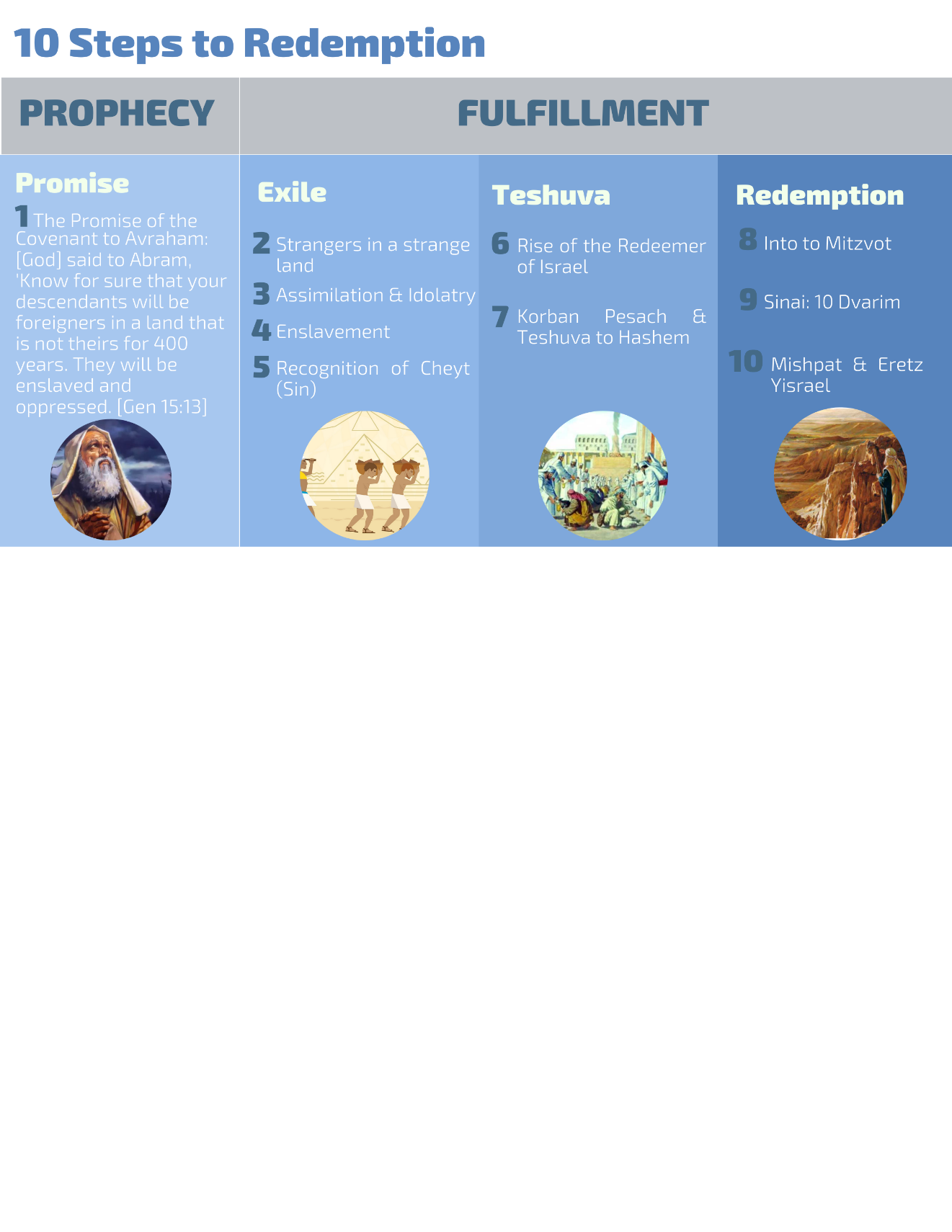
# Class # 7 -Women Power

# Senior Fellowship Leadership Program

# Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks



Women More Religious than Men - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUvhqM0MGIQ>

1. Why are there more women than men at MJE?
2. Why are women more interested in religion?

**Sotah 11**

**Rav Avira taught: In the merit of** the **righteous women that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt.** He tells of their righteous actions: **At the time** when these women **would go** to the river **to draw water, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would materialize for them small fish** that would enter **into their pitchers, and they would** therefore **draw** pitchers that were **half** filled with **water and half** filled with **fish. And they would** then **come and place two pots on the fire, one** pot **of hot** water for washing their husbands **and one** pot **of fish** with which to feed them.

**And they would** then **take** what they prepared **to their husbands, to the field, and would bathe** their husbands **and anoint them** with oil **and feed them** the fish **and give them to drink and bond with them** in sexual intercourse **between the sheepfolds,** i.e., between the borders and fences of the fields, **as it is stated: “When you lie among the sheepfolds,** the wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold” (Psalms 68:14), which is interpreted to mean that **as a reward** for “when you **lie among the sheepfolds,” the Jewish people merited to** receive **the plunder of Egypt, as it is stated** in the continuation of the verse, as a reference to the Jewish people: **“The wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold”** (Psalms 68:14).

**And when** these women would **become pregnant, they would come** back **to their homes, and when the time for them to give birth** would arrive **they would go and give birth in the field under the apple tree, as it is stated: “Under the apple tree I awakened you;** there your mother was in travail with you; there was she in travail and brought you forth” (Song of Songs 8:5).

1. Why did the men need so much encouragement to have marital relations? In what way did the example of Amram help justify the men’s disinterest in having families?
2. How would non-righteous women respond to being ignored by their husbands? Why did the Jewish women consciously decide to NOT respond in the expected way?

**Sotah 12a**

 The verse states: **“And there went a man of the house of Levi,** and took for a wife a daughter of Levi” (Exodus 2:1). The Gemara asks: **To where did he go? Rav Yehuda bar Zevina says: He went according to the advice of his daughter** Miriam, as the Gemara will proceed to explain.

A Sage **teaches: Amram,** the father of Moses, **was the great man of his generation. Once he saw that the wicked Pharaoh said: “Every son that is born you shall cast into the river,** and every daughter you shall save alive” (Exodus 1:22), **he said: We are laboring for nothing** by bringing children into the world to be killed. Therefore, **he arose and divorced his wife. All** others who saw this followed his example and **arose and divorced their wives.**

**His daughter,** Miriam, **said to him: Father, your decree is harsher** for the Jewish people **than that of Pharaoh, as Pharaoh decreed only with regard to the males, but you decreed** both **on the males and on the females.** And now no children will be born. Additionally, **Pharaoh decreed** to kill them **only in this world, but you** decreed **in this world and in the World-to-Come,** as those not born will not enter the World-to-Come.

Miriam continued: Additionally, concerning **Pharaoh the wicked,** it is **uncertain** whether **his decree** will be **fulfilled,** and it is **uncertain** if his decree will **not** be **fulfilled. You are a righteous person,** and as such, **your decrees** will **certainly** be **fulfilled, as it is stated** with regard to the righteous: **“You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto you”** (Job 22:28). Amram accepted his daughter’s words and **arose and brought back,** i.e., remarried, **his wife,** and **all** others who saw this followed his example and **arose and brought back their wives.**

1. What was Amram’s justification of divorcing his wife?
2. Why didn't Miriam mind her own business concerning her father’s divorcing her mom? Amram is the Gadol Hador [the Torah leader of the nation], isn't it a bit presumptuous of Miriam to intrude on his decision making, especially at a time of genocide?!?
3. What were Miriam's counter arguments to Amram? What mitzvah is she implementing in her critique of Amram personally?
4. What is the significance of comparing Amram to Pharaoh implicit in Miriam’s critique: **“Father, your decree is more harsh** for the Jewish people **than that of Pharaoh, as Pharaoh decreed only with regard to the males, but you decreed** both **on the males and on the females.”**
5. How did Amram react to his daughter’s constructive criticism of his highly personal decision?
6. How did the men of Israel react to Amram divorcing his wife? Why?
7. What impact did Miriam’s critique have on the nation of Israel?
8. In what sense is Miriam’s heroic act, along with her fellow women the cause of redemption?

**Shemot  2:1-9**

2:1 A man of the house of Levi went and married Levi's daughter. 2:2 The woman became pregnant and had a son. She realized [the child] was special, and she kept him hidden for three months.

2:3 When she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus box, coating it with asphalt and pitch, and she placed the child in it. She placed it in the rushes near the bank of the Nile. 2:4 [The child's] sister stood herself at a distance to see what would happen to him.

2:5 Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe in the Nile, while her maids walked along the Nile's edge. She saw the box in the rushes, and sent her slave-girl to fetch it. 2:6 Opening [the box] she saw the boy. The infant began to cry, and she had pity on it. 'It is one of the Hebrew boys,' she said.

2:7 [The infant's] sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?' 2:8 'Go,' replied Pharaoh's daughter. The young girl went and got the child's own mother. 2:9 'Take this child and nurse it,' said Pharaoh's daughter to [the mother]. 'I will pay you a fee.' The woman took the child and nursed it.

1. **Berachot 10a** - “**Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Eliezer both said: Even if a sharp sword is resting upon a person’s neck, he should not prevent himself from** praying for **mercy, as it is stated** in the words of Job: **“Though He slay me, I will trust in Him”** (Job 13:15). Even though God is about to take his life, he still prays for God’s mercy.” How is this principle manifest with the strategy of Yocheved and Miriam to save baby Moshe?
2. **Case Study #1** - Johnny MJE’er has gotten in a fight with his long-term girlfriend Sarah. He is very angry. He wants to dump her.  How would the arguments of Miriam concerning her father Amram’s decision to divorce her mother apply here?
3. **Case Study #2** -Jessica MJE’er has reached out to her friend Nancy multiple times. Nancy seems to be ghosting her. She declares in her frustration - I am “unfriending her”. How would the orientation of the righteous women of Israel respond to the situation?
4. **Case Study # 3** - Melanie MJE’er is in the running for her dream job. She has already had two rounds of interviews. The competition for this role is fierce. The stress is killing her. The company called and asked her to produce a written plan to deal with a particular problem as a way for the hiring team to determine who they should hire among the last three candidates.  She is emotionally spent from this two-month process. She does not feel that she has the energy to be creative and craft an amazing presentation.  What does the philosophy of Miriam and Yocheved instruct her to do?