

## **16 — Beshalach: It's Not a Chidush**

**Content notes:** we're discussing the obliteration of Amalek (with possible genocide implications) from 8:57 to 13, and from 34:22 to 38.

**Lulav:** Welcome to Kosher Queers, a podcast with at least two Jews and generally more than three opinions! Each week we bring you queer takes on Torah. They're Jaz —

**Jaz:** And she's Lulav —

**Lulav:** And she's Anat! And today we're gonna talk about Beshalach.

*[Brivele intro music]*

**Jaz:** Welcome to Anat. Anat is a musician and artist and teacher living here in Brooklyn. She has roots all of the world, in Israel and Yemen and Hungary and Poland and plays a bunch of different instruments.

**Anat:** Accordion, piano, singing, drums, guitar, ukulele —

**Lulav:** Okay.

**Anat:** I have a harp now.

**Lulav:** Okay!

**Anat:** It turns out David's harp, which is quote-unquote "missing," since Babylon exile, and which he used to hang over his bed, and the north wind would play and that's why he knew it was time to get up and study Torah (*Lulav laughs*) — anyway, it was in the Music Inn at the west village that whole time. (*Lulav laughs*) You know that store, the record store in Mrs. Maisel? That's a real store.

**Jaz:** Cool.

**Anat:** It's owned by a Jew named Jeffrey. You should definitely go.

**Jaz:** Great. Anat also teaches music and Judaism and does ritual and has led things at Let My People Sing and at the Singing Communities Intensive —

**Anat:** Now called the Rising Song Intensive, at Hadar.

**Jaz:** Rad. And works with really cool musicians, including Aly Halpert and Batya Levine and Joey Weisenberg and you're now working on Batya's new album, right?

**Anat:** That's true. I'm the vocal director.

**Jaz:** Which is super cool. And you have an album coming out.

**Anat:** Yes, two. I have an album called *How Can I Keep From Singing?* That's my actual debut album. I've been sitting on it for a while. Then I have a Hanukkah album. It's kind of a lo-fi, all proceeds go to destabilizing Christian hegemony. So stay tuned. It's going to come out on like, the 30th night of Hanukkah or something. Now, on Monday I started working full time for G-d. (*Jaz and Lulav laugh*)

**Jaz:** (*laughs*) Okay!

**Anat:** What am I doing? Ask me.

**Jaz and Lulav:** (*overlapping*) What are you doing?

**Anat:** I am dismantling white supremacy in Jewish organizations in the United States. Then I will move to Israel and do the same work, and then it will travel to the whole world.

**Lulav:** Cool.

**Jaz:** Incredible. The hero we need and deserve.

**Anat:** Now, dismantling white supremacy is much harder than smashing the patriarchy, because smashing the patriarchy you just kind of baseball bat. (*Jaz and Lulav chuckle*) Then there's also destabilizing the aristocracy and building the world we want to see.

**Lulav:** Yeah.

**Anat:** Which I'm already doing also. You have to do them all in tandem. (*Lulav chuckles*) But also one at a time.

**Jaz:** And with buddies.

**Anat:** You need the buddies. You need the comrades. You know who I don't want? ALLIES. Okay. (*Jaz and Lulav laugh*) I don't want people who are like, oh yeah, I will help you. No! No, shut up, I don't want your help. You need *my* help. (*Jaz and Lulav laugh delightedly*.) Oh my Lord, and you guys are the ones who are so uptight and need everything written down and everything scheduled and everything to happen right away, according to your terms. It's like, relax, please, because I'm trying to enjoy my life, which is my latest project.

**Lulav:** Aw, that's a good project.

**Jaz:** An amazing project.

**Anat:** I just started personal training today, so that I can — I don't actually want to punch Nazis, I just want them to back off immediately when they see how jacked I am. (*Lulav giggles*) They're not even going to see how jacked I am, because I'm going to be wearing a new leather snakeskin coat. (*Jaz laughs*)

**Jaz and Lulav:** (*overlapping*) Amazing.

**Anat:** Now, more importantly, I'd like to invite all of you Brooklynites to my party. It's my bat mitzvah, okay? I'm 30 going on 13 (*Lulav chuckles*) and actually, it's parshat Beshalach, so that's the tie in. February 8th, it's above Izzy Rose, in Brooklyn. It's at the Brooklyn Bazaar

office. Ten pm till late. There's a \$15 cover for food and drink and entertainment.

**Jaz:** Great. Before Lulav summarizes your parsha, can you talk to us about why you liked it, why you picked it?

**Anat:** Well let me just add one thing, which is that I'm also my other project is that I've been studying Yemenite music (*Jaz gasped*) and culture, and I'm doing a research project on my family, which is why I'm going to Israel after I turn 30, on Tu B'shevat, and doing some more research. And so the party is a fundraiser, okay? And even if you're not at the party, you can still contribute. Okay. So, why do I like it? Well, it is my bat mitzvah portion. When I was 12, I had a bat mitzvah where I just had a party and I sang a song for people. (*Singing*) Ein li erez acheret gam — (*stops singing*) now, I know I have to stay on schedule, so I like it because it's my bat mitzvah portion, and also this shabbat is called Shabbat Shira, which means the song Sabbath, beshalach means sending, but here's the most interesting part, okay. It's a rebirth. Rebirth of a nation. Now, you might remember that Moshe was born twice. First he was born to Yocheved and then, he went into a second womb, which was the basket that Yocheved made, and then he was born to Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh.

**Lulav:** Mm hmm.

**Anat:** And then, they co-parented him. So Moses was reborn, and he was mixed heritage, basically. He was adopted, but he still had his own mother and that's why he was so well-equipped to be the deliverer. You know why? Because mutts will save the world. (*Lulav chuckles*) So why do I like it? It's because it's the rebirth of a nation, okay. And first, Nachshon had to jump in, and then G-d was like, fine, you want to go across? Now you can go across. And it was like, the waters of the sea parted and they were reaching toward the sky. The mayim and the shamayim were reaching towards each other. It was like the flood. It was also like when David tried to build the foundation of the temple and he moved his clay pot even though the clay pot was like, "do not move me," and the waters wanted to come and flood the world. And obviously it was like Noah's flood. So the moment of birth, of rebirth, it was also the moment when the world could have been destroyed. Now, a lot of people went across. It was not easy. But Moses and Miriam were leading them, and Aharon. Moses is like earth and Aharon is like fire, the priest, fire pants (*Jaz laughs*) and Miriam is water, obviously. And G-d is the spirit, to complete them.

**Lulav:** Oh yeah, air.

**Jaz:** G-d is the avatar?

**Anat:** But many people wanted to go across — air, the spirit, ruach Elohim.

**Lulav:** Oh.

**Anat:** Now some people did not want to go across. They didn't want to go across for the sake of going across, they wanted to go across for the sake of enslaving people, and also thereby enslaving themselves. And guess what? Those people did not make it across. As Beyoncé said, "Driver, roll up the partition" (*Lulav laughs*) I need to credit my roommate Amy Schiller, okay, who created the Beyoncé-der, that's "Beyoncé d-e-r." (*Lulav laughs*) That's why I like it.

**Jaz:** Cool

**Anat:** And there's a song. Yeah.

**Jaz:** That's beautiful. Um, Lulav, so that we can talk more about all of those things, can you start us off with a very fast summary of this parsha?

**Lulav:** I would love to. Can you give me 55 seconds?

**Jaz:** Yes. One second, that's very specific.

**Lulav:** No, 55 seconds, Jaz, not one. *(laughs)*

**Jaz:** Uh-huh. *(Lulav laughs)* Yeah, yeah. Alright, ready, set, go!

**Lulav:** The Israelites make their exodus, traveling through the wilderness to avoid conflict. They take Yosef's bones, like he asked, and they are guided by cloud and fire. Egyptians pursue with slave-hunting chariots but the sea parts to allow the Israelites through and subsequently collapses on the pursuers. We all sing Mi Chamocho, presumably not the Debbie Friedman tune, but you never know.

**Anat:** Eh, probably was.

**Lulav:** Bitter waters are filtered by a miracle tree, so no one goes thirsty. Mitzvot keep you healthy, according to the name.

**Anat:** That's true.

**Lulav:** Moshe and Aaron get manna and quails, so no one goes hungry. Keeping Shabbat is accounted for, according to the Name.

**Anat:** Yes, wow.

**Lulav:** Somehow they partied forty times on a diet solely of manna and quails, *(Anat laughs)* um, Moshe strikes a rock for water, which I'm sure will never come up again, and please note that all the miracles from the sea on, are in response to the people kvetching. We end with a fight against Amalek *(alarm sounds)* while Moshe is cheer squad. *(Jaz and Anat laugh)*

**Anat:** Can you just slow down?

**Jaz:** Nope,

**Lulav:** I can't.

**Jaz:** That's what we're about to do right now.

**Anat:** I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about the Torah. It's all in one parsha. Whose idea was that? It's overwhelming.

**Jaz:** There's so much.

**Anat:** But you know what it's for, it's for blowing people's circuits, okay? (*Jaz laughs*) This is pre-Purim, we're in pre-Purim right now (*Lulav laughs*) And obviously, Purim is pre-Pesach, we're in pre-pre-Pesach.

**Lulav:** Whoa.

**Anat:** So this is obviously Pesach, Pesach is this. So we're in pre-Pesach, but before Pesach, your mind has to be completely blown (*Lulav laughs*) By how much is in this parsha.

**Jaz:** There's a lot in this parsha.

**Lulav:** Honestly, this was like a short parsha compared to some of the stuff in Bereishit. (*laughs*)

**Jaz:** I know.

**Anat:** Can we talk about Amalek for a second? Did you know there's a contractor in Brooklyn called A.Malek? Have you seen this?

**Jaz:** No!

**Lulav:** Oh, that's fun.

**Anat:** Okay, so I'm constantly remembering Amalek, and do you know who gave birth to Amalek, according to the midrash?

**Jaz:** No.

**Anat:** Okay, Timna. Do you know who Timna is?

**Lulav:** No.

**Anat:** I'll give you a hint, it's not a national park in the Aravah. Timnah is a warrior princess chief like Sarah, okay, and she wanted to convert, and the rabbis were like, no! She wanted to be Jewish so much she became a concubine of Esau, who wasn't even Jewish! (*Lulav laughs*) And then, she gave birth — she conceived with Esau — and gave birth to Amalek. Do you see what happens when we close our doors to people who want to join us? Literally, it breeds destruction, and hatred. Hatred breeds hatred. And I don't think we need to record anything else on the podcast now. (*Lulav laughs*) So, when the Torah says remember Amalek, and it also says wipe out the memory of Amalek, you're obviously very confused, and what you're supposed to do is do both, okay? And then you're supposed to have a middle path, which is absorb Amalek. And transform. Okay, in hallel, we sing hafchtah mispedileh mechol. You've transformed my mourning, and my suffering, and my eulogy into dance. That's what we gotta do with Amalek, okay? It's a very simple midrash.

**Jaz:** That's beautiful.

**Anat:** Thank you.

**Lulav:** Amalek is like a character from Bereishit, right? To some extent?

**Jaz:** No, I think this is the first time they're mentioned.

**Anat:** Okay, let's see.

**Lulav:** Because you said... Esau?

**Jaz:** Well...

**Anat:** That's a midrash.

**Lulav:** Okay.

**Anat:** You know, the Torah's not exactly chronological.... *(Lulav laughs)* in the way that we use time.

**Jaz:** But, no Amalek, I believe, is here for the first time in this parsha in Shemot when they fight Amalek, he's not a person in the tribe.

**Lulav:** Mm.

**Jaz:** But you're saying that Amalek —

**Anat:** Exists in Brooklyn today. *(Lulav laughs)*

**Jaz:** And also that the tribe is supposed to be descended from this person who's —

**Anat:** Timna, who tried to convert.

**Jaz:** Right.

**Anat:** Amalek is a little bit like Voldemort. Here's what it says. Only the disappearance of the Amalekites will satisfy G-d's anger.

**Lulav:** That's rough.

**Anat:** G-d will personally "erase their traces." I'm just reading from the Chumash. The URJ Torah. G-d will personally "erase their traces" and Israel - that's in quote because like G-d's a person? I don't know, kind of. Erase their traces, Israel is summoned to be the executioner of G-d's will. This extraordinary judgment suggests that the battle between Israel and Amalek in Exodus 17 and referred to in Deuteronomy 25 had some crucial significance. And that later conflicts between these two peoples further deepen the antagonism. Remember how I said that we're pre-Purim? Haman was directly descended from Amalek. Okay? And let's go further.

**Lulav:** It's all connected.

**Anat:** What happens after Purim? We have Pesach. Pharaoh. Probably also descended from Amalek. Then we have Lag Ba'Omer. I don't know about that one. *(Jaz and Lulav laugh)* Anat: Okay, then we have Tisha b'Av. Babylonians. Probably Amalekites, okay?

**Jaz:** Tisha b'Av includes a lot of other tragedies. Crusaders? Definitely Amalek.

**Anat:** Yes. Ferdinand? Amalek.

**Lulav:** Also, I found the connection to the omer. Amalek has more than one letter in his name. That's like counting the omer.

**Anat:** Ayin, nun, lamed. (*Jaz laughs*) Wait, so can we just keep going? Okay? July 4th — the American Revolution. You decide who's Amalek in that one, okay? I'm not going to touch that one. (*Jaz laughs*) This is Kosher Queers. That's treif, that's hot dogs and pork, that's not for us. But I'm just saying, Amalek was there too.

**Lulav:** Okay.

**Anat:** I'd like to read another piece from the URJ. (*Clears throat*) "The women danced." Now, you know how recently, there was a big siyum of daf yomi? (*Jaz laughs*) And I heard somebody give a dvar Torah and they were like, there was a siyum *for women*. Women are learning Talmud! And it's like, this is not a chidush, okay. Have you heard of Beruria? Have you heard of Imma Shalom? Have you heard of Aviva Richman? Have you heard of my Talmud teacher from Israel, I forget her last name, but her first name is Tehilah?

**Jaz:** Or all the way back to Miriam HaNeviah?

**Anat:** Oh yeah yeah yeah, but that was pre-Talmud. Oh, have you heard of my savta zichrona livracha, Sarah, born Cohen, then HaLevi? Born Shadrah, changed to Sarah cuz she moved to Israel? Kinda like Sarah in the Torah? She had the Torah memorized and she didn't learn how to read until she was 65. She had to hide in the closet of the cheder so she could learn Torah because girls were not taught Torah, okay, and you think that it's a chidush that women are learning Torah? The only chidush is Megillat Esther, the revealing of what's been hidden, which is that women have been badass scholars for longer than men.

**Lulav:** I didn't understand several of those words. (*laughs*) What does chidush mean?

**Anat:** Chidush means, uh, new, or like, an innovation, or like, a new idea.

**Lulav:** Oh, okay!

**Anat:** There's no chidush.

**Lulav:** So, yeah, it's not new that —

**Anat:** No chidush!

**Lulav:** (*overlapping*) — that women are learning Torah .

**Anat:** (*overlapping*) It's not a new idea that women are learning Torah.

**Lulav:** Yeah!

**Anat:** Or learning Talmud. It's not chidush that women are learning Talmud. Now of course, people have been trying to keep women out of the Talmud. That was pretty successful in terms of who's quoted, except for Beruria and Imma Shalom, and like, occasionally some

other women.

**Jaz:** As a fun side note, we just had Beruria come into the Talmud already in the daf yomi cycle, in Brachot, where Beruria is quoted because her husband says that there are some kids in the neighborhood who are annoying him and he prayed that they might die because they're sinning so much (*page turning noise*) and she's like, "you can't do that. You should just pray that they stop, not that they die," and then they stop being irritating and she's right. (*Lulav laughs*) Can we — because we've talked about some of the parsha in less linear order, can we also do some of it in sort more, linear order?

**Anat:** Yep.

**Jaz:** So, we start with their leaving Egypt. (*page turning noise*)

**Anat:** With the pillar of cloud.

**Jaz:** Mm hmm.

**Anat:** Which is by the way the sukkah. The pillar of clouds were air conditioned according to the midrash and masechet sukkah, okay, air conditioned and very cozy.

**Jaz:** Lovely. And a pillar of fire.

**Anat:** By night.

**Jaz:** They approached the sea. They get to the sea and Pharaoh's army is chasing them, and the people say to Moshe, "why did you bring us here if we're just going to die?" (*Lulav chuckles*) And this is I think the first of their many complaints in this parsha. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Anat:** Moshe said, vayomer Moshe el HaAm, al tirau — Moses said to the people, have no fear. Al tirau. Stand by, stand by for deliverance. That's what he says.

**Lulav:** How does that make you feel?

**Anat:** It makes me feel great, okay. It's like, people who are freaking out about whether they're going to catch a train or something, it's like, just stand by. there's going to be another train. It's going to get you where you want to go. G-d said to Moshe, "ma titzak elai?" Why are you yelling at me? Start walking! Okay, you want to get away from Pharaoh? Go! Okay, and then —

**Jaz:** And then they go into the water, and Nachshon goes first, right.

**Anat:** Everyone's like, yeah, I — we actually didn't learn swimming, even though it says in the Talmud you have to teach your kids to swim.

**Jaz:** They haven't gotten the Talmud yet! It's later.

**Anat:** You're right, you're right. Okay, they hadn't learned how to swim, they didn't have that rule yet, from the Talmud, and everyone was like, yeah I don't know how to swim, plus there's jellyfish. (*Lulav laughs*)



**Jaz:** They're all just kind of looking at Moshe and the's like, alright, and Nachshon is the one dude whose like, okay, you said go, I'll go and he goes into the water and he goes up to his knees and then he kind of looks back and then he goes up to his chest and then kind of looks back and he's like, there's still water. *(Lulav laughs)* If I recall correctly, he goes in until his head is covered, and then the water splits and lets them all through.

**Anat:** Okay, what do we learn from this? You gotta be all in with G-d if you want G-d to part the waters for you. Okay. As the spiritual says *(singing)* "Wade in the waters. Wade in the water, children. Wade in the water. G-d's gonna trouble the water." Okay, do you think Harriet Tubman had some sort of promise that she was going to be free? No. She just started walking. Cuz she couldn't tolerate slavery.

**Lulav:** Because the alternative...

**Anat:** The alternative was intolerable.

**Jaz:** We could also learn from it as well that you just gotta get started. The waters don't start before you get there. You gotta get started. You gotta get going.

**Anat:** You gotta come towards G-d and then G-d's gonna back you up.

**Lulav:** Yeah. The reason that I was hesitant about you just gotta walk directly into the water is they chose this path in the first place because they didn't want conflict with the Philistines.

**Anat:** Sorry, which path?

**Lulav:** We skipped over a bit in 13:17, the very first line of *(page turning noise)* the parsha.

**Jaz:** You're right.

**Lulav:** Which is that G-d did not lead them through the land of the Philistines —

**Anat:** Even though that was closer —

**Lulav:** Because even though that was a shorter trip, they didn't want the people to face war.

**Anat:** Well, that's good. Yeah, I'd rather swim than see war.

**Lulav:** Yeah, the reason that I point to this is there were multiple ways to go and so I'm very hesitant about like, choosing to run into the water just as a general piece of advice, rather than like, going through a place where you know that your comrades are probably going to fight with the locals.

**Jaz:** Mm.

**Lulav:** But I do like when you point out that the alternative is intolerable, so like in this specific situation, you just gotta go, you just commit and make it happen.

**Anat:** You gotta risk everything, you know? It's like if you don't go all in, you're not going to win. Unless you're being very cautious, but you know what that's called? Incrementalism. *(Lulav laughs)* You know what I like to call that? All lives matter.

**Jaz:** Alright so, they're crossing the sea and there are walls of water and then the walls of water fall down on the people who are chasing them.

**Anat:** You forgot the staff.

**Jaz:** Oh right. Moshe holds the staff up to part the water.

**Anat:** Hold out your arm, okay. Let's all practice. *(Anat and Jaz laugh)* I'm doing it.

**Jaz:** *(overlapping)* This is an audio medium.

**Anat:** *(overlapping)* Well, I'm telling them!

**Lulav:** I'm doing it, and I'm not even in the room with y'all.

**Jaz:** It's true, Anat is stretching out her arm.

**Anat:** Jaz isn't doing it. There we go! Do you think it was the right arm or the left arm? I think probably the right arm.

**Jaz:** I think it was the left arm because we should always go left. *(Lulav chuckles)*

**Anat:** I agree we should go left but you want your left arm free, okay?

**Lulav:** Isn't the left hand the poop hand?

**Anat:** Make the right hand do the work.

**Jaz:** Bigotry.

**Lulav:** Are you left handed?

**Jaz:** No, but my brother is.

**Anat:** Let's just stay focused, okay?

**Lulav:** Yeah. *(Jaz and Lulav laugh)*

**Anat:** Listen to this — the angel of G-d who had been going ahead of the Israelite army now moved and followed behind them. So first the angel leads, and then follows. *(sings briefly)* "Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow..." And the pillar of clouds shifted from in front of them and took up a place behind them to protect them from the Egyptians, the air-conditioned fuzzy cloud, that's related, that we represent with a sukkah. And it came between the army of the Egyptians and the army of Israel. Thus there was the cloud with the darkness and it cast a spell upon the light. Va-ya eir mit ha-lailah. So that the one could not come near the other all through the night. Okay, now the translation is "cast a spell," okay, but in Hebrew, it just says "lights up the night" so that they can't get close to each other. What does that mean? Not just that the Egyptians can't come close to the Israelites. The Israelites cannot go back. They can't be like, never mind, I want to stay enslaved. Because sometimes when we are the most close to freedom, we are like, actually, I'd rather watch TV.

We want safety. We want somebody else to feed us. We don't want to grow our own food.

**Lulav:** So having like a pillar of fire and a cloud behind is — uh — a helpful thing.

**Anat:** Yes, the angel, the angel, all night and all day the angel keep watching.

**Jaz:** And then, they do cross the sea, and the angels — there is this story about the Egyptians drowning, that the angels sing a victory song, and G-d turns to them and is like —

**Anat:** Shut up.

**Jaz:** Yeah, how can you sing my children are drowning?

**Anat:** Ugh... oh my gosh, it's so heartbreaking, but let me ask you something. What do they eat on the way?

**Jaz:** To the — matzah?

**Anat:** When they were crossing the Red Sea! I'm not worried about the adults. Adults can fast for three days. We know because Queen Esther did it and all of her people. But what about the babies? They can't. And the mothers. They were kind of stressed out so it wasn't working that well, and the babies were crying. And what did G-d do? G-d provided fruits, pomegranates, apples, anything you wanted — in the walls of the sea! And all the mothers had to do and the wet nurses was just reach out (*tongue click to demonstrate*) and pluck an apple, tapuach hinani — and then the children could eat. Now by the way, everyone was singing, when they were crossing, because that's what you gotta do. Like we were singing earlier.

**Lulav:** Gotta keep up the pace.

**Anat:** Yeah, you gotta keep walking so you don't feel discouraged. Very important. (*sings*) "You know, I can't keep quiet, ohh..." And when people were in jail during the Civil Rights Movement, same thing. They would sing even while they were being beaten. Okay? Because you can beat someone's body, but you can't really beat their spirit. You can try. So even the babies in the womb were singing. Now, how would you know that? Well obviously, the wombs were glass. (*Jaz laughs*)

**Lulav:** Wait a second. (*Jaz laughs*)

**Anat:** Let's keep going. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Jaz:** Okay, so they cross and they arrive, and there's more singing, led by Aaron and Miriam.

**Anat:** Well, actually it's Moshe.

**Jaz:** You're right, sorry. Moshe and then Miriam. I got tripped up because it refers to Miriam as Aaron's sister instead of Moshe's sister, and they're like, this is weird given that Moses was just the one talking.

**Anat:** I think it's incredible because Miriam's song is two lines. It's actually one verse long. You know how long Moshe's song is.

**Jaz:** *(laughs)* It's so long.

**Anat:** It's so long. Okay. Miriam is like Shiru l'Adonai, ki ga-oh ga'ah. Sus vrochvo ramah bayam, which you could read as horse and driver he has hurled into the sea. Or you could read it as the horses and their riders are going to Ramah, camp on the ocean. *(Jaz laughs)*

**Lulav:** Oh geez.

**Jaz:** That's maybe a stretch.

**Lulav:** So those are the first two lines of the song that Moshe sings. And I'm just picturing Moshe's out here, starting every different stanza with a new poetry. And then Miriam's like, okay, now that the singer-songwriter has had his time, let's all join together: Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

**Anat:** I love that. Can we sing a little bit of Shirat Hayam right now?

24:43

**Lulav:** Sure.

**Anat:** Here's how I like to sing it. This is an Iraqi tune I learned from George Mordechai, to Ya Ribon.

**Jaz:** Mm.

**Anat:** *(sings, with Jaz humming along in the background)* Az yashir Moshe, at hashia, hazot ladonai yayomu lemor. Ashira ladonai, ki gao ga'a. Sus v'vochvo ramah vayam. Oz vizimrat ya, hayehi lishuah. Ze'eli vanvehu elohuhi avi vearomemenhu. Adonai ish milchomo Adonai shemo, Adonai shemo.

**Jaz:** Yasher kochech.

**Anat:** Thanks. Thanks to George Mordechai. His album's on Spotify, *Safra*, but don't use Spotify, just buy the record! *(Lulav laughs)* RisingSong.org.

**Jaz:** We'll link.

**Anat:** Hadar.org. So then Miriam's song, how does Miriam's song go?

**Jaz:** You just read us Miriam's song.

**Anat:** Debbie Friedman is a direct descendant of Miriam. *(Lulav laughs)*

**Jaz:** Definitely spiritually.

**Anat:** Yeah, definitely. It's very clear to me. And then Debbie Friedman, she had a lot of descendants. Elana Aryan, Chava Mirel, Eliana Light, they're all following in her footsteps, with the timbrel. What do they call the timbrel? Tof beyadah. Vatikach beMiriam HaNeviah achitot Aharon — yeah, the brother of Aharon. *(Jaz and Lulav laugh)* I guess they wanted to

get Aharon's name in there too.

**Jaz:** They're like, he's also here! We have two prophets and —

**Anat:** *(overlapping)* She was Aaron's sister first, okay. *(laughs)*

**Jaz:** *(overlapping)* — also Aharon.

**Lulav:** Oh also, I think this is written by people who want to really emphasize that Aharon is the direct descendant for their priestly line

**Jaz:** Sure.

**Anat:** Well that make sense because Miriam is water. What is Ahraon? He's the bucket. **(Lulav chuckles)** No, no, listen, priests are vessels. So she picks up hatof beyadah vetetzen kol hanashim achareha — all the women went after her. And when I say women, I mean like, people, like a gender-inclusive use of the word women.

**Jaz:** Sure, why not.

**Anat:** Like man, like when people say men, like say all men are created equal. "And when I meet Thomas Jefferson, imma compel him to include women in the sequel! Work!" *(Jaz laughs)* Achareha betupim uvemicholot. They all went out with their drums and their dancing feet.

**Jaz:** Mm. *(sings softly, under Anat)* And the women, dancing with their timbrels...

**Anat:** And they followed, and then Miriam answered. So Miriam didn't start singing until people were already following her with dancing feet and drums.

**Lulav:** Yeah.

**Jaz:** And what can we learn from this?

**Lulav:** You have to do the nigun first and like, get everybody on the same page. *(laughs)*

**Anat:** Lulav, before you do the nigun, start playing your little drum and then see if people play along, okay?

**Lulav:** *(gasps)* Yes!

**Anat:** And you don't need one of those big drums, just a regular sized drum, because you have your voice, and only when other people are with you, then you should start singing. Don't start using your voice before people are listening.

**Lulav:** Mm hmm.

28:13

**Anat:** And then she answered. Vata'an lahem, she answered for them or as they translate here, "Miriam chanted for them."

**Jaz:** Mm.

**Anat:** It's just like the way a ba'al t'filah or ba'al korei — they are praying or reading Torah for the kehillah. It doesn't say she's singing for G-d. She's singing for them. She's telling them, okay, it's a back and forth, it's like antiphonal, shiru ladonai ki goa ga'a. You sing to G-d. I'm singing to you. You sing to G-d. Sus verochvo ramah vayam, the horses and the reider are at Ramah by the Sea.

**Jaz:** Uh huh. *(laughs)*

**Anat:** They're in the underwater Ramah. Ramah has a submarine camp now. I'm sorry. You can cut that out. *(Jaz laughs)* But that would be cool, right? That would be a cool camp.

**Jaz:** It would be a cool camp.

**Anat:** Underwater. *(sings)* Under the sea.

**Jaz:** *(Overlapping, singing)* Betoach hayam.

**Anat:** *(overlapping, singing)* Tachat hayam. *(All laugh)* Sus verochvo ramah vayam, ramah vayam, shiru ladonai, ki gao ga'a, sus verochvo ramah vayam, doo doo doo doo doo doo —

**Lulav:** If anyone from Disney is listening to this, this is fair use as a parody. *(laughs)*

**Jaz:** Have you not seen Pizmon? There's that Jewish a cappella group at JTS, maybe? AND they have a song that they call Betoach Hayam that's just an a cappella Jewishy version of "Under the Sea."

**Anat:** I'm here for it.

**Jaz:** In Hebrew.

**Anat:** I'm into subverting Disney.

**Jaz:** It's beautiful. *(laughs)*

**Anat:** Okay, I think that's good. That's the first aliyah, right, or are we still going?

**Jaz:** Yeah, let's keep going. *(page turning)*

**Anat:** Oh, then there's the bitter waters, which is really interesting, because Miriam's name is bitter waters.

**Jaz:** Yes.

**Anat:** It's like, they got to Miraim's place and they were like, we hate it here. *(Jaz and Lulav laugh)* They were like, why is there a woman in charge?

**Lulav:** Oh no.

**Anat:** Okay, we thought we were following G-d.

**Jaz:** Well, and then they complained —

**Anat:** G-d was like, welcome, my name is Miriam. *(laughs)*

**Jaz:** *(laughs)* And then they complained about more things! *(Lulav chuckles)*

**Anat:** Which they should, okay, because G-d forgot that they needed water.

**Jaz:** And food.

**Anat:** Well no, the food was provided.

**Jaz:** At first, Moshe was like, why are you complaining, and they were like, because we need food, and only then do we get food.

**Anat:** Oh, there's a Hasidic master who writes about the bitter waters. I forget though, lucky for you. *(Lulav laughs)* Oh, here's what it is. They couldn't drink the water because it was bitter. Hello, are you thirsty or are you not thirsty? Who cares if the water's bitter?

**Lulav:** Well, if there's anything I've learned from the Oregon trail, it's that if the water is too bitter, it will make you sick

**Anat:** Yeah, we're not in Oregon.

**Lulav:** *(laughs)* Neither were the people in Oregon trail.

**Jaz:** True.

**Anat:** Sometimes, you've got to swallow a bitter pill. And I've got a bitter pill for you to swallow. The earth is on fire, okay! You're going to need bitter waters. You're going to need waters of every flavor.

**Lulav:** To be clear, the reason that water is bitter is that there's stuff dying in it.

**Anat:** I'm sorry, is this a public health podcast? *(Jaz laughs)*

**Lulav:** Yeah, sometimes. *(Jaz laughs)* I don't know.

**Anat:** It has been suggested that there are scientific bases for this.

**Jaz:** Mm hmm.

**Anat:** Oh, they put a piece of wood into it, so that was like, sanitizing piece of wood.

**Jaz:** Cool. But then they get manna.

**Anat:** Yummy.

**Jaz:** And then G-d feeds them.

**Anat:** Yummy, yummy, yummy. What do you think manna looks like?

**Jaz:** Oh don't know. I mean, they say it is like, flaky. Like the dew.

**Anat:** Oh, like phyllo dough.

**Lulav:** It may be quail poop.

**Anat:** Oh come on, Lulav! That's disgusting.

**Lulav:** No, okay, so 16:13, "In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. (*Jaz snorts*) When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was." And Moshe said it is the bread that the Eternal has given you to eat." (*Jaz chuckles*) So like, maybe it's quail poop. It's very nutritious quail poop (*laughs*)

**Anat:** Well, you're forgetting some processes, okay. (*Lulav laughs*) This is what you call a closed loop. First of all, hafachta mispedileh mechol; you turn my suffering into dance. Now, what happens? The quails poop, okay? The poop goes in the compost — you know, you honestly don't even have to put it on the compost. You can put the quail poop directly on the fields. Then you gotta plant the seeds. You don't have to plant them, because the wind is going to put them there. Then you have to water them, but the rain does that, okay. You're basically doing nothing and then the sun comes and then the seeds germinate and they grow. Okay. It takes a long time. G-d just speeded up the process. And then you get wheat and then theoretically you have to do human labor to turn the wheat into bread, unless you're going to follow the bracha which says hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz, the one who brings out bread from the earth, okay. This is the bread the Eternal has given to you from the earth, okay. But the interesting thing is it came from the quails who came from the sky. However, the quails originally came from eggs, unless you don't believe eggs came first. So now we have a big question. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Jaz:** And food, conveniently. And it's very sweet that they go and gather their food most days but they don't have to gather it on Shabbat. They get a double portion on Fridays.

**Anat:** And here's what it says, also. Everyone takes as much as you need for as many as there are. This is universal basic income.

**Jaz:** Mm hmm.

**Anat:** And it says you shall fetch for those in your tent, AKA, the boys go out and they collect the food for everyone.

**Jaz:** Or alternatively, we just have an idea also, of not everybody has to go out. We can all work together and then we don't need everyone to work to do the exact same thing. We'll all be provided for.

**Anat:** (*overlapping*) Because some people have to pray, some people have to weave clothes, some people have to feed the babies, there's a lot to do.



**Jaz:** And we don't all have the same skills

**Lulav:** Oh!

**Jaz:** And we just all provide for each other.

**Anat:** It's okay to have specialized labor or you can have a rotation if there's something people really don't want to do, like collecting quail poop.

**Lulav:** And in 16:18, it says when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing left over and those who gathered little had no shortage. So like —

**Anat:** So like, Elizabeth Warren's plan.

**Lulav:** Uh... (*chuckles*)

**Anat:** If we just tax the billionaires 2%, we could all have nice bat mitzvahs.

**Lulav:** I was going to go more in the direction of, if you have universal basic income, you also have to have the other programs that currently are income-based, that people desperately need to live.

**Anat:** Okay, I'm with you.

**Lulav:** Because some people need more, to survive.

**Jaz:** So can we jump to the end of our parsha?

**Lulav:** Sure.

**Anat:** Wait, can we just — it melted in the morning, the manna. (*page turning noise*)

**Jaz:** Yeah.

**Lulav:** Oh, which is also, don't accumulate wealth beyond what you need.  
34:23

**Jaz:** I think the last thing I wanted to talk about was just to go back to the Amalek really quick.

**Anat:** Oh, are we in the wilderness of Sin now? Sin, okay, there's a mountain. I've climbed it. It's a real place, you can visit.

**Jaz:** Cool.

**Anat:** That's all.

**Jaz:** I just wanted to tell a story, also, while we're here. When they say, may Amalek's name be obliterated, you hear that, as Anat was saying earlier, against other modern enemies of the Jewish people, things that say, like, "may his name be obliterated," and I once saw a man who had tattooed on him the name of somebody who had abused him, and had

tattooed that man's name and the words "yemach shemo," "may his name be obliterated," because he was like, this person is like an Amalek. They are an enemy and I must seek them out, seek out that their name be obliterated.

**Anat:** That's the only thing that's gonna alleviate G-d's anger, when we destroy Amalek. Now, where does Amalek live? Inside our hearts and minds. Amalek has colonized our minds and the only thing that will alleviate G-d's anger is if we sweep our own houses. What I'm saying is, if you care about anti-racism, stop lecturing about it and start doing the work in your own house.

**Jaz:** I really appreciate this re-reading of Amalek, because I — it is otherwise a difficult story.

**Lulav:** (*chuckles*) Oh boy. There's the whole striking of the rock thing, because we start off with there's no water to drink and there's a miracle for that and then we end up with there's no water to drink and — (*laughs*) Yes, Moshe was stuck between a rock and a hard place

**Anat:** The rock being God — tzur — and the hard place being Yisrael, like, who literally slept on rocks.

**Lulav:** So I want to just point out that in this story there doesn't seem to be anything that much different from at Marah, where he was told to just like throw a piece of wood in the water. Here he's told to just like, hit the rock.

**Anat:** No!

**Lulav:** Oh?

**Anat:** He was told to ask the rock nicely or tap the rock. Does it say strike? I'm not looking at the text.

**Jaz:** I'm not looking at the text either. I wonder if the striking thing —

**Lulav:** 17:6 says I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb, strike the rock and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.

**Anat:** What is it in Hebrew?

**Jaz:** We can also check later. I wonder if it comes up next week. Like maybe this time he was supposed to strike it and next time he was supposed to ask it nicely

**Lulav:** It may come up later.

**Anat:** Because it's like — I thought I was supposed to hit rocks, and God was like, that was just like a training. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Lulav:** That was the one time!

**Anat:** It's like, kids hit each other and that's kind of normal. Obviously we don't want to encourage it. Why do they hit each other — because they see people hitting each other on TV, and because adults don't ask for consent when they touch their bodies —

**Lulav:** Mm hmm....

**Anat:** So they're like I guess that's fine to hit people. So when you have brothers hitting each other, that's normal. And then, you teach them to ask each other nicely for things. This is a message to teachers, okay? If children hit each other, they've seen that modeled. They came by that honestly.

**Lulav:** So then the third thing is just how funny this bit with Amalek is —

**Anat:** *(laughs)* Like funny ha ha?

**Lulav:** Like Moshe is like, hey, YOSHUAH, can you like choose some men for us and fight Amalek, and I'll be there cheering along, and when it actually happens, every time that his hands are raised, YOSHUAH and the Israelites are doing fine, and then every time he gets kind of tired and puts his hands down, the Amalekites are winning, so they just get two dudes to hold him up, which is hilarious.

**Anat:** Incredible.

**Jaz:** It's beautiful. Last week, we talked about having buddies, and we talked about how Moshe is like, I need Aaron to speak to me, as like disability accommodation and assistive technology, and this time he's like, listen I need somebody to hold my hands up, and similar idea.

**Anat:** Beautiful idea.

**Lulav:** Yeah

**Anat:** And also remember we practiced stretching our arms out to part the Red Sea next time we need to, which is actually the Reed Sea by the way, okay, that's just a famous typo, okay Reed Sea. Reeveeeed Sea. *(Lulav laughs)* Green, it was green, it wasn't red. Reeveeed. So when we were practicing holding our hands out, could you have done for the whole hour? I bet not.

**Jaz:** No, it's hard.

**Anat:** It's hard, so you might need help *(Lulav laughs)* or you might have a personal trainer strengthen your arm. I just found out today that my left arm and my left leg weigh more than my right side, so I need to strengthen my right side. I need the angels to switch — Gabriel and Michael.

**Jaz:** So, Lulav, is that all of your things?

**Lulav:** Thank you very much for immediately without even me asking giving me a redeeming interpretation other than just that Moshe is magical *(Anat laughs)* and the dudes are holding him up for murder purposes.

**Anat:** That's because we need help. We all need help.

**Jaz:** Yeah...

**Anat:** (*sings*) "Ooh, I get by with a little help from my friends. Do you need anybody?" I just need somebody to be my daf yomi chevruta. (*Lulav laughs, and Anat sings again*) "Could it be anybody?" (*stops singing*) No, they have to know a little Talmud.

**Jaz:** You should come join our Daf Yomi thing earlier in the day at work.

**Anat:** I'll consider it, but — yeah, I'll consider it.

**Jaz:** Alright, fair enough.

**Lulav:** — If you're listening to this, that wasn't even fair use.

**Jaz:** Anyway, Lulav -

**Anat:** It was totally fair use.

**Jaz:** Can we move on?

**Anat:** John Lennon believed in peace, okay?

**Lulav:** Or Apple?

**Jaz:** Hi, it doesn't matter (*Lulav laughs*) and we move on to Rating G-d's Writing, the segment in which we make up three scales off the top of our heads.

**Anat:** I have it! I have it!

**Jaz:** And rate this week's parsha. Anat, what's your scale?

**Anat:** Song of the Sea Plus.

**Jaz:** (*laughs*) Okay

**Anat:** But that's when a C was good, you know? Now because of grade inflation C's are considered bad. This was back when C's were like, normal. Sea Plus.

**Jaz:** Anat has come up with her own scale and rating.

**Anat:** Song of the Sea Plus.

**Lulav:** (*laughs*) Good.

**Jaz:** Great. Lulav, can you give me a scale?

**Lulav:** Yes, Jaz, on a scale of fifteen midrashim, what would you rate this parsha?

**Jaz:** I would rate this parsha 14, partially because 14 is my lucky number, and I love that, and partly because I think it's a very good parsha with a lot happening, very interesting things happen, lots of great miracles, lots of good room for drashim and lots that we know and also I took away one because I think there are sometimes — I struggle with Amalek, even though I really like Anat's interpretation.

**Lulav:** Jaz, do you have a scale for me?

**Jaz:** Yes. Lulav, out of a scale from the bottom of the feet to the top of the human body, all covered in water, what percent of the human body covered in the sea would you rate this parsha? (*Anat laughs*)

**Lulav:** So, the water is like right below my sternum and I'm like turning back looking like, how does this magic work? Are you okay?

**Anat:** Nachshon, come back! Your lips are turning blue! Come inside for a soda.

**Jaz:** Uh-huh.

**Lulav:** (*laughs*) Yeah but I enjoy this a lot, there's a lot of funny stuff, and also there's my favorite song in here, but like the whole thing with Amalek and like blotting out people's names, I just feel very complicated about parts of this.

**Jaz:** Mm hmm.

**Anat:** Yeah.

**Lulav:** Especially since a lot of it seems to be motivated by antagonism between the people writing it and like neighbors —

**Jaz:** Mm...

**Lulav:** As we have seen throughout Bereishit and now

**Anat:** Expressive art therapy, (*Lulav laughs*) they were writing about their troubles, they didn't know it was going to be published by G-d. (*Jaz laughs*)

**Lulav:** So yeah, that is a song of the C+, 14/15 midrashim and up to my sternum in water and looking confusedly back

**Anat:** Yeah, that's good. Do you think Hashem will be happy with the grades?

**Jaz:** I hope so. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Anat:** Or will They talk to the dean of students and get us fired? (*Lulav laughs*)

**Jaz:** From what?

**Lulav:** Are we employed by a university that Hashem attends?

**Jaz:** We just talked about how Anat is working full time for G-d.

**Anat:** That's right! So —

**Lulav:** That's fair.

**Anat:** I don't think God's going to fire me.

**Jaz:** I don't think so either

**Anat:** Unless I really f up

**Jaz:** Umm... Anat, we're about to wrap

**Anat:** I have a hashtag

**Lulav:** Who doesn't?

**Anat:** My hashtag is Anat. #Anat My Instagram is @AnatMuse, AnatMuse. My email is [ahochmusic@gmail.com](mailto:ahochmusic@gmail.com) and my website is <https://www.anathalevyhochberg.com>. You will not find my music on Spotify, although I do sing on Joey Weisenberg's records that are on Spotify. You could find my music on my website, it's not really there either. You're going to have to just call me up

<bleep>

**Jaz:** Nope (*Lulav laughs*)

<bleep>

**Anat:** Actually, I have a Google voice number that I want to tell you. It's (978) 656-1026. That's public. (978) 656-1026. Okay, it's a public number. That's my business line. If you want to hear me sing, pay me money, okay? Or be my friend.

**Jaz:** Great.

**Anat:** (*sings*) If you wanna hear my music, you gotta first be my friend (*Lulav laughs*) Or else buy my record, or pay me to do a show — yeah!

**Jaz:** And —

**Anat:** February 8, you can hear me sing. (*Lulav laughs*)

**Jaz:** Great.

**Anat:** I'm so excited! Pay artists!

**Jaz:** Speaking of which, on that note, thanks for listening to Kosher Queers, and if you like what you heard, you can also give us money if you support us on Patreon at [patreon.com/kosherqueers](https://patreon.com/kosherqueers). We will give you bonus content if you do so and also help us keep making this for you. We now have stickers, that I just mailed out. They're very cute. You can also follow us on Twitter @kosherqueers or like us on Facebook at Kosher Queers, or email us your questions, comments, and concerns at [kosherqueers@gmail.com](mailto:kosherqueers@gmail.com)

**Anat:** Don't forget to tag us on social media.

**Jaz:** Yeah. If you're listening to it, and want to say things about it, and please tell people

about our podcast.

**Anat:** Use the hashtag, too. #Anat

**Jaz:** Our artwork is by the talented Lior Gross.

**Anat:** Nice.

**Jaz:** Our regular music and our intro music is courtesy of the fabulous band Brivele, whose work you can find on Bandcamp. And you should buy their album, too.

**Anat:** Yup

**Jaz:** Our sound production this week is done by our excellent audio editor, Ezra Faust. I'm Jaz Twersky and you can find me @WordNerdKnitter on Twitter. We recorded this audio on the traditional lands of the Lenape people.

**Anat:** And I'm Anat. #Anat.

**Lulav:** I would like to tell Virgin Records, if you were listening, that that was fair use, parody, parody. *(Jaz laughs)* And also —

**Anat:** You're like calling down the evil eye right now, okay! *(Jaz laughs)* Why don't you let them discover the podcast for themselves? Or are you trying to get publicity with a lawsuit?

**Jaz:** No.

**Lulav:** I'm Lulav Arnow, I do not like lawsuits, and I am holding up a hamsah right now.

**Anat:** No evil eye!

**Lulav:** You can find me @spacetrucksix on Twitter, or yell at me @palmliker! I recorded this audio on the traditional lands of the Wahpékute and Anishinaabeg.

**Lulav:** Have a lovely queer Jewish day!

*[Brivele closing music starts]*

**Anat:** Oh wait — I had something else to say.

**Lulav:** Yeah?

**Jaz:** We'll edit it in.

**Anat:** Shabbat shalom, I guess

*[Brivele closing music continues]*

**Jaz:** This week's gender is Beyoncé.