



# Sermon Spark



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### Sermon Spark: Pesach

Taking the Jewish people from Egypt purposefully put the Jewish people into situations that would be incredibly challenging. This is to teach us that any worthwhile, meaningful endeavor, like taking the Jews from Egypt or creating a State of Israel, will by nature come with significant challenge. We are called to face these challenges with courage and integrity.

### Key Texts:

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter.

זי וַיְהִי, בְּשַׁלַּח פְּרַעֲהַ אֶת-הָעָם, וְלֹא-נָחַם אֱלֹהִים דֶּרֶךְ אֲרָץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים, כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא

*Exodus: 13-17*

The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites.

ח וַיַּחֲזֶק יְהוָה, אֶת-לֵב פְּרַעֲהַ מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּרְדֹּף, אַחֲרַי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל;

*Exodus 14:8*

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water.

כב וַיִּסַּע מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּם-סוּף, וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶל-מִדְבַּר-שׁוּר; וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת-יָמִים בְּמִדְבָּר, וְלֹא-מָצְאוּ מַיִם.

*Exodus 15:24*

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

ח וַיָּבֵא, עַמְלֵק; וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרֶפְדִּים.

*Exodus 17:8*

In *gematria*, Amalek is the numerical equivalent to *safek*, doubt.

## Framing:

Why does God over and over put the Jewish people into these difficult situations? Why does God lead the Jewish people on a crooked path out of Egypt? Bring Pharaoh back? Not provide adequate provisions? Allow for Amalek, the embodiment of doubt, to attack? There is a lesson here: God wanted the Jewish people to know and experience profound challenges as they embarked on their spiritual and historic mission. That is true today in the building of the State of Israel. Each of these encounters represents a different kind of challenge we have experienced in building the State of Israel.

The crooked path might represent competing ideas and approaches, many never reconciled, about what Israel should be.

- Pharaoh represents external enemies and military attacks.
- Lack of food and water represents scarce resources.
- Amalek represents doubt.

These challenges, however, are not signs of failure. Rather, they may be important steps for us to take as a people to grow morally, economically, militarily, Jewishly, etc.

**Modern Application to Israel** Choose a challenge/setback that Israel has faced over the last 60 years, whether military, political, economic, or spiritual. See if you can find a way that facing that challenge has created a stronger Israel moving forward.