

Session 196  
Ki Tavo – A Time for Teshuva  
22 September 2024

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_V2wPzsA9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_V2wPzsA9E)

Jeremy

Shalom Fellowship! This is Jeremy Gimpel broadcasting from the Arugot Farm. We have a new camera with a lot going on. That's why I wasn't able to participate as much with the chats. But I hope that everything is going well and that you hear me and that everything is alright. Can you guys give me a quick thumbs up, that everything is Ok? Excellent. Ok, rock and roll.

So first of all, I have a very special surprise for you today. Tehila is with me here on the Arugot Farm, that's very exciting. And I really have so much to say, that's why at the very last minute I'm cutting out parts because I want to be able to have as much time as possible and really focus on what needs to be focused on.

And first, I just want to give you an update on my life this last week and what we've been doing the last week. So, I've been focusing a lot on teaching. I feel like now it's stronger than ever before. I really understand what my mission is this year. I've been given the tools, I've been given the desire, and I'm been focusing on the Judean Book Club and I've been focusing on my travel Log. And it's like a travel log through life. But I said, I had so many insights and so many beautiful experiences and crazy experiences in my summer tour, spreading the Torah across the world. I want to document that and share it with people. But it's kind of like a travel log through my life, and it's a travel log through my European speaking tour. And it's sort of interwoven, I'm really doing many videos about that. And also, the Judean Book Club. We're learning the art of teshuva, we're learning a road to teshuva from Rav Kook, and it's so beautiful because it's such a deep book that we just don't have time in our once a week session to also catch up, also share what's happening in Israel, also learn Torah. We need to expand our Torah, and the Judean Book Club is absolutely doing that in the most marvelous way.

And so this Shabbat, just to let you know, I've been praying every Friday night, almost, on the Arugot Farm, for six years and one week. It was exactly last week's parsha, Ki Tetze L'milchama, exactly, and you shall go out to war. When Tehila and I sold our home and we actually moved to the mountain. For six years and one week and this last Friday night was the most beautiful Friday night prayer service – davening, singing, that I've ever experienced. It was totally unplanned, unprecedented, and I'm still a little bit like riding high on such a beautiful Shabbat.

There is a very famous singer in Israel and his name is Akiva. And it just so happened that his whole family, they're a very musical family, came to celebrate his parent's 40<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. So their whole family took over our House of Prayer and they just had the most beautiful prayer. And Akiva's father...I mean, Akiva is like a super-star musician in Israel, at least

in the Jewish music world. And his father is one of the great rabbis in Israel, he's one of the heads of the yeshiva in Dimona. And he came in and he was so touched by the Arugot Farm, and so touched by our House of Prayer, and at the end of his dvar Torah that he gave, he actually said the blessing that Ezra instituted, when you come to a new place in Israel that's expanded its borders back to the biblical promise, and he made such a heart-felt blessing. I actually like, my eyes welled up with tears because I was so emotional that...I remember six years ago, it was literally me alone on a mountain and our House of Prayer didn't even have a roof. And we've just come so far.

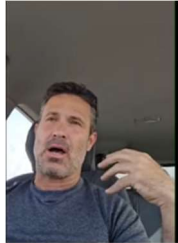
And this Shabbat was so beautiful that I just wanted to share that with you that we are winning in Judea. This Fellowship is winning in the Land of Israel. And it's not through power and it's not through might, but it is quite literally through the Spirit. And the Spirit was filling that House of Prayer Friday night. And so with that, I just want to kick off the Fellowship with a prayer for the new year, with a prayer for Elul. This is an opportunity to literally experience coming together from all around the world and beyond language and beyond culture and beyond ideas. Just to come together in an actual prayer to HaShem.

So, HaShem, Master of the World, King of the Universe, we are here again. Your Fellowship from every corner of the world. We've come together today to start off our week, aiming toward You and working to aim our year upward toward Your goodness. Thank You for this special opportunity every year in this time of year. Thank You for coming out of Your abode to be with us amongst the field. Help us tune into the calling of our life this year. Help us ride the wave of teshuva and redirect our life, returning to the plan that You have for our lives. Bless everyone who has come here today. Bless everyone who will be tuning in soon. Bless their loved ones and shine Your light into our lives. Shine Your light that we can be a blessing to the world and to everyone around us. May this year, we experience absolute renewal. Let us experience a new Jerusalem and a new healed world. Amen.

Alright my friends, and so now I want to give you just an update on what I was doing practically. Cause I feel like the Land of Israel Fellowship has been with us. And they really are the missions. And if we accomplish these missions, that's like the way we pave the path to Mashiach. One is to inspire the world with the Torah. The second one is we have to empower the Jewish people in eretz Yisrael and around the world. The third is we have to encourage aliyah and ingather the exiles and number four is we have to inherit the Land of Israel. Settle the Land of Israel, that's what the Arugot Farm is all about.

And this week, I had the opportunity to visit two of the most pioneering farms in all of Judea. And I want to share with you one of the farms, the girl was engaged on our Farm. And one of the farms, the girl was married on our Farm. And so, our Farm, the Arugot Farm has made little farmlets throughout Judea. And slowly, but surely, we are inheriting the Land of Israel. And so, I know that you know Nechama, she was our shepherdess, and she is a part of that epic picture.

Where it's her in the mountains, in the wheat field, with our flock of sheep, and it literally is like a picture that looks like 3,000 years ago, even though it's months ago. And so now she's married, and she lives on the cutting edge of the southern hills of Hebron with her husband Yisrael. And you know what, here's just a short clip on my way there, just to kind of get you to pack into the excitement and the energy that I felt when I was there. So here's the clip.



Hey friends, with everything that's going on, people have actually WhatsApped me and emailed me saying, "Jeremy, what's going on with the new farms?" And I've been in Europe, I fell off a horse, I just...today is the second day that I've dedicated to going out to Judea to the frontier, out to the most pioneering people that I know, to go visit.

And today I'm in the southern hills of Chevron in the Ma'on Farm, Chavat Ma'on. You can see Ma'on is a place in the Bible that King David hung out in. And so really, from the Arugot Farm until Ma'on, that's really the responsibility that I'm taking, at least in my own personal life. And so is Ari, we're doing it together. But I'm out here today alone without Ari. And I'm going to visit Nachama and Yisrael.



Of course, Nechama was a shepherdess on our Farm. They got engaged on our Farm. In fact, I had a music video way back then that was actually a little bit of a documenting her engagement party on the Farm. And we got them a tractor and they built a new farm on the

outskirts of Chevron. And I'm going there today to check it out. And so this is our day trip here on the Fellowship, going out to Ma'on in Judea. And so I'll keep you posted.

Alright, guys, so I'll tell you the truth. That my time with Nechama and Yisrael when I was there, I was so taken by their purity, by their innocence, by their absolute love of Israel, their love of the Land of Israel. And they're so private that I didn't make any more videos. And I wish that I would have, but I was just doing what I thought was right at that time. And I was there and they were showing me that they were at the edge.



And Nechama, there's a picture of her that I took, just one picture that she's pointing and explaining to me where they are and where they've come from, and how much farther they want to go into the desert. They want to be even deeper into eretz Yisrael.



And they're just so beautiful and here I just took one selfie, just so I can capture that day. And so you can see the heroes of Israel. That's their home behind them, that tent-like structure. Because they have no interest in acquiring possessions, they have no interest in getting land for themselves. They just want to live like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, just walking through the Land and settling the Land by being out

there. Their flock of sheep, by them being together.

And you know, I came back from Europe with my own tithe. And people always ask me, "Jeremy, where do you give your tithes?" "Well I give it to Torah study, I give it to here, I give it to there." And I was so taken by Yisrael and Nechama, I just dug my hands in my pockets, and whatever money I had, I didn't really even count it, I was just like...here! Take it!" And I found extra money, like Nechama, this one doesn't go to the farm. This just goes to you. Take Yisrael out to a coffee shop and just enjoy life. You're so good. Buy something for the New Year, Rosh Hashana. Don't invest this in your herd of sheep. This is just to make you happy."

Because they've given up all material happiness, seemingly. But they're the happiest people that I know. I just love them so much because their happiness comes from such a pure place. And you know, it's interesting, but we just are talking about in this week's Torah portion that we learn, the mitzvah of first fruits. It's like our tithe, really with the Torah, where we really learn the idea of like, "Oh, you're taking some harvest home? You got to give your first fruits to Jerusalem, you have to give of it." I

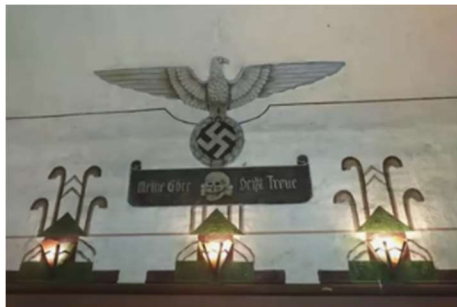
n Deuteronomy 26, verses 9 and 10, this is what you say when you arrive in Jerusalem with your first fruits, with your tithes.

He (Hashem) brought us to this place, and He gave us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruit of the ground that you have given me, O' Hashem.  
*-Deuteronomy 26:9-10*

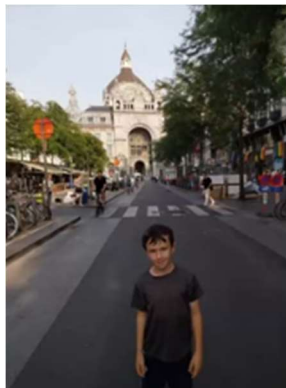
And I'm looking at that and like every other word there is "You brought me to this place, You've given us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and money, here's what I've given from this Land."

And I'm just wondering, "Well, how can there be people in the world that claim to love the Torah, that claim to respect the Bible and they say like, 'Oh, yeah, the Land of Israel? That's just not that important. I can have a have a Temple in Antwerp. I can just live in my holy place somewhere else.'"

And you know, Tehila and I, we spent time in Antwerp, Belgium. And we went there for the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, which is a day that's a pretty solemn day, it's a day that we recognize the destruction of two Temples and Jerusalem, and we're spending it in what the world, or the Jewish world calls the last Shtetl in Europe. Because there's 30,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews that live in Belgium in this little city called Antwerp. There's so many kosher restaurants, and there's such a Jewish atmosphere. It's literally like Fiddler on the Roof, but in 2024. I mean, the chief Rabbi of Antwerp is in Belgium, riding his bike around. And I've just never seen a rabbi with a long beard riding a bike. And their life in Antwerp is absolutely beautiful.



But at the same time, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, Tehila and I went to a concentration camp right outside Antwerp. And you walk in, and there's this Nazi symbol that that's probably the last thing that you want to see. It was a very meaningful thing to see on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, the day of the destruction and sadness for the Jewish people. And I'm saying, "How are these people choosing to live in Antwerp?"



And I then looked around the city, and what can I say? I took this picture of my son, Noam, and that beautiful building there behind them – the train station. I mean Antwerp is absolutely beautiful. But sometimes, the exile is so beautiful that it just sucks us in. And that's why it's so important to tap into the truth of the Torah. When God says, "Oh, you gotta bring your tithes to Jerusalem," and then what you're saying is "God, thank you for bringing me to this place, and this Land, the Land flowing with milk and honey." It's like constantly reminding us. I mean, think about the first commandment given to the first Jew, Abraham is to go forth to the Land that I will show you. At the very end

of the Torah, the Jews are what? Leaving Egypt on their way to Israel. The bookends of the entire Torah is our story, connected to the Land, and people are saying, "Ahh, the Land of Israel..." No, no, no.

That's why Yisrael and Nechama and the Arugot Farm, it's like we are committed to fix the sin of the spies, we're committed to love on the Land of Israel. And the Land of Israel will hopefully...not hopefully, we can see it with our own eyes, as a testimony. The Land comes back to life. And you know, we have given everything that we have. Tehila and I, we had a home, we had possessions, we once had money, and we just gave it all up to settle the Land. And I felt like last Shabbat was the real turning point spiritually. It's like, we are on our way to triumph. We're on our way to victory, we're on our way to Mashiach.

I'm just telling you that the world may look chaotic now. There may be Chezbollah in the north and Chamas in the south and the International Criminal Court and all the media is always so

negative. But I'm telling you, on the inside, what's happening, is there is an absolute spiritual revolution taking place that Tehila and I, where we can tap into. We can feel it, we know it. And so, with that, I want to introduce you to the scholar in residence, to the professor, to the woman of valor, to Tehila, who has prepared a beautiful Torah that's exactly right for this time of year. And so I wanted to make sure that she has the opportunity to once again share with you because I know so many people told me how much you've missed her. But she's a very busy woman and thank God she gives us time. So, I want you to know, here's she is, and I want you to enjoy her, and then I'll be right back. So, Tehila, come on.

Tehila

Hi everybody, it's so great to see everyone. So, Jeremy has set high expectations for me to bring great words of wisdom. But I think, as always, I might have more questions than answers, but we'll try. So this time of year, as we approach Rosh Hashana is a time that's filled with paradoxes. You know, I'm sure I'm not alone in this feeling, like on the one hand, we're accepting upon ourselves all these New Year's resolutions. And you know, I'm going to be better in this, and I'm going to be better in that, but if you're anything like me, a lot of times, we find ourselves sort of back where we started at some point.

I for one, proudly this past year, started a notebook last Rosh Hashana with all of my goals. And then I was so proud of myself for writing down all of my goals, that I was going to give a Torah class on Simchat Torah on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October in the nearby village. And I was going to be talking about how important it is this time of year to be setting our spiritual goals. And as I'm walking there, I'm watching men being called up and news trickling in. And as you can imagine, that my little notebook stayed in the bag, both physically and metaphorically and a lot of my goals are pretty much gobbled up by this you know, unexpected war. And even on regular years that don't have war, how many times do we set goals and then find ourselves, just sort of looking back and being like, "Well did I really even live up to everything that I tried to put into potentiality?"

And you know, also we know that HaShem sets our destiny on Rosh Hashana, life or death for the coming year. And yet, the year starts and we see wonderful people taken from us and bad people seeming to be doing just fine. Does that mean that we could just do whatever we want? HaShem is making His choices and it's just sort of arbitrary, we don't even understand? And even when you look at Rosh Hashana, it seems like a day filled with paradox. On the one hand, HaShem is judging us, and so it seems so scary. And so you see people in the synagogue crying and praying and fretting. And on the other hand, everyone is eating these big festive meals and cheerfully wishing each other a good year. Like if you ask an alien that landed, is Rosh Hashana a happy day or a sad day? They really don't even know the answer. Is it serious day or a joyous day? The whole day is so paradoxical.



Even the word itself, Rosh Hashana, shana itself is a paradox. Shana in Hebrew means both change and it also means repetition. Something happened again. Well are we changing, or are we staying the same? Is HaShem just like dropping destiny on us with us having no ability to interact with it? Or are we like actually doing something? We're praying...we're saying that God is judging us and He has these books that He's opening up with our good deeds and our bad deeds. But then we're praying for God to change our judgment. Is it an us thing or is a God thing? What's going on here?

And then I saw a passage in the Talmud. It's a passage in the Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashana on page 17B. And in the Tractate, it's talking about what happens. Let's say, HaShem gave you a good judgment. And then you prayed and you got your good judgment, you're all happy for the new year. Then you decide to be a real jerk. Well, are you still going to get all those blessings? And what about the opposite? Rosh Hashana, you really messed up. You slept through the whole day, you didn't repent, got a bad judgment. Then after that, man, you felt bad and you became a really righteous person. And you're like a saint, you're a great person. And so, now what? You're just stuck in that whole judgment? Now you're just going to be punished all the time? The Talmud is struggling, again with this paradox of the nature of the holiday. So here's what the Talmud says. Tell me if it makes you feel better.

If much rain was decreed but the people do not act righteously, the rain will fall in places where it is not needed, such as over seas or deserts. However, if only a small amount of rain was decreed but the people act righteously, that little rain will fall in places where it is needed, and it will be enough to sustain them.

*-Babylonian Talmud,  
Tractate Rosh Hashanah, 17b*

So, does that passage make you feel better? When I read it, it actually just me feel more frustrated. Like, is this all one big joke? Is there some kind of absurd theater that I didn't even buy a ticket for? In Israel we have a joke about the former Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, it's not actually a joke, it's probably a true story. But when he was Finance Minister, someone said to him, "Oh, you

know, you promised to give money to X, Y, Z." And he said, "Well, I promised, but I didn't promise to keep my promise." And that became a famous joke in Israel. "I didn't promise to keep my promises." Is that what the Talmud is telling us HaShem is doing to us? The Talmud is saying, "Let's say God decreed upon us a lot of rain cause we were deserving of the blessing." And then we were bad, so He's going to drop the rain over the ocean. Well, I promised to give you rain, I didn't tell you where it's going to be."

And then, if we got a bad decree of having drought, well that little tiny bit of rain that comes that year is going to fall in all of the right places. This seems like a little bit of a joke. Like HaShem is saying...is the Talmud telling us that HaShem gives us a judgment and then just jiggles it around? Like, "I promised it would rain, but I'm just going to move it around and the joke's on you!" And you know, it will work out however HaShem wants it to work out based on whatever we're doing on that day. Why do we need the judgment on Rosh Hashana to begin with?

And you could also ask, “Why is the Talmud so fixated on water?” Like obviously water is good and important, but what about food? And health and safety? There’s so many things that the Talmud could talk about. It could just say, “Well whatever blessings that you are allotted will be distributed to you in a useful or not useful way, depending on your behavior.” Right?

So, I don’t know, this Talmud left me even more perplexed than I was to begin with. But you know sometimes when something is extra weird and bothersome, it’s actually the invitation not to get upset, but to get curious, to dig a little bit deeper. The sages don’t serve us lessons that are already baked, but they kind of invite us to dig in and invest and try to work hard. So I want to try and unpack this Talmudic passage for a second, but for that we have to rewind. Every holiday on the biblical calendar, like even on the not biblical calendar, even in the post-biblical calendar is commemorating something that happened. Some miracle that happened. Why is that?

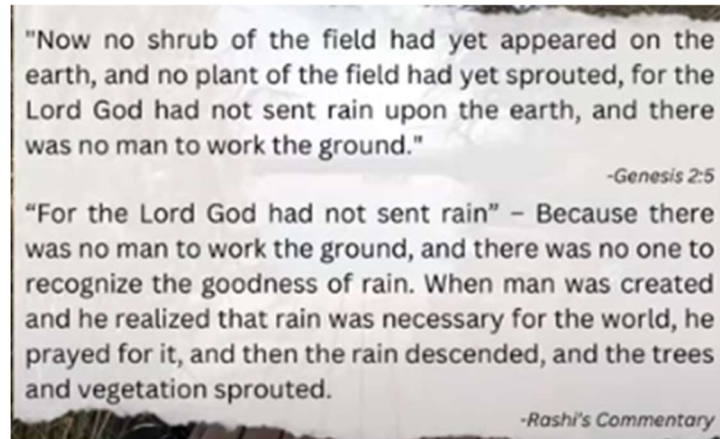
So, it’s interesting to pay attention, not every great event or miracle that happens gets a holiday. But all the holidays are commemorating some kind of great event. Why? Because some events, some miracles, are so powerful, it’s as if they embed themselves into the fabric of time. HaShem reveals Himself on Shavuot, that didn’t just happen that year. It was such a powerful revelation that it put a stamp in time that allows us, if we spiritually have our antennas tapped in, to receive that energy year after year. That quality that came into the world on Passover, we can just taste that taste of freedom. The 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, the sadness of the sin of the spies, reverberates again and again through the tragedies and the destruction of Jewish history. It sets some sort of stamp in time that we can experience again and again.

So now, what is the time of Rosh Hashana? What spiritual energy is Rosh Hashana tapping into? Now according to the sages in the Midrash, two biblical events happened on Rosh Hashana. The first one you guys probably know, the second one maybe not. The first one we’ve talked about in the past, that the creation, and specifically the creation of Adam, took place according to the opinions of many of the sages, on Rosh Hashana. The other biblical event, that according to the thousands of years of oral tradition of the Torah, happened on Rosh Hashana, was the remembrance of Noach. When Noach was in the ark it says that God remembered Noach and the waters began receding. And we’re told that that happened on Rosh Hashana as well.

So now, isn’t it interesting that both of these stories seem to be stories of water either being or going from being in the wrong place to being in the right place. Because let’s go back to how the world started. The world was *tohu v’vohu*. The world was chaos. The Spirit of God was hovering over the water, meaning there wasn’t nothing, there was water and there was the Spirit of God hovering over this chaotic potentiality of existence. But it was totally disorganized. The story of creation gets tons of attention to dividing water, right? There’s an upper water and a lower water, the land and the water. Water is always being there, there’s rivers coming out of Eden. Water is being set into its right places.



But here's something really interesting. When we get to Genesis, chapter 2, it says:

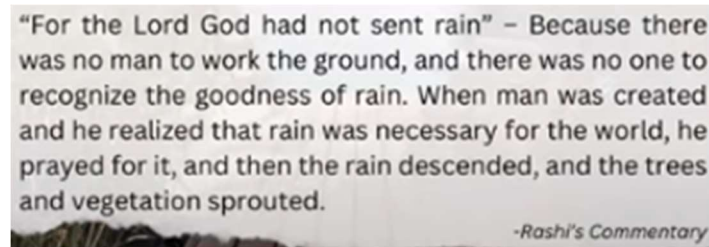


And then it says in verse 7, that God, the Lord formed man of dust, breathing into his nostrils, and then became a living soul. And then God planted a garden and He placed the man there and the Lord God caused to sprout from the ground every tree pleasant to see and good to eat.

Meaning, if I asked you just sort of off the cuff, what was the first thing that

Adam did? Most people would say that Adam was naming the animals. But actually, our tradition says that the first thing he did was pray for rain because there was no rain. There was all this potential water all over the place, but it wasn't set into the place that actually needed it.

And so Rashi says:



Now that Rashi, if you think about it for just a moment, should be knocking you off your chairs. Cause what is it saying? What is this idea saying? That Rosh Hashana commemorates the creation

of man, but what was the actual thing that man was doing on Rosh Hashana? The first thing he was doing was praying. And what was he praying for? He was praying for this rain...what is water? Water is this abundance that God put into potentiality, into the world. He's praying for that abundance to come where it's needed, onto the seeds of the field. That is the work that man is doing. God put all of this potentiality into existence and the work that man is doing on the first Rosh Hashana which is then reverberating through all of history is to pray for the water, that potential to be funneled into the place where it is most needed.

Now, if we go on to Noach, what happens in the time of Noach? It's really the opposite. What is the flood? The flood is all of that water, all of that beautiful abundance and potentiality going from being in the right places, in the oceans and underground and in the wells and in the sky. Going from being in the right places to being in the wrong places. To being in a damaging place, to being exactly where you don't want it, all over you. Right?

And then what is happening on that next Rosh Hashana that we're experiencing in the Bible? That next Rosh Hashana, is God remembering Noach. What does it mean that He remembered

Noach? That He saw Noach's good actions and Noach acting in the right way, as opposed to the rest of his generation that brought the water all over themselves. He is acting in the correct way, so HaShem once again takes that water, that's all in potentiality, and brings it into its correct places.

Now if we go back to that Talmudic passage, isn't that interesting. The Talmudic passage is talking about HaShem putting this, in Rosh Hashana, sort of giving this broad decree of what is the potential of you're coming near? What is the potential? So now, on the one hand, you could just be like, "Ok, well God's already decided my year," and then be sort of stuck in this strange feeling. What is the Talmud saying? It's saying, through our connections, through our relationship and meeting with God, just like Adam and just like Noach, we can take that potential that HaShem is planting in the world and channel it wherever it needs to go.

Then the Talmud is telling us something so precious here because it's saying that it doesn't matter what is the revealed blessing, a lot of water, a lot of potentiality, or if it's a small amount. Because you come and meet HaShem. And what HaShem has decreed for you in your year. And you come and say, "Ok, HaShem, I'm accepting that judgment now. I'm now doing the work of Noach, I'm trying to take whatever you have given me and put it into the right place." So the Talmud is saying, even if you've gotten the decree of a little bit of rain. You might have gotten the decree of a little bit of money, or a little bit of health, right? A little bit of peace in your home, a little bit of whatever it is that you were hoping for. But with that, you can do so much, you can send it directly onto the fields that are needing. You can take that little bit that you've gotten this year and grow something beautiful out of that. You can develop your own spiritual strength, you can help those around you, you can have abundance in your life, you can still have connection with HaShem through that little bit.

And if HaShem gave you a lot, it doesn't mean that that lot is going to be an automatic blessing. Everyone thinks, "Well, I can't have too much money," of course you can have too much money! Every now and then people who have too much money and it becomes a curse for them. Well, I can't be too wise. Have you not met smartypantses that just have too much smartness for their own good? Even if you get a blessing of a ton of abundance, your actions meet HaShem and then you are able to take that and have it go either in the right place or the wrong place. And so, we don't have to be consternated by this paradox. The paradoxes of Rosh Hashana are built in to a meeting. Anytime you're going to have a meeting of Divine infinity with our finite, human existence and effort, it's going to be paradoxical. But that paradox is beautiful. That is a relationship that we on Rosh Hashana have the potential to develop and then carry with us throughout the year to take what HaShem gives us. Whether it be plenty or whether it be limited, and then channel it to the right places, just like Adam and Noach did, channel it to the places that are most useful and most needed and not squander those blessings.

And so, with that, I bless us that we have beautiful work together with HaShem this Rosh Hashana. Taking all of HaShem's blessings and all of HaShem's challenges and sending them exactly where they're needed to help us grow the most this year. Bye, everybody.

Jeremy

Wow, you guys get that? That was marvelous. I never heard that before. That was my first time listening to it, and it's just so beautiful. I was actually taking notes, because I wanted to respond to them. Smartypants, how about smartydress? Ed and Julie Byrnes, like smartypants, smartydress. That's right, she is just too smart, it's just unbelievable. That was marvelous, Tehila. Kol Hakavod. That was really beautiful.

And the Hebrew, about shana, I'd never thought of that before, that that literally means shinu, which means to repeat and shinui which means change. And so, Rav Kook has a beautiful teaching that time isn't just circular, though in the eastern world, they're just going around and around – you die, and reincarnate, and dying and reincarnating. There's war, there's this, it's just... the modern world though is a world of progress. It's like, if you're not WOKE, then you're left behind. If you're not progress, then you're...it's like they're linear.

And Rav Kook says that the biblical way, the Jewish way, the Torah way actually sees life as a spiral that's going up. Everyday you're repeating yourself, but you're always changing. Every year you're going up...here we are a Rosh Hashana again, but we're like one level higher. So it's repeating, but it's always changing. And I thought that that was just really beautiful.

And the way that I understand judgment, is that it's not so much a judgment of like you're going to do this or you're going to do that. Because it's like, what you said, your actions are judged all the time. Either you can be cursed because you're acting in a dumb way. You can be blessed because you're acting in a smart way. So what is this judgment day? In the language of the Rambam, this is at least how I understand Maimonides, kind of like our life is an unfolding movie, not unfolding narrative. And then once a year, there's a time where we're like, "Cut, I'm going to edit." Snapshot, where are we holding right now? And that is a judgment. Because it's like, where are we? We can always make our life better, we can make our life worse, but like once a year there's like actually a time to stop, take stock and really think, where are we exactly right now? And so, thank you for that, Tehila, that was marvelous. You are the most wonderful wife, you're the most wonderful teacher, and we are just blessed as a Fellowship to have such a teammate.

And so, now, I want to take us on a journey. I want to say something that I never learned from anyone else. It was kind of an insight that came to me that came to me this Shabbat. And I'm hoping that because I was so inspired this Shabbat, this insight has some real wisdom to it. And it rings true to me. Because what Tehila did was an incredible explication of the Talmud and Noah and Adam and the rain and you were able to find the patterns and then pull out the

wisdom. But then, my teaching today is the exact opposite. It's very, very simple. It's so simplified, that it's inspiring because it's so simple.

And what I want to do, I want to go through the Torah portions of the week from last week all the way until the end of the Torah portion, and it sort of brings us through Rosh Hashana, and to really sort of just the names and the themes of the Torah portions are the guidance that we need to do everything that Tehila spoke about. And so, last week, we learned Ki Tetze L'milchamah. And what we're going to see now, is each one of the Torah portions leads us to the next. And what I want to do, is that if we follow the Torah portions in just the most basic, simple terms, but we internalize, we take what we know in our mind, and we bring it all the way down to our hearts, it really has the chance to guide our life into the new year.

And so, the first Torah portion that we always read leading up to Rosh Hashana. It's always these Torah portions, is Ki Tetze L'milchamah, for you shall go out to war. And what that's teaching us is that like you need to have an orientation when you come into this world. Some people come into this world, and this is happening right now in Europe, and they want to sit on the beaches in Italy, and they want to drive the BMW in Germany, and they want to just enjoy life. And it's like, hello! That's not the purpose of life. We have come into this world as warriors. We've come into a war. Our spirit has come into this world and our soul is right now in a battle and we have to win.

And when you realize that we're here to work hard, that we're here to be a blessing, that we're here to fight against the evil inclination, and let good overcome evil, that's a totally different orientation. Cause if my whole life, I'm just trying to have a martini by the pool, and my whole life is a struggle, then I'm like, "Wait a minute, I don't even like this whole life thing because my expectation is up here and like reality is down here."

And what that Torah portion is teaching us is that our soul coming into the world, reality is life is a struggle and it's meant to be a struggle. You have to enjoy the hard work, you have to enjoy working hard and developing who we are and growing into who HaShem created us to be. That's the whole purpose. We are at war. Why are we at war? The very next Torah portion. Ki Tavo el h'erezt ...where you shall come into the Land. Why are we struggling? Why are we kind of going through these obstacles? Because there's a promise for us, called the promised Land. Where you shall come into the Land.

Now some people think, "I just want to go to the Land." No, no, no. To come into the promise, you have got to go through the war. And as we come into the Land, what happens in this week's Torah portion, there's blessings, there's curses, and there's a whole world once you're in the Land. It's not enough to make aliyah, you have to keep making aliyah. And that's really what the work inside the Land of Israel is all about.

And then what happens once you've gone to war and you've come into the Land? Then you can actually be Nitzavim, you can stand tall. That's what next week's parsha is called. Parashat Nitzavim, you are all standing before God. And that standing before God, after our war, and entering into the promise, and dealing with making aliyah, inside the Land...it's like living within the dream and then creating the dream that we're living. Then you can discover who you are when you really stand before our Creator. And the standing before God, that is always the last parsha we read before Rosh Hashana. Can we put up the slide, just to see that level?

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- 1. **Ki Tetze La Milchama** - for you shall go out to war
  - 2. **Ki Tavo La'aretz** - For you shall come into the Land
  - 3. **Nitzvaim** - You are (all) standing
  - 4. **Rosh Hashana** - New Year

And you can see it right here before you because I made this slide special for the Fellowship. Where you shall go out to war is last week's parsha. This week's parsha we were studying, you shall come into the Land, to the Promise. And then, stand before God after that promise. And when you stand before God, that's the judgment.

It's not a judgment necessarily of like, you've been good and you've been bad. It's just truth. It's just who you are. You're standing before the truth.

And you need to understand that every person in life brings out something inside you. Tehila, I really believe she brings out the best inside me. But it's a very specific element. My father, he brings out something wonderful inside me. Ari, he brings out a whole other side inside me. When you stand before someone else, whatever that friend is, it brings out something that only they can bring out. And that's why when someone passes away, it's so sad because it's almost as if that part inside you went with them because it won't ever be able to come out anymore.

On Rosh Hashana, you're standing before the ultimate truth. You're standing before the Creator of the universe. Your Creator, and there's no where to hide, there's no where to run. It's just standing before the truth. And standing before the truth, your truth is able to come out. That's what Rosh Hashana is all about. It's actually tapping into the truth of your life. Because some people are very honest, but very few people are honest with themselves. They dilute themselves, I dilute myself all the time. And I need Tehila, and I need Ari, and I need our Fellowship to come and sort of like knock me into place. That's what Rosh Hashana is all about. To stand before the truth of your life.

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- 5. **Vayelech** - and he walked
  - 6. **Ha'azinu** - you shall listen/give ear/tune in
  - 7. **Ve Zot Habrecha** - And this is the blessing

And then, the next Torah portion, is Vayelech. And with that, you walk into the rest of your year. And as you're walking into the new year, you have goals, you have aspirations, you have mantras that you want to keep with you, the verses from the Torah that are the most inspiring, the writings of the

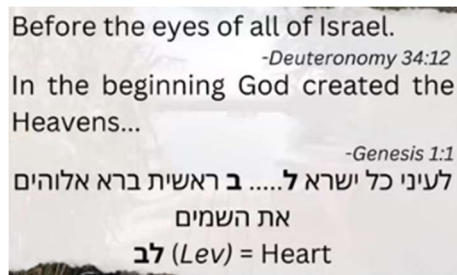
sages, you're able to find everything that you want for this year. You've set it all upright like we've done in the past Fellowships. Then you can start to walk.

But when you're walking in the year, what's the next stage? Ha'azinu – you shall listen. Now listen is a unique word in Hebrew. Because Shema Yisrael, HaShem Eloheinu, HaShem Echad, there is a listen there. It's like, Hear Oh Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is one. It's like you can hear the shofar. That's shema. Ha'azinu is like listening to your MP3 player to classical music. You have to really l'hazinu, you have to give ear, you have to tune in. You really need to listen. And so, as you are walking into your year, after the truth of your life, the way that you need to walk is with an open ear. Listening to God's Word, listening to the guidance that's inside you, saying, is that really what you want to do? Are you going to regret doing that? Or to the positive – that's where you need to go, that's what you need to do. Listen. You must walk while you listen.

And if you do that, you know how the Torah ends? Do you know how your year will be blessed? Exactly. Ve zot Habrecha. That's the last Torah portion before we start the book of Genesis all over again. And this is the blessing. So if you can actually just internalize the themes of the last Torah portions of the year – that first we're here to grow, we're here to work, we're here to become better, we're here as soldiers in the army of the King. It's not a coincidence that I'm broadcasting from the mountains of King David where his mighty men were assembled, where his elite commando Delta Force...this is where it happened, right where I'm broadcasting from. Because the people that we should aspire to be like are the mighty men of King David, the soldiers of the King. Because we are at war. We're at war with Amalek, we're at war with ourselves, we have to bring the light to banish the darkness. Why? To come into the Land of Israel. Why? To stand before the King. That's what Rosh Hashana is all about. And only then we can walk off into the next year with an open ear. Why? Vezot Habrecha. Because that's where the blessing lies.

That's what this is all about. The Torah portion themselves are really teaching us how to come into the new year. How to end last year and how to walk into this year. And with that, you can really see it. In the last verse of the Torah, and the beginning of the Torah, there's a code. But the code only appears in Hebrew. So I would love to teach it to you now. Because only when you finish the Torah cycle and start it over, you get it. The last verse of the end of the Torah, is:

That's the very last verse of the Torah. The very first of the Torah is:



That's the very last verse of the Torah. But you see, in the Hebrew, the last letter of the Torah is a lamed. Bereshith, in the beginning, the first letter of the Torah is a bet. Together, those two letters, the last letter of the Torah and the first letter of the Torah, they spell lev, they spell heart. Because you can only really have an open heart to the Torah once you've read it one time and you come over it again. Just like what Tehila taught. It's repeating itself. But every time we repeat, we change. Every time we repeat, we grow. And that's what lev is, it's to have a heart in the Torah. It's like we together as our Fellowship are about to finish another year together. And we have the opportunity, the merit, the joy, the pleasure of actually starting a new year. We're going to get a new heart, we're going to connect the lamed, the last letter of the Torah, with the bet, the first letter of the Torah and really be blessed with a heart for the Torah. That's what this is all about. And that really brings me to my last point.

In this week's Torah portion, there are blessings and there are curses when you come into the Land of Israel. We're commanded to go to Har Gerazim and to Mt. Ebal. And some are to say blessings, and some are to say curses. But you can't help but see that like, there are so many curses. Not so many blessings. Like, what's up with that? Why on earth when you come into the Land is there such a negative slant, so many curses, so many threats, and then the blessings, there's blessings, but it's not like overwhelming blessings. They're not like outlandish blessings. It's pretty much like, your life will be good, you'll make it here. It's going to be good, you'll be blessed.

And that, to most people stands out. And that always makes people say like, "Ahh...this God of Israel, I'm not so sure." And my father, who is one of the greatest parents that I've ever met, he's a real family doctor. A doctor of the soul. And he says that the way to raise children is with positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is ten times more useful than threats, than negative reinforcement, than putting people down. And that's exactly what the Torah is teaching us. The Torah needs so many more negative reinforcements because positive reinforcement is so much more powerful. All you need is a little bit of love. All you need is a little bit of water and then the flower will blossom. And I feel like that's such a beautiful teaching, especially to parents who have kids that are terrible two's, teenagers, it's pretty much all of parenting. Because parenting is so hard, and it's always important to remember there are words of water that help grow. Now words of fire, that really will burn things down. And if the words of water, the words of blessing, are ten times more powerful, in growing your child up.

Now while I totally agree with that because I am my father's son, I think there's also a really deep lesson about life. Because the curses are curses. It's like, whoah. Be careful. Hell is always pictured in art as this bottomless pit of fiery hell. And I think that's because every bad situation can always get worse. I mean, I was with a broken foot, a broken head. Well, I could



have had two broken feet, I could have also cracked open this part of my head. Like bad things can always get worse. But the blessings are so beautiful. Because the blessings of life are just saying, "Life will be life. Life will be good." It's not like an outlandish blessing. It's just that reality will just light up around the people who are living in tune with HaShem's will in their life. Life will be beautiful because life is beautiful. Unless we mess it up and we bring curses upon ourselves. They don't need to do outlandish blessings because life itself is a blessing. You don't need to promise anything other than life itself because life is the greatest gift. Every day is a blessing.

I, this last two weeks have done two feasts of celebration and gratitude. One with my study partners, with Rabbi Shlomo Katz, and one with the village right next to us. Not only to thank HaShem publicly, but also to thank that village because when I was down and out and Tehila with her shoulders is carrying my whole family. And I am out for the count, that little village, absolutely came to our aide. They just loved their fellow like themselves. And I wanted to throw a little celebration on Shabbat morning just to thank them and bless them and really show our gratitude.

But the truth is, that I'm just expressing something that's truly on my heart. I just live right now with a consciousness that I want to share with you because it's a new consciousness. It's a little bit of a soul realigning of the hardships that I lived through. Falling off a horse, making it back from Europe with Chen that was in the hospital for seven days. I feel like at least right now, I recognize the gift of life. I recognize that every day is a gift. Every day we need to love. Every day we need to go to our loved ones, to our wives, to our husbands, to our children, and hug them hard. Open and really just hold on for just a few extra moments. Let them feel how much you love them because you never know. Just like that, you could fall off a horse, and every day that you haven't fallen off a horse is a day that's a blessing.

And so, we're going to be at war because that's what this world is. There are forces in the world that we have to combat and we have to be strong. So when we have an opportunity to love, we have an opportunity to experience the joy of life, experience it for all it's worth. Because that's why God created this world ultimately because He is the ultimate good. His creation was created to bestow goodness upon us. The greatest goodness is when we overcome evil and bring the blessing. It's not just to sit with the martini and have someone serve me the blessing. It's like we partner with God in bringing blessing into the world. We partner with God and bring His light into the world. And banishing darkness from the world, that's the light that we can really enjoy because we're actually partners with the Creator, Himself. That's the Rosh Hashana that I want.

And so, when I stand before God on judgment day, I just want to stand in truth. To know what's right and what's wrong. I have been humbled. I've walked around now with a limp, I've walked around now with crutches. I've experienced humility, because you know, everyone when I was

with crutches looked at me with so much compassion. They looked at me with so much love. And for me, I've never experienced that before. And I don't know how to explain it. Humiliating, I don't know, it was very humbling. It was very humbling that I wasn't helping others but others wanted to help me.

And so, the book of Psalms says God will raise the humble and He will humble the arrogant. And the fact that I went out on a horse, without a helmet, it's just an expression of like... "Eden, you're 14, you better wear a helmet. I've been riding a horse, I'm 44, I've been riding a horse since I was 11, I don't need a helmet." A horse is a horse, of course, of course. A horse can tumble and once it tumbles, there's really nothing that we can do. You're going to crack your head. And if you don't wear a helmet because you're arrogant, you're just going to suffer the consequences.

And that confidence, I guess on one hand it's what gave me the confidence to move out to the Arugot Farm, to sell my home, to sell my possessions, put it all on the line. Go up against Germany and Norway and Denmark and fight for what's right because God is with me. But that confidence can also be blurred with arrogance. And that's really a fixing that I need to fix this upcoming year because that's the loudest message that I could receive from that.

And so, everyone, I hope doesn't have to fall off a horse. And if they go through the process of just following the essence and the names of the Torah portions, when they get past the war, they get into the Promise that God has destined for them, that they are fully tapping in that who HaShem created them to be in their own promise. It's your Promised Land, you may not know where it is. Because Abraham didn't know where it was. He just started walking. But if you have a chance to enter into the promise, just a little bit and stand, nitzavim before HaShem, to stand in truth, ultimately you walk, you listen, you will be blessed.

And so I want to end this Fellowship with a blessing from the mountains of King David. Because everyone in this Fellowship are warriors, spiritual warriors, prayer warriors, physical warriors. All of us are on the same team. And I just want to really bless this global community that's unlike anything else in the world. It's such a manifestation of a dream. It's like we are the cutting edge of what I believe everything the promise of the Bible is. Everything that was dreamed of. Of people that look different, people that act different, different cultures, different nations, different languages. We can all come together and stand before the truth of our own lives. That's what the Temple is, a House of Prayer for all nations. Rosh Hashana is not a Jewish holiday. If anything, we're celebrating the creation of Adam. Adam wasn't a Jew. He's the father of all of us. So all of us at this time of year can stand together, even if we come from different backgrounds. And just stand with the truth of our own lives, for all of humanity. Exactly.

And so, with that I want to give us all a blessing from this place, which is a blessed place. And then, from my heart to yours, may HaShem bless you all.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Alright my friends, shalom, I'll see you again next week. And you can follow me on the Judean Book Club. You can follow me on my Travel Log because I'm going to be putting out a lot more content in this upcoming year. And you can sign up for my daily WhatsApp group. You can, of course, email me. You can just find out your ways to connect, the ways that you want to connect because I'm going to be broadcasting one way or the other. And so, maximum invitation minimum pressure. That's what we're saying. Bless you all, thank you so much. Shalom from the mountains of King David and I'll see you soon.