

שלום לכולם, תודה שבאתם. בגלל שיש פה היום אורחים מארצות הברית, אני עובר לאנגלית.

Today in my speech I will share my thoughts and feelings about the story of Parashat Hukat.

At the start, this story just seems like a depressing story of Moses being forbidden from achieving his entire life goal, because he did one bad thing.

But if you dig deeper, it's still just mostly depressing.

But if you dig even deeper, then there are some good lessons that you can take from this story.

For starters, it teaches you that sometimes the collective is bigger than a single entity.

Despite the fact that practically or maybe literally every single Jew that escaped from Egypt died before they made it to Israel, the Jewish Community survives and manages to make it to their safe haven.

What I am trying to say is that Moses might have died a sad death for a cause that I see as unreasonable, but his death meant that a different person needed to take up leadership, which led to growth in the Jewish community (maybe. I don't actually know). His successor was Yehushua Bin Nun, who was at the time, a seemingly normal person (except for the fact that he was one of the only people who actually wanted to go to Israel). And then he just decided to become the leader (I don't know why, it doesn't sound like fun to lead a bunch of cranky Jews, but I guess someone had to do it).

The fact that they all died from old age (like at age 40. Wow, people did not live a long time back then) means that everyone who came into Israel would be appreciative of a free life where you can actually stay in one place and have real food and not live in a state of constant thirst and hunger. And HEAT.

I know what it's like to have to suddenly and surprisingly need to move to a different home, but at least it was at a reasonable temperature (well, before Israel.) And I had stability for a few years (and my parents didn't die. That's also important).

Another lesson this Parasha teaches us is to not take things from Parashas. Huh? Sorry, I mean for granted.

Not to take things for granted.

The Jews had a bunch of water, but when it inexplicably vanished after Miriam died, they needed to learn how to survive without it (spoiler alert: they didn't do a good job. they just came crying to Moses for a couple of days until he smacked a rock and it ejected a bunch of water on the pitiful humans).

As for us, modern day humans, we can just turn on a faucet whenever we're thirsty, and we don't need to exchange words and/or violent acts with inanimate stones.

So the story is also teaching us to be thankful for the stuff we have. I may not have everything that I want, but I have everything that I need, and I am satisfied.

My torah portion is also about Miriam, Moses's sister. Miriam saved Moses as a baby by putting him on a raft in the Nile River and following him until she saw that he was safe. Also, when everyone finished crossing the Red Sea, she threw a big party and the first drum circle in history. And that's all she did. Wow, the Torah did not put a lot of focus on women .

I respect the drum circle part because I like music (like most sane people (and also some insane people)), and parties, and I understand the need to keep your mood up, especially when your entire life is changing (and you just witnessed an entire army of Egyptians drown before your very eyes.)

I can also relate to the responsibility of being an older sibling, even though I have never done something so extreme (and I'm pretty sure no one here has either), but I do help my brothers.

As I turn 13 years old, I'm ready to begin the newest rotation around the sun of my life. Thank you all for coming. I really appreciate it. Thank you Ima and Abba for supporting me and my brothers Mano and Lev for entertaining me. Now - let's get on to the fun part. P.s. when you chuck candy at me, attempt to do it in a way that I can walk out of this room in one piece. Now I'm gonna try to protect my vital organs.