

Session 197

Nitzavim and Vaeilech – Who By Bunker

29 September 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l o FQC WVY>

Ari

Shalom my friends, shalom, shalom! Can you see me, because I cannot see you, and now I can. Thank you for waving and giving me the thumbs up. We know the drill. It is so good to see all of you, so good. You know I feel like we've been through so much together since the founding of this Fellowship. I think, was it in 2019? Something like that. You know we've experienced so many things together from epidemics to wars, personal things, the passing of parents, spouses, family. We've prayed with each other, we've prayed for each other, we've held each other up, we've been bonded on this journey through this Fellowship. And that is why it's particularly sweet to see all of your beautiful, shining faces right now. I would even ask if it's not out of line...cause I'm literally going through all the videos and looking at every single one of your faces, every single one of you. Up until the end where it stops showing faces and it just starts showing the pictures or just names. And I would even ask that those of you who most often just like log in and listen with your screens off, which I totally of course respect, I get it. But maybe just for a moment, let us turn on our screens and just look at each other in this great time together. Oh, I see you're doing it! Thank you, thank you, oh this is so good. These are times of so much happiness and light and salvation. There's Monie and Toby and Sherry and Sonye, Dabir, oh Erica, Victoria, hi! Oh it's so good to see all of you, thank you for doing that. It's just with this time, it's so good, it's so rich, there's so much light and salvation coming down right now for the nation of Israel, and for those that love and are attached to the nation of Israel. Brett, hello. Karen, shalom Karen, Bernard, good to see you! Thank you. Ok, I'm just so happy to see all of you.

You know King David says in Psalms, in Psalm 126, He who sows with tears, reaps with joy. You know, you've all sown tears with us. You've cried with us in our pain, you've made our heartbreak into your own heartbreak. You've literally as the prophets of Israel said, attached yourself to the nation of Israel by shedding tears with us. And now, you're able to reap with joy, right? And truly experience the joy and the salvation that Israel has experienced and is experiencing right now. I don't know if that's what it feels like to you, what this last Shabbat was like for you, but it was certainly like that for me.

Of course, what am I talking about? I'm not talking about Jeremy's nephew's bar mitzvah, although that was great. I'm talking about the death of Hassan Nasrallah, may his name and his memory be wiped out. This past Shabbat, the last of what are called the Shabbats of Consolation, following the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av. You know, we read these portions in the prophets in which we're consoled following the great traumas we've experienced in the past. Whether it's the

destruction of the Temple, the Holocaust, whatever it is. It's Shabbats where we read the prophet's words of consolation. A consolation which we desperately need in our times right now, but we've also needed throughout history.

And there I find myself. This past Shabbat, in Ephrat, celebrating the mitzvah of Jeremy's nephew. So Jeremy is like a brother to me, you guys know that. Our families are therefore very much connected to each other. My group with Shaena and Jeremy and his wife is called Best Friends Forever. My group with Jeremy's brother, Mike, and his wife, Gila, is called Real Best Friends Forever. And my other group with Danny, his other brother, and his wife Avigial, Real, Real Best Friends Forever. Like that's what it is. And so there I was, celebrating with them. And we were at the morning prayers, and like Jacob was about to start reading from the Torah, such a powerful portion. So much of which I don't think I'm going to be able to get to, which Jeremy is going to kill me because he comes up to me and he's like, "Do you want to switch weeks with me? I want this week, this portion is so rich." I'm like, "Yeah it is rich," but I didn't know what was in store. That I wouldn't be able to get to all of it. This could easily be a two or three hour Fellowship.

But anyways, we were right there, he was about to start reading from the Torah, and right then, my barber, the guy that cuts my hair, Chanok, who just walked into the synagogue, comes up to me and tells me, his eyes are lit up, he tells me that his neighbor, who's not yet strictly observant of all the commandments, so is able to watch TV or radio or whatever, came up to him and told him that it's all over the news, unconfirmed...but Nasrallah has been killed. And Nasrallah is dead! I know what that sounds like, Nasrallah is dead, it's like, what, are we celebrating this? But I couldn't believe my ears. My heart leapt with hopeful joy. I was a little bit guarded, but during times of war, especially when you're in the army, it's all about rumors. And so, during times of war there are often rumors that prove to be just that, you know they're rumors.

But something felt differently about this. It felt true. And I couldn't help it, but my heart just started to dance. And in the back of my mind I realized that there may be people in this Fellowship, and we're family and we love each other and we know each other's hearts and it's all good. But I know that there may be people...I think there may be people in this Fellowship who are not truly on board with this fully. Fully, in the sense that, of course, everybody, I'm sure thinks it's good that he's dead. But should we really joyfully celebrate the downfall of our enemies? Right? Even if they do seek our annihilation? It's ok, be honest. Who here in this Fellowship feels that way, that maybe we shouldn't be so celebratory about the death of Nasrallah, our enemy? Ok, I don't know if hands are going up, ok, there's hands, at least A hand is raised. And for that, there's probably ten that aren't. I don't know, maybe not. You know, and I want to talk about that, I want to go into that soon because it's such an important subject. It's not a corollary issue, it's an integral issue. And the internal conflict there is critical to

navigating our way through all of this. And I hope we get to that soon during this Fellowship, but there are so many things that I want to get to.

But for now, let me just finish sort of my story here. So I'm told this great, albeit unconfirmed news, but I don't care if it's unconfirmed. I want to bring that happiness that Chanok brought me to everyone else. Right or wrong, I wanted to be that guy. And I immediately start going up to everybody that I could to share these wonderful tidings with them. I try not to speak during prayers, but this was an exception. And the look of shock and disbelief and joy, and caution, it was more or less the same reactions that people had. It was as if they didn't want to let themselves believe it; at the same time, they really wanted to believe it. And again, I don't know if this is right or wrong, but I was just listening to my heart and people were asking me...is it confirmed, is it confirmed? And I was like, "It's confirmed, it's confirmed!" Because my heart had confirmed it.

And I was telling everybody, and so everyone is getting so excited, and then Shaena, my wife Shaena heard from someone saying, "Your husband is saying it's confirmed." And she came to me and she said, "It's confirmed?" She was like making me paranoid that it wasn't really going to be the case. And that I'm confirming this thing to everybody. And then there we are sitting and having lunch later and someone comes into the house and says, "Nasrallah is dead." And someone says, "Is it confirmed?" And they said, "Yes, it's confirmed!" And I said, "Thank God, thank God." And then Shaena says, "Wait a second. Who did you hear it's confirmed from?" And it turned out it was from me. So it came back to comfort me, the whole confirmation thing. Anyways, I don't know if I should have gone into that whole thing. But you know, people were guarded. But I'm sure my barber didn't realize that when he was speaking to me, he was speaking into an amplifier that was going to notify the whole synagogue and community because I so badly wanted to be bringing simcha.

Anyways, minutes later, immediately following the reading of the Haftarah from the book of Isaiah, I was approached by my dear friend, Rabbi Eli Mashel, who showed me the beautiful, prophetic verse that we were reading from, the prophet of Isaiah, at that very moment! Which of course perfectly pointed us to the author of this story, to the true commander of this operation. All of which is right here in the Torah, and the prophets. Because the greatest mistake we can make is to believe that it was the bold daring of the Israel Air Force alone that killed Nasrallah. Or that it was the strength of our hands, or the brilliance and ingenuity of our technology and our intelligence that sabotaged those beepers. Hopefully, the cataclysmic failures of October 7<sup>th</sup> have disabused us of those arrogant illusions, right? No, it's not our strength or the might of our hands.

The Israeli Air Force  
With their ground support  
that eliminated Nassrallah



I saw this picture here that actually encapsulates it really beautifully. For those who can't read it, it shows a picture of the Israeli Air Force on top and a picture of their ground support below. That ground support is the nation of Israel at the Western Wall, praying to the God of Israel. That's a good encapsulation of the dynamic here. You know, it was not us, but it was the God of Israel who did these great things for us.

Because on the very Shabbat that this Nasrallah assassination mission was taking place, the entire nation of Israel is hearing the words of God, spoken to us through the prophet Isaiah, over 2,700 years ago. Words that were clearly meant to be read to us at that very moment. This was at the moment that this is happening, God

is assuring us that the day will come, a very special day will come. We could have never known that that day we were reading about was referring to that very day, yesterday, on Shabbat. But the day would come, in which the prophet Isaiah says:

Hashem, our God, will  
cause righteousness and  
praise to grow in the face  
of the nations.  
-Isaiah 61:11

And that for Zion's sake, HaShem will no longer be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake, He will not be still.

Now stay with me. Literally, as the news of Nasrallah's downfall was coming in, at that very moment, we were reading Isaiah's

words:

For the day of my  
vengeance is in my heart,  
and the year of my  
redemption has come.  
-Isaiah 63:4

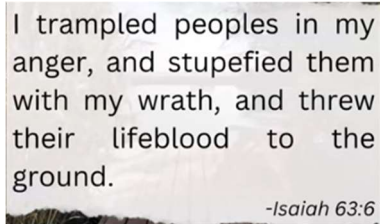
I mean, anyone who read those words at that moment, felt...it's not about the head, it's about the heart...felt the exhilaration in their hearts of experiencing prophecy manifesting before their very eyes. I know I did. I mean, who would have thought that we would be reading words, written nearly three millennia ago

for the most insightful understanding of what's happening to us right now, and the current events that are happening at this very moment that we're reading. Literally as the crushed body of Nasrallah was being airlifted out of the underground bunker which he and his fellow few surviving Hezbollah officers were trampled by the earth and crushed within.



Is that video being played? Literally as it's happening, we read the very next verses. Do you see him being lifted?

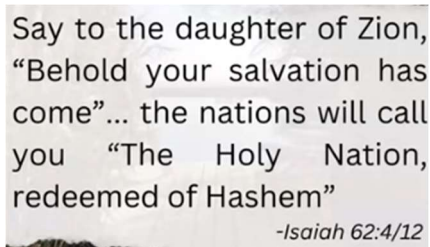
We read the very next verse, Isaiah, chapter 63:



I trampled peoples in my anger, and stupefied them with my wrath, and threw their lifeblood to the ground.  
-Isaiah 63:6

I mean, this is only a touch of it, you really need to read the entire thing. Because it doesn't only tell us what's happening, but it tells us why. And it tells us what will happen next. And so, for those of you who are concerned... "Oh, no, what's Iran going to do now? Now they're really going to really be upset. Their retaliation is going to be fierce. What's going to be, what's going

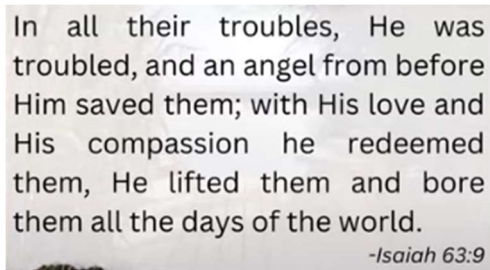
to be?" My friends, do not fear. I'm not saying that this is over, far from it. There may be much ahead of us. But the rest of the portion tells us that in the days to come...spoiler alert...a great redemption is coming:



Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold your salvation has come"... the nations will call you "The Holy Nation, redeemed of Hashem"  
-Isaiah 62:4/12

You know, finally...what is redemption? True comfort, seeing why we've been through all of this. In the very last verses, God tells us that all of that time that we felt abandoned and alone, it wasn't true. We were never alone. And we will never be alone.

Chapter 63, verse 9:



In all their troubles, He was troubled, and an angel from before Him saved them; with His love and His compassion he redeemed them, He lifted them and bore them all the days of the world.  
-Isaiah 63:9

So we're not alone. A great redemption is coming, and so my friends, buckle up. Buckle up. Because I have a feeling that the ride is just getting started. But the singular most important thing is...do not fear. Because a great thing is in store. Great miracles of God are about to transpire for the nation of Israel, and for the entire world. So hold on tight and really up that emunah, up

that faith.

Anyways, so this Shabbat was a great one, for me, for my family, all of Israel. But everyone experienced it in their own way. And so, I want to hand over the Fellowship to my beloved friend, Jeremy, to share his thoughts and experiences about all this. Because I know it was good, it was good. Please, Jeremy.

Jeremy

Alright, thank you so much. That's awesome. And I can't tell you, reading all of those prophecies and experiencing Shabbat in Israel, I felt an energetic shift in the world. I felt that evil was removed from the world. And the power of being a Jew, a power of being a believer in the Torah, is that we have the Torah portions of the week and we have the Haftarah portions of the week. And right as we're about to end the New Year, every believer around the world is reading this Haftarah that Ari just quoted. It's unbelievable! And we say:

For a day of vengeance was in My heart, and the year of My redemption has arrived.

-Isaiah 63:4

Every person around the world is reading that verse and saying, “Whoah, it’s almost the New Year and this is happening now?”

And then, after Shabbat, we’re watching things blow up and then someone sent me a picture of Nasrallah’s bunker.



And I’m like, “That’s interesting. It’s not too graphic, so I feel comfortable to show it. But if you actually see the bunker, it was such an arrogant place to hide because the bunker isn’t that deep in the ground. It’s as if the Israeli intelligence found the bunker and said, “He’s there right now, quickly blow him up.” And Israel blew him out of the water.

And the amazing thing is that the last speech that Netanyahu gave, Nasrallah heard. And that last speech was the greatest kiddush HaShem, the greatest sanctification of God’s Name that I ever heard coming from our Israeli Prime Minister. And I just want to play you like the last half minute. Because that was the last half minute of this evil Nasrallah’s life. Check this out from the leader of Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu



To the people of Israel, and to the soldiers of Israel, I say, “Be strong and of good courage.

חֲזָקוּ וְאַמְצוּ אֶל־תִּירָאוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵיךָ הוּא הַהֲלֹךְ עִמָּךְ לֹא יִרְפָּךְ וְלֹא יִעֲזֹבֶךָ

The people of Israel live now, tomorrow, forever!

Thank you!”

Now the reason why I wanted to share that message with you, is that Bibi spoke in Hebrew. That whole speech was in English. But then the last verse he spoke in Hebrew from the Torah. And he said, “Do not fear, do not have any fear. For the Lord your God will go before you and crush your enemies.” And he spoke in the Name of God and then the wrath of God rained upon this evil, Nazi-like Nasrallah that was hell bent on destroying the Jews, and had already shot hundreds of rockets that had killed innocent people, children in Israel, and now that evil was removed from the world.

And I feel right now, it's a turning point in Israel. It's a turning point in the war, and it's perfect because we're just about to go into a new year. And I know that there are some people that say, "No, it's not the New Year, the New Year is in Nissan according to the Bible, and the Jews don't know what they're talking about." And I'm like, "I don't even want to have a theological debate with you. There is a new time, there is a new season. I'm telling you, I promise, according to the Jews, it's a New Year."

The last year will be the year that will always be remembered as October 7<sup>th</sup> year. The war of Simchat Torah. Everyone will remember that year for the destruction and the devastation. But right now, we are entering into a new season. We're entering into a new year, the last prophecy we all read was saying, "A day of My heart's vengeance, the year of My redemption is coming." As we enter into the New Year, it's a new time, it's a new season, and I am excited.

And what I want to share with you more than anything isn't prophecy and it isn't destiny. Because Ari and I have been talking about prophecy and destiny for who knows how long, but I'm telling you all that not only is it close, it's closer than we've ever experienced it before. We can literally feel the tremors of the earthquake right now. Such an evil has been removed from the Land. We are a giant step forward toward world peace. A giant step forward. And the fact that the leader of Israel was speaking in the Name of God, is such a powerful statement. That was the last thing that this evil Nazi-like Nasrallah, Chezollah person heard, was our leader of Israel speaking in the Name of God. That's exactly the way this should unfold.

But I want to share something a little bit deeper. I want to share with you the power of living by the Bible. But not just believing in the Bible, and loving the Bible, but living by the Bible. My children are little. And so, to them the Bible is very, very real. They haven't had any cynicism that's clouded their minds yet. They hear the stories of Pharaoh in Egypt and how he threw our children into the Nile. They hear the stories about Haman, how he wanted to destroy all the Jews in one day. They know, we were just in Germany, they know about the Holocaust. But all of a sudden, we tell them, today is a great day because evil has been removed from the world. Imagine a man as bad as Haman, that he wanted to just kill as many innocent Jews as possible. And instead of this time, Hitler running away and killing himself and doing the Holocaust, and the Jews were in the Galut and were in the exile and couldn't fight back. The Jews fought back and the Jews won. We killed Haman.

And my kids, eyes lit up...we did?! And all of a sudden, it all became so real to them. Because they're living the Bible. It's not a Judaism, it's not a religion, it's a life as a Jew in Judea that is now encountering evil and finally the power of Israel is being revealed. Yah, we did an amazing attack with beepers, pinpointing the terrorists like no other army in the world's history. The innovation, the brilliance, but then, we took out the king of all evil in Lebanon. And I just want to show you this video that Tehila took of my kids because we don't celebrate death, we celebrate life. And now that that evil has been removed from the world, thank God, more

people will live, more people will prosper, there's a chance for peace, we're moving toward Mashiach. But I just want to show you my cute children singing and dancing in my house when they heard the news that the modern-day Haman was killed and removed from the world. Watch my cute children:



They're just so cute, just so pure, it's just so good, and now they're a little bit safer because that evil has been removed from the world. And that song was saying, "We sent Nasrallah to Allah." And it's just like a cute song that somebody made up immediately, put it on the internet, and of course it immediately went viral

and all of Israel is like singing this fun song. We sent Nasrallah to Allah. And my kids were just so happy and they went to bed so confident at night that the God of Israel is with the people of Israel. Mashiach is on the way and we are going to win. And so, I just wanted to offer you that opportunity because you're never going to find that on CNN, you're not going to find that on any website in the world. There's no way that you can get into the home in the heart of a family in Judea. Because everyone in this Fellowship, they're just my extended family. So I wanted you to see our children dancing and celebrating that now evil has been removed from the world. And so, that's really all the analysis that I have.

But I do want to bless you all with an amazing New Year. We're entering into a new season, we're entering into a new time, the year of redemption is on its way and we're only on the way up. I can already see on my account on X that there is a shift. There's a lot of people that are on the fence, so you know, the college students, they want to be with the winners. They saw hang-gliders on October 7<sup>th</sup>, the rebellion against the colonialism. They don't even know what they're talking about, but they want to be with the winners. All of a sudden now, the God of Israel is the winner. All of a sudden now the Jews are the winners.

The Arabs around the Arugot Farm, I can see, they're all in a theological conundrum. Because they're asking themselves, "Wait a minute, is Allah with the Jews? Are the Muslims in Dubai, right? The Abraham Accords?" They're all being thrown now for a loop. And that's the definition of a kiddush HaShem, the sanctification of God's Name. Because God's power is being revealed through His people, in His Land, and we are going to win, until absolute victory. And victory for us is all the way until the Geulah.

And so with that, pass it back to Ari, I just want to celebrate with everyone together and for you to see my kids dancing. So thank you very much. Love you, we'll see you soon. And thank you, of course, for all of the feedback for our Judean book club. Ari is going to start up soon, and once a week, it's just not enough anymore. Today the Judean Book club was exactly about Teshuvah and Nasrallah because things are always happening. And our meeting once a week is



of course, that's my cornerstone, that's my anchor, that's my life. I don't know...I couldn't live without our weekly meeting, but now I realize the year is coming with more broadcasts, more teachings, stay more connected to Israel, and that's our mission this year. Bringing the truth of Israel to the ends of the world and strengthening our Fellowship like never before. Thank you all for joining us and thank you all for being a part of our global community because very soon, this virtual House of Prayer for all Nations, it's just a matter of time until it won't be virtual anymore. And we are all going to celebrate in a House of Prayer for all Nations in Jerusalem. Amen. May we see it this year. Alright, Ari, your turn.

Ari

Amen, Amen, thank you for that, Jeremy. And yah, there's so many things I have to say, but essentially, it's true. I have been feeling and more than ever, a shift in energy, a shift. It's almost like, the sages tell us that when the enemies of Israel rise, then Israel falls. And when Israel rises, the enemies fall. Particularly with Edom, right? And I feel that happening. That the tides are turning. I see it happening, I just saw Mohammed Bin Salman, the crown prince, the King of Saudi Arabia said, "I don't even care about this whole Palestinian issue. It's not even important to me." And these videos are being made in Arabic, in the Arabic world, lionizing and celebrating Benjamin Netanyahu and mocking and making fun of Chezbollah. It feels like there is a shift happening.

And you know, in the Song of Lecha Dodi, that we sing on Saturday, on Shabbat, on Friday night, it says, "Rise up, shake yourself off from the ashes and the dust." That's what I feel like is happening. Israel is rising up and shaking ourselves from the ashes and the dust. And that's like I said, there's more to come. There may be more ups and more downs, I know that there are. But this is what I feel like the trajectory is happening.

You know, I often zoom out and I reflect upon the unfathomable expanse of the physical universe. And then I zoom all the way into the submicroscopic atomic level. I was looking for this video that I saw on YouTube, I couldn't find it.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FntYEQHg8d0>) Where you see it go all the way out and then from out, all the way to the earth and then to the sub-atomic particles and you end up with the same sort of thing that you did on the outside.

And for some reason, this thought strengthens my faith. Because it reminds me that all of this is but nothingness in the eyes of the Creator. And just as He controls every movement of everything within the vast universe, it's not a challenge for Him to orchestrate everything in my world, in my life. The world as a whole and in my life with the precious, precise perfection as a communication and to all of us. And if everything that happens to us, to really know and believe that it's an invitation and it's an opportunity to grow closer to HaShem as human beings that are created in His image and therefore the more closely we grow to His image and His

attributes, the closer we are to Him. But as just children coming closer to their Father, that's what all of this whole thing is all about.

And so, this year, as we're approaching Rosh Hashanah, and experiencing this unique pivotal point in world history, I've started understanding different dimensions of these high holidays that I've never experienced or even considered before. Because each year, from scratch, I find that I face similar questions. They're answered almost each year in different ways, ways that I need to experience an answer that I need for that part of my life for that moment. But the essence of the question remains the same and it's about what appears to be a dual mission, contained within these 40 days, the 40 days starting with the beginning of Elul, and culminating on the Day of Atonement, on Yom Kippur. Elul arrives and we're trying to come close, to connect with God on a deeper way, right? He's out in the field after all, right? More accessible than ever and He's just waiting for us to come close. And we do. And we take an accounting of our year and our life and we try to repent and return to Him, to return to our true selves, to come close.

But then, we arrive and Rosh Hashanah, we're there at Rosh Hashanah. And it seems like all of a sudden, we do a totally different thing. On Rosh Hashanah it seems like we stop with the whole repentance thing, the whole personal journey, relationship with God thing, and it becomes all about one thing. It becomes about one mission. And what is that one mission? Looking at the comments. To crown HaShem as King. To coronate HaShem as the One and only sovereign King of Heaven and Earth. There is none other. And Rosh Hashanah is all about focusing about that truth and strengthening that facet of our relationship with God. The relationship between a King and His subjects. Rosh Hashanah we understand in our heads, and we seek and yearn and aim to successfully infuse into our hearts that God is the King of the world.

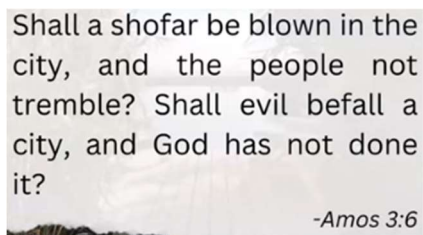
And listen, it's been a long time since any of us have ever experienced...I'm sure none of us in our lifetime what it is to have this worldly king reigning over us. I'm not talking about like a symbolic one like in England or something. Like a king who holds our fate and the fate of our family and our people in His hands. At His whim, at a mere whisper of His mouth, he could raise us up or God-forbid, end our lives at that very moment. And so, we're trying to arouse within us that very real fear that we should have of our King. The only King of heaven and earth.

And yes, I said fear. And I mean fear, because when I mention to others the idea that I'm hoping that I'm going to be able to get out and express to you right now, and I'm not 100% sure of it, but it sure is loud within my heart. When I shared this idea that I'm going to share with you, many seem to recoil and object when I said that we need to place the FEAR of God in our hearts. They said that fear is the wrong word. That awe is a better word. Awe, no words, we can't say it. Unimaginable magnificence and power and strength of God should just fill us with awe. And that's what they said. It's not fear. Fear is the wrong word.

You know there were Christian friends that were visiting from Holland that I shared this idea with. And one said, "No, no. God is a God of love, not fear." That it was love that conquered his heart, not fear or wrath or vengeance, just love. And there's really no room for anything else. And listen, while there's definitely truth to that, one dimension of truth, that in and of itself is very lacking. What I want to say, is that while pure, unadulterated, unconditional love of God, from the depths of our souls, that is the ultimate goal, without having fear as an element in the very foundation, it's not a real love. Real love needs to have a base level of fear. Not just awe, but actual fear. Right? The foundation needs to have fear, otherwise, my assertion to you, is that it can't be real love. Can't be truly lasting, weather-proof, bullet proof love. Otherwise the love is vulnerable to competing lusts and desires and impulses and it's simply won't last.

Because in my experience, when in the world, the spiritual world, my relationship with HaShem, when there's an Achilles Heel in that relationship, a vulnerability, it is always...it's like, right for that thing. Because the goal is, to grow in our relationship, so that's exactly what it will go for.

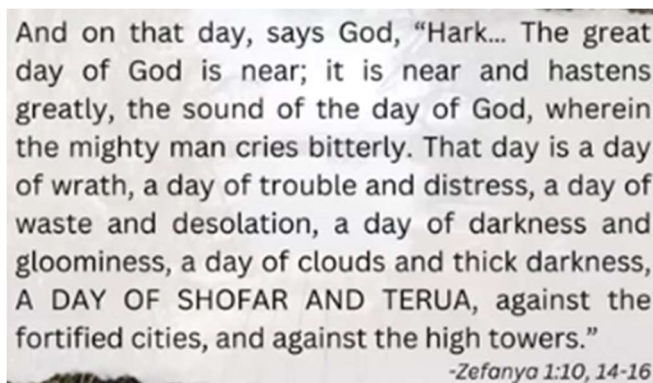
So, fear, I believe is necessary. The prophets tell us, among other things, that part of what the shofar is designated for. It's supposed to arouse within us, fear. The prophet Amos says:



Shall a shofar be blown in the city, and the people not tremble? Shall evil befall a city, and God has not done it?  
-Amos 3:6

That's what the prophet Amos. Now Rabbi Brofsky brings a prophecy from the book of Zephania affirming that fear is supposed to be aroused by the shofar.

This is from Zephania:



And on that day, says God, "Hark... The great day of God is near; it is near and hastens greatly, the sound of the day of God, wherein the mighty man cries bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A DAY OF SHOFAR AND TERUA, against the fortified cities, and against the high towers."  
-Zefanya 1:10, 14-16

Now there are more, there are more. But I just want to share with you how this fear has evolved for me in my relationship with HaShem throughout my life. Because when I was younger, I was very much afraid of God in the traditional denotative sense, in the same way I was afraid of my Junior High principal. That's how I was afraid of God. I didn't want to be punished. It just felt like I would be able to hide from the principal,

but where am I going to hide from God?

But as my relationship with HaShem continues to evolve and mature, and I hope it continues to do so and I'm able to look back and see how unevolved it is right now. As that evolution and maturation happens, that fear is fundamentally changing. And at this point in my life, I'm not

afraid of being punished for my sins. On the contrary, my fear, I'm afraid of NOT being punished for my sins. It's not like I want God to let me off the hook. I don't want to be left off the hook. Because as all of you know, a fundamental element of my relationship with HaShem, is that God's punishments are not really punishments. They're corrections, they don't happen to us, as we always say. They happen for us.

So Jeremy said last week, a sin is a chet. Which means missing the mark, going off the path, going astray, misaligning yourself from harmony with your true self, and with your Creator. So God's corrections, if we receive them with the same love and faith with which He gives them, if they're harnessed correctly, they can bring us closer to Him than even we were before we committed this sin.

And you know, I was just thinking this past Shabbat, Shiloh, my beloved son, my two-year-old, my older son, we were walking back from Synagogue. And he was just so defiant, and he was so rebellious. Everything, "No, no, no, no, no," it was unreasonable. And I was really losing it, and I said, "You listen to your Abba, Shiloh, you listen to your Abba. HaShem says to listen to your Abba and honor your father." And he was defiant and then he said, "I'm sorry, Abba," it just melted my heart, melted my heart. And I was thinking about this story, I think it's Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, that stood before HaShem when the congregation was saying Slichot. You know...we have sinned and singing our slichot which we do during these days. Slichot, meaning I'm sorry. He said, "God if it weren't for our sins, You wouldn't have these beautiful slichot, these beautiful sorry's." I felt even closer and more in love with Shiloh after all of this.

That has become a very important piece in all of this for me. That receiving the correction correctly can bring us closer to Him than we were before the sin. And I want to...I sort of want to tell you a little bit why, you know? Because just to be honest and vulnerable, I don't try to ever be something I'm not because I still fall. I still fall. I think like we all do, but speaking of this Fellowship, maybe there's some of you that don't anymore and that wouldn't surprise me. But I still fall and sometimes I fall hard, or whatever a hard fall has come to mean for me at this point in my life. That's always changing. You know, but there are times where I sin in ways that I thought were behind me, ways that I really thought I'd overcome. And when I fall, the pain can be immense, it can be devastating. It can hurt so much that there are times where I really believe that the sin must be the punishment itself. That's how great the pain from the sin itself is. Can anyone identify with this? Ok, a lot of you, that doesn't shock me.

But ultimately, I come to terms, eventually I'm blessed to come to terms with the fact that HaShem does not want me down or depressed. That at this point in my life I come to this conclusion sooner than I used to. But God doesn't want us sad and depressed. That inappropriately channeled sadness and depression is satan's win in and of itself. Even more than the sin, is the sadness that follows it and the depression that follows it. Because that is

just satan's playground. And it can lead to an avalanche downfall of further sins and distance and alienation. And HaShem just doesn't want that of us.

And sometimes, we feel like, well we got to be there, we got to do that, we have to punish ourselves. It's only right, otherwise we could...no, God knows our hearts. We don't need all of that. We're pained enough from just the sin, itself. And you know, I start to have moments of clarity in which I see that, like I said, the sin itself was in some ways perhaps an early warning alarm, exposing blemishes in my life, the way I'm living my life, in maybe what is the lackadaisical, or lazy or uninspiring way I may be serving God without even realizing it. You know, we can just lose awareness and just get into a funk and not even know that we're in it.

You know, and then with God's help and blessing, I start to see how responding to my falling, properly and productively and faithfully can bring me to a higher level of service and a deeper relationship with HaShem than I had before. I see how the sin itself can be harnessed as a platform and a stepping stone to climb higher and higher. And that's how the sages tell us that it's possible to transform our past sins into mitzvot, into the fulfillment of actual commandments, serving God. Because essentially that's the, through our proper approach and utilization of it. That is essentially what it became. We became closer to God through it.

And I also find that I'm often humbled by my sins and my short comings. And being humbled is most often painful. Right? It's never fun. But it helps me to see that there are times, you know like I said, like I'm coasting, that I'm good...and not really failing in any significant way, but I AM, whether I realize it or not, just remaining in my comfort zone. And not really serving HaShem with all of my heart and all of my soul and all of my everything that I have. But I'm ok. You know, I'm not sinning, after all. And in this world that we're living in, where with so much heinous sin, it's easy to start playing the comparison game. Which is a bad idea. It's a falsehood. We're only compared to us and to our potential. But, you know, perhaps I look and I'm comparably righteous, although maybe just righteous in my comfort zone, but I'm comparably righteous with the rest of the world, and that may be why God is blessing me with all these blessings that I have in my life! That there's some sort of quid pro quo. Like give and take. You know I try to stay away from sin and try to serve God in whatever mediocre comfortable way I'm doing it, and exchange for that, He's giving me these blessings and I'm sort of earning it. And it's like, that sort of thing is happening. There's like a Google spread sheet there.

And then, I fall hard on my face! And I'm humbled, and then I look around at the abundant blessings of my life and there's like a panic and a pain and I realize...I haven't earned any of this. That it's all a free gift. There is no quid pro quo. When Moses stood before God, and he prayed to God that he should be able to enter Israel, va'etchanan, the word was from the lashon...he was asking for a free gift, that he didn't even deserve. Moses! After all he had done in his whole life. And he said, "I didn't even deserve it." And sometimes it takes me to fall flat on my

face to realize I don't deserve this, it's all a free gift. And that feeling, however painful and vulnerable it may have been to get to, it's healthy. I feel it. Because it ends up, that crack in my heart, that void, that brokenness ends up being filled over, brimming over with love and gratitude. With this burning desire to serve HaShem in any way I can and with all that I have. Not out of fear of punishment, but out of love and desire to express that love in any way I can. And that love tends to be so flaming sometimes, it's so on fire, that I don't even...it almost brings me past all of the pain because I don't have time for that. I just want to do what I can do to sanctify HaShem's Name in the world.

So I'm still very much like on this journey of life, or at least I hope that I am. But my experience of the fear of God has evolved from fear of punishment like I said, into fear of distance. Fear of losing the relationship that I most hold dear. Which my friends, could possibly be defined as love. That itself could be love, that very emotion could be the transition to love, I don't know, it's a thought that I just had. I'm not like a love-ologist. I don't know. But I think it's important to recognize that without those early stages of fear, fear of punishment, I would have never been able to arise to this level of love that I have right now. So fear is a real important part of it. I really hope that I'm able to express to you what's on my heart right now. Please HaShem allow me, for Your Name's sake to be able to articulate this.

Ok, so sharp turn. I look around at the situation that Israel is in right now. And the truth about the universe going in and out, this is all happening right now, for right here. You know I look at the situation that we've been in since October 7<sup>th</sup>, but really before that. And I've come to realize that the journey of repentance that I've personally been on, the journey of true repentance, is what all of mankind is experiencing right now. I think of what all of mankind has always been experiencing. But just this portion of that return and repentance is becoming clearer to me than ever before. Clear to me! I've never really thought of it that way.

Because for those of you who have been a part of this Fellowship from the beginning, you've seen how our journey here in Judea and in Israel has created us into the people that we are. I'd be really interested to go back to the first Fellowships and see how I'm different and in what ways and how all of that has happened. And I'm not only speaking about me and Jeremy personally, but I'm talking about the nation of Israel as a whole. Everything that we've been through has changed us and we have grown from it. And there's a whole world that you can say this about.

And you know, there are jokes in Israel that since October 7<sup>th</sup>, there really aren't any leftists. Just last week I spoke in Tel Aviv to a group of these liberal, American college kids. And oi va voi, and it was so powerful and it was just...it didn't record. I think I told you that already. I don't know if I told you. But anyways, I was speaking to the guy who organized it and just me and him were talking, and I asked him, where is he on the political spectrum? And he told me that he's...well, I would call myself a leftist. I'm on the left. To which I replied, "Oh, you're the leftist

that everyone's talking about." Meaning that he's the only leftist left. To which we both laughed because he understood what I was saying, that there aren't any of them left, not after what we've been through. And by the way, after speaking to him more in depth, I can tell you that he was saying things, particularly about the war going on with our enemies, that a leftist would have never said. And so, why is this happening? By the way, you may be saying, "Well, I see on the news, and it seems like there are leftists..." Yes, but remember that the news has an agenda. And they want to project a certain reality. And so they will take very, very loud internationally funded leftist groups, however small and irrelevant they are, and magnify them way beyond what they really are. So that's not a real thing.

But anyways, why is all of this happening to the nation of Israel? Particularly to the nation of Israel within the Land of Israel? Because the horrible genocidal terror of October 7<sup>th</sup> was not something that we witnessed like the rest of the world. It was something that we experienced. And when you have a real, first-hand encounter with pure evil, it changes you. And you realize, you know in your heart that not only that true evil exists, but that it needs to be destroyed.

And so, you definitely heard from me personally and probably many in Israel, increasingly more impassioned clarity regarding the absolute devastating brutal defeat that our enemies must face at our hands. You know there have been times I'm sure, that perhaps I've been even too graphic regarding what I envision we need to do to Chamas and Chezbollah and Iran. And I've seen, particularly when encountering Christians, like conventional Christians, good people, real friends that I really love, that this is where I often lose them. The things that I'm saying is just too brutal and violent for a God of love.

Just this past Friday morning I actually stood on my balcony with these four Dutch Christian businessmen who were staying at the Farm, sweet men, real friends, lovers of Israel, truly. And when I told them how I feel Israel should go about retrieving these hostages, I won't go into it all here, but it involves broadcasting to all of Gaza as we cut off the heads of the top ten Chamas leadership in the Israeli prisons, and put them on stakes and broadcast that to all of Gaza and tell all of them, that for every minute that goes by, that there will be another ten until we get to the death of every single jihadist, Chamas member in Gaza. Give us back the sons and daughters of Israel NOW! Right?

And so I told them that and I saw...I lost them. I mean, he didn't make it a secret. It really took him back and he expressed that he thought that the way to conquer Chamas was the way that his own heart was conquered – through love. This is what he said, right? I won't go into the entire discussion, which was very interesting. But I told him that there are different nations with different characteristics and strengths and weaknesses. And that's why Ghandi was ultimately successful ending British occupation of India through non-violence and hunger striking. That strategy would have lasted about two minutes against the Nazis or the jihad. Not

everybody is the same, not everybody is this sweet, loving Dutch business man loving Israel, that was standing on my balcony.

So I explained that in the mindset of the jihadist, expressions of love and compassion to them are interpreted by them as weakness, a weakness which deserves to be destroyed. Their hatred for us is unadulterated and pure and it's maxed out. There is no negotiation or compromise that could ever make a dent in their genocidal hate. So some people say...how are we going to bring peace? We need to get into their textbooks and replace the education of their children that Jews are the children of monkeys and pigs that must be killed, that that's a religious directive in their textbooks that we need to get in there to those textbooks. And replace this hatred with a more modern, tolerant, messaging. I don't know how you guys feel about that, but that is absolute silliness. It's ridiculous. And it's insulting to us, it's insulting to them.

I mean last week I read the entire list of the hundreds of genocidal assaults on Jews since the foundation of Islam. And now we're going to get into their textbooks? Come on. So my friends, I ask you then, so where's the hope? Not hope for the next three months of ceasefire. Not hope for a cold, disingenuous peace treaty like we had with Egypt. But where's the hope for real peace? Where's the hope for the love that the prophets promised? Where's the hope for that? Where's the hope for that?

And you know, I used to just think well that's what the Messiah is. When Mashiach comes, that's when it's all going to come, and that's when it's gonna happen and there was something sort of metaphysical that would happen in our hearts. And maybe that is the case. But I've been thinking about it as we approach Rosh Hashana because I think the answer may lie in Rosh Hashanah itself. Because just as the foundation of true tshuvah, for returning to a truly loving relationship with God, that we attain on some level by properly harnessing the power of these holidays from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, to the Day of Atonement, to Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. There's a process there. We'll talk about it in the coming weeks. The journey that we go through in getting to a place of true love, through Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur to Sukkot. Just as the foundation of a true loving relationship with God is built upon the most foundational level with fear, it's the same thing in the journey with tshuvah with Chamas and Chezbollah on the global jihad. And really, the tshuvah of the entire world.

Fear is a necessary ingredient that they need to go through before we can ever even hope to have our enemies love us, they must first fear us. I'm not just talking about awe, right? The only way that they will ever know and recognize, you need to know the Arab jihadist mind, the only way that they'll ever know and recognize that they've been defeated, is when they are filled with fear and humiliation. The only thing that can cloud out this binary in their hearts of absolute rage and hatred, that can be eclipsed by fear. Because they don't see their defeat as just a defeat against them. They see their defeat as the defeat of their god, as well. And they're right. And so they must fear us.



And when I say us, I don't mean just the nation of Israel, obviously not. I mean the nation of Israel as the earthly representatives of the God of Israel. And although the nation of Israel doesn't recognize it all the time and we don't say it, the truth is that the entire world, deep down, in their conscious or subconscious, always has and always will conflate the nation of Israel with the God of Israel. And when we are raised up, He is raised up. And when we are lowered, He is lowered. And so the nation of Israel, within the Land of Israel, is recognizing that not only must our enemies be defeated, but the fear of God needs to be implanted in their hearts. Because from what I've come to really see is true, there is this binary that I was just talking about in their hearts, hate or fear, that's what it is. And what we've seen HaShem inflicting on our enemies through His nation, Israel, is the fear of God. It's true we're not there yet, but these attacks on their beepers and their walkie talkies, causing them to fear any electric device...that is, there's been all these videos.

Have you seen these videos coming out? These two Israeli guys are so funny, they're playing Chezbollah guys. They're like, "It's ok, let's make coffee." And they go to the coffee machine. Oh, we like it warm, it's better warm, it's better like the old days, warm where we don't have boiling coffee." And every device that they go to, they're terrified. That's a real thing, that's a real thing. So, there's that fear. The attack of Chaniyeh, killing Chaniyeh in Tehran, assassinating Chezbollah, operatives and officers in Beirut, causes them to question whether they can feel safe anywhere in the world at any time. The assassination of Nasrallah and his top men, deep underground, causing them to realize that even their billion dollar subterranean tunnel networks can't save them. There's nowhere for them to look, to turn, to do. That is the fear that my friends, if we see it all the way through, I believe can eventually lead to love. But only if we see it all the way through. If we make the same mistake that we've made in the past and we say, "Lesson learned, ok." Because with Jews, there's something about real victory that we just eh! It's like we have to win against our will just in ways, like the 6 Day War, Israel was more shocked than anyone else, I think. At the unbelievable salvation that God did for us.

So, you know, if we make that same mistake that we've made in the past, and we say, "Ok, Nasrallah and Chaniyeh...now let's reach out in peace." They will inevitably say, "Well look at them. They're extending a hand again? They must be afraid. We must be winning. More terror." It's not that people say that they have these terror attacks because they're hopeless. The opposite. It's not hopelessness, it's hope that the global jihad will succeed and they will murder every last Jew. That's what drives them. And so by extending our hand now, we would just be giving them hope. Only when we've so thoroughly defeated them that there's no room for confusion or ambiguity. Only when we credit that miraculously mind-blowing defeat to the God of Israel and not to our own strength, only then, when they are terrified and humbled, not just by the nation of Israel, but even more so by the God of Israel, only then can we begin to engage them from a place of compassion and forgiveness and love. And I can't begin to tell you how much I look forward to that day. But we're not there yet. We're not there yet. We have to see this all the way through. We must defeat them in the language of defeat that they know.

Abject, humiliating defeat, culminating in the loss of land, culminating with Gaza and Lebanon, and Judea and Samaria, all of biblical Israel being under full Israeli sovereignty, settled with beautiful, peaceful, Jewish communities.

Rav Ginsburgh just came out, a big article in the Jerusalem Post saying, "Lebanon is biblical Israel as we all know and it needs to be settled by Jews." I don't care if this gets me sanctioned, I don't care how this sounds. It's true. Even according to international law, the application of which is so hypocritical and weaponized against the Jews, that I don't care about it at all. But according to international law, when one nation conquers the territory from which their sovereign land was attacked in an existential war by another nation, when you win that war, the land is yours. You don't need international law to tell you that. All you need is the most basic logic and moral compass to know that. But that doesn't matter. Because when you have the ultimate law, the law of the God of Heaven and Earth bestowed to us in the Torah, well then international law sometimes, somehow, it just loses its jurisdiction.

Now I think that all of this is possibly taking longer than I intended. But it's because I'm still working it out myself. The realization that the fear of God that I see needs to be infused into the hearts of our enemies is exactly the same fear of God that I need to infuse in my own heart. And then I can be a vehicle and a vessel for that heart to go out, for that fear to be manifest to all of humanity, to the world, starting with Chamas and Chezollah. In a different way. Meaning they need the actual fear. Other nations don't need that fear. For them it could be much more of an awe. And that awe, is what they're going to experience when they witness what the God of Israel still lays ahead, that He's going to do for His people.

And so, that's what Rosh Hashanah is all about for me. Because Rosh Hashanah is not a Jewish holiday. It just isn't. It's not a Jewish holiday. It's the birthday of all of mankind. It's when all of humanity stands before HaShem in judgment. And that's why it is our task to crown the God of Israel as the King of the nation of Israel. Not only with our words, but in our hearts. And that is what happens when we blow the shofar. Why the shofar? Rav Saadia Gaon teaches that the shofar is blown because THAT is the manner of kings. At the beginning of a king's reign, trumpets are sounded throughout the jurisdiction of their kingship to announce the beginning of their reign. And it is in Psalm 98:

With trumpets and the sound  
of Shofar, raise your voices  
before the King Hashem.  
*-Psalm 98:6*

And our blowing of the shofar to bestow Kingship of HaShem is meant to reflect HIS blowing of our souls into our bodies bestowing us with life.

Chapter 2 of Genesis:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

*-Genesis 2:7*

The blowing of the shofar demonstrates that we are using our neshimah, our breath as Jeremy teaches, which comes from the word neshamah, which is our soul. Our breath and our soul are connected. One is the spiritual and material manifestation of the other. Reflection of the other. And so we are using our neshimah, our breath, to dedicate our lives for the King. You, HaShem, gave us breath, and we turn around and dedicate that breath right back to You, HaShem, through the shofar, through our words, through our very essence.

Rosh Hashanah is a day of such awe-inspiring magnitude that we, little old us, have the opportunity and the mission to crown the Creator of Heaven and Earth as King. Here. Here in this realm, in the lowest of realms, the realm that He most desires to reign. But not by force or coercion, but through love through free will in our hearts and that's what we are here for. The magnitude of God's kingdom should be so overwhelming that on that Great Day, on Rosh Hashanah, God's Kingship should eclipse our egos so much that we can't even think about ourselves. That's why we don't even pray for ourselves. All that concerns us is the fulfillment of our mission of declaring and coronating God's Kingdom. Not only throughout all of mankind, but most of all...in our own hearts.

I'm telling you my friends, I've really come to believe that being overly focused on Rosh Hashanah, about our own concerns which can just happen when you know whether we're being written in the Book of Life, it's a natural thing, but it's a trap to distract us from the real purpose of declaring God's Kingship. That is, I'm telling you, that is the secret, I believe, to being inscribed in the Book of Life on Rosh Hashanah. Because life simply cannot mean merely having a heartbeat. That cannot be what true life is about. For our sages teach us that true tzadikim, the truly righteous are more alive after their death than they were in this world.

I often think when I say that, I always think of the Lubavitcher Rebbe who affected all of the Jewish world. But since his passing, his influence has exponentially grown and he's not even physically here. But his influence, his desire, his ratzon. His essence, his life force is so much greater. True life is only that which is eternal. True life is connecting to the Tree of Life, to the Torah, to HaShem. When your entire essence and the deepest desire of your heart is dedicated to HaShem, then whether your heart beats or not, you are alive. And you are inscribed in the Book of Life. But if the deepest desire of your heart is consumed with the fleeting ephemerality of this world. I don't want to make light of it. The needs that we have in this world are very real, are very real. But if that's what it's all about for us, well then if even if your heart continues to beat, the entirety of the coming year, you are not truly sealed in the Book of Life at all.

While there's nothing inherently bad with being...there's nothing inherently bad with pleasure or materialism that is channeled and directed to service of HaShem. Then it's good, those things are good. We're not monks on a hill top trying to deny ourselves all day. No, but it needs to be controlled through the directives to us through HaShem in the Torah and directed to service of HaShem. But if the desires of your heart are directed toward fleeting pleasures and materialism and amassing wealth and your bank account and money, as an end in and of itself...well that's the book of death. I have really come to believe that it is not about your heart beating at all.

So in my life, particularly in the past year, where I've seen some of the bravest, holiest, most selfless people sacrificing the beating of their hearts for HaShem, offering up their very souls to sanctify the God of Israel and to protect the nation of Israel...running into kibbutz Be'eri, into oncoming fire to save their fellow Jews who they don't even know, that they probably have no agreement with them about anything at all. And they die doing that. Well, it is clear as day to me that those people, whose physical bodies died this past year are alive. They are alive with a vitality and eternity that we cannot even imagine.

You know I had actually this image burned into my mind this past week.



This is a picture of Major General Ziv Chen, may his memory be a blessing, his grave. He passed away, he was killed in a battle in the southern Gaza Strip. He was 27 years old and he had just gotten married when he fell, he was killed defending the nation of Israel and the Jews of the south. Seven months after he was killed, his young widow, Hallel, gave birth to their first son. And this picture, if you could show it again, Tabitha, this picture was taken last Friday when his baby was born, a son, who made him a father after his death. And in this picture you will see how his family decorated the grave with signs of balloons saying, "It's a boy!" and "Mazel tov!" Ziv was the 9<sup>th</sup> soldier to fall from among the same God-fearing Yeshiva in Meruka (?). Now are you trying to tell me that Ziv and all these other heroes of Israel who have sacrificed their lives were inscribed in the book of death? Somehow, they didn't stand up to the true scrutiny of the Divine? I don't believe that for one second. For not only does Ziv live on in this world through his son, thank God, but through the entire nation of Israel he continues to live. For the nation of Israel that he sacrificed his life for. That's what we say, "May your soul be tied in, inextricably linked with the bundle of life. He's alive through the House of Israel, the eternal nation of Israel, just as those who have dedicated their lives to God and to the Torah and to the truth of Israel, continued to live on in the truest form of life...that is, by connecting your essence to eternity, to netzach, that is eternal life.

And with that, my friends, I'm sorry for going over, but allow me to bless all of you and all of us. That this Rosh Hashanah we succeed in crowning the God of Israel as King of the entire

universe. By coronating His godliness, His Kingship as sovereign, first and foremost in our own hearts. And I bless us that this Rosh Hashanah, that when the holiday doesn't necessarily play out the way we anticipated or would have liked to play out which is most of the time, it's a 3-day holiday this year. There's a lot to go wrong, a lot not to go as planned. I want to bless us that when that happens, that we accept that with love, recognizing that HaShem is the King and accepting our lives as they are, with gratitude is a very powerful and exalted way of declaring His sovereignty over our lives and over our hearts. And I want to bless us, my friends, that we and our families are written and sealed in the Book of Life, the book of true life. And that we merit to live this coming year and the rest of our days, consumed and immersed in the totality of our essence with love for HaShem. And serving Him with all that we are and all that we have. And I bless us, my friends, that this Rosh Hashanah is the very last one that we will have to experience without the world shining from one end to the other with light and love and knowledge of HaShem covering it all as waters cover the sea. Amen.

And with that, allow me to bless all of you, the blessing of Aaron the High Priest. And as you know, I'm not descended from Aaron, but we are a nation of priests. And there is nobody more blessable than all of you. So it is my greatest joy to bless all of you.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May God bless and protect you, may He shine His light and His countenance upon you and may He give you peace. Amen.

Shalom, my friends, shanah tovah, love you very much, keep in touch, stay connected.