it, and then...

F: Well, is it David's house (inaudible) it's higher up, and actually --

Q: So that's a straight geographical. You want to make more of it than that? Right, that's geographical.

F: I don't know, I was just -- it's repeated --

Q: She's hinting that I think there's more.

F: -- so many times, down to your house, down to your house.
Is it supposed to be the emphasis of what you were
suggesting, of David --

Q: Good.

F: -- not doing the kingly thing. But maybe, I don't know,
through guilt coming out that emphasized that you should go
to your house, and I've been in my house... I don't know.

Q: Good.

F: The emphasis and the repetition says to me --

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

F: -- a point for it.

Q: Especially since (inaudible) is so important in the promise
to him. He's going to have a (inaudible). Good, very nice.

F: So the one thing is that I remember in the beginning when
you spoke to us you were talking -- (inaudible) bring it
back to ourselves and institutions and [00:21:00]
leadership.

Q: Right.

F: You said that there are some people in this group that have
a lot of power and a lot of influence, (inaudible), all
those things. When we look at leadership, these two -- here

is Uriah who doesn't have power, but he's a very powerful person. He is really more of a leader than the king, who's --

Q: This moment.

F: -- (inaudible) power -- exactly, at this moment. So that's a very important thing for us to always remember when we're looking to teach.

Q: Yeah, just remember, though, he gets killed. (laughter) And it's unclear whether he was playing cat and mouse. In other words, I think the text leaves it ambiguous. Does he know that David has slept with his wife, or not? Well, we don't --

F: Recognition.

F: He hasn't been home.

Q: The text specifically doesn't give us enough information to make a decision, right? And I think that that also indicates that from the people's perspective, understand, once you ask for a king, once you designate leaders, right, there's a certain fire, [00:22:00] because those leaders are probably with power -- chances are they can do more damage to you than you can do to them. And if Uriah does know, he's playing with David, then it's even a darker (inaudible) story in some respects.

M: (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, right. In other words: don't provoke unless you know you're going to win. So let's go.

F: "'As you live, by your very life, I will not do that.'"

Q: Of course, that's...

F: "David said to Uriah, 'Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will send you off.' So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. The next day David summoned him, and he ate and drank with him, until he got him drunk. But in the evening, Uriah went out to sleep in the same place with his lord's officers, and did not go down to his home. In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab which he sent with Uriah.

[00:23:00] He wrote in the letter as follows: 'Place Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest, and fall back so that he may be killed.'"

Q: Of course, this is how David is... The only way David can get away with this is he knows Uriah what?

M: Won't read it.

F: Will follow.

Q: Won't read it. In other words, specifically Uriah's loyalty to the king is now going to get him killed. So this is a way of making clear, right, what power can do.

F: "So when Joab was besieging the city --"

Q: And more than that, what's the plan -- I'm sorry -- what's the plan? I'll show you how bad this gets. David's plan is obviously going to kill much more than just Uriah, so David is willing to sacrifice other people now. It's not even just Uriah. He's out of control, this guy.

F: [00:24:00] He's a narcissist.

Q: Yeah, we're going to see exactly what that means in a second.

F: But they're already in battle. I mean, that's -- so that (inaudible).

Q: They are in battle.

F: He's not sending him out --

Q: But he's creating a certain strategy that's going to get more than just this one guy killed, right? So no, they're going to war, but the strategy is everything in war, right? So he's altering the strategy of the war, which is going to incur more casualties, specifically to get rid of a personal problem. Yep.

F: "So when Joab was besieging the city, he stationed Uriah at a point where he knew that there were able warriors. Men of the city sallied out and attacked Joab, and some of David's officers among the troops fell. Uriah the Hittite was among those that died. Joab sent a full report of the battle to

David. He instructed the messenger as follows: 'When you've finish reporting to the king all about the battle, the king may get angry and [00:25:00] say to you, "Why did you come so close to the city to attack it? Didn't you know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech, son of Jerub-Besheth? When it is not a woman who dropped an upper millstone on him from the wall at Thebez, from which he died?"'"

Q: Did anyone happen to check that out? This is Joab speaking now, right? Joab is speaking to the messenger, right? And he's projecting, which is the author's way of getting us to know that Joab... Well, you'll see in a second, right? David never says any of this. This is all in Joab's head, right? Did anyone check who Abimelech is, by some chance? By the way, it's a very easy thing to study a text that way. If anybody asks who court is, or any -- you just look up Abimelech, you find out where he is, you read that story, and then you understand why he made this reference. Abimelech was in the period of the Judges. He was the judge after a judge named [00:26:00] Gideon. Gideon had been asked to be king -- had been asked by the people to become king, and Gideon said, "I can't become king. Adonai is your king." The next person was Abimelech. Abimelech was asked

to be king, and Abimelech said, "Yeah, (inaudible) the king," right? And, of course, this was before the kingship actually emerged as an institution. This was the early kind of grappling with (inaudible). And Abimelech wants to become king, but it's considered overreaching in Judges, but then he's walking by a wall and a woman throws a rock over the wall and kills him. So here Joab is putting into - - in his talk he's saying, oh, this happens, this kind of thing, you know. It once happened with Abimelech who was killed at a wall. Now, that's the way the text is telling us, one, that Joab what?

M: Knows.

Q: Knows, that's the first thing. You could bet as a general when he got a note saying [00:27:00] kill Uriah (inaudible), he had his own people out, right, so, of course, what does this do to the kingship?

M: Puts (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, it undermines the credibility of the kingship itself, even with the upper, upper elite, right? And it's also a way of telling the reader, since this is not David, it's just Joab, this message is going nowhere. It's David. It's Joab speaking to the messenger, so the only people that know this are the messenger and the reader. The reader's

learning, make sure you understand what this story's about.

David is no different than who right now?

F: Abimelech.

Q: Abimelech. He is a usurper to the throne in this moment.

And what got him killed?

F: A woman.

Q: A woman, right. Yeah, he couldn't control himself. Which, of course, that's the problem with power: you can't control your passions. That doesn't make a difference. Sexuality's just a good place to play it out, but you can play it basically sex, money, and, you know, military power.

[00:28:00]

M: Are you saying he couldn't?

Q: Well, he didn't. He didn't. He could've, he just (inaudible) sexual, you know, politics --

F: (inaudible).

M: Synonymous.

Q: -- synonymous.

M: Yeah.

F: "Then say, 'Your servant, Uriah the Hittite, was among those dead.' The messenger set out. He came and told him all that Joab had sent him to say. The messenger said to David, 'First the men prevailed against us and (inaudible)

out against us into the open. Then you drove them back up to the entrance of the gate. Then the archers shot at your men from the wall, and some of your majesty's men fell. Your servant Uriah the Hittite also fell.' Whereupon, David said to the messenger, 'Give Joab this message: "Do not be distressed about that matter. The sword always takes its toll."' "

Q: It's unbelievable. David doesn't show... Remember, Joab, whether he was or wasn't, [00:29:00] was telling the reader that you would expect a king to feel what about casualties?

F: Upset.

Q: Oh, [Ari?]?

F: These things happen. (laughter)

Q: These things happen. Go.

F: ""Press your attack on the city and destroy it." Encourage him.' When Uriah's wife heard that --"

Q: Of course, that's his anger, erasing the anger, project outright there is the skill that's beginning to well up there. So he projects to wipe out that fucking city. He's really saying, "There's a part of me that's really dirty that needs to be wiped out." That's excellent.

F: "When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she lamented over her husband. After the period of mourning was over --"

Q: What word appears twice in that verse that's not necessary? Yeah, aloud, please.

F: Husband.

Q: Her husband, you know. It's completely unnecessary. We know it from the very first verses of the story. That's also very, very important, very important point: no name here. We're being told [00:30:00] that this woman was somebody's wife. Why? That's what David did, right? This adultery -- we're seeing the relationship between adultery and murder. Good.

F: "After the period of mourning was over, David said to have her brought in his palace. She became his wife, and she bore him a son."

Q: There's a little more to that verse. It doesn't look like that the way they did it.

F: "But the Lord was displeased with what David had done."

Q: In other words, as opposed, the way he said, right, it wasn't not bad in his eyes, right, but it was very bad in John's eyes. OK, now we're going to get why David remains a hero.

F: "Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said, 'There were two men in the same city, one rich, and one poor. The rich man had very large flocks (inaudible). The poor man had only one little ewe lamb he had bought. He tended it, and it grew up together with him and his children. It used to share his morsel of bread, drink from his cup, [00:31:00] and nestle in his bosom. It was like a daughter to him. One day, a traveler came to the rich man, but he was loath to take any from his own flock or herds to prepare a meal for the guest who had come to him, so he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the one who had come to him.' David flew into a rage against the man and said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die. He shall pay for the lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and showed no pity.' Nathan said to David --"

Q: OK. OK, one more, sorry.

F: "'That man is you.'"

Q: Now, this is David. As they say, Nathan, he has cojones, (laughter) because most prophets got killed for what he just did.

M: It's kind of like the story of Jonah when he's standing outside of Nineveh, and the gourd [rose up over him?], he laments the death of the gourd.

Q: Well, it's the use of parable in that respect. It's very similar. (inaudible), right, [00:32:00] Nathan uses a parable to... It's like, you know, you show a movie and you project the movie, and then you turn the movie into a mirror. That's what David's doing here. Right, that's what Nathan's doing here. But it's a very clever -- how many characters are there here? You have to understand, what first is nice is David does have a -- what's great about David is his tremendous righteous indignation, you know? (laughter) And that's a good thing. A king has to have that, because sometimes you just have to act off that righteous indignation. But look at a different -- there's the poor person, there's the rich person, and there's the lamb, there's the herds, and there's the traveler.

[00:33:00] Who's who? What's what?

F: (inaudible).

F: The lamb is Bathsheba.

F: The lamb is Bathsheba.

Q: The lamb is Bathsheba.

F: Poor man is Uriah.

Q: The poor man is Uriah.

F: And David is the rich man.

Q: The rich man is David.

F: David's wives are the herd.

Q: Very nice, the harem.

F: God.

F: God.

F: The baby.

Q: Of course, this is a hard one. Well, whatever you pick, pick it and then explain it. (inaudible) more than one. Just don't guess one. Right? Now remember the story: the rich man takes from -- the rich man [00:34:00] who has this takes from the poor man this to give to this. OK? This is why it's a very subtle thing, a very... I did not get, I did not understand this until about three years ago. It was enough without understanding it, because you basically get it, but the real sharpness of the point you don't get until you understand who the traveler is. I always understood it as, wow, yeah, a rich man took from a poor man, and that's really disgusting, and David got pissed off, and...

M: David.

Q: David, right. This is David. There are two Davids in this story, right? This is David the ruler.

F: King.

Q: This is David the who?

F: The man.

Q: Exactly. Man. This is David the man. And, of course, this is the breakdown of power: where you use your [00:35:00] power that flows from who?

F: God.

F: The people.

Q: Well, let's say God and the people, or, the only reason you have this power is to protect the people, let's put it that way, but you use the power of the kingship -- that's why he sends out the spies, and he uses Joab, and he uses the mechanisms of state. That's why it's so involved there, right? He doesn't just kill him himself. He could kill him himself and the story would still be the same, right? He uses all the mechanisms of power to feed -- and I'm using that on purpose -- to feed David the man, which means his own personal self-interests are completely detached from whose interest?

F: The people.

Q: The people's interest. That's the exact opposite of what story, of what character? Where the people's interest --

F: Moses.

Q: Moses. That's the exact opposite of that story, where Moses is willing to do what for the people?

F: [00:36:00] Die.

Q: Die for the people. And that's why it says "[Hebrew] Israel, [Hebrew]." There was never another leader like -- because Moses completely understood how the power of Moses, the leader of the people, and Moses the person actually always had to work together. Right? Here we have the most aggressively described gap between these two. That's what makes it such a great parable. It's not just a poor man piece -- it's not just the rich man stealing from the poor man. Yeah?

F: Yeah, I think the traveler (inaudible) what gets David -- well, traveler comes and goes, right? And what it's really getting at is sexual interest, which comes and goes, and is sort of, you know...

Q: That's nice. Well, this is a much more --

F: That's the human (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Another way of putting it is that this whole thing [00:37:00] is a much more transient category than king. See how sharp it is, though? To have two Davids inside of the parable? That's a good writer. That's really a good writer.

OK. Now, of course, David's great, because he says --
what's going to happen to this person?

F: He's going to die.

F: (inaudible).

Q: He's going to die. Now, what is the penalty for stealing a
lamb? Anybody know? Well, it connects to this, right? That
if you -- what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Exactly what it says here. What does it say here?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Four times over. [00:38:00] Right? It's four times over,
right? But David reacts more than even the four times over.
Had he said four times over, that would've been exactly the
appropriate penalty, but what does David say?

F: Death.

Q: Death. Because what's the penalty for murder and adultery?

F: Death.

Q: Death. So it's almost as if the parable hits at some deeper
core. I don't think David fully grasps the parable, right,
but he feels that the righteous indignation is so... And
then, of course, he's also feeling a whole lot of guilt
inside, and so he bursts out of this moment when he can

punish, and he says death to that person, which is really the penalty he deserves. OK, so now watch.

F: "Thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, "It was I who anointed you king over Israel, and it was I who rescued you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house, and possession of your master's wives, and I gave you the house of Israel [00:39:00] and Judah. And if that were not enough, I would give you twice as much, more. Why, then, have you flouted the command of the Lord and done what displeases me? You have put Uriah the Hittite to the sword, took his wife, and made her your wife, and had him killed by the sword of the Ammonites. Therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you spurned me by taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite and making her your wife." Thus said the Lord, "I will make a calamity rise against you within your own house."'"

Q: OK, so we have enough of that, we can... Oh, let's go to verse 13, which is the -- let's see what it says -- terrible, terrible --

F: "David said to Nathan, 'I stand guilty before the Lord.'"

Q: David says two words in Hebrew, [Hebrew], no, you know, ducking responsibility. And, of course, in many ways God forgives... Since his penalty should've been death, there

is a forgiving [00:40:00] of that sense. By doing that, God's showing that he has higher authority than the king, and that's something that David has forgotten during this whole experience, right? And it happens to be very good, that God has higher authority, because God has higher authority... If the king had authority to issue the punishment for this, what would the punishment have been?

F: Death.

Q: Death. So here we're learning the real role of higher authority: to be able to increase compassion, increase mercy, and God plays it off of David, who doesn't deserve it at all. But it's a great way for us to learn it, right, and it's a great way for David. David's now learning to understand now what it means to be king. It's not to fuck your people -- and that's literal. [00:41:00] It's to have protection, compassion, mercy for your people. And he puts them in the exact same situation. And I would say this is really excellent leadership training. This is the kind of text that people who go into leadership positions ought to study, about the real possible uses of power. It may not be adultery and murder. You can do it in more subtle ways.

F: (sneezes)

Q: Bless you.

F: Thank you.

Q: Now, one more thing. That's enough for this story, but what does happen?

F: (inaudible).

Q: What?

F: His child dies.

Q: His child dies. Good, what else happens?

F: He gets another chance, gets another --

Q: Gets another... First of all, what doesn't he lose?

F: (inaudible).

F: [00:42:00] (inaudible).

Q: He doesn't lose -- oh, first of all, let's start there, right. He first does not lose the kingship. For something that looks a lot... I mean, between me and you, I would've taken the kinship away, right? So he doesn't lose the kingship, so this is a very ambiguous story in the end. And not only does he not lose the kingship, but he maintains a relationship with Bathsheba, and it's true the first son doesn't make it, but the second son becomes who?

F: Solomon.

Q: He does what?

F: Built the temple.

Q: Builds the temple. Now, that is still a product of that union. Now, I don't know what the hell a prophet's doing there, but to say that in some respects the temple itself is a product of a murderous, adulterous relationship -- I understand, one child removed -- it does cast a little, you know, taint on the temple, don't you think?

M: (inaudible) punishment (inaudible) [00:43:00] (inaudible).

Q: Good, good. I think that is punishing David the man. That's very nice.

F: Doesn't it also sort of (inaudible) --

Q: But --

F: Oh.

Q: Let me just play that: punishing David the man, OK, it's punishing David the man, but yet the king and the temple still is tarnishing away, no?

M: Yeah.

Q: That makes sense of why the first son has to go, because the king the man has to be punished, and there the sins of the parents is still an ideology (inaudible). It's not till you get to Ezekiel, 200, 300 years later.

M: (inaudible) capital punishment.

Q: What?

M: I said, if God could forgive, God doesn't (inaudible) -- if he's, in effect, absolving David of the consequences of his crime, then he's also devoted to taint (inaudible).

Q: I don't know. In other words, when you wind up having Solomon [00:44:00] build a temple, and you know Solomon's, what is it, pedigree, lineage, it can't help but -- but maybe pedigree (laughter) --

F: It's on David.

Q: -- it can't help but, no matter what God is doing there -- I want to say what is that message there?

M: Does Solomon know about this, what had happened prior?

Q: I mean, it would be hard to imagine that he didn't know. I mean, we never get a point that Solomon had a conversation with his mother or his father about "Let me tell you how I met your mother," (laughter) but if Solomon was like any other child, he turned to his mommy and dad and said, "How did you meet?" You know, I'm sure... And he was, they say, the wisest man in all the world.

M: It could be a lesson for him, if he knows about it, (inaudible) kind of tainting something (inaudible).

Q: OK. You want to say something?

F: Well, just that harking back to when we got beyond Genesis, and [00:45:00] talking about how at a certain point God

decided, I can't just keep destroying everybody and starting over again, you know, that I've got to recognize that human beings are not perfect, and I've got to work with what I've got here, and move on, and maybe see that David had some better qualities, knowing, as being omniscient, you know, that he's destined for some greatness, as well.

Q: I think that's a really good response. I want to comment on that after three comments. Go. So let's one, two, three, Elliot --

M: I was just going to say, if you buy the comment then the temple is tainted, then in that way the people bear responsibility just as much --

Q: Yes.

M: -- for their actions, and it's not just about the responsibility of kingship, but the responsibility of what it means --

Q: Yeah, that's very nice.

F: Ah, (inaudible).

Q: That's excellent. In other words, we Israelites are the king we create. I think that's a really very important point, and Israel is responsible for whatever her finest kings have done, in some respect. [00:46:00] I think that's

a really important point, very important point. Followers are as responsible for their leaders as leaders are responsible for their followers, in many ways. We get the leaders we deserve, and that's what that's saying, too. Very nice. Yeah? Very nice.

F: So just one thing that helps me, that indulges me, that I think that by taking away the first son, I don't think that that was also an attack on or hurting David the man. It was hurting David the king, too, even though he could be assured of offspring, you don't know you're going to have sons, and which better thing than to have a son to carry on your legacy and the crown. I mean, everybody wants a son, and --

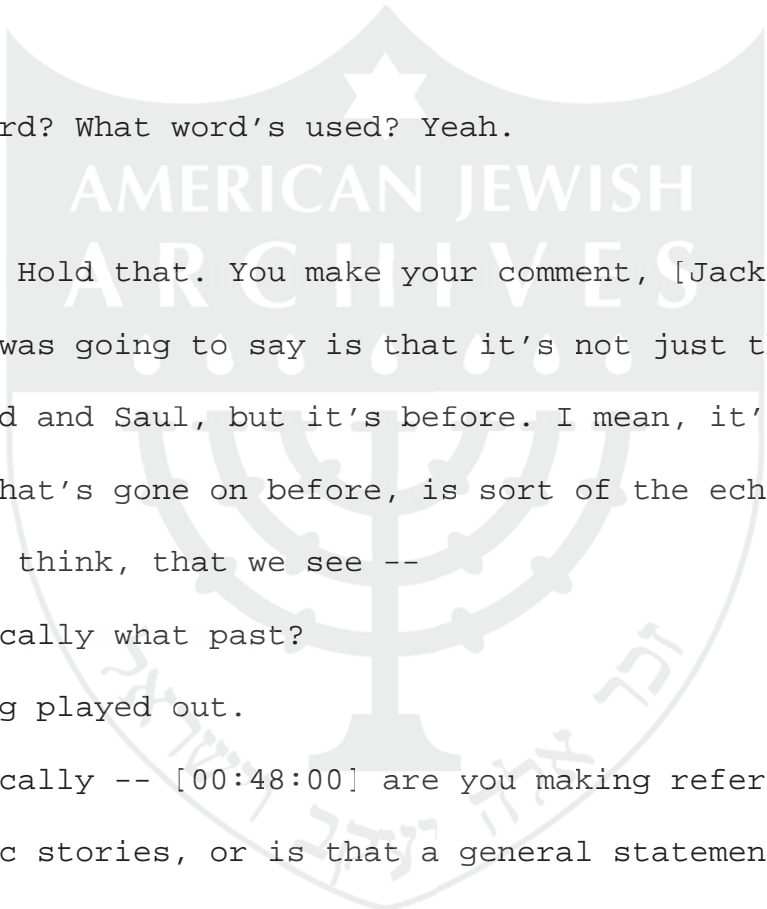
Q: What we do know about David is he already has sons. That's one. (laughter) And... No, it's a good point. We know David has sons already, and we know that the dynasty's promised forever and ever, right? It's an unconditional covenant we learned last time, so we know that it's unlimited. The thing that's interesting about -- what I'll say [00:47:00] is that it does account for all different characters, right? Why does this son have to go, but allow...? If you understand that there's two Davids here, right, David the man must be punished, right? But what's going to happen to

David the king? He both is allowed to be king but just remains a stain forever and ever, right? Because what will not be removed from his house? Something in the text. I also want to get to what you said, (inaudible) unbelievably smart when you say this. What's not going to be removed from David's house?

M: Coin.

Q: What word? What word's used? Yeah.

F: Swords.

Q: Swords. Hold that. You make your comment, [Jack?]?


F: What I was going to say is that it's not just the lineage of David and Saul, but it's before. I mean, it's all the stuff that's gone on before, is sort of the echoes of the past, I think, that we see --

Q: Specifically what past?

F: -- being played out.

Q: Specifically -- [00:48:00] are you making reference to any specific stories, or is that a general statement?

F: Garden of Eden.

Q: Well, we're going to get to that. That's (inaudible).
(laughter) Wait until you see how connected this is.

F: It's sort of general. I know there's something specific, but I haven't thought it out.

Q: Right, because what you remember is in David's lineage are two other stories, right? One is Judah and Tamar.

F: Right, Judah and Tamar.

Q: And this is the same -- this is a very similar story.

F: Yes, Judah and Tamar story, and --

Q: And also you remember the Ruth and Boaz story.

F: Right, but she was the great-grandmother.

Q: Right. And Ruth seduces Boaz, which is completely out of character for women in the Bible, and Judah is the father-in-law of Tamar. Judah is the father-in-law of Tamar. Tamar fails in his responsibilities as Judah. Judah is the ancestor of David, the king. It's the kingly royalty line. He fails in his responsibilities, and she has to play harlot, seduce him, get pregnant, and show him that he failed in his responsibilities. The moment in which he says, "Look," he says, [00:49:00] "it's known that your daughter-in-law, who has slept with someone else, and she's pregnant," he says, "take her out and burn her." And she sends him these royal kind of symbols, says, "No, no, the person who slept with me is the person who owns this." Judah immediately sees the symbol and says, "She's more righteous than me," which is --

F: (inaudible)?

Q: Two weeks ago. Two weeks ago.

F: Perfect, (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: "She's more righteous than me," right? So, in other words, Judah reacts immediately how, much like David reacts here, right? OK, and just that is a leadership quality. And look what Clinton's doing now. We don't have a society in which a leader can actually say "*Chatati*." Think of it: what would it be to structure an institution in which leadership can actually say "*Chatati*" and still maintain their leadership?

F: But even if he does say (inaudible), necessarily, I mean, he (inaudible) said --

Q: No, but let's hope he means it. [00:50:00] Let's hope he means it, let's hope he means it.

F: -- (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, if he did, it would be... So I want to now come back to your point and then move on, and that is: where do swords in front of the house appear? Only one other time in the Bible does that appear.

F: The swords at the feet of the tree of knowledge.

Q: Swords in front of the Garden of Eden, the entrance of the Garden of Eden. The end of the Garden of Eden story, after the people are -- (inaudible) -- after the people, Adam and

Eve are cast out, it says -- and it's a [Hebrew]; there are swords that protect the entrance. This story and the Garden of Eden story in that respect have an echo of each other, and you actually captured it. What we're learning is that [00:51:00] this journey... And what was the problem there? Remember? Adam and Eve did what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, they break the boundary. Right? They break the boundary. They used their what?

M: Free will.

Q: They used their free will. They used their power, right? They used their power to break the boundary. And the downside is no more Garden of Eden. Upside?

M: (inaudible).

Q: One. Oh, good. The same exact punishment. They should've been what? They were told -- very nice, Sam. They should've been -- we'll just have all the different analogies -- they should've been killed, he said, but, in fact, they're not killed. What happens? They're banished. Banished just means now they are much more on their own, they're much more free than they even imagined, right? And the upside is had they not done that, what wouldn't have happened?

M: Never would've entered the covenant.

Q: No story. (laughter) [00:52:00] No story. In other words, the Biblical story is suggesting, right, that without boundary break, without boundary through the boundary, history itself, and the human adventure, and the human journey couldn't have happened. Now, apply that to this story, right? This story is about what institution? Kingship. And what's it saying about the kingship? And David is the paradigmatic king.

F: At some point you have to (inaudible).

Q: That somehow the kingship itself is like -- to establish the kingship is like doing what?

F: Breaking boundaries.

Q: Somehow, establishing the kingship is like eating from the tree. It is --

F: (inaudible).

Q: What?

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

Q: It is some kind of compromise with the way it should have been. It's a compromising with the covenant. In fact, all institutional and all hierarchical arrangements in this community somehow are always going to have an echo of [00:53:00] covenantal compromise, and that's one of the reasons laypeople are so hard on leadership, both

professional and their own leadership in the community:
because there's something -- there's an undercurrent of the
culture itself that speaks against having leaders, almost,
or having leaders that -- unless they act like, you know,
Moshe, right? Because the covenantal moment itself, at
Sinai, everybody really is fundamentally what? Is
fundamentally given the opportunity to be a leader. It's a
kingdom of priests and a holy nation. So forever and ever,
all institutional arrangements, with its hierarchies and
its complexities and its organizations and its armies and
its institutions, all of them are going to smack as
compromise. But, at the same time, the text is saying, just
like when they left the Garden of Eden, history really
continues, and then something really powerfully positive
and necessary about it. Same here with kingship, and, by
extension, [00:54:00] in our era, whatever institutions
we're building, right? At the same time, the kingship seems
like a moral compromise, had you not had kingship, and you
had a kind of total moral purism, what would've happened?
Right. Right, bye-bye, that's the end of the story. Total
moral purism would've destroyed the Jewish people. Total
moral compromise is also going to destroy the state. So
you're going to constantly mediate between those poles of

moral purism and total moral compromise. And, of course, that's going to be always a constant argument, because currently where's the balance? And if you look to Torah, or you look to Talmud, or you look to the codes for the answer, you're looking in the wrong place. All you could look there -- and this is very important, as you now -- I don't teach history, but now you're going to only learn history for the next six sessions, right? I teach kind of [00:55:00] ideas and meaning. I assume you're learning the historical context with all your readings, and I care about it, but I'm assuming you're getting it and placing it in historical context. Now you're really going to get history. History is only important because it gives you previous moments where these decisions were made. You're not making those decisions. So we read this because we say, hmm, at a previous moment in Jewish history the people had a decision about how to move institutionally, and they moved towards this. They could've moved towards a more purist position. It would've destroyed the people. That was the judgment then. And could've moved -- the moral compromise we see -- I mean, King David's the example of moral compromise, and a total moral compromise equals the death of your own nation. So you constantly have to be asking where is the line, and

there's no permanent answer. It's a moving (inaudible), it's a moving line all the time. And that's the kind of conversations leadership really needs to have. And that's the Yom Kippur of leadership, right? That's part of what a real board retreat [00:56:00] would be, right? Not only the visioning piece of a board retreat, not only the strategic aspects of a board retreat, but what would really -- where in a board's year can people say "*Chatati l'adonai*"? Or if they don't believe in God, which is fully understandable in this era, "*Chatati [L'kha?]*"? And what would it mean to experience that? And (inaudible) leadership? And would that get coverage? I told you in my shul in Chicago that when I founded the first [*aliyot?*] on Yom -- did I tell you this? What?

F: Don't think so.

Q: The first [*aliyot?*] on Yom Kippur -- we do group *aliyots*, because we're trying to get away from the notion that people are [*machas?*]. It's really interesting. Now, I mean, think of it in terms of this: the institution of *aliyot*, the upside of it is people really feel honored by Torah, right? The downside of it is it begins -- you know -- "Why did that son of a bitch get the *aliyot*, especially on [00:57:00] (inaudible) Yom Kippur?" So what we did in our

shul, because we had a president, because the president put down \$100,000 a year to build something, (inaudible) see what would happen if we build a product that we just like without having to worry about finance, and he never took an *aliyot*, and he never took an honor, and he always sat in the back row. Because we're modeling what would it be to create a radically egalitarian community in which whatever you gave would give (inaudible). And so on Yom Kippur -- actually, on all days -- we give group *aliyot*. We don't give individual *aliyot*. And we try to use Torah to create community, because one of the culture needs right now in America is community. So we'll use the *parsha* to -- so, for example, like last week when I did this first *aliyot*, it says Joseph [Hebrew], there was no interpreter of the Pharaoh's dream, so I created a situation -- it takes me about three or four minutes -- about anybody who has dreams, aspirations -- and it's not clear how they're going to get there. There's no [falter?]. There's no [00:58:00] interpreter of their dreams at this moment in their life. Right, so of course, now, 50, 40 people got on, because who doesn't have dreams, right, or aspirations? And I said, "It could be literal, it could be figurative, it could be career, it could be personal, it could be night dreams."

You know, I expand on what we mean by dreams. Forty people come up. And I said, "Now, concentrate on that dream, and let's use the Torah to hopefully link the [Hebrew], the energy of the Torah to imagine where the [falter?] would come from, where would the interpreter come from. So on Yom Kippur what we do is the first *aliyot*, based on the Torah reading, in which Aaron asks *chuva* for who first, in the Yom Kippur literature? He asks first for himself, right, and the *kohanim*, before he can do what?

F: Ask for the people --

Q: Ask for the people's *chuva*. He first has to ask *chuva* for himself. So our first *aliyot* -- and we have, you know, 1,000, 800 people in the room, and there's a lot of board members of congregations, [00:59:00] because it, you know, it plays both worlds. It plays in the Federation world, and the very activist world, and it's also in this kind of new age spiritual world as a bridge community. So we have 60 people get up most of the year, because more men in high leadership positions still in our institution today, mostly men get up, and they set up about -- I ask anybody who's in a leadership position in American Jewish life, right, to take this *aliyot*, specifically to think about where did they fail, right, their leadership. Where did they fail

this -- they failed their people as leaders? And I do a little imagery to help them discover where they failed all of us. Me, too, because I take the *aliyot*, too. And it's very powerful. I would say last Yom Kippur, easily half of the men weeping. These are not little men. These are powerhouses.

F: Powerful men weep, too.

Q: But not in America, they don't. (laughter)

F: Little men.

Q: [01:00:00] One -- no.

F: (inaudible).

Q: No, no, no, no, I don't mean little men, short.

F: I know! I understood that. (laughter)

Q: Oh. Where have you ever seen in the American Jewish community a powerful man cry on leadership issues?

F: (inaudible).

Q: On a leadership issue, not his mother dying, where he maybe cries, right? On a leadership issue. On a leadership issue. Right?

F: I've never seen it.

Q: You know, because it's... But, of course, that's Yom Kippur. And people need that. What would it mean to structure up, to have that kind of experience inside of

our...? That's what it would mean to make the processes of the institutions Jewish. And it's clear that it's desired, because otherwise why would they think that *aliyot* can do that? Only one person would come out if they thought it was too touchy-feely. This is not Berkeley. This is -- no offense to Berkeley (laughter) -- this is Highland Park, Chicago, you know? You're not -- we don't...

F: *Yom Kippur's* a complement to this.

Q: It's Highland... Right. (laughter) I want to make sure you understood it. That's Highland Park, Chicago, you know, [01:01:00] where that's happened. So that's the story. This story is about that, on the one hand, these are all moral compromises that we make when we begin to set up institutions, whatever our institutions are. But there is no -- and at the same time, these institutions are absolutely necessary to continue the journey, or to continue the coding of Israel would not have made it without the kingship. And yet it's filled with incredible ambiguity, darkness, and compromises. And the key then becomes can your leadership be [Hebrew], and, I guess, can you have critics inside, like Nathan, who don't get killed (inaudible)? Yeah?

F: Rabbi?

Q: Yeah?

F: I just wanted to say something on the theme of forgiveness that's here, that you mentioned. This is just, to me, at least, [01:02:00] one in a stream of examples of God's forgiveness. Adam and Eve, he doesn't kill them; he banishes them. To Cain, he doesn't kill them, he banishes them.

Q: Good, good.

F: And those people I don't consider leaders. I mean, they're not -- they're just -- they're folks, right? So -- and, I mean, the theme of forgiveness, I don't necessarily see this as a particular example of how a leader's supposed to be compassionate, but, rather, the leader has to play by the same rules --

Q: Good, yeah.

F: -- as other folks. And yeah, I mean, that... Because I don't see this as a distinct (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: That's fine. The leader has to play by the rules.

Forgiveness, though, is also a part of what it means to be empowered, right? Whoever you're dealing with, whether it's Adam and Eve, or Cain and Abel. But you're right, that's, I think, Cal's point, and yeah, the king and the leader has

to... The person, right, is going to get punished there.

[01:03:00] The king is treated just like a person there, just like he should be. And that's good.

F: And the other question I wanted to ask you: if the people are responsible for the king, do you see that -- or responsible for its leadership -- I mean, do you...

(break in video)

Q: -- but when I'm speaking to followers, it's really important for followers to understand how much responsibility they have. I think that's... You speak -- one thing leaders understand is they speak to different communities in different ways, you know? So my second *aliyot*, right, is for all followers who have moved up to treating their leaders so they can truly lead. You know, so that's the second *aliyot* on Yom Kippur. And so you have to play both there. But, you know, if I can step into the followers, I'm always telling people in denominations, for example, very often after I speak, I met with people, and people complain about the rabbis. I said, well, you know, who chose them? Who's supporting the institution that's training shitty ones? [01:04:00] I mean, I don't understand. Whose responsibility is that? That's your responsibility if you take seriously, right... You're not

supposed to be a rabbi, because we shouldn't have all rabbis, but so whose responsibility is that? If you really want... People have, again, a lot of power. They just don't know that, and they have to learn how to reap that power. So I think we have to empower -- that's the empower part of it. You made me think of something else when you said this about God: in some ways, this is the same story as the story about God, who learns from the very beginning how to exercise God's own power, but, in fact, God is very much like King David. God's passions very often get out of hand early on, and God does what? Exercises God's power in profoundly destructive ways. But God has to learn to [01:05:00] do *tzimtzum*. He has to learn how to contract God's power, just like people are going to have to learn how to exercise their power. The choice is not to exercise your power, or to give up your power. That's not a choice.

F: But all of this is a part of childhood growing into maturity. God has to go through it, and the people have to go through it, and my children have to go through it.

Q: Well, I think that we have to -- that's not a thing that ends when you're an adult.

F: No, but part of maturing is learning to exercise control.

Q: Right. Yeah. That's fine. But whatever you're learning at 12, it's nothing like... I mean, I'll speak for myself: in the last two and a half months, I cannot believe the difference between what it means to be the president of an organization and what it means to be on the board of an organization. I cannot believe... I'm not even aware that... It's amazing, when you say something to someone in your office, it's a whole different thing now. (laughter) You know, you say something and they actually...

F: Jump.

Q: If you walk by, you know, you have something on your mind, you're not feeling well, [01:06:00] you walk by and you say hi, and it's not in the exact same way that maybe they perceived you, instead of two years ago they think, you know, something's wrong. And that's a whole different level. And I think that I had pretty good restraint and things by 12, 13, was pretty much in touch. It's a whole different thing now I'm 39, you know. And I imagine that power is going to increase (inaudible), right, now decrease. So I think that that's a never-ending battle, right, the more successful and more powerful you become. (inaudible) King David is going through his kingship here, and he's a pretty together guy, look what's happened.

M: (inaudible) the story as a metaphor for (inaudible) people, and then, you know, David's committed this terrible thing, and then God basically cuts him some slack, rather than destroy him entirely (inaudible) kingship. You look at that and say, well, it's really a story about the entire people, I can kind of buy into that, but this notion that [01:07:00] the story is really about -- it's similar to the Garden of Eden, and it shows God's mercy and forgiveness, and then what it really shows (inaudible) that the King has to play by the same rules that the rest of us do, I can't accept that, because in my mind, if somebody else had slept with someone else's wife --

Q: They'd be dead.

M: -- and killed them, they would be dead, so they don't have to play by the same rules.

Q: Yeah, "play by the same rules," I'm not sure I would use that language exactly. No one plays by the same rules, because everybody's unique. That's the... There are no such thing as rules that... Right. Everything has to be contextual. But, of course, you can't have it that way, so there has to be general rules.

M: (inaudible) --

Q: The king has different rules, right? Although, in Biblical... Yeah, no, he would've been killed, right. He deserved death penalty. He said it himself. But the king has different sets of responsibilities, too. That's, I think, where [01:08:00] Seth's point was, that Adam and Eve did deserve what?

F: Death.

Q: Death. That's what the story says. God says that. God says -- and there are no other people yet, so there's no play by the rules. You play by the rules, whose rules? There were only two people. So it's not as much play by the rules, as that all rules are fragile and tentative, and --

F: Able to be bought.

Q: -- and vulnerable to contexts.

M: Yeah, this is what I'm having a lot of trouble with, because to equate what Adam and Eve did, to eat from the tree of knowledge, with that horrific abuse of power, is not comparable to me. I mean, on the one hand it's a God says, "Well, if you do this --"

Q: (inaudible) --

M: "-- if you do this, it's death," but what they did was not murder somebody out of just arrogance and abuse. [01:09:00] What they did was explore, and express curiosity, and they

rebelled against their parent. I mean, to me, that's qualitatively just completely different --

Q: OK.

M: -- from going out and murdering your lover's husband.

Q: OK.

M: So it doesn't work for me.

Q: OK, so it doesn't work for you. I think what you have to -- what I feel the text is --

M: (laughter) I'm sorry.

Q: Doesn't make a difference to me. I think the text -- (multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Don't worry about it. Don't feel so guilty. The point is the text, though, uses *cherev* at both points to say that there's going to be a *cherev* that keeps you from something, I think that that only appears twice. I think that the author is asking you to look at those two stories together. And don't get caught up in the penalty part, right? I think that any analogy breaks down when you get to the details. The point of analogy is it gives you some higher truth by not getting all the way down in the details.

M: Right, but --

Q: I mean, there is a naiveté that has to be [01:10:00] broken for real creativity and to make their journey to really

happen. There has to be a real assumption of power, and there are consequences to that. In that respect, it's the same story. Adam and Eve assumed power, have real consequences to breaking the history. The establishment of the kingship -- now, forget -- it's not about David anymore. It's not about what David does. It's about forever and ever, establishing any institution, the establishment institution is a breakout from the Eden of how Jewish people experience themselves, which is an egalitarian people, a kingdom of priests, right? And they break out. The second you establish a hierarchy, an organization, and different leadership classes, and different classes altogether, you are breaking out of the pristine covenant and mold of Sinai, which is -- let's say that's the (inaudible), right, in which everything really is one people, [Hebrew], a holy priest. You've broken past that, and [01:11:00] you've seen that tension right from the beginning of this story. That's where it's different, not in the penalties, not in the forgiveness piece, not in the... Except for in the piece that the story continues and the partners are still here. God's still committed to Adam and Eve, clothes them. God still commits to David (inaudible). Right, it's not the acts. Of course the abuse

of the kingship power is going to be far more than anything Adam and Eve can do. Why? Because there are no people around for Adam and Eve. That's not what that story's about, right? The more you get into the story, the more the abuses of power are going to be that much more vicious, because now you have real power. In the end, Adam and Eve are just two characters, and they're really make believe, and they're really... David's a real person. Real people will get killed. Because one is, in the end, a political story. The other is more of a psychological, existential story. [01:12:00] In the political, people get hurt, killed. So you don't have to buy into these details. Forget about the story. You're now saying what does it mean to have kingship here. It breaks the pristine moral purism to have the way we've understood how we organize and govern ourselves. But you have no choice. You don't break through that, you will not have structures to govern and implement the covenantal ideals and norms. You will not be able to do it. But once you do it, compromises are amazing, you know? Once you decide that the only way to raise money is to give the first *aliyot*, the [Yom?] *aliyot* to the wealthiest person, once you decide the only way to raise money is da-da-da-da-da, it may be, and you may have to do that,

because without doing that you can't actually fulfill so many remissions of what the people's about, but there are consequences to that. That's what this story is getting at, of all institutional arrangements. Right? Once you set them up, [01:13:00] you break out of a kind of pure way in which the community's organized. But if you don't break out, the community can't continue. But if you do break out, are you aware of the consequences, and can you build in the correctors, amongst which is here is the possibility of creating a context in which there could be a critique of leadership, like Nathan, and leadership saying "*Chatati l'Adonai.*" (inaudible) by that piece, that's all, just take it at that level. That's all I really meant by it. Yes, and then we have to go on.

M: (inaudible) --

Q: A little louder.

M: It's just I see something else going on. It's not just here, but this is (inaudible), and sort of the tension between the laws and unattainable goal --

Q: Good.

M: -- but also the law as --

Q: Law and unattainable -- or real and ideal.

M: Or real and ideal --

Q: Good.

M: -- but it's attainable enough so that it could be strived for.

Q: Excellent.

M: And, you know --

Q: Good, thank you.

M: -- the balance and the tension between the two, God has to be able to forgive, because if he doesn't forgive --

Q: What's the result?

M: -- then man can't recognize his own imperfection, [01:14:00] and in doing so can't beg the forgiveness that allows him to be grounded and to refocus his behavior and start over again.

Q: Yeah.

M: Otherwise, he's just going to keep killing (inaudible), and for God's sake, he created them, why would he want to knock them all off?

Q: Right. That's right. In the end, unconditional love has to be the context, and there's a constant negotiation between the real and the ideal, and once you recognize there's a negotiation, there's always a danger that you'll get mired in the what? In the real. You'll actually think the compromise is ideal, so you're always going to have to go

and correct this. That's a very hard thing, especially for people who have what?

F: Power.

Q: Power.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Right, right. These are exaggerated examples so that you can really -- I mean, they're not 100% exaggerated. I mean, you know, there are plenty of powerful people that do things as rough as this.

M: They may be 100% real, but they're exaggerated in some way.

Q: Right. Well, of course, because it's written for who, these stories? The Jewish people. And the Jewish people are never perceived in the story [01:15:00] as what? Common. They're what? Kings and priests. Because the self-reception of the Torah of the Jewish people is that they have power. It's not until we get out of the Biblical period that we're not powerful. Which is why the Bible stopped being studied. You study rabbinic literature, which was the literature of palaces. And don't be surprised we've reentered in the last, you know, 50 years history, and we have a lot -- and we have returned to study, and the majority of this story is not of rabbinic texts. It's of what texts?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Biblical texts, because they speak, again, to our condition: return to the land, power and affluence. Let's face it: the average Jew throughout -- Ben, whoever you have next will tell you there were a few periods where things were unbelievable, and it's very important to learn that, because those are going to be the key to reconstruction of Jewish life. But --

F: [01:16:00] That's what we're reading right now.

Q: What?

F: We're reading about this (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, the Biblical period's the whole -- that's a thousand years of that. You're now going to read -- Benji (inaudible) probably is your next teacher, so you'll go from 620 to the modern period, and a thousand years of it, of which not more than, you know, a couple hundred in places where we actually had it good, and even then we were vulnerable and fragile, because we only had it good for a while and then it turned on us. He'll concentrate on those periods to a great extent, because they're our keys to our being able to reconstruct, because they at least mimic a little bit of our situation. But the general tone of rabbinic literature doesn't mimic our situation, you know. So when you read the King David story, tell me, if you were

living in most places where a king in power, the King David story, what are you going to say about it? The rabbis turn King David into a rabbi, anyhow. They said his greatness was that he'd sit and offer. I think that was one of the rabbinic texts (inaudible) got to the back of it. I've been reading too many. But (inaudible) rabbi. [01:17:00] OK, let's go. So, interesting prophetic ideological insights or breakthroughs. Go to Isaiah, chapter 10. I'm just going to go through. You're going to see three or four key ideas, right? The prophets basically live from 800 to 525 BCE, and they're always doing the same thing: they're critiquing either the king, either the priesthood, or the wealthy. In the name of the story, right? Not as outsiders of the story, just outsiders of the establishment. So somebody read 10, verse 5:19. Hello...

F: Ah.

Q: That's good. Let's go. (laughter) That's the first word.

F: [01:18:00] "Those who write out evil writs and compose iniquitous documents to subvert the cause of the poor, to rob of their rights the needy of my people, that widows may be their spoil, and fatherless children their booty, what will you do on the day of punishment when the calamity comes from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and how

will you save your carcasses from collapsing under fellow prisoners, from falling beneath the slain? Yet his anger has not turned back, and his arm is still outstretched. Ha! Assyria, rod of my anger, in whose hand is the staff of my fury -- is my fury. I will send him against an ungodly nation. I will charge him against a people that [provokes?]..."

Q: OK. Here, right, the prophet is saying what's going to happen? For the people that what? Are not behaving. What's going to happen?

M: (inaudible).

Q: By?

F: Assyria.

Q: Right. And Assyria's called what?

F: Rod of my anger.

Q: [01:19:00] Rod of my anger. This is the "rod of my anger" ideology. In other words, most cultures didn't have a concept that their god could use other nations... Well, when you got conquered, your god lost. Here, Isaiah -- and this is the first time we really see it, right, in its full development -- somehow, Assyria's behavior is related to God, so that when Assyria beats you, it doesn't indicate your God's weakness. It indicates what?

F: Your God's strength.

Q: Your own God's strength, somehow. Right? Because Assyria's strength itself is only a reflection of what?

F: The power of God.

Q: The power of God. Now, this may sound very obvious to you, but if you go back to 750 BCE, this is a revolutionary idea, and it was one of the ideas that allowed the southern kingdom to have a way of understanding its own destruction.

[01:20:00] It was so not allied that when 722, when the northern kingdom got destroyed, they did not have an ideology that allowed them to survive. That's why they're called the ten lost tribes, because they got lost. This ideology wound up within the next 150 years, probably combined with the unconditional covenant ideology of the fifth kingdom, so the people who got exiled in the Babylonian exile in 586 could still imagine that their god still what? Was with them. That their god was still with them.

F: That it was powerful.

Q: It was powerful. Right, right, that's even more important. It was with them, plus it was powerful. Now, this is still -- there's still little -- how many people like this ideology, that when something bad happens to us it's still

God? This ideology now is probably just about over in most mainstream American Jewish community, right? But it's still alive in the ultra-Orthodox community, right? Right, when the (inaudible) [01:21:00] group [*mesharim?*] says that because of the Reformers and scientists the Holocaust happened, that is... In other words, of course the Nazis were strong, right, but their strength was really only a reflection of God's...

M: Anger.

Q: Anger. And they were a rod -- you could put in the words Nazis, and the Nazis were a rod of God's anger. I'm not saying you should like the ideology. I'm saying it is internally coherent. It is internally logical.

M: (inaudible).

Q: And, right, there's an internal consistency. Now, remember, all ideologies, they only work -- ideologies are just ways of framing the story, right? They only work as long as they help make sense of the data. For whole groups of Jews, they are making sense of that data. Now, [01:22:00] that ideology is breaking down, just like us. What event broke that ideology apart for many Jews?

F: The Holocaust.

Q: The Holocaust. One, modernity did, because we don't think God intervenes anymore. Modernity destroyed that kind of God, right? So modernity did, but the Holocaust surely did. But just remember, there are upsides and downsides when ideologies get... Right, the upside of it -- the downside of losing that ideology is there is a cut between your actions and your fate, once you lose that ideology. Or, another way of putting it: the advantage of this ideology is there is a certain clarity between your fate and your actions. Know what I mean? And now we live in a society in which you can't talk about punishment.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, well, (inaudible) story. It's about a new way to account for all that data. In other words, the data is now just all over the place, another way [01:23:00] of saying it. You know, those of us who have children, we do raise our children that there's a connection between their deeds and their fate, right? And sometimes we are the rod of anger. You know, and I don't mean literally, obviously. Right? But we do want to create a sense that there's a real linkage between faith and deeds. All this is is a play on that on a kind of national, cosmic level. So it's a very powerful ideology. It still resonates with us a little bit,

but I don't think we want policy like. But there's a downside: now we live in a society that you can't talk about punishment, you can't talk about... You have to talk about consequences.

M: (inaudible).

Q: Yeah, uh-huh.

M: AIDS is God's response.

Q: Right, is God's anger towards homosexuals, exactly.

M: Blaming the victim.

F: What does anger --

Q: It's not blaming the victim. [01:24:00] Here, it's not blaming the victim. In fact, when the ideology is working right, when the ideology is working right it doesn't blame the victim. In fact, what happens to the victim?

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: It actually supports the victim and allows the victim --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- to... Not...

M: To not be a victim.

Q: To not be a victim. Because what happens to the victim? He says, "Whoa."

F: (inaudible).

Q: By?

F: (inaudible).

Q: More than that? What do you do?

F: Change your behavior.

Q: Right, you change your behavior. You change your behavior.

In other words, you can actually -- the action's still available to you now becomes real, possible source of reconstruction. That's the upside of it. Now, maybe the key, then, is the prophets are saying this about the whole people. They never use this ideology to isolate one part of the people against the other, and maybe that's really the difference in this society. When this ideology is used as a complete national ideology, which is what it is here, right? The whole people. It's not [01:25:00] you part of the people -- the prophets don't say, "You one part of the people that now happens to be X, you know..." When it's an ideology that's a complete, nationally based ideology, it is really a source of [*teshuvah*?] for the people, or it's not a source, it's a -- yeah, a source. It compels the people to [*teshuvah*?].

M: You say that in the context of the Holocaust (inaudible).

Q: Well, I think maybe what the ultra-Orthodox are doing wrong, of course, is they're saying this wasn't a national,

right? There are two groups of people they isolate out -- no different than isolating out homosexuals -- it's two groups of people who you're isolating out, to use that ideology. And when you use it that way, the ideology's very pernicious. But as a people, we do have an ideology like that. We say the Jewish people -- UJ's built on that ideology. UJ's built on the ideology because of our sins we were punished. The "our," first of all, is the entire Jewish people. That's the way they get away with it. They don't use the language "sins." What was our sin? [01:26:00] [APAC?], right? It's the same thing. Any --

(multiple people speaking and laughing; inaudible)

Q: No, no, every --

M: (inaudible) --

Q: All Israel... (laughter) No, no, think about it for a second.

F: It's the process.

Q: What was the fundamental sin of the Jewish people, especially American diaspora, let's say, right now.

M: Inaction (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

F: Inaction (inaudible) --

Q: It was inaction. Right? Right? And that inaction...

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right? Now, we don't believe really in a God kind of that intervenes, but that's a secular spin on that. And look what we were able to produce off of that. If ushered in, a complete reevaluation of the American Jewish political situation and stance, and philanthropic position and stance, and how to use both philanthropy, right, or affluence, and to use power. So that ideology could be powerful when it's applied nationally. It's really dangerous when it picks out one group inside and says, "The whole people's curse is because of you." [01:27:00] So maybe that's the corrective on it.

M: Well, I mean, even when it's more general, if it's applied to the Holocaust -- I mean, I see what you're saying when you apply it to AIDS, because (inaudible) separating, but if you're saying that because the Jewish people were not righteous enough that God punished them by --

Q: Well, that broke down (inaudible). That's where we started. We said, at some point the ideology does break down. But I think we have to beware that's a secular version of that ideology. It's not God punished us because of it, but -- it's not as much of a consequence of us not using our behaviors that had happened much larger, which is a little bit of a subtle... OK? Yeah.

F: Why would this ideology be disappearing, really, at the same time as it seems to be increasing (inaudible)?

Q: No, it's only -- that was John's point is that all fundamentalists have this ideology [and this core?], because it's a way of understanding a lot of what's going on in the world for them. Because there are a lot of problems --

M: It's a way of controlling the behavior, [01:28:00] too.

Q: All ideologies control behavior, right? The only question is how you're going to control it. That's what ideologies do. This ideology, though, is specifically powerful when you feel powerless about what you can do. And that's what fundamentalists feel when they look around and they look at the world. What's going on?

F: So then is the difference in between --

Q: Then they use this --

F: -- that the Jews feel powerful and the Christians feel less power?

Q: No, we have it, too.

F: No, but not in the same numbers.

Q: That's only because we're only 14 million and they're a couple billion.

F: No, but relatively --

Q: No.

F: -- there's a growing proportion --

Q: No.

F: -- for the same way that...

Q: It's unclear. We have no idea what... There's so many different kind of Christian fundamentalists, and we lump them all together as one group. There are a lot of different kinds of Christian fundamentalists.

F: No, sure.

Q: And anyway, in terms of the power over the Jewish people right now, and the definitions of being Jewish, I would say that it -- I mean, you're not going to win long term, but in the short term [01:29:00] I would say that the fundamentalist right wing of Jewish life are controlling definitions right now. For good and for bad. I think as long as their ideology is better than ours, they deserve to. As long as we don't have a new compelling ideologies... So I don't blame them. I never blame the other for winning. It's our fault. OK?

F: Who is us?

Q: Us is us, Reform conservatives, secular Jews who have no ideology. You know, basically it makes us feel good.

M: I'm asking (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: As a general, as a general.

M: -- a 15-minute question, and I'm not sure that I'm finding the answer. So if we had this ideology, and it was the guilt ideology, and the Holocaust, and that led us to creating, you know, the success of UJA (inaudible) successful right at this minute with UJA, and --

Q: (inaudible) UJA too much earlier. Let's take \$20 million (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: Oh, I understand that, but --

Q: It's a metaphor. I'll let you know, when you speak to Gentiles, they would love to have [01:30:00] a UJA.

M: Right.

Q: So let's just --

M: But we always flagellate ourselves (inaudible) --

Q: Right, so let's be a little careful.

M: -- right? But things are breaking down, and there's no question about that. So as leaders in the community --

Q: I like to say they're transforming.

M: OK, they're transforming.

M: Actually, they're more (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M: And so do we have a new --

Q: Shh.

M: In your mind, is there something that we're transforming into already, or are we still in the process of breaking the boundary and we don't know where we're going, and what is it -- and as the leaders, then, should we be creating new ideology?

Q: Well, I think that the problem for liberal Jews, the liberal Jewish community, is that -- I mean, it's both, it's institution and ideological; they go together -- that right now we're in -- many of the ideologies that worked for us no longer work, you know, and we're struggling with one movement struggling, and that's part of its transition to new leadership, and the conservative movement is struggling. Unfortunately, its leadership really is struggling, and that's a problem in the movement. They'll pay the price, you know. I mean, they just wrote a report saying [01:31:00] everything's fantastic, but on the ground we know it's not, so that's there. I think UJ really is working hard at that. I mean, I'm with them. That upper, upper leadership really is struggling. I think even at CJF they're really trying, the shul, local federations, people are trying. This is really complicated. We have to ask ourselves. We're not used to asking these questions. What is it we really believe now for the next phase? What do we

really believe? That's a fun question. What do we really believe? And we're going to have to ask that question in the context of being normal, and that's new for us. Because most of the ideology, the function (inaudible) the Jews, the function to affirm the meaning of being segregated, affirm the meaning of being separate, affirm the meaning of being really different. And now, how can we affirm our identity... What I sometimes put this way is: we're going to have to be able to imagine [01:32:00] a total Jewish lifestyle that demands no segregation, and to even hear that is weird. The first time I formulated it, I said, "Wow, what does that mean?" You know, and I formulated it, but it came out in a speech once that I was doing. Maybe it's in the public school. A total Jewish lifestyle that demands no segregation. And, of course, that's what Christians are going to have to develop, because there is no possibility for segregation in the global community. And that doesn't mean there won't be difference. No jumping. Doesn't mean there won't be difference. But what will it mean to have differences in the way you live (inaudible) not demanding segregation? That is new for human beings. That's a new possibility. That's what real pluralism and real freedom, real technology, communication, and mobility

[01:33:00] needs, and we just are not ready for that yet.

So --

M: Are we (inaudible) going the other way?

Q: Well, there are -- because that is where we're going, and it's so scary, and since we have no idea what it's going to look like, don't be surprised there are real reactions to that reality. Even a guy like Clinton, who knows full well we're going there, will sign bills because -- you know, to create false boundaries. You can't help it because you don't know what to do. In this respect, what you have just done last night or whenever it was really is an interesting first move on that. There's no ideology that underlines it yet because your institution doesn't have to be ideological, but there are incredible ideological premises that do underline it, you know. Finding a way to really play out the individualism of human beings while still maintaining community. That's going to be one of the central [01:34:00] challenges: finding out how you can really allow people freedom and believe that they'll really be responsible. You're presuming that kind of human being, and that kind of community. It's unclear whether we'll be able to do it. So I don't know (inaudible). What would a democratic, pluralist, humanist, inclusive ideological

position, which allows for multiple particularities, look like? That's what we're talking about creating.

F: (inaudible).

Q: What?

F: We never get anywhere?

Q: Why do you think that?

F: Because, I mean, we have this trouble going on in my organization right now on the top leadership that we have this international board of governors, and they all want to -- they've decided, or some of them have decided, that they want to run the hospital. They want to make the decisions on the way the hospital runs. Well, you can't have 70 people running a hospital?

Q: Right, I never said that.

F: Huh?

Q: I never said 70 people running a hospital.

F: Yeah, but [01:35:00] you know, the by consensus and all that kind of stuff, it takes forever for anything to get done.

Q: (inaudible) --

F: Do you know that the Quakers make all their decisions, the the Society of Friends, the Quaker Society of Friends, make

all their decisions by consensus for the entire organization.

Q: I assume they don't want to make --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: But I assume they don't want to make all the decisions... I mean, they understand the difference between medical decisions and non-medical decisions. It's really isolating what it is they really want, right? Obviously they're saying what? They don't feel that they have enough input. Now the question is to clarify where that input's going to be.

F: Yeah, no, I mean, I've been thinking about that this whole discussion. I mean, I don't think it's wrong. I think that we're not doing a good enough job. Their needs are not being met.

Q: That's all.

F: But that's also not completely realistic.

Q: Well, they don't know what the ideal is even -- what don't even know what their ideal is, because that's not even been clarified. All (inaudible) a little bit of their anger we understand, a little bit of their dissatisfaction, and how the professionals are a little tense, and the hospital's

very tense. [01:36:00] That's what we have now. So you've got to, you know --

F: I don't know about that. I just (inaudible).

(multiple conversations and laughter; inaudible)

Q: But that's just a reflection. But every institution is going through that, because we're all having the same problems of how to merge the real individuals and the authority and power that people have on their lives, right, and building real communities with those communities, or hospital communities, medical communities, whether those are Federation communities, whether those are APAC communities. It's the same problem everywhere. No one knows yet how. We don't know if it's going to be... America's having the same problem.

F: But the challenge is for us the leaders in our own little sphere who don't have -- you know, it's the power versus the not power, whatever, being able to make a change in this hundred-year-old institution --

Q: (inaudible).

F: -- that doesn't really recognize women in the same way, etc., etc. You know, it's very frustrating.

Q: Right. [01:37:00] That's true. These are really, especially right now -- this is (inaudible). There are so many fault

lines, you're saying. There are so many fault lines. OK. I mean, I have no answer for that. I mean, I don't think it was much more difficult than the move to kingship. These were major, seminal moves. They're sizable kinds of moves in the history of the Jewish people, and we're in one of them, too. And so they're hitting all the institutional structures. Because here at kingship, we think it's just the king hanging, but that was the entire economy, that was the entire... That was all the institutional... When you said kingship, it was like you were saying the entire Federation, Agency, medical community, right? The kingship was everything. So there was a sizable kind of experience for the Jewish people as they moved. And we're in one of those, too, now. OK, I want to move on a little bit, unless it's... Yeah.

M: (inaudible). [01:38:00] I'm involved in (inaudible) Federation. I think that (inaudible) distressing. The power (inaudible) leadership -- the NJAs, JL, and UHC, for that matter -- (inaudible) the inability to offer a national leadership, to compromise on even small issues, and (inaudible) merger (inaudible) and show true leadership to the American Jewish community is a very serious matter. It

combines with the fact that our institutional bureaucracies have now matured to a point where their own furtherance --

M: I agree.

M: -- has become a more important goal than the purpose of the institution as it was originally organized. This combination, whether it's the joint or whether it's the [UJA?] or [CJF?] combination, or [UAC's?] [01:39:00] distancing itself from the real needs of the synagogues (inaudible) inability to even -- you know, forget about serve them, but even recognize their needs (inaudible) always have is UHC has become the bum committee. It's become the collecting dues and ensuring that there's compliance (inaudible) membership, not serving its membership.

F: (inaudible) --

Q: I think in general you're right, but when you sound like a prophet, in the end you're not important, because what we just learned here is that there is no choice but to have institutions, and these are the natural moral corruptions in institutions. There it is, you know, fucking the people by having adultery and murdering, so here it's by actually believing that you have an independent role as opposed to serving.

M: I'm not arguing your point. The point is these institutions are obsoleting themselves, and the reason that the Orthodox voice is, I think, as strong as it is today is because there's a clarity and there is a [01:40:00] lack of [muddiness?] in their organizational structure and in the way in which they're pursuing their goals.

Q: That what?

M: And I adamantly disagree with most of their philosophy, but it doesn't make any difference (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: I agree with that, the clarity of ideology, but don't -- it's bad to lump all. When you say all UJA, there's a real fight inside of UJA about how to go about this. When you talk about even UHC, right -- and I would say they're in, in many ways, worse shape than UJA, believe it or not -- because UJA at least raises \$220 million, and out of that \$220 million, \$200 million actually goes to people needs. So push comes to shove, human beings are actually affected by \$200 million of the \$220 million, right? So that's already fairly decent, right? Its larger problem is it has no language to describe what it's doing. That's what its problem is, more than anything. CJF is a separate issue, right? It is more like the UHC federations. So there,

[01:41:00] I think that you're right. But the second you would do away with them, you'd have to build them again, and almost all the same problems you would have. So don't overestimate the Orthodox success, right? Its success is far more limited than you think, right? The thing is they have a feeling of triumphant now, right, and it's the first generation of Orthodox that have wealth, so they're exercising their wealth for the first time, so they're getting on the national scene, which is a healthy thing for the Jewish community. So that's the first time, because they're the first real postwar generation that's made it. So now they have their building in Washington just like UHC can have, and (inaudible) can have. They have their own place. That's healthy for the Jewish community, and so they're experiencing. They haven't grown 1% in 20 to 40 years in America in terms of population, not one percentage point. They were 7% in 1950, they're 7% in 1990, right?

F: (inaudible).

Q: The makeup of Orthodoxy has changed, but that's true.

[01:42:00] They're much more clear (inaudible). And almost all of their success is dependent on the rest of the Jewish community having fought all the battles and crime.

M: And I think it's important (inaudible) to discuss looking realistically at the breakdown of our institutions is different turning its back on (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Well, good, (inaudible).

M: I voted to continue our UHC membership.

Q: Yeah, good, excellent.

M: I sat in the (inaudible) meetings. They drove me nuts, but I did it, because to turn your back on it is to give up completely.

Q: Good. I think that's what we (inaudible) --

M: But we have to be realistic about what we have and what we don't have in our leadership in this country right now.

Q: Right, I said that. That was the first lesson. Let's go to Ezra. I'm sorry, let's go to Isaiah. We did read of the anger. Let's go to chapter 10, verse 20, so just a few verses later. This is another ideology.

M: "And in that day the remnant of Israel (inaudible) and the estate of the house of Jacob --"

Q: Shh, shh, everybody listen.

M: "-- shall lean no more upon him that beats him, but shall lean sincerely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. Only a remnant shall return, only a remnant of Jacob to Mighty

God. Even if your people, oh Israel, should be as the sands of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return.

Destruction is decreed. Retribution comes like a flood, while my Lord God of Hosts is carrying out a decree of destruction upon all the land."

Q: OK. What would you think you would call this ideology, where it repeats over and over again there?

F: Remnant.

Q: Remnant. This is the remnant ideology.

F: What is (inaudible)?

Q: Seven twenty to 750, right.

F: BCE?

Q: BCE, before the destruction of (inaudible). Remnant in Hebrew is *sheerith*, right? And remnant ideology is also very powerful ideology, especially if you're what?

M: (inaudible).

Q: If you're...

F: Powerless.

Q: [01:44:00] If you're few, (laughter) you're --

F: (inaudible).

Q: (coughs) If you're a few, you're powerless, it's a very powerful ideology, right? Think of the early synagogues that came here that named themselves *Sheerith Israel*.

That's what they were saying. "We're only a few -- we may not be many, but we're going to what?"

F: Survive.

Q: "We're going to survive it and make it. The rebirth and renewal will come through us." OK? Of course, it's a dangerous ideology, like anything else, when it's used inside the people, against other people. This is the prophet saying, "Who's going to be the remnant? Everybody who's left." It's a national ideology when it's used as a particular ideology inside the national experience, and it's very dangerous, because it really says -- that ideology is what allowed Reform -- right, I never spoke about it this way -- it allowed Reform to actually say yes to patrilineal descent, because it just assumed that it could make the unilateral decision on the [01:45:00] destiny of the Jewish people, because it never dawned on them that really the rest of the Jews (inaudible) make it. That deep down, Reform Jewry was going to be the Jewry that makes it. It's that ideology that allows Orthodoxy to --

___: (inaudible).

Q: Right, it's ideocracy. Right. So you both use the same ideology. Now, Reform doesn't talk that language, right? It

uses the language of, you know, egalitarianism and that,
but in the end you've got to say if you make a decision...

M: (inaudible) very clearly use (inaudible).

Q: Good.

M: All of outreach is "If we don't do this, we're not going to survive."

Q: Good, OK.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

F: They don't listen to language of "We are the ones that are going to survive --"

Q: Right, they won't...

F: -- but the Orthodox (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: Oh no, (inaudible) saying Rabbi Schindler made a decision of patrilineal descent, he basically said that, that they're not going to survive unless they see the writing on the wall, and the writing on the wall says that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: I mean, that is [01:46:00] Reform ideology, to a great extent. They know how to couch it in more (inaudible) terms, because they're liberal modern, but that's the ideology.

M: (inaudible).

M: Huh? (laughter)

Q: What is?

(multiple conversations and laughter; inaudible)

M: You know, you make an issue of patrilineal descent --

Q: Oh, no, no.

M: -- (inaudible) institutionalizing.

Q: Every argument has an intrinsic logic, too. I happen to think that patrilineal descent makes a lot of sense intrinsically to the Reform movement, but it's interesting to see what ideologies -- and I'm not saying it's bad, necessarily; it's important for us to understand, though, sometimes it's presumed on things that we don't even recognize. Right? There is a presumption there that somehow the rest of the Jewish people are not going to be terribly significant in the positions they take. So that the rest of the Jewish people, the other 60% of the Jewish people, don't recognize all the people that we recognize in Jews [01:47:00] as Jews. It doesn't really matter, because either they'll come along or they're not going to be around. That's what makes sense.

M: Positioning oneself from your point of strength, when you look forward, out a few years, is how any organization survives, any people survives.

Q: I'm not saying it's a bad position.

M: No, I know, I know that.

F: Well, some would argue that it isn't (inaudible), it isn't (inaudible), it doesn't count.

M: Ah, but if you don't take a stand and a position...

F: No, sure, but then you're not breaking the boundaries.

Q: Right.

F: And you're not (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: I happen to think -- my own view is that I think it's a great thing to have maximum positions at this moment of transition, but I think everybody should understand the cost of their position. That's all. Thank God we have one group of Jews called Reform who are on the borders. They're so permeable with Christianity at the moment that, you know, we have really open borders. Thank God. Thank God we have other people who are saying, "You know what? Let the borders be high." And I think we need all of them. The real issue is [01:48:00] (inaudible) each other. And so a Reform rabbi has to speak to -- when he converts someone he has to say, "You're coming into the Jewish people." For example, when you understand the consequences of your position, you build in correctives. So a Reform rabbi has to be able to say, when he's converting someone, "I want you to know you're coming at one of the most exciting times in Jewish

people history. You are actually going to be involved in redefining the Jewish people, because right now you're coming in to a people that doesn't know exactly who it is, right? I know a little bit why I'm a Reform Jew, and I bring you in to the Reform people, right, but you really don't know." And this is an unbelievable moment. Now, one of the costs of being in transition he has to say at some point to the convert is that, "Understand half the Jews in the world will not recognize you as Jewish, because I'm converting you. It's not a bad thing. It's not a good thing. We're in a period of transition. You're coming in at an unbelievably interesting moment." That's being honest, right?

F: (inaudible) do that.

Q: Well, that's malpractice if you don't do it. And that's what I try to (inaudible). Thank God you've taken patrilineal descent. I think it's very important you take it. But now be honest with your people that you've taken it. [01:49:00] It's a cutting edge position, right? That's why you're so (inaudible) Reform. That's why you want to convert to Reform, because we're really going to influence the Jewish people, etc., at this moment, (inaudible) definition. But you have to know that you're going to have

children that may fall in love with a Conservative, may fall in love with an Orthodox, may make *Aliyah*. And right now, because it's such a cutting edge position -- it's right, but such a cutting edge position, though, a lot of Jews will not recognize you as Jewish. And it has nothing to do with our community, except that no, we are one Jewish people. Now, that would... Then a person makes a decision, and I would hope that person would still make a decision to convert Reform, but if a moment should come in their life where something happens, they're not shattered to recognize they're not Jewish. And that's the things that I and my Conservative colleagues are dealing with. We have people who come in now into the Conservative and Orthodox movement who are finding -- we have to tell them they're not Jewish.

F: Who says?

Q: Who says what?

F: Whether they are or not?

F: [01:50:00] This is what happened (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

F: They're not --

F: Right, who's telling us.

Q: What do you mean, who says? They said. They learned.

They're not stupid. They learn -- they begin to learn, they

begin to study with someone who at some point says, you know, "If your mother's Jewish, and of course, by the Reform movement (inaudible) that person said, 'Oh my God, I'm not Jewish,'" and it's the first time they hear about it.

F: And then their child wants to marry someone (inaudible)?

Q: I'm not saying don't do it. I'm saying you build in correctives to your positions once you take them.

M: I object to what you're saying. You're saying they're not Conservative Jews, or they're not Orthodox Jews, (inaudible).

Q: They're not what?

M: When you tell a Reform Jew that comes into a conservative congregation they're not Jewish, (inaudible) --

F: He didn't say that. He said --

Q: Only a patrilineal Jew. Patrilineal Jews (inaudible).

M: Or converted, or not recognizing Reform conversion is my --

Q: Well, the Reform conversion, if it doesn't have [Hebrew] and [Hebrew], then it's not, by a whole segment of the Jewish people. That's just reality.

F: Sure. Yeah, and that's going on.

M: (inaudible) and every conversion [01:51:00] I've been part of, (inaudible) rabbis (inaudible) there's always (inaudible).

F: Not always.

M: Well, this isn't his point.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: No, no, no.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Guys, guys, guys, guys!

F: (inaudible) saying you're not Jewish.

Q: I'm not saying you're Jewish. I'm saying there's a debate in the Jewish people. We've got to be honest with people! That's all.

F: There are some people in the Jewish community that would say that they're not Jewish.

Q: That's all. That's what you have to be honest about.

F: That's what you -- yeah.

M: Is this a surprise to anybody? No.

Q: That's all. But it's not happening. We've not built in the correctives to positions that are absolutely important to be taking now, but there are not consequences, because they're breakthrough positions.

F: And this is also when you talk about the character
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: My read is patrilineals will be the norm of the Jewish
community in the next 25 years.

M: I'm not even all that comfortable with the patrilineal
ideal, but that's neither here nor there. It's the way in
which it's being treated by the Conservatives and Orthodox
Jews that I object to.

Q: What are they supposed to do, besides when they...? I mean,
most --

M: Understanding my beliefs.

Q: -- of them are trying to do it in a very... Most of them,
when there's a (inaudible) that comes into your office,
right, [01:52:00] you try as hard as you can, right, to
make it as non-crushing as possible back to your community,
(inaudible) not Jewish, right? Now, there's a whole lot of
language, and it would be great if Orthodox and
Conservative rabbis were trained in the language of the
process of creating identity, that conversion we begin to
recognize is no longer a moment you're in, you're out, but
it's an evolutionary process. There's a lot of language
that can be used to soften that, and to explain it, but it

would surely be easier if the person who's the first, you know --

F: Point of purchase.

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- at the point of purchase, yes, (laughter) that was it, at the point of purchase there was a touch of honesty about what's going on in the American Jewish community. And that's when I talk to Reform rabbis. When I talk to Orthodox rabbis, I talk about do you think there's a way that you can articulate your position that doesn't completely destroy and underline any legitimacy the Reform Judaism has? You know, that's what they have to do. They have to learn the lack of use of hostility of language. Reform has to be honest. [01:53:00] That's the two problems in the communities. Conservatives are caught in between those two communities, you know. But that's the two problems. If you believe patrilineal is right 100%, you just assume everybody's going to make it, right, that way, and you're not honest, and half the Jewish people really don't agree, and the state of Israel doesn't agree, and the foreseeable future won't. So that's where they are. They're not straight. Orthodoxy's not straight, because when they hear about this what they say is Reform Judaism as a whole

is (inaudible), and that's disgusting. That's where they're disgusted. They don't isolate the problems. They label the whole community. That's the problem with pluralism in American Jewish life. But leaders have to be extra sensitive, and lay leaders, especially, because they are really generally more pluralistic. Yeah, [Janet?], then we've got to go on.

F: I think we also have to take a step further, and training laypeople, not lay leaders, but, you know, the folks, as [01:54:00] [Lou?] said, the community, how to be (inaudible), what it means to live in (inaudible) society. Because one of the things that's changed is that we have a lot more people asking questions than we did. I mean, because we're a democratic culture, we have a lot more people asking questions, and we know less what it means to be part of the community through the eyes of our individualistic nature. And what I would like to see, you know, as a growth of this question, is really (inaudible) what does this mean in our circle to be a community and in light of human individualistic culture? What does it mean for our circle of friends, for our families, even?

Q: You know... Right. Here's an example of that: it would've been amazing had, after the UHC passed patrilineal descent,

that the next conference was devoted to how we implement patrilineal descent [01:55:00] in light of the very real fact that more than half of the Jewish people reject this position.

M: Pastoral.

Q: The pastoral implications, the human existential implications. That would've been an incredibly interesting move, and would've taught the people (inaudible) --

F: [Hebrew]. AMERICAN JEWISH

Q: -- [Hebrew] -- how really to deal with an issue in which you can take an aggressive stand, because you 100% believe it's right -- in the long term I believe it's right, and I don't position myself there for a variety of reasons. But how do you do that and then do it responsibly? That's what (inaudible).

M: But institutionally, I mean, that's not how they work. The patrilineal descent didn't come from a process of lay leadership talking and deciding they would bring it forward. (inaudible) happens there is their spiritual leader, Rabbi Schindler, would speak to a biennial group, [3,000?], and say, "We should have patrilineal descent," [01:56:00] and then they spend the next three years reacting to whether or not they should have it, and then

decide it. And so in a perfect world they would've had a lot of intellectual discussion building up to the fact that he's now going to come to a big group and say, "We need to do this." Then they --

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [build it into?] those three years.

M: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) discussion.

Q: You know, that's the consequences, in a moment of transition, the consequences of the positions you take become central to people (inaudible). I'm all about this, all people. I don't think that's unreasonable.

M: No, it's not unreasonable, really. I had (inaudible) transform (inaudible) who's a Jew has always been a very important issue to me, because my mother converted, and insofar as I know she converted in such a way that I would probably be able to walk into your office and still be Jewish. That's neither here nor there, but I went to the (inaudible) Holocaust (inaudible) this summer, and who's a Jew, to me, became the exhibit on who's a Jew to the Nazis. And who's a Jew [01:57:00] became externally defined.

Q: But I can't allow the external defining (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: In the end, that's a short-term pathology. It's OK.

M: (inaudible) throughout our history.

Q: And it's over now. That's exactly what this moment in history is over. The other's not going to define you. Russia, the evil empire, is not going to define what it means to America. Now we're going to decide what does it mean to be an American, on our own terms, internally, without any external props or helps or tariffs or --

M: I'm not convinced that we have a choice, and I'm not convinced (inaudible) that choice.

Q: Well, I think that if you look at fourth generation American Jews, they've made the choice. They've said it doesn't daunt them and they're Jewish because of A, B, or C. Either they'll be --

F: And when (inaudible), it's not (inaudible).

Q: To -- right, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

F: And when it does (inaudible), they object.

Q: Either there's going to be internal, compelling reasons, internal, compelling reasons to be Jewish, or a lot of people are not going to be active in the community.

M: [01:58:00] And we're all Jews by choice this generation.

Q: I mean, that's what that means. And I understand that when you go to a Holocaust museum you still feel that, but by the time our children do that, it'll be (inaudible).

M: What do you mean?

F: It's not lost.

Q: And maybe that's OK.

F: (inaudible).

Q: I'm not sure... [W. Hartman?] has a wonderful one-liner in which he says, "Remember, the mountain that you've made us choose is not actions (inaudible)." What he's saying is not that the Holocaust is not important. Holocaust creates messages about what we were to do as Jews. Hitler didn't create Jews. Moses created Jews. That's a very perceptive (inaudible). There are incredible lessons we need to learn as what we have to do as Jews from the Holocaust, many of which we have not learned. [01:59:00] (inaudible) the Holocaust reduces you as a Jew. I think that that's something that we're going to have to work on. And I understand, the first generation (inaudible) late '60s, early '70s, it was such a calamitous, disastrous event that the very fact that everybody was vulnerable made everybody together. It's not clear that the next phase of Jewish... I don't know if that's a good thing. I think it's great that we're getting over that. It's not getting over the memory of the Holocaust. I don't want to be misunderstood, right? The horror of the Holocaust was a very, very central

mitzvah, but you don't remember it because that's what makes you Jewish. You remember it because it's one of the many events in our history, amongst them one of the most seminal events, that reminds you how you want to behave once you're Jewish. [02:00:00] It's a subtle difference, and it's a transition and change. Which means, let's face it, the law of return is going to be aggregated by our children's generation, too. There's not going to (inaudible). A normal people doesn't have a world. A normal people decide what's in their best interest to allow immigration, and so the real people (inaudible) have a little bit more of your -- little more (inaudible) little more (inaudible) liberation, immigration laws. But you don't let anybody, just because they say you're a Jew, but post-Holocaust, (inaudible) mobility of the people. It's a healing moment. On the other side, it's the recovery from illness. It's the recovery from illness. It's the post, you know, [02:01:00] post whatever stress syndrome. But then you get over that syndrome. Just where, of course, it gets complicated for us, because we're the transition generation for this. But not for our grandchildren, unless another Holocaust should happen. Not for our grandchildren. OK.

Let's go to Isaiah -- we did the remnant ideology? We did that?

F: Mm-hmm.

Q: Great. So now we'll go to Isaiah 53.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Isaiah 53. This is...

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F: Jesus Christ.

Q: Right. This where the central metaphor for the suffering servant comes from, right? Here, though, who's the suffering servant? Well, read a little more, Stephen.

M: "As one who hid his face from us, he was despised. We held him of no account. Yet, it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured. We encountered the plague, smitten and afflicted by God, but he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities. He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed. We all went astray like sheep, each going his own way, and the Lord visited up him the guilt of us all."

Q: OK, this is the suffering servant ideology. Who's the servant, though? It's not Jesus, obviously, here. This is written in the 570s BCE. This is about 600 years before Christianity. Who's the servant? [00:01:00]

M: (inaudible).

Q: Exactly, very nice. Well, that's that answer. Let's go on.
(laughter)

M: Thank you, Ed.

Q: OK, so now, again, very, very powerful ideology, especially when you're what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: And suffering, right? I think it probably is now an anathema to most Jews, this ideology. In fact, there's something actually -- not [Hebrew], this suffering, but it's actually [Hebrew], (inaudible) suffering (inaudible).

F: Do you think, though, that this is where the early Christians got the idea?

Q: (inaudible).

F: I mean, it's so...

Q: It's a direct (inaudible) on it.

F: Yeah. (laughter) It's amazing.

Q: OK. Now, go to chapter 49, verse six. Yeah, (inaudible).
(laughter)

M: (inaudible). "For he has said: 'It is too little that you should be my servant, in that I raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel. [00:02:00] I will also make you a light of nations --'"

Q: OK, here's the light of nations, the first time it appears, first time it appears, right? That's 49:6. And this, of course, is, again, a very powerful ideology. It speaks about what you possibly can be, right? Notice, by the way, the Messianic vision of being right unto nations, what doesn't disappear? What don't disappear? The other nations. It never says that a nation's going to be what?

M: (inaudible).

Q: Or?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Or converted, right? All the nations of the world will then -- the last one will do is Isaiah chapter two, verses one through four. There are a couple very familiar phrases that are here.

M: "The word that Isaiah, son of [00:03:00] (inaudible), prophesized concerning Judah and Jerusalem for the days to come, the mount of the Lord's house shall stand firm above the mountains and tower above the hills, and all the nations shall gaze on it with joy, and the many peoples

shall go and say, 'Come let us go up to the mount of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and that we may walk in his paths, for our instruction shall come forward from Zion.'"

Q: The Hebrew for that is [Hebrew]. This is where [Hebrew] comes from. It's a Messianic vision, right? And who's standing on the mountain? Who's standing on the mountain now? Who's there?

F: Us.

F: (inaudible).

Q: You just read it, come on. Who? All the...

M: People.

Q: Peoples. Right. Multiple peoples. Now, you sing [Hebrew], you're reenacting a moment. What moment are you reenacting? Rabbis knew where it came from, you know, when they put it --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

F: [00:04:00] Sinai.

Q: Well, you're reenacting Sinai, and you're also reenacting what by singing that phrase, if it comes from here? Or not reenacting, I guess; you are foreshadowing. You're foreshadowing the Messianic moment, right? You're foreshadowing the Messianic moment when you take out the

Torah and sing [Hebrew]. That's what the rabbis meant when they put those words in that liturgy, right? They knew where it was coming from. And they're also saying something very powerful, that the Torah you teach has to be a Torah that's comprehensible to who?

F: Everyone.

Q: To everyone, to the... Right, that's the thing: the everyone is to the peoples, not who only?

F: Jews.

Q: The Jewish people. It's a very radical vision, right? It's maybe a really important contemporary source -- a potential source for real pluralism.

M: But one thing, I noticed a couple of times now they referred to the house of Jacob. They don't refer to the house of Abraham (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: Because Jacob is named Israel later on, so Jacob is (inaudible). OK? [00:05:00] Good. Now, go to Jeremiah 29. Oh, by the way, a little bit later there you had, "And the nations will not lift up swords against nations," and all that stuff.

M: (inaudible)?

Q: Jeremiah 29, yeah.

M: "This is the text from the letter which the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the priests, prophets. The rest of the elders of the exile community, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon after King --"

Q: OK, da-da-da-da-da. The exile happens in 586, and Jeremiah, who's a prophet, (inaudible) prior to the exile and destruction and post-exile and destruction, he's living in Jerusalem, he's a prophet, and he writes a letter to the people in Babylonia. Watch what he writes.

M: You want me to start --

Q: Yeah, yeah, start with the letter.

M: "Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to the whole community, which I exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and live in them. [00:06:00] Plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives, and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands that they may bear sons and daughters, multiply there and do not decrease, and seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray to the Lord in its behalf, for in its prosperity you shall prosper.'"

Q: OK, what's this letter say, basically?

M: (inaudible) diaspora (inaudible).

Q: Here's an ideology that says live life, let life triumph, even in the diaspora. This is very early on. This is the very first diaspora.

F: Is it also suggesting -- it's not clear on (inaudible) at this stage, with the presumption that it's within the Jewish community.

Q: I think the presumption is it's within the Jewish community. Intermarriage becomes really -- they first begin to emerge seriously in exile. This is very early, so I don't know what we can make of it, [00:07:00] because this is a letter that's purported to be right at the very beginning of it. We know when Ezra comes back from Persia 130 years later that he is becoming anti-intermarriage, you know, (inaudible), and he has all the priesthood throughout all their foreign wives, which nowhere in the Bible does that happen. But, of course, that's what happens to a minority community. A minority community can't afford to allow marriages to outside cultures, because their culture's not strong enough. That's the Ezra. That's the Ezra strand of the tradition. The roots strand of the tradition is when you're the dominant culture you can take anybody, because you'll do what?

M: Absorb them.

Q: Absorb them. These are two strands, and they're both inside of the people. So, we'll see.

M: There's something problematic about this, [00:08:00] (inaudible), (laughter) but it's far deeper than "choose life," because what it basically says is, you know what? The bottom line is things are hopeless. Ain't no way things are going to get better. You're not coming back. You've got --

Q: No, no, it says that --

F: No, the next paragraph, "You're coming back."

Q: -- and we didn't read the rest --the next paragraph says you're coming back in 70 years.

M: Right, 70 years, which means these 70 years there's nothing you can do.

F: Enjoy yourself.

M: But it's not enjoy yourself. It's accept the fact that you are in slavery, accept the fact that you indentured, accept the fact that you've got no homeland, which is --

Q: Of course, what happens?

M: -- which is that sort of changing by --

F: You flourish.

M: The only thing I don't like about this is it says that there is no real ideology. It means the ideology shifts with the situations, so the situations absolutely dictate the ideology of the Jewish people, that there is no rock of ages.

Q: What is the rock? What's the rock?

M: Change.

Q: Life must triumph.

M: Yeah, that's interesting, the rock as an ideology, but...

Q: Life must absolutely triumph.

M: Anyway...

Q: Your life, but the Jewish people's life must absolutely triumph. [00:09:00] And even land, as central as it is, will be secondary to that. Now, you wouldn't need Jeremiah as -- Jeremiah wouldn't have written this letter unless there were other messages being sent out. What were the other messages being sent out?

M: Don't keep Shabbos. (laughter)

Q: No, come on. He's not saying don't keep Shabbos.

M: Well, the problem with that is (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: We're only giving you -- there's 45 chapters in Jeremiah. I'm only giving you one, like, whatever (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

M: No, but that's my question is -- and I wasn't actually making a joke of that. If he is saying that everything else holds true but the land, that's one thing, but it seems to me in this first paragraph (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: I'm just giving you one letter. He's saying build a life. Build a real community. Judaism can survive outside the land. That's what he's saying. I'm giving you a very short version of this. Right, I think that it's interesting in the initial parts of the letter he gets very pragmatic. He's not saying, "Don't worry (inaudible). You know what? The first thing: you better find lovers, and you better be able to build homes, and you better be able to have children, because otherwise everything else you're trying to do is ridiculous. Don't think you can't do that." And that is a very pragmatic... [00:10:00] That's, by the way, that was the (inaudible). That was what they basically said. They said, "We're not going to worry about anything. You know what we're going to worry about right now? We're going to restore light to the Jewish people post-

(inaudible)." And it did capture -- this was the joints, like -- this, to me, is the joint UJA opening letter. Now, it's not sufficient, right? But it's a very powerful letter. Right? And there must've been countervailing forces that said it's impossible to survive (inaudible). And this is obviously one, and we know it went so powerfully that this is 580 -- let's say this is 580 BCE, right? By 520, when Cyrus takes over, right, and the Persian empire destroys the Babylonian empire, 520 BCE, 530, right, the Jews have it so well under the Persians, they've built such a strong community, that the temple is allowed to be rebuilt by Cyrus, and Cyrus is called [Hebrew]. By the way, that's the first time [Hebrew] was actually used. Right? Cyrus is called the [Hebrew] by -- Third Isaiah -- there are three Isaiahs that say one, two, and three, right, different time periods. [00:11:00] (inaudible) what was the name? A messiah. And they get to rebuild the temple. But, in fact, it worked so well that from then until this day, the majority of the Jewish people will always live outside the land. So when he gives permission to go back, less than a third of the Jewish people go back to the land. Why? Because you know what? They've built an amazing community. You know what they built? They created Shabbos, the fact

is. Now that they created this -- there was no Shabbos in the biblical period. We have no idea what Shabbos really looked like. And here in Babylonia, they began to build a Shabbos. They begin to build Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur has no rituals in the Bible. They begin to build the Yom Kippur. Because we know many of the rituals we have borrowed are Babylonian customs, right? They begin to develop all -- they develop intermarriage laws. They begin to develop a real community. The most important, you know what? They canonized Torah. That's what they do. They begin to write down the Torah, and actually you have by the time of Ezra, 450, five books. So the exile -- and, in fact, [00:12:00] Judaism is a product of the exile. That's what we recognize. Judaism is a product of the exile. Because even these documents are all written in the exile about a previous period.

F: I don't think (inaudible) gets uncomfortable. I mean, it's clear --

Q: He's saying 70 years.

F: Well, right. I mean, it seems that this is a temporary measure. You know, while you're there, have a good life, but your ultimate goal is to come back. So I don't know if it's necessary saying that that's what I --

Q: But what Elliot is suggesting is that it's hard to have it both ways, you see, and, in fact, once you create an ideology that can sustain itself off the land, it can sustain itself off the land. (laughs) And even if you have the opportunity to go back to the land, if forever from that perspective, now that's going to change in the next 50 years, the population. There'll be more Jews in Israel. But that's a long time. That goes from 586 BCE until, let's say, 2025, 2040. That's 2,500 years [00:13:00] of the people's existence will have been spent, the majority of those Jews, off the land, even though the land was always what to us? Central. Right? And the reason that it's so important is that here you see why. Because early on we developed a powerful way of still experiencing life. Now we're ready to go to Ezra.

M: That's why the Dalai Lama's so interested in us.

Q: That's why the Dalai Lama's so interested in us, exactly. Now go to Nehemiah, chapter eight. And you'll see the success of this ideology, the success of this ideology was that the Babylonian and the Persian Jewish community became very strong, powerful Jewish communities, so much so that there were people like Ezra and Nehemiah, Ezra, a scribe in the Persian monarchy, and Nehemiah, a very important kind

of governor, political leader, right? He's a political leader, Nehemiah. It is page 1,519, right? [00:14:00] A leader. The temple's rebuilt in about 515 Before the Common Era, but the community never really takes off the ground because most of the leadership does not return. The temple is not really a serious institution. We know nothing about it, right? In fact, we know very little about the temple, from its rebuilding in 515 all the way straight to the Maccabees, we know very, very little about the temple in that community. If we have no records of that community for 250 years, it's probably because there wasn't much happening in that community. And Ezra and Nehemiah we hear about in 450, and these guys hear about and feel that they want to help rebuild this community. They live in a little bit different periods, but we're collapsing them for the sake of this story, right? And they come back. And I'm only taking one piece, because when they come back, their force of -- first of all, they have all the authority of Artaxerxes, so that's very important. They have the authority of the Persian king. Right, and they come back and they retake that city, right? [00:15:00] They rebuild the walls, if you read those texts. They fix up the city. They solidify the economy. One of the things they do, we're

not going to read, is that they get (inaudible). The high priesthood are all intermarried, and Ezra comes there and he says, "You're going to have to make a choice here," because he experiences that this people is very weak, and if the priesthood is intermarried, it's not that...

Intermarried means what's going to happen to the culture of the community? The culture is going to be diffuse. It's going to be diluted. Right, the seed of the priesthood, he speaks about. Right, so it's a combination of genetic, cultural, whatever. And what does the priesthood do? He lists all the priests who were intermarried in the book of Ezra, and he gets them all to divorce, which is a very powerful thing. And it's a live position, right? The Orthodox position in American Jewish life is that Ezra strand of the tradition. And we ought not make fun of it, [00:16:00] because... Because they may be right. (laughter) (inaudible) decisions. (laughter)

F: Especially as a lead-in --

Q: What if we are not strong enough --

F: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: -- culturally? What if we are not strong enough culturally to absorb all of this, right? Now, I think that even if

we're not, we probably has no choice, because in freedom you have no choice but to get stronger.

M: (inaudible) so many periods of Jewish history where there has been assimilations we've spoken of, a loss of identity in the Jewish people, that we go away --

Q: There are two strands. Everything you're going to say to me now is the Ruth strand, and I can make an argument for the Ruth strand that is so unbelievable that it actually would get into Bible. We call it Ruth. (laughter) And I could make another argument for the Ezra strand that's so unbelievable that it would get in the Bible. It's called Ezra. But the point that both are in the Bible is that understand as you're making your argument, [00:17:00] there is a full-fledged other argument, and by virtue of you being -- you are a Ruth. By definition, you, positioned where you are in the Jewish community, you are playing out in the most positive ways the Ruth argument. But understand Ezra's in the Bible, too. And what pluralism is is understanding that insights and critiques of your position off of the other strand. That doesn't mean giving up your position, but pluralism means hear the insights and the truths, because the Torah could, Torah could have decided to leave one of those strands out, because they are

contradictory strands. So that's the key. (inaudible), OK, what is the Orthodox critique? Even though I know I'm right. Because if you hear their critique, you'll build in correctives to the inevitable consequences of your own position. Similarly in Orthodoxy, it's really important to Orthodoxy to read the book of Ruth over and over again [00:18:00] and hear the real harshest part of that message, that without intermarriage there would have been no King David. Without marrying the Moabite, he was not allowed to marry until the tenth generation, there would have been no King David. What does that mean? They have to hear how do you create a kind of openness in the society that allows for radical spontaneity, which is messianic. That's what they have to hear. Doesn't mean they have to change their position.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Etc., etc., etc.

M: I'm sorry, I missed that radical spontaneity is messianic. Can you just clarify that?

Q: The openness, the messianic moment is an open moment. It says history can be fundamentally changed, right? Things don't have to progress neatly, step by step by step by step. That's the messianic moment. So you want (inaudible)

who, in the end, is a messianic character, a combination of Judah, right, incest, Lot, incest, [00:19:00] and David, murder. Or Ruth, not David, Ruth, which is a product of an intermarriage, too. The messiah is a product of (inaudible). So you have to leave that open. What the pluralism is the staking your life on your position while really being open to the possibility that you don't have the whole truth, but you have to stake your life, because you've got to live, and if it's 51% of it, it's enough to stake your life on, because you've got to make the decision, hearing the critique of the other, not so that you take the other's position, but see what correctives you can build into the consequences that the other probably doesn't see, in your position you can't see because you (inaudible). Had Reform done that on patrilineal, they would've recognized. Everybody was telling them -- I remember, I was in a conference a year after patrilineal. There were a group of interdenominational rabbis. There were about 250 of us. And it was clearly the Reform rabbis were being told, "Look, you're going to see you're going to have conversion drop in your community." And, of course, that's exactly what happened. [00:20:00] And that's what Reform now is dealing with, right now. And that's the...

They're not going to go back on patrilineal, but that was the last convention, or two conventions ago, in which there really is a precipitous drop in conversion. Because one of the incentives to convert was taken away. Now, I don't think that -- I think tradition should still stand on the books, but had they been aware of it coming in, what policies could they have created to mitigate that potential drop? That's what pluralism does. It doesn't undermine your position. It corrects all the consequences, both sides. Both sides. OK, so now let's look at Ezra -- (inaudible), I'm sorry -- chapter eight. Here they've rebuilt the community, and of course you need a covenanting ceremony. So what's interesting to me is the nature of this covenanting ceremony.

M: "When the seventh month arrived, the Israelites, being settled in their towns, the entire people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate, [00:21:00] and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the scroll of the teaching of Moses, with which the Lord had charged Israel."

Q: Where wasn't this taking place that you would've thought it would've been taking place in? The temple. So we're already seeing a shift in what is -- a beginning shift -- this is

proto-rabbi, right? And hopefully we'll have about a half hour to do the rabbis. So this is proto rabbis.

M: "On the first day of the seventh month --"

Q: And what are they going to read? You would've thought what would happen if you were recovenanting? What kind of ritual? What kind of ritual would you have?

F: (inaudible) your son.

Q: But what kind of ritual do you think you would've had if you're in 450 BCE and the temple's rebuilt.

F: Sacrifice.

Q: Some kind of sacrifice ritual, and instead you don't. You have Torah ritual. Because, of course, who's leading this? Ezra. Where's Ezra from? Exile. Right? Where there wasn't what?

F: [00:22:00] Sacrifice.

Q: And there probably were some new rituals that emerged, along which one of them probably was what?

F: Torah reading.

Q: Torah reading, right? And I'm not saying Shabbos Monday Thursday, right? I mean, that's what the (inaudible) says, but I'm not sure of that. But there was some notion of beginning the reading Torah, because we know Ezra himself is called a what? A scribe. That's the first time we have

that title. We have priest, we have king, we have prophet, but Ezra's not. He's this different guy. He's this different kind of thing. He's a scribe. There's a new leadership type that emerged, probably emerged where? Babylonia and Persia. Why? Because as they left the land, right, or exiled, one of the things they had to do was consolidate and --

F: Get organized.

Q: -- get organized. They had to organize their story. And so the scribes became an important leadership title.

F: Well, it's the change in accountability and all the different kinds of things (inaudible) --

Q: That's what I'm saying.

F: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Your conditions force leadership changes.

F: Right, absolutely.

Q: OK, that's very... [00:23:00] This is one of the lessons I always teach rabbis. Don't be surprised there's new forms of leadership emerging. The conditions have changed, right? What rabbis are trained -- the answers, the conditions rabbis are trained to respond to are only a very limited set of the conditions and challenges the Jewish people now face. They face so many wider challenges that we are not

ready for, that we are not trained to, that our Torah, the Torah we know, doesn't respond to. So of course there are new institutions and new leadership types. Don't be jealous, right? Just figure out what role can you have in helping shape those leadership types, because there are a lot of new rabbis emerging. We don't have names for them yet. Some of them are called execs, right? Some of them are called campaign directors. Some of them are called, you know, hospital whatever -- [00:24:00] heads of American Friends Of, right, you know? (laughter) Those are just new leadership types that have emerged, you know. Because you didn't have major hospitals in 1250, you know. So you have a new institution, right? And if you have a new institution, new types of leadership will have to emerge that can run those institutions. Now they just need to be - - what would Jewish training of that leadership look like? Well, we don't know yet, you know, so we're all (inaudible). OK, let's go.

M: "On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought --"

Q: By the way, first day of seventh month is what date? Rosh Hashanah. So you can see Rosh Hashanah was already

beginning to develop. There was something going on there.
Rosh Hashanah seems connected to reading the Torah here.

M: "Ezra the priest brought the teaching before the congregation, men and women and all who could listen with understanding. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from the first light until midday, [00:25:00] to the men and the women and those who could understand. The ears of all the people were given to the scroll of the teaching. Ezra --"

Q: This is the beginning of the democratization of the Torah itself. You don't have anything like this in the Bible, in the Torah, right? The Levites -- the priests really controlled Torah.

M: "Ezra the scribe stood upon a wooden town made for the purpose, and beside him stood --"

Q: Da-da-da-da-da. That's like being what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: That's (inaudible). And these people to the right and the left, what are they like?

M: Leaders.

Q: They're like -- right, they're like David. I mean, this is amazing because this is 450 (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: Sure. Verse five.

F: The (inaudible), the brotherhood.

Q: On his right and his left, right.

M: "Ezra opened (inaudible) the people that financed the building of the stage -- Ezra opened the scroll (laughter) in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. As he opened it, all the people stood up."

Q: What do we call that? To this day, what do we call that? That's *Hagbah*. Understand? This is going back [00:26:00] to 450 BCE. As you make *Hagbah* this weekend at the shul, think about it, right? To 450 BCE. They have --

F: What's *Hagbah*?

Q: *Hagbah*'s when you lift the Torah up and everybody stands up to look at what... The Sephardic do it like this: prior to reading you lift the Torah up and you show the people what you're going to read, right? Ashkenazy do it differently. Ashkenazy do it after you read. The people lift it up, and they show you what you did read, and you get up and you say, "This is the Torah, Moses gave the Torah, three cheers for the Torah," (laughter) and you sit down, right? It's a very powerful thing, right? And here's the first time it's happening. Then what happens? After he does the hop up, which is -- like the Sephardic, he does it before...

M: "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered 'Amen!'"

Q: Right, [Hebrew]. What did he do? [Hebrew]. He said [Hebrew]. Sounds like what?

F: (inaudible) an *Aliyah*.

Q: Sounds like an *Aliyah*. Right, we don't have the language yet, but he said somehow he blessed God, [00:27:00] [Hebrew]. Bless God is the bless -- that's *Baruch Adonai*. And what do the people answer?

F: Amen.

Q: Amen.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Keep going.

M: "Then they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the Lord and their faces to the ground. And then a bunch of people --"

Q: Good.

M: "-- and the Levites explained to the teaching to the people."

Q: What's that? Oh, read one more sentence.

F: (inaudible) --

M: "While the people stood in their places."

Q: Shh.

M: "They read from the scroll of the teaching of God, translating it and give it the sense so they understood the reading."

Q: What's that?

F: (inaudible).

Q: That's (inaudible).

F: I have another question. Earlier you said the people stood lifting up their hands. Is that when the custom of holding your [Hebrew] up and holding it up (inaudible) --

Q: I don't know. Again, I'm not from the community that does that, so I don't know if that's where it comes from, but it's such a logical thing. This does not take, you know... You don't have to have a source for some... I'm sure those people that do have a source, that this is the source. I don't know. I can't say for sure. But it makes sense. You hold the Torah up and you want to connect to it, [00:28:00] so you go like this. It's no different than in a Baptist church, when you're going like this, and you try to connect to the (inaudible) Jesus, you know? I mean, I shouldn't say that. (laughter)

F: At a rock concert.

Q: It's the same thing. It's a normal thing, you know? What we need is more of those body movements, you know? Right, but

anyhow, they had to give sense to it. What's giving sense to it? That's a d'var Torah. That's trying to explain it, because it's just assumed that just because you read the Torah wouldn't mean that what?

F: You understood it.

Q: People understood it. I mean, this is 450.

M: Nothing's changed. (laughter)

Q: Nothing's changed, right? The only question that's changed is do we give good sense, you know? Verse nine.

M: "The Nehemiah and (inaudible), Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were explaining to the people said to all the people, 'This is a day holy to the Lord your God. You must not mourn or weep,' for all the people were weeping as they listened to the words of the teaching."

Q: Why were they weeping? [00:29:00] Why were they weeping? I mean, there's no one why, obviously. There's no one why. OK, (inaudible) this is the power of a reconstitutive community. A reconstitutive community has tremendous loss, because you recognize that something's new, but something new, something's lost. You know, that's what we're going to have to be. Our recovenanting is going to have great loss. That's at least -- and your pan-Jewish experience is over. It's not coming back, folks. That kind of community is not

coming back, even though it was never that kind of community. That kind of holiness is not coming back, even though it was never that kind of holiness, but it doesn't matter. You still cry about it, you know? That's over. The innocence of Israel is over. All of that is over. The kind of purity of being able to raise money they way you have. That's over. We're going to have to reconstitute our community. We're going to have to read our Torah again. But what does it say [00:30:00] that promotion of grieving and loss, it says, no, don't cry too much. Then what then you do? Go have one?

F: Kiddush.

Q: Go have Kiddush. Understand, that's why, from this text, this is almost -- it's weird, right?

F: (inaudible) Shabbos (inaudible) --

Q: Isn't it weird, right? And then finish with verse 12, the people all went off.

M: "Then all the people went to eat and drink, and set portions, and make great merriment, for they understood the things they were told."

Q: OK, great. Now you understand this is... Yeah? Yeah. You like this text?

F: Yeah, I just have to say something very quick (inaudible). I was just in the Holy Land last April, and it was my fourth time there as an educator, and I went to shul one day on Shabbos, and it was a bunch of very, very, very old men who had survived the Holocaust and had stayed in their shul in Krakow to, at the time, to try to rebuild the community, and [00:31:00] they could barely get a *minyan* on Shabbos. And the Torah service came, they pulled up the Torah, and they lifted it up, and then they put it back in the arc. And I went to them afterwards and I said, "Why didn't you read from it?" And he said, "We don't know how. We don't remember how." But he said it in a way that wasn't sad. In this bizarre kind of way, it was enough that they were still there and still alive and still could pull out the Torah. And suddenly, like, this whole thing just connected to me in this --

Q: Good, great.

F: -- whole different way, of this... You know, on the one hand, yeah, it's sad. On the other hand, it's rebuilding something new, or something different.

Q: Good, great, beautiful story. Beautiful story. This is the beginning of -- this is the seeds of what 500 years later is going to become the beginnings of (inaudible) Judaism.

Right? Now, we went through the Hanukah period already in which [00:32:00] we saw the next time the Jewish people were able to gain sovereignty over the land, because of deterioration through the (inaudible) to the next haj from 160 down through the destruction of the temple, because it caused the deterioration of the Jewish people's condition in the land, until about the time you get to the beginning of the first century you have real variety of groups really fighting inside the Jewish people, right? Kind of a next crossroads of destiny moment. And you have a number of groups, and I'm going to -- again, I compact things for the sake of, you know, the story. Also, because I'm always interested in for what reason, so when I compact it I'm really providing a why (inaudible) which I behoove you as you move on to your next teachers, and they intend to teach you facts, try to as often as possible ask "So what?" Right? What difference does that fact make in the [00:33:00] life I construct for myself, for the institution that I construct. The more you can ask that question, the better teachers you will be for your teachers. Right? Otherwise, they could be teaching you any kind of history, and they're all great teachers, so they can make any history interesting. But so what? That was the question we

never asked in the seminary, and so the seminary produced a whole bunch of Conservative rabbis who understand documentary hypothesis, the historical period, the science of Judaism. They can tell you a million historical facts about Jewish life, but they can't build community.

F: And, you know, (inaudible) is so afflicted, speaking to people who are completely unaffiliated, because what it does is it gives them the *hechsher*, too. And, in fact, more so sometimes the people who (inaudible) don't have community, [00:34:00] they could have it in a... I don't know, somehow it's so inclusive.

Q: Good, so you've got to ask those questions always. Now, four groups, five groups, kind of roughly around the first, in the first century. The first group is -- let's call them the [Essenes?], OK? Again, I'm compacting. Essenes and [Sisecs?] always one group now, which they weren't, right? This is a group that you recognize the ideology. This is a group that said fundamentally what was going on in Jewish life was so corrupt that the only answer for the Jewish people was to create a pure community, a community that would live out the values in its most pure form. They moved to the Dead Sea area, right? This is where we get the Dead Sea scrolls, etc., etc., [Kurad?] community. I gave you

some of the readings from the Kurad community -- that was for last week -- just so you would see the intensity of what it was like to live in that community, [00:35:00] the rules of entry to the community, the norms, the hierarchy in the community, the kinds of purity norms in that community, right? And their sense was that if they -- they would create almost a temple in their community, right? So that when the day came, that the temple would be repurified, where there Jewish people would come back on the scene as a serious people, they would be a ready group of people who were kind of already living in the temple in the pure Judaism. What ideology is that?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: No, that's first -- an ideology (inaudible) today. That's a remnant ideology, right? We will go, we become a small remnant, but what kind of remnant will we be? Pure, and from us will come an entire...

F: Nation.

Q: An entire what? Nation, renewal, right, exactly. [00:36:00] Right? What happened to the Essenes?

M: Poof.

F: Poof.

Q: They gone. Nothing's gonna bring 'em back. (laughter)

Right, what happened is in the end they cut themselves off from the community and God. They got killed. OK, so very powerful -- it's a very powerful ideology because it allows you to believe -- first of all, it creates real structure to the community, and it allows you to believe that you're destined to be (inaudible), right, because of (inaudible), which generates a more intensive desire to do it, right? Next. That's one ideology. I'm giving to you (inaudible). All right, the next is the zealots. These are people who, especially towards the end of -- prior just to the destruction of the temple -- these are the people who believe what, the zealots? Their famous stand is (inaudible). They believe that the Jewish people fundamentally do not survive without what? [00:37:00] Without sovereignty over the land. Right? And therefore we do what?

F: Die for it.

Q: Die for it. They will die for it. In fact, more than that: not only they would die for it, but they'd kill for it, including who?

F: Themselves, each other.

Q: Each other.

F: And then they'd (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

Q: Right, including each other. In the end, this is a (inaudible) where the most extreme form of this group, right, killed Jews who wanted to make a peace treaty with Rome. Right, but they fought to the end until, you know, groups of them moved to (inaudible), and we know (inaudible), right? So we know what happens to zealots. (inaudible) ideology got them killed. Then you have assimilationists. These were people who I think we don't take them into account seriously enough, but these were really the majority. It's the majority, that all of this was unfolding, and Rome was taking over, and Rome was really a powerful empire, and Rome is destroying [00:38:00] the temples, effectively ending sovereignty, and that eventually Bar Kokhba rebellion in 135, you know, almost every major village in Judea burned down, 900,000 casualties. A lot of people came over, you know? Because after all, it looked like they won. Right. It looked like they were right. Power was on their side. And this, I think, we have to take very seriously. Maybe the largest group, because there were seven to ten million Jews in the first century, the largest, 10% of the Roman empire, and by somewhere in the neighborhood of mid 500s, all right, 600,

there were only a million Jews in the world. Right? So the majority of Jews during this period, up to and post-destruction of the temple, this was the end. Fifth group? Are we on the fifth group?

F: Fourth.

F: No, fourth.

Q: Fourth group is Christians. I had you read, if you remember, [00:39:00] what's the last speech of (inaudible). You remember that? Did you see that in your notes? Because it was a beautiful testament that (inaudible) we are, right? I had you read some of the Dead Sea scrolls, and then I had you read a little of the New Testament. And the reason I had you read some of the New Testament was that you -- especially Matthew; that was what I was most concerned about, Matthew and Paul -- is you read Matthew and you recognized that, first of all, Jesus is traced to whose lineage?

F: David.

Q: David and Abraham. Who's missing as the key characters? Abraham and David -- if I asked you biblical characters and I said Abraham and David, there's only one missing.

F: Moses.

Q: Moses. So you notice that Moses is missing, right? Great. Moses is missing, and Abraham and David are included. David because why? Messianic lineage. Abraham why?

F: Father of (inaudible).

Q: The father of who? Good.

F: Monotheism.

Q: Of the people. What people? The people of Israel. The father of the people of Israel. But what's amazing about connecting to Abraham is that he's pre what? [00:40:00]

F: (inaudible).

M: Jewish religion.

Q: No.

F: Pre-Sinai.

Q: Pre-Sinai. Exactly. He's pre-Sinai. And that's going to be very important, because as Paul begins to reimagine -- as he begins to reimagine Judaism, really, as he begins to reimagine Christianity, right, what I would say, as this group of Jews begin to reimagine Judaism and it becomes Christianity, right, they are writing, for the most part, in Matthew to who?

M: Jews.

Q: To Jews. And this is a rhetoric that will speak to Jews.
This is using David, and they would never write that way if they were speaking to who?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Pagans. Either you were a, right... You wouldn't write to Pagans, because Pagans would say, "Well, who cares about David? Who cares about Abraham?" These were arguments specifically made to create an alternative or new Israel. And you already see early on -- and by the way, if you read the parts that I gave you on Matthew, [00:41:00] it's hard to disagree with a lot of it. I come not to what, says Jesus in Matthew? I come not to undermine any parts of the law. But let me ask you seriously: what is important, that which comes in your mouth or ultimately that which comes out of your mouth? How can you not agree with that? I'm ready to sign up I read Matthew, right? It's really true, right? It's not that much different from the invasive, prophetic critique of what? Of what institution?

F: Priesthood.

Q: Priesthood. It's not such a difference from that critique.

M: I mean, that's what's striking is that this is -- that in some --

Q: At least in Matthews.

M: This is prophetic, but takes it out of the bounds of Judaism. The prophets always brought it back, and said, "Let's bring it back."

Q: Well --

A: Although you could make the argument that --

Q: Right, right. (laughter) No, so already you begin to think dialectically. As you make your argument, you see the other side. (laughter) [00:42:00] But in Matthew it still sounds on the inside. That's why I also gave you Paul, where Paul's really beginning -- you're beginning to see the separation, but I want you to see where the separation is, right? One is there's a movement towards a justification by faith rather than justification by law. That's Paul's move, to graft the new Israel, right, on Abraham. If you believe in Abraham, you're part of that Israel. A lot of you believe in the law. There's a beginning to recognition that the law creates guilt, right, and [Matthew had it?] in the Paul that I gave you, also. So there's that beginning move, and then when they go out to Asia Minor to begin to convert people, almost the cutoff mark is what Paul says what is no longer needed?

F: (inaudible).

Q: That means both in general. He picks one in specific. It's no longer needed in terms of conversion.

M: (inaudible).

Q: In terms of conversion --

F: Circumcision.

Q: Right, circumcision. Now, by cutting -- [00:43:00] no pun intended (laughter) -- by cutting off circumcision, by not making that central, in a sense what he's saying is he's cutting off Christianity from the self-consciousness of being Jewish. I'm going to say that again: that he cuts Christianity from the self-consciousness of being Jewish. And once he does that, that is really where the separation happens. Until that moment, Christianity's another one of these ideologies inside of Judaism finding out for where are we going on this covenantal journey. That's what Reform has to be incredibly careful about right now. It is right on the edge of that, right? Now, of course, everybody has to be careful right now, because if you look at these things, it's really weird. Zealots, we have that position. It's a very live position, that we will -- [00:44:00] out politic is secondary to holding on to what? The land. And I'm not talking about Likud now, because I think Likud is real politic in these real debates. But I'm talking about

the right of, you know... I'm talking about people living in [Hebrew]. Believe me, I'm sure that there are plenty of notes when Netanyahu is dreaming -- I just wish those 400 maniacs would just disappear from (inaudible). And that has nothing to do with what he's giving back to the Palestinian state or anything, but he just -- because he knows they're crazy, right? That's (inaudible). We have our (inaudible), right. There's no doubt there are whole groups of Jewish people who are separated from the rest of the Jewish people, and they're trying to live it out in a box, right? We have our assimilationists, right. They're around. And then we have our people dabbling on the edges, right. We have people dabbling on the edges, whether it's some of the goddess stuff -- and I'm not saying it's -- I think we need [00:45:00] to dabble on the edges now, right? But that is truly dabbling on the edges, right?

F: (inaudible) advertise us with their ritual (inaudible).

Q: You have to admit that that's... I am not against any what?

F: (inaudible).

F: Witches.

Q: I am not against anything right now.

F: There are a lot of Jewish witches.

F: [Hebrew].

Q: Well, I mean, (inaudible) at least that traditional piece.
(laughter) No, I'm not --

F: (inaudible) Jewish (inaudible).

Q: Right, I'm not joking. I think we have to have maximum experimentation in the age of tradition, but we have to be aware of this is dabbling, and in terms of the Christian option, be very careful. Where does your ideology -- it's not whatever it's becoming, because it won't be named Christianity, whatever it becomes, whatever it is -- is separated from a Jewish self-consciousness, right? For Reform, they've really got to ask very craftily, what's the threshold of their membership to be Christian? [00:46:00] We're not converted by some standards, even their own standards. What's the threshold where consciousness of being Jewish separates from their ideology of inclusiveness. That was the whole question. I'm not saying where it is. I have no idea where it is now.

F: They're not asking questions.

Q: At different moments in Jewish history maybe demand different where those lines are.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: So I'm not -- well, no, they are (inaudible). No, just the opposite. The Reform movements asking incredibly now --

they made a radical move, it seems to me, in the last convention where they said children who are going to school in both -- children will go into -- you must know this --

F: Church school.

Q: -- children who are going to church school and synagogue school are no longer welcome in the synagogue school. Do you understand how radical it is for the Reform movement to make that kind of move? All right? Not only you don't --

F: But in the end (inaudible) --

Q: But don't --

F: -- (inaudible) meaningless --

Q: Don't minimize people's... [00:47:00] You can't minimize people's moves when they're internal to their ideology. You have to allow a timing.

M: That's the governance.

Q: Right, that's not ideological. Right, exactly. I know that sounds crazy from the outside, but if you're on the inside it's a very powerful thing, and if you were there at the fight, it was a very serious fight. It wasn't like some game.

M: And what it did was it supported those synagogues like ours that always had that position.

Q: Right, which is a very -- that was probably a helpful thing to our synagogues, let's put it that way. We just finished one right now, right? I mean, the Reform, UAHC voted not to -- whatever that board of governance was, right -- voted not to support rabbis who wanted to -- not to change the law and say that rabbis really can do intermarriages, and we support that. They maintained another line. That's a very important move. See, Reforms keep saying, "We're now at a threshold," [00:48:00] right? Which is now counter, in some respects, where Reform was going.

M: They actually, what Reform is saying, is we're kind of teetering over the threshold.

Q: OK, I'm being generous.

M: And we have to pull back.

Q: Good. That's a very heavy thing to say.

M: We determine it, and this (inaudible).

Q: Right. This is a very healthy moment for American Jewish life, and it's very -- this is what I tell Orthodox right now, especially [after that?] school, because I think the school really was -- that's a very serious move because the rabbis, in the end, it affects people, the rabbis have so much autonomy still, but on the ground this is (inaudible) schools. There are children now that are going to be made

uncomfortable, and that Reform doesn't like to do, right? And there are real, live human beings that are going to be hurt by that decision. So I tell Orthodox, understand that's a wild movement to make, and no one would've predicted they made that. So anyway, those are the four (inaudible) --

F: Sorry, could you just explain to us which position they talk about at the school level? Sorry, I just missed that (inaudible).

Q: They just said that basically if a child is going to [00:49:00] church school and synagogue school, he's no longer welcome in the synagogue school. And it used to be that the Reform movement said -- now, left it up to each individual congregation, because that's an internal governance question of how the whole movement works, just like the Conservative movement leaves it up to each individual rabbi (inaudible), right? That's a very powerful -- it's a very powerful statement. It's a radical pullback position. Because the massive -- the outreach position that's -- the most extreme outreach position is just put your product forward and don't worry about it. In fact, I happen to believe we develop some positions to the -- I hope there will always remain some Reform congregations

that lie about that position, because we're going to need some more extreme positions that don't happen at the center of the movement, you know what I mean? See, central of the movement go back to the Jewish people, but I hope we'll still have extremes, and you'll still be able to connect it to Reform. That'll test Reform pluralism internally.

F: I have a question. (inaudible) parochial private school for their [00:50:00] Monday through Friday education, (inaudible) school or --

Q: Is that parochial Christian?

F: If it includes catechism kind of religious -- if they go to a mass, if they go...

M: I think that's what's healthy about Judaism and I enjoy about it is that Judaism is a spectrum of ideologies, not just viewpoints on a scale, and (inaudible) --

Q: I agree.

M: -- some of our congregations that characterizes (inaudible). I never even knew the word until I had a guest come to High Holy Day services.

Q: I like that.

M: (inaudible) Reform (inaudible). (laughter)

Q: So I want to make sure I get -- I need at least 15 minutes to do...

M: (inaudible). (laughter)

M: So if you take that extreme position, do you then
(inaudible) Jewish (inaudible) Jesus (inaudible).

Q: No. Look, whenever you're going to push me to my limits --
(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: -- you're going to push me for my limits, so...
(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: No, no, no, if you're going to push me to my limits, I
would... You know, everybody has limits. Yeah, everybody
has limits, [00:51:00] and I'd say that's where, you know,
there probably is a limit, that there's an entire consensus
among the Jewish people, right? When there's an entire
consensus, though, it's not a fake limit. You're not
building a fake boundary. OK, let's go. So now there's one
other group, and that's the Hasidic Jew, OK? And, of
course, this is the group that becomes our heirs. And I
would say that the most important -- did anybody bring the
texts --

F: Yes.

M: Yes.

Q: -- that look like this?

F: (inaudible).

Q: All right.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: It looks like this. It says "Study session nine" on the top of it. [00:52:00] It's after the article. All right, home stretch, folks.

F: Ten more minutes.

Q: Right, everybody understands the problem. The temple's destroyed. You've got to really reimagine the whole culture, institutionally, ideologically, so we're going to just run through a whole bunch of texts so you get a feel. Here's one ideological move. If you look at page four of those texts, Roman numeral II B. First, the shock of the Greek. "When [Hebrew] heard that Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was burned down, he tore his clothes. In mourning, his students tore their clothes. They wept. They cried out in mourning." In other words, you have to understand the whole power of what it means. It was like -- it was, you know, a micro is the death of that person who's closest to you, [00:53:00] and your world collapses. So how do you rebuild the world? That was the rabbinic, right? Christianity, you built a Jewish world, right, Jesus in the end was the new sacrifice, right, the perfect lamb. The temple was -- Jesus actually (inaudible) temple, it was very powerful. And (inaudible) the world, in the end God's

grace would still be there if you link to that final sacrifice of sacrifices. And it's a new Israel. Now, here you're going to have a different move. Number nine.

"[Avahanan?] said, 'Who is mighty one like you, oh Lord?'" [Hebrew], right? "'Who is like you, mighty in self-restraint, that you hear the blasphemy and insults of the wicked man and you remain silent?' In the school of (inaudible) it was taught [Hebrew]. Who is like you among the not [elim?], right, gods, but [ilim?], [ilmim?], I should say, [00:54:00] the deaf and dumb ones." That's a pretty powerful thing to say about God. But why is God God? Because God is able to restrain himself so much that he's the deafest and dumbest. We don't mean dumb stupid, right.

F: Most silent.

Q: The most mute, right? Pretty wild way of understanding God, right? And this begins a process -- we're only going to get some initial ideas -- as God becomes more silent there's going to be a call for greater what? Human participation, OK. So I'm going to give you something I would call the rabbinic trends, right? God limits higher human participation. Right? And that's the example here. But this is pretty radical. You know, this is very different than the biblical God. A God who's deaf and dumb, [00:55:00] I

don't think the average biblical character would've thought of God that way. And specifically, God's silence indicates God's what?

M: (inaudible).

F: Humility.

Q: More than that. Who is [Hebrew]? Who is as mighty? Who is like you, right? Right? Your power comes specifically in your what?

F: Silence.

Q: In your silence, in your restraint. Right? Later you'll have an ethics of the father who said, "[Hebrew]." Who is the [gibor?]? [Hebrew]. The person who can conquer his passions and conquer his desires. In other words, the person who really shows restraint is the greatest hero of all. So you're going to have a redefinition of heroism, a redefinition of power, a redefinition of strength that would equal restraint, passivity. Right? In a sense, your strength, your heroism [00:56:00] is in your powerlessness. Now, I'm only give you one little thing here. There's thousands of places to locate this, you know? We gathered these texts, right, you know, which were very good examples. Next. Number ten. "One time [Hebrew] went out to Jerusalem, and [Rabbi Joshua?] called after him, and he saw

the holy temple in ruins. Rabbi [Joshua?] said, 'Woe is us for this place! The place where this individual atoned for us is ruined.'" Right? And so the implication was how can we ever get what now?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right. How can we ever feel whole again? How can we ever feel atoned again? How can we ever feel connected again, right? You think it's like atoning your sins, and since we don't believe in sin that way, we don't feel the status in that way. But imagine if you couldn't ever feel whole, that wholeness, right? Think of whatever is your favorite method of getting it together. It may be going on a hike.

[00:57:00] Imagine if that was completely unavailable to you forever. Right? No, imagine the top five things you do. If you can imagine that. I'm trying to find, right... "My son, do not despair [Hebrew]. We have enough for atonement that is as effective as this. And what is it? Deeds of lovingkindness," right? That's [Hebrew]. That's what it is in Hebrew. [Hebrew]. Equals what? It's as effective as this.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, [Hebrew] is as good as sacrifice. This is an amazing thing. [Hebrew]. (chalkboard squeak) Sorry. The rabbis

moved to say that acts of [Hebrew] are a form of sacrifice, and as effective as that in creating wholeness. Don't be surprised you start teaching this somewhere in the neighborhood of about 100 BCE to 100 CE, and you get to the end of the [00:58:00] twentieth century, and don't be surprised that you're the kind of philanthropic community that we are. Because [Hebrew] had become one of the straight vehicles of actually what?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Purifying yourself, wholeness, and in the theological sense connecting to God. Now, it's connecting to God that has real implications if you're a social service institution, because the (inaudible) of this insight in the twentieth century institutionally is a social service agency. And there are a lot of secular Jews who experience being engaged in social service, whether it's United Way, whether it's the [has?], whether it's [Hebrew], a lot of Jews who are connecting to [Hebrew] as a way of experiencing wholeness, for them you might say [Hebrew] equals what?

F: [00:59:00] Judaism.

F: Prayer.

Q: Prayer. You might say that. And I know it sounds what?

Radical. But imagine that this sounded. You had plenty of

people who said, "No, it's not, I'm sorry. [Hebrew] very nice, I'm all for you doing, but don't tell me it's like sacrifice. I was there at the temple, and let me tell you, it's no sacrifice." But you know what? They persevered. They spent about 700 years persevering at these kinds of insights. Now, I'm not saying we should teach this here. I teach (inaudible). Because I really think it's true for some, right? Or I would say it's true for some people, and the fact that you don't teach it (inaudible) invalidate what they feel at the deepest internal levels, and therefore they can't verbalize them, and because they can't verbalize it they can't teach it and really feel it, because until you verbalize it you can't feel it, and then we can't maximize what's really happening here. So that's why I do it. OK, now what's very powerful [01:00:00] about this is what did people just experience in their lives regarding [Hebrew], in their lives? This is just post destruction of [Hebrew]. What have they experienced in their lives? A complete absence of what?

M: [*Chesed*?]

Q: [*Chesed*]. They experienced on a historical, existential level a complete absence of *chesed*. And so what do they do? Whose *chesed*, by the way? Say it out loud.

F: God.

Q: God's. A complete absence of God's *chesed*. So what do they do? What does [Hebrew] do? He suggests or promulgates a teaching that the key response to the experience of the absence of God's *chesed* is to increase the level of what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Human *chesed*, exactly. Do you understand what an amazingly beautiful and powerful ideology that is? It speaks exactly to the cultural confusion. The cultural confusion at the moment is people don't experience *chesed*, [01:01:00] on the largest meta level, and what does the ideologue do? Right? At that moment, he creates a [*mum?*] that will increase the amount of *chesed* circulating. Got it? And, of course, it plays off this human participation. All right, if God has negative *chesed*, we're going to create what?

F: Positive.

Q: Positive *chesed*.

M: [Good?]. (laughter)

Q: OK, you feel the power of that? Feel the power of it? Now, don't be surprised, post [Hebrew], what happened in the Jewish people? If there was ever a time when we felt negative *chesed*, it was right after the [Hebrew]. So what was there an outburst of?

F: *Chesed*.

Q: An outburst of *chesed*. UJA made it, UJA Federation system made its mark -- and UJA's founded when? Nineteen thirty-nine. It's founded 1939. At the heart at the absence of *chesed* in the culture, what happens? [01:02:00] There's a institution emerges that represents who? Not one denomination.

F: Everybody.

Q: Because there was too much *chesed* needed. It's not that it was -- no individual institution could actually provide the amount of *chesed* necessary to counteract on a meta level the absence of *chesed*. Even if the Reform movement was unbelievable, it could still only supply, right, X dosages of *chesed*. But an institution arose that represented who? Everyone. That's why they said, "We are..."

M: One.

Q: One. They represented everybody. Therefore, the *chesed* that they could bring to the table was what? Massive. Massive. It was a massive dose of *chesed*. And it actually also compelled and attracted Jews, who were not involved, for the most part, in other forms of Judaism. In that respect, it represents the next level of this rabbinic move.

[01:03:00] Now, what that means we don't know yet, and we

haven't played it out. We haven't developed the ideology for it, and UJA sold out its ideology because it doesn't speak about what it means and all that, and Federation's afraid to speak about what it means, but those are all the later problems. (laughter) No, it's a problem because it's still the same thing, because we're still playing out (inaudible)...

(break in video)

Q: -- [Hebrew]. This is the Torah of the (inaudible). Rabbi [Isaac?] said -- this tells you that whoever occupies themselves with the study of the laws of the sin offering, study of the laws of the sin offerings, it's as if he actually sacrificed a sin offering. This tells you whoever occupies themselves with the study of the laws of guilt offering, it's as if he actually sacrificed a guilt offering. What do we have here?

F: Study.

F: (inaudible) sacrifice.

Q: Study of... Study of Torah equals what?

F: (inaudible).

F: Sacrifice.

Q: Equals sacrifice. We're seeing -- I'm giving you 400 years here, but we're seeing [01:04:00] the beginnings of a reorientation, a post-temple Judaism. Study equals sacrifice. Torah then equals what? If you study Torah, where you're studying Torah is in some sense equal to the...

F: Temple.

Q: Temple. Where you're playing out communal *chesed* is somehow what?

F: Godly.

Q: Is somewhat like the temple where you're offering a sacrifice, right? Or imagine that your agency is the [Hebrew]. That's what you have to imagine. That's the analogy. I know it's hard to imagine. In some respects, (inaudible) is the [Hebrew] at the end of the twentieth century.

F: Every classroom.

Q: That's what they're saying. Every classroom that there's a study of Torah happening there. Right, now, if you lead it there, it's pandering. Because what are the real implications of saying that? What are the [Hebrew]? What are the [Hebrew] implications of that once you understand that this is the [Hebrew]? How would you really act? What

would the real relationship between teacher and student be?

[01:05:00] What would the real (inaudible)? Next, the study of Torah is equal to (inaudible) number D, and number 19.

The (inaudible) presence is at the head of the bed where one (inaudible) the sick. Now it becomes a mini [Hebrew].

F: (inaudible).

Q: [Hebrew] is sick bed, right? Next, when a husband and wife are loving and worthy, the divine presence is between them. Now it becomes --

F: Sex.

F: Religion.

Q: And the bedroom. [Hebrew]. (inaudible) occupy themselves with the study of Torah (inaudible), even five, even three, even two, even one. Right? Twenty-two. Whoever sees the place where miracles were performed for Israel says, "Blessed are you loving God (inaudible) all comets or earthquakes or lightning or thunderstorms or mountains or hills or seas or rivers or deserts or rain or good or bad - - or on [rain?], on good timings or bad timings."

Basically, every possible moment, if you can detect it -- and here, what's the religious technology?

F: Blessing.

F: Blessing.

Q: Blessing. The technology's a blessing. [01:06:00] Brand new technology, did not exist pre-rabbinic. No [*bracha?*]. This was the technology used to devote, to help sign, to give meaning, right, to help you read the data. Because otherwise people just thought it was an earthquake, or people just thought it was a comet, or just people thought it was just rain, or just lightning, or it was just a desert, or just a river or mountain, a hill or a sea. Or just an act of (inaudible) *chesed*. Or it was just studying Torah. When you say [Hebrew], right, whatever you say. And all of a sudden, that [*bracha?*], if it's working right, kind of reveals a deeper read on what it is you're doing. The challenge for our era is this is what we would call, right, a [01:07:00] secularization insight. Secularization insight. Areas that look what? On the surface, they look what?

F: Secular.

Q: Secular, become what with this insight?

F: Holy.

Q: Holy. (inaudible) holy secularity. You get the idea there, right? And then just add one more thing. I'll take you through just where this works best, and that's the Shabbos tale. So they really turned the Shabbos tale over to

(inaudible), so you had salt -- well, give me all the customs -- salt --

F: Bread.

Q: -- bread --

F: Wine.

F: Wine.

Q: -- wine --

F: Candles.

Q: -- (inaudible) and (inaudible), great. These are all
[01:08:00] great temple rituals. Next.

M: Candles.

Q: Candles.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Well, that's [candles?]. (inaudible).

F: Challah.

Q: Challah, very good.

F: (inaudible).

Q: Right, (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: Good. In the entire preparation scenario, different clothing, right? Washing, or not washing, handwashing, but let's call it *mikveh* --

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: By the way, now I don't think people go to *mikveh*, but if you're preparing -- most people do not go to *mikveh*, but there is no reason why we can't make a conversion to --

F: (inaudible).

Q: -- to shop... There's no reason we can't make heed to that, but a shower hot, because we are no longer generally -- since almost all of us take a shower every day, we're not taking a shower only for cleanliness. There's more going on in a shower than simply cleanliness, right? But there's no way that pre... [01:09:00] It's only our generation that took a shower every day. Do you know that? Ask your parents when they were growing up did they take a shower every day, or take a bath every day. We're the first generation to do that in human history, so of course we have no norms for it. We don't know what it means. No, ask your parents. I'm sure most of them did not take a shower every single day.

M: (inaudible).

Q: And your grandparents surely didn't.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: Well, there was scarcity of water, right, etc., etc. So taking a shower every day may have more meaning than it

means to the eye. How many of you use a shower in the morning as a get together method? (laughter) There's no reason that we can't, with a [touch?] conversation about an American Jewish life, can we make that aversion of [Hebrew], right, or at least an echo of [Hebrew], right? If you read what's his name -- what's his name, that guy? He wrote, you know, *Everything I Learned in Kindergarten...*

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

F: Fulghum.

Q: Fulghum. Not Dr. Seuss. Fulghum, Fulghum. (laughter) It was like a Dr. Seuss book, though. [01:10:00] Fulghum, Robert Fulghum. If you read his newest book on ritual, which it's not a great book except that -- the book is terrible, but all the examples are great. I can't explain it. It's one of those books --

F: The same as the first one.

Q: Right, OK. So Robert Fulghum writes a book about the rituals in people's lives, and he shows how people have a variety of morning rituals, right? As I'm reading those rituals, I'm just going through the book of [Hebrew]. I said, "I can't believe it, we have all this stuff, but we have to reconnect the [Hebrew] to the experiences that people will..." Do you know what I'm saying?

F: Meaning.

Q: To a meaning of them. So what else? Clothing, *mikveh*.

F: White. The white (inaudible).

Q: White?

F: I thought it was supposed to have (inaudible) --

Q: Yeah, no, I'm trying to connect it to the priesthood. The priests wear white, good, OK.

F: No, I thought that those were, like, the [*kitte?*].

Q: Good, priests wear white.

F: Because we don't have incense, but the smells (inaudible).

Q: Good, nice smells.

F: (inaudible) preparation.

F: What about the blessings --

Q: Blessing, of course. All the blessings. The whole notion of blessing. Even the blessing you bless your children is what blessing? [01:11:00]

F: (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

Q: Not that one. The one after you brush, [Hebrew], what's that?

F: It's the blessing.

M: Priestly.

F: Priestly.

Q: It's the priestly blessing. It's the priestly blessing that was the blessing that was layered on that, right? What about song? Who sang [Hebrew]? The Levites. Right? So basically look, that's what we just claimed: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12. Right? There was a complete -- Shabbos is where the rabbis played it out maximally, right? And they said, look, on this day it is as if your home is a what?

F: Temple.

Q: Temple. Your home is the temple. Your table is the what?

F: Altar.

Q: Is the altar. You are --

F: Priest.

Q: -- a priest, and the world is what?

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: (inaudible). No, I'm not kidding. [01:12:00] This is one of the great cultural reimaginings, reimaginings.

F: And how powerful it is, because look how few people have kept it up, and it's still around. Isn't that true?

Q: It's a very hard thing to do because it depends on what? A tremendous amount of what?

F: Faith.

Q: Not good enough.

F: Imagination.

Q: Not good enough, faith. Every culture depends on community and commitment. But this is a tremendous amount of imagination, because you're imagining this is that. And, of course, it... (coughs) Christianity said all of this and said, well, you know what? The cross is [01:13:00] the Torah. The cross is essential [to the movement?], like the Torah. You know, it said Christian community, Jesus is the (inaudible). And we've been fighting with Christianity ever since. They've been our central -- we always define ourselves alternately. Now that's over, because both have to define themselves with something else. That's why there's a powerful debate (inaudible) religions across the board. So we'll conclude with -- if you go right to the end of the article, it's attached, the end of the [Selser?] article, right, so go back a few pages. So what have I really been teaching you? You see it? "When Moses ascended on high, he found the holy one, blessed be he, [01:14:00] engaged in fixing decoration to the letters of the Torah." Everybody's seen the Torah. You've seen the decorations, right, on the top of letters. There's, like, [cornets?]. "Said Moses, 'Lord of the universe, what are you doing?' He answered, 'Well, you see, there's going to arise a matter

at the end of many generations. Rabbi Akiva -- Akiva ben Joseph is his name -- will expound upon each one of these till heaps and heaps of laws..." In other words, Rabbi Akiva is going to have such an imagination and be so creative that to the decorations he's going to be able to connect cultural and covenantal moves. That's where (inaudible). "'Lord of the Universe,' said Moses, 'I gotta see this guy.' He replied, 'Turn around.' Moses went down and sat behind eight rows," which you should know from [Latin?] is the last row of the academy, and the rows were seated in an arc, the best students in the front, the worst students in the back. And so Moses was considered one of the worst students. "Not being able to follow their arguments [01:15:00] about the discourses [upon one?], he was very ill at ease. When they came to a certain subject, the disciples said to Rabbi (inaudible), 'How do you know this? Where do you deduce this from? What's the source of this?'" It doesn't sound what? Authentic. "And (inaudible) replied, 'It's a law, given upon Moses at Sinai. He was comforting.' Thereupon he returned to the holy one, 'Blessed by he, Lord of the universe. You are such a man, you should be gifted Torah by me.'" We're not going to read the rest of it right now. You're not going to give the

Torah by me. This is one of the few moments we get incredible self-consciousness by rabbis of exactly how (inaudible) what they were doing was. They fully knew, especially the early generation or two -- and this is [Hebrew], so this is 500. This is still the first, you know... It wasn't until about 900 that the rabbis really gained control of the read. [01:16:00] And they at this moment exhibit a certain self-consciousness what they were doing was very radical. The Torah that they were reading, and the interpretation that they were giving, he hung to the Torah, you know, like (inaudible). Because after all, to say that you can interpret from a crown on a letter is really saying what? Because what does a crown on a letter mean?

F: (inaudible).

Q: Doesn't necessarily mean anything. A word at least means something, but a crown on a letter doesn't mean anything, unless you what?

F: Imagine.

Q: Unless you imagine. Unless you imagine. But somehow that imagining, in however thin way it looks, is still rooted where? In the Torah. Even if it's just a (inaudible). And the fact that Rabbi Akiva [01:17:00] was able to do that

and becomes the greatest at that allows him as one of the contributors to the Mishnah, which is the first document, later the [Gamara?]. The Mishnah's 200, the [Gamara's?] 550, (inaudible) [Babylonian?] (inaudible). It's that imagination that allowed the people to recreate themselves in the face of destruction. I'm sure early on it felt incredibly thin. Inevitably these things (inaudible), right? Make a little Shabbos here, let's do a little Yom Kippur this way here. He probably looked at let's make a Seder this way, and let's ask a few questions, and let's tell a little story, and here's the outside framework of this story, and then let's add this, and let's add that. I'm sure it looked thin, all the different pieces, you know, as they began to recreate Judaism. But they had the courage of Rabbi Akiva, who recognized that you've got to use [01:18:00] your imagination, and be able to say really, especially if you're a leader, be able to stay with the full confidence when somebody asks you, "Where does that come from?" Sometimes that comes from the Torah itself. And I know the danger of that. I know the danger. The danger's what we speak about all the time. This class hopefully was about liberating a little bit, not to feel that petrified paralysis. All of you, by virtue of your leadership

positions, wherever you are, whether you're in a classroom or whether you're wherever you are, you are playing (inaudible). You're part of the process of reimagining where Judaism's going to go. You're not just dumping a bunch of facts, or doing a bunch of activities with people. Each of those facts ought to have meaning. Each of those activities that you're doing speak to much more to become the community you're creating, trying to create a [Hebrew]. Because when the [01:19:00] [Hebrew] was destroyed, the downside of it was that it was destroyed. The upside is that God's presence now feels (inaudible) more places. God himself is liberated, and we can actually create a world, which is the dream. If you could have (inaudible), even knowing -- and the end of the story is that sometimes you have to allow (inaudible). Because Rabbi Akiva's destiny, this guy with the greatest imagination, is that he was killed in the Bar Kokhba revolt, in a rather brutal way. So some of us, even in our most creative moments, may go down in flames, and we won't understand that. Some of the best things we do, we just won't understand it. That's what Moses said. "But I don't understand. How could you let this happen?" Such that the Lord replied, "Be silent." There is a complexity to being human. There is a mystery to being

human. But please, we can't paralyze our creativity or our imagination, right at this moment [01:20:00] where there's nothing that's (inaudible) creativity and imagination. So even the declarations of Judaism you know, even if you think you don't know enough. But at least (inaudible) declarations, even those declarations can be incredible sources for you. So that's...

