

Session 159

Chayei Sarah – Israel at War: Facing Your Fears

12 November 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2eSD1T-6JU>

Ari

Shalom everybody, good to see you, good to see you! Jeremy, is it good to see them or what?

Jeremy

Yeah, very good to see you guys. Shalom everybody. Tehila's here also. She's on the side here, waiting to be called into duty.

Ari

Yeah, this is an intense Fellowship. There's a lot going on in Israel, there's a lot going on in the world, there's a lot going on at our Farm, in our corner of Judea. And so we want to share all of that with you. We're just sitting here literally up at the moment of it starting and saying, "Who should go first, who should talk first, who should do what?" And so we decided, Jeremy, you're going first this time. Then, Tehila, then for some reason, I keep doing this to myself. And I'm going to go after Tehila. Which is number one rule, NEVER go after Tehila. Impossible to follow Tehila. But for whatever reason, I need to be humbled. Perhaps at some point I will be raised up after the humility that I keep having. So anyways, Jeremy, you go first and I'm going to let Tehila sit here. Ok, next to you.

Jeremy

Shalom, everybody, ok, a lot going everyone. So, ok, a little bit of background. The last week has been very intense around the Farm. I'm not going to give over too many details, but our surrounding is becoming more volatile. There's more attempted...let's just call it like it is...more attempted terror attacks all around the Farm right now. And so Ari and I are responding accordingly, so is the army, so are the villagers that live around us. Just for example, in the last hour, there were 15 rockets fired from Lebanon into Israel, just this last hour. And so, we don't know if it's necessarily connected to the Shifa Hospital, which is one of the Chamas headquarters that the IDF now is slowly but surely evacuating the people and going after the terrorists that are in there and maybe this is sort of backup that is coming. It is unclear, but what is clear is that it seems as though this conflict is not going to stay located in the Gaza Strip. It is spreading, and we're feeling that. We're feeling it. Definitely the tense realities around the Farm are sensed by everyone.

And so, what I want to do today is, I want to talk a little bit about God. That's what I want to do, that's what's on my heart. I feel like God needs to be brought a little bit more into this reality in Israel. You know there's so many pundits and speakers and analysts and journalists and everyone's talking about their opinions about everything. But everything that happens in Israel is connected to God. And it's like the separation of church and state in Israel is like taking the water out of the pool. It's not a pool anymore. Everything that is happening here is a spiritual battle, a physical battle, it's a biblical battle, it's all intertwined.

One of the verses in Tehillim says it like this – From my enemies, I shall become smarter. And the sages of Israel say that you can actually learn Israel’s chosenness from Israel’s enemies. And when you look at this, some people say, “How can you even believe in God in such a scenario? Look what happened to Israel on October 7th, I mean, where was God, where is this, where is that?” And I’m looking at Israel’s enemies, and the people who stand with Israel’s enemies, and most of the time, since the Garden of Eden, good and bad has been interwoven within each other. Within every good, there’s a little bit of bad, within every bad there’s a little bit of good.

But as we come now to this end in our history so far, in transitioning to a new era, the good and the bad is actually being separated out. There’s never been a clearer line dividing between good and evil. There’s the side of the Jihadists, rapists, murderers, kidnappers of toddlers that are still holding hostages, that are still holding our babies underground, and then there’s the people that are siding with those rapists, murderers. And then there’s the people that are trying to free the hostages and fight against these murderers. And it’s like, look at the Jew’s enemies, whether it be Nazis that attacked the Jews in the last generation. Imagine living under their rule, or imagine living under the rule of Chamas. Imagine if Iran and Chamas and ISIS and the Jihad won the war and they actually defeated the West. Imagine living under that civilization.

So yes, always as soon as evil arises in the world, it attacks the Jew first. But note that when evil arises in the world, it attacks the Jewish people first. It’s like, how do you not see God in that? I mean of all of the people the Jews are less than a quarter of 1%. Zero point two of one percent of the world population. And when evil arises in the world, it’s like attracted to the Jews like a magnet. And you can become very wise from looking at our enemies. You can know the truth of goodness by encountering the truth of evil in the world.

And so, as I’m watching some of these people that are siding with the Chamas, it’s almost like they have these glass eyes and they’re just so filled with hatred that it makes you believe that the Jews must be good if you look at our enemies. The enemies of evil are attacking the forces of good. Now, we’re just the front lines, because they’re after all of us, they’re after all of us. They’re after you in England, they’re after you in Australia, they’re after you in New York and Los Angeles. And so, we’re just, you know Pearl Harbor’s right down the road, folks. If you don’t know that, then wake up. They are not just after Israel, and they’re not just after the Gaza Strip, and they’re not just after Judea and Samaria. They are after London, and they are after Berlin, and they are after America, and the evil force that arises in the world, that’s just the way that mechanics of this world works. It attacks the Jew first. And you would think the world would be smart enough now that when some movement immediately attacks the Jew...I mean, right now in London, right now what’s trending in social media is “death to all Jews.” That’s actually trending in London now, that is the most popular tweet that’s happening in London now. Hashtag deathtoallJews. And so, when that happens, yes there are Jews in London, but all the others that are non-Jihadist Muslims in London, watch out. Cause once the Jews leave London, they’re coming for you.

The second thing that I wanted to talk about was at the very, very beginning of the war, I haven’t really talked about this, but because Ari and I live alone on a mountain, every once in a while, I have an opportunity to just like walk off into the wilderness and just have moments with myself and moments with God. There was one point when I was really like, shaking my fist at heaven, really calling God out.

“How did You let this happen to us? How did You let this happen to us? We’ve been burned, we’ve been raped, we’ve been killed...how did You let this happen to us from these forces of evil? Maybe we weren’t perfect, but look at this!” And immediately, it was, “I gave you tanks, I gave you airplanes, I gave you the most sophisticated technologies to uproot the evil from the Land. Why are you turning to Me?”

It’s like there’s a part in the Torah where God says, “Why are you calling to Me? Go, travel.” There’s like a time for prayer, there’s also a time for action. And right now, the Holocaust, there could really be theological questions there. But at this stage in Jewish history, the entire responsibility is on our shoulders. To defend not only the people of Israel, but the good people of the entire world. We’ve been given every tool at our disposal to protect ourselves. And I think one of the tools that’s really lacking, that we have not been using is actually prayer. You know, I wish that I had a larger microphone in Israel. But I would like to propose a new peace plan. Because we’ve tried everything in this country. We’ve tried to offer them Land, we’ve tried to offer them money, we’ve even given them guns. That’s how crazy the Israeli left is. And I’m like, “Let’s try a new peace plan. What about a mass movement of teshuva? We’ve tried everything else. Can all of Israel actually repent? Can we just call on everyone in Israel to actually call out to God? Let’s just...why not try? We’ve tried everything else. Can we just try to see...I don’t know how to say it. Put God in a corner here and force God to like reveal Himself? Like if we could all call out to God, maybe that would actually be a better peace plan than all the other nutty things we’ve done like giving our enemies guns to attack us with.

And I’ll tell you. This is a story that was published by one of the soldiers that learned in Yeshivat Ramat Gan, which is one of the most unique yeshivas in Israel because it’s placed right in the heart around Tel Aviv, in that area. And their idea was how to be a light in secular Israel. And so this was posted on the bulletin board of that yeshiva by one of the soldiers that’s fighting in Gaza. So I have the letter here with me in Hebrew. And I’m going to read it to you and just translate it automatically into English. Here’s what it says:

Yesterday, one of my boys, one of our friends, one of the chevre, called me and told me this story. He’s from Givati, he’s from the infantry unit, Givati. Last night we were in the middle of battles. I was in the headquarters and all of a sudden my commander comes up to me and says, “I have a very important mission for you. You’re religious, right? (With a kippah on my head.) Go, pray now.” And I said, ‘What?’

This is a totally secular commander, he lives with his partner in Tel Aviv somewhere. And he tells me, “Listen, what I’m telling you right now. This is a time only for prayers, for the longest time, we have two armed personal carriers that have broken down in the middle of an open area in Azah. This could be a catastrophe. We are not able to fix them. Go pray, or they’ll fix them, or the Chamas might not attack us. Pray now, we are in a dire situation.”

It took me time to process what was happening and I wasn’t able to concentrate. I immediately went out to just talk to God. I said, “HaShem, these are Your boys. They’re here fighting on behalf of Your people. Let there not be a desecration of Your Name, and these things happen.” I wasn’t able to concentrate, but ok, I did my best. A quarter of an hour later, I came back to the headquarters, as I was asking for God to hear my prayers, as I gave them over. I got to the headquarters and the commander comes to me, filled up with light. And he says to me, “You do not understand what has happened here.

A minute after you left, the first armed personal carrier was fixed and started working. A few moments later, another one was fixed. And now all of them are fixed and they're moving toward battle. You are not going in to Azah, I need you right here for you to just pray." And that was the story that happened.

And you know, it's like, slowly but surely what we're seeing in Israel is a real awakening. An awakening among Israelis from all walks of life. The most sold item in Israel right now are tzit-tzit. There's not enough kids to tie the knots in the strings because so many people are feeling compelled to wear tzit-tzit now. Soldiers want them as guards and protection, and the people that are praying for their soldiers want them as guards and protection. And so you're seeing what's happening here. It seems as though we're just being brought to a place where two things are going to happen. One, the Jewish people are coming to grips that we are Jews. And what does that mean for someone that has denied their Jewish identity their whole life? It's forcing them to come to grips, they're watching the marches in London, and the demonstrations in New York, and they're yelling, "Gas the Jew, death to all Jews." And these Israelis are like, "I don't really even identify as a Jew, I am sort of just a human, an Israeli, I don't really even know what that means. But they hate us."

And Jews, it somehow taps into this intergenerational hatred for thousands of years and now it's like, what is it about us that they hate so much? Look at who hates us! Like the derek of all humans, the worst of society, the most evil, that must mean something good about me. And so the first thing that's happening is the Jews are being forced to come to grips with their own Jewish identity.

And the second thing that's happening, whether we like it or not, is that Israel is standing alone. The pressure is melting, slowly but surely. Calls for ceasefire, more and more pressure, more and more news articles about the Gazans, more and more news articles. And in some ways, when you think about the process of redemption. Last generation we had to deal with Esav. And we dealt with the Western world at their worst. And it manifested as the Nazis, the pinnacle peak of western civilization, the most advanced society, the most advanced scientists, Beethoven and Bach and all of the culture of Western civilization coming out of Berlin. And then Esav went and just attacked the Jew, the evil spirit that came out. And remarkably Germany today, even more than other European countries, is standing relatively strong alongside Israel. Like what a fixing may be happening there, with that relationship.

And before Esav, is Yishmael. And imagine the pathway that's happening now. We had to do something, fix something there, go through a battle there, and now we are one step closer to Avraham's children – Yitzchak and Yishmael, fighting right now inside the Land of Israel, all of the Arabs around us are kind of coming together. And now, it's like a final, final battle. But where is it bringing us back to? It's bringing us back to Abraham. And Abraham was the man that stood alone. He said, "All of you child-sacrificing idolaters are wrong, and I am right." And so, Israel confronted with the evil of Chamas and what they did to our children and what they're still doing to our children and our elderly, have to have enough courage and resolve to say, "All of you are wrong and I am right." And the Jewish people alone will stand for the truth. Because when you stand for the truth, you stand with God. And that's this dual process that's happening to every Jew on an individual level and the Jewish people collectively as a nation in Israel.

And so, the state of Israel is going through a process and the mystical writings of Judaism would say it like this:

That the peel comes before the fruit.

The State of Israel is the peel. And now slowly that peel is being peeled away to get to the fruit. But God's vision for Israel was not the modern State of Israel. I mean the State of Israel. We're not even a country, we're a state. Forget about a Kingdom. We're a State. It's embarrassing. Is Germany a state? Germany's a country. England's a country. The State of Israel. And so that's clearly not the vision of the prophets. But what's happening is that that is the peel that comes before the fruit. And the peel is slowly being peeled away and a new fruit is emerging. And that's what's happening now here in Israel.

And you know, for the world to say, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." That's what they are saying in all of these marches. What that means is, they're calling for Jewish genocide. They're calling for all the Jews in Israel to be wiped out. They're calling for all of us to be killed. After we experienced what we experienced with our hostages still being held by the Chamas terrorist organization, no demonstrations are calling for the Chamas to surrender and release hostages. They're calling for the destruction of all Jews, for the annihilation of all Jews.

And so the separation is happening now, between good and between evil. And you know, I don't know if it's going to be facial recognition, or if it's going to be posts on Facebook, but a record is being kept right now, for every lover of Israel and every hater of Israel. Maybe it's simply in God's mind, but I think it's actually going to be really provable in this world as well. Where everyone will be able to hold up either a badge of honor, or a real mark of shame. And there will be judgment, judgment for those that came against God's chosen people. That could not differentiate between good and evil and who stood on the side of evil. Where Israel has just wanted to live in peace and yet just riddled with terror and war and this is the beginning of the war that will end all wars.

And so, choose your sides wisely because a record is being kept. And so, this is the last war. Yishmael was the last one. You know in Tehila's Torah a few weeks ago, she quoted a mystical writing that Yishmael was circumcised at the age of 13. And, it says that he will have a merit to the Land of Israel for 1,300 years. And if you just google really quickly, "When was the Arabian conquest of eretz Israel," you'll see it lasted almost to the day, 1,300 years until the Jewish people came back in 1948 and established the State of Israel.

And so, there's some things that are so glaringly true. And when people say, "Ahh...the Jewish people, you stole the Land." There's just never been a stronger claim of a people to a land than the Jewish people to Jerusalem. Every rock you pick up in Israel, you find Jewish writing. Every name of every Jewish city you find in the Bible. I mean the interconnectedness between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, I almost don't even want to have the debate because it's ridiculous to even give it credibility. Because they're no people in the world that is more connected to the Land of Israel than the people of Israel.

And so the truth is now revealed for the world to choose. And so, what's so marvelous about this Fellowship is that we are a living example of the way the world should be, of what the world could be. And we're living it right now, in this time, in this transitional period. And so we should be blessed to know that as we're going closer and closer from Esav to Yishmael, all the way back to Avraham, that we should have the clarity, the courage, and the emunah to stand alone like Abraham, to say, "All of you demonstrators, the hundreds of thousands of you around the world, all of you are wrong. And we are right."

And so, with that, I am very good at saying that she is always right. Because most of the time, she is. So I'm going to introduce Tehila for you guys, she's been working on this Torah that she's going to teach for quite a while now. And it is beyond challenging for her to find the time, come here, broadcast, and so she loves you all, we love her, and with that, I will pass it over to Tehila Gimpel.

Tehila

Hey guys. Thank you, Jeremy. Hey, so great to see all of your faces. So you know, I apologize. It's been a little bit of a time. I haven't been able to put out so many videos. I don't have any actual good excuse other than not having really anything to say. And I don't want to talk to you guys if I don't feel like I have something to say, but sometimes HaShem just speaks so loud. I don't have much choice. And so here I am. In the spirit of the videos and the Torah I've been trying to give over since the beginning of the war, I'm looking in the Bible for the meaning of the word chamas and seeing what that means in different places in the Torah and how our biblical heroes struggled in the face of chamas, which in Hebrew is this horrible, horrendous evil. And you know to try to draw inspiration from them and in our struggle in the face of what seems to be this insurmountable evil in our own times.

And I want to focus back on Psalms because at the end of the day like Jeremy said, it's really, for those of us who can't be in physical battle, being in prayer battle is really the most that we can do. And I've been getting inspiration lately from my little boy, Noam. Noam, he'll be playing, and our kids kind of live their normal life. And he'll be playing soccer, working in the garden, but then suddenly I'll see this sort of sadness come over his face and then he'll just say, "Ima, can I light a candle for the hostages?" And you know, it's really heartbreaking. And every single night, when I finish telling him his bedtime story, he'll ask me for the book of Psalms. He'll ask me for Tehillim. And every night I'll find him with his light on in his room with his little book of Psalms open because he fell asleep reading Psalms for the hostages and for the soldiers. And I just thought that was so precious. And so I said, "Ok, Noam, you inspire me, we're going to focus a little bit on the Psalms."

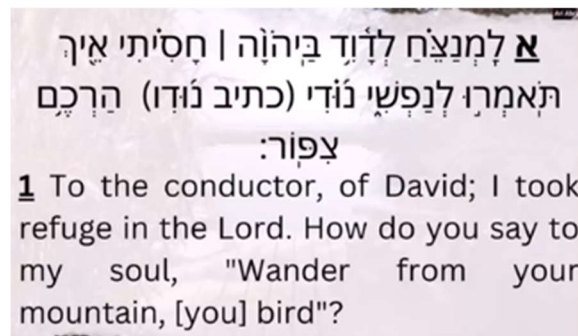
And I want to, today, if you guys want to grab your Psalms if you have it nearby, I want to look at Psalm 11. And Psalm 11 is the very first time that we see the word chamas in the book of Tehillim, in the book of Psalms. So my go-to was to open Chanan Peratz book on Tehillim. He wrote a book called, "To Live the Psalms." And he usually has really nice insights on the meanings of the words, but here, you know I felt like drawn to this...I felt drawn to this particular Psalm. And then, I open up the book and what does he say? Chanan Perat was fighting for Gush Katif. He was in Gush Katif, in Azah, in Gaza, before it was evacuated and he was one of the last people left in Gush Katif after everybody had been evacuated. And he was in the synagogue of Neve Dekalim, one of the last places of Gush Katif to be destroyed. And he

says in his book, "I'm sitting in the synagogue, I'm pretty much the last Jew in the Gaza Strip," this is in 2005, in the disengagement. And he says, "I felt drawn to read Psalm 11."

And so I said, "Ok, that's a confirmation that this is what I'm supposed to be studying." And he said that this Psalm gave him strength at that moment. And it was so striking, but even with all of that, I was just having trouble getting up my strength to try to really dig into this, and then my birthday rolled around last week. And thank you Nancy for your kind wishes, I just saw them. Hi Nancy. And it was my birthday, and I wasn't really in a birthday mood. And my beloved sister-in-law, Avigial who I hope you guys are following her amazing work that she's doing during this war, she knows me so well. She said, "I know you're not going to want a birthday present for your birthday, so I sent you a devar Torah, I sent you a Torah." And I see a word file in my WhatsApp, and I open it up...you guys are going to fall off your chairs. I open it up, I hadn't said anything about this to her. I open it up, she says, "I wrote you a Torah on Psalm 11 because I know you've been having a hard time, making videos and making Torahs. Maybe this will get your engine going."

I said, "Oh my gosh, ok HaShem, I hear You loud and clear!" And then, my wonderful friend, Bretta, and my wonderful friend, Deborah, they both asked me to do another video on Psalms. So, this is a collaborative work, and I have to thank all of my friends that have been pushing me forward.

So, if you guys are with me, I would love if you would open up Psalm 11. I just want to study it because when we study it, then we can really understand the meaning and pray it together, but not just from reading the words but from actually understanding it. So the first verse says:



You guys know what it means when it says, "To the conductor?" There are about 50 Psalms that start with "to the conductor." It means that in the Temple, that was something that was sung with like an orchestra and there was a conductor. And this was something that was read in the actual Temple with beautiful music. So it says, "To the conductor of David..." Now it says, "I took refuge in the Lord..."

It's an interesting opening. David starts out by saying that he takes refuge in HaShem. Now what's interesting about this particular Psalm is that it has no actual prayer in it. Look carefully at Psalm 11, David is not actually asking HaShem for anything. He's actually sharing with us his inner dialogue about how to exist in his emunah, in his faith in HaShem in the face of a really difficult reality. He's straightening himself out, straightening us out, not the external reality, but actually how we maintain our relationship with HaShem in the face of a difficult reality.

So David starts with this fundamental problem...how do you say to my soul, wander from your mountain o bird. What is the problem that he's facing? He's facing a problem that everyone keeps telling him to get off of his land. He's saying, "Everyone is saying, get off your land."

You know the sages tried to figure out, if you have all these problems, if you would just get off your land, just fly away, everything will be ok. The sages tried to figure out, which point in David's life is this taking place. And Rabbi Menachem Ma'eri says this is happening in the 23rd chapter of the 1st book of Samuel. Now this is amazing. Because in the 23rd chapter of the 1st book of Samuel is when David and his men go out of hiding from Saul because they hear...get this...that the Philistines are about to attack a community called Kehila. A city bordering near the Philistines. You can't make this stuff up. We know that the Philistines were mainly in Israel in the area that's now the Gaza Strip. Right? And then they're attacking communities that are next to the Gaza, next to this Philistine kind of Gaza strip in order to terrorize them. And David takes his men to go save them. Does this sound like it's speaking to our times, guys? You can't make this up, right?

David takes his men to go save them and then what happens? Their response is so ungrateful because they basically turn him over to Saul after he saves them from these godless Philistines. And it's such a painful thing for David. He's essentially protecting people from these horrible enemies and they turn him over and he has to run away and become a fugitive again. Imagine reading this when you're Chanan Perat and you're the last person in Gush Katif, you're the last Jew in Gush Katif, when the settlements were there in Gaza were there to protect the cities around the Gaza Strip by creating a presence there that wouldn't allow terror organizations to take hold. And the self-sacrifice of the people who went to live in the most dangerous areas in order to protect other Israelis were then treated so horribly and thrown out of their homes and turned into fugitives. It's like you can't make this stuff up.

Now what's so interesting is the word that David uses in Hebrew to say that the bird...they tell him to fly away like a bird is (נִוֹרֵי) nudi, which is in the singular. But the texts...this is one of the several examples...there's a few places in the Torah where the written word is different than the way we pronounce it. The way we pronounce it is nudi in the singular, but the text actually says nudu (נִוֹדוּ) which is plural. You will ALL be told to fly away from your land, fly away from your mountain. So it's like the verse is already hinting to us that there's going to be a double story here. There's going to be David's single story in the singular, but it's going to be ALL of your story, Israel, time and time again. It's the singular and the plural at the same time. It's something that we're going to face not only in David's personal life, but in our life.

And we feel it so much now. When you see the proportion of soldiers that are falling to protect Israel right now, it's so unbelievably noticeably disproportionately made of settlers and believers from Judea and Samaria, the ones who are the most vilified so wrongly as if we are the ones that are endangering peace and turn out to be the only ones who properly identify the real danger posed by these terrorist organization. And now instead of saying, "I told you so," those are the same people that are running out most courageously and giving their lives to save people once again. And the world, and even people in Israel still talk about turning these very heroes over from their homes. Like you know, "Get out of Judea, guys."

It's the singular and the plural. It happened in David's life and it's happening over and over in our national story. And so the basic problem being faced in this story is, "Ok, you gotta get off of your land." And you know, it feels so familiar because we finally have our place to be Jews in Judea and they're just like...when Jews lived in Europe, they said, "Why are you guys wandering around Europe, find your own

place.” And once we find our own place, they’re telling us, “Why are you living in someone else’s place? Go back to Europe, go back to Brooklyn.” And we’re like these birds, constantly being shuffled off of our Land, as if for our own good.

And now, verse 2 it says:

ב כִּי הִנֵּה הַרְשָׁעִים יִדְרֹכֹן קִשֶׁת כּוֹנְנֵי
חֲצִים עַל־יָתֵר לִירוֹת בְּמוֹאֲפֵל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:
2 For behold the wicked tread the
bow, they set their arrow on the
bowstring to shoot in the dark at the
upright of heart.

And then in 3 it says:

ג כִּי־הִשְׁתּוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִהַפְּעַל:
3 For the foundations were destroyed;
what did the righteous man do?

Think about what David is saying here. He’s saying they’re shooting in the dark at the upright of heart. And the foundations are being destroyed. There’s a feeling right now in the world, I’m sure you guys feel it, too, that the foundations don’t make sense anymore in life. Like the obvious good is being seen

as bad, the obvious bad is being seen as good. And we live in a world where Iran is the head of the UN Human Rights Counsel, and where the President of Syria who has killed half a million of his own citizens is condemning Israel for not being humane enough and Israel is offering humanitarian aide to help evacuate the babies of the terrorists.

And you know, and then David asks, “What can the righteous man do? The arrows being shot at the upright in the heart of darkness. You know most of the battles in Gaza are taking place at night. And every morning we wake up and the count of how many of our righteous people are dead is so obvious that HaShem is taking the best ones. Do you guys get that sense? It’s just like HaShem is taking the best ones and it’s so unbelievable. The people that are being killed here, sometimes they don’t even seem like real people. I’m like, “I’m a good person. I try my best, I give charity and I try to be a good mom, right?” And then, you know, as soon as I meet like a really righteous person, that’s like one in a hundred, right? How many really super-duper righteous people do you meet? It feels like every person that’s falling for us here are mythically level good people.

Like yesterday we heard the terrible news that Yossi Hershkovitz died. His son is a counselor in our children’s youth group. He’s a 44-year-old school principal and a Torah teacher who’s also an unbelievable military warrior and a gifted musician who played violin for sick people in the hospital. I mean, could you be more David-like than being a musician who’s also a Torah teacher who’s also a warrior? Like, what are we going to do with that? And each story, it seems like there’s not a normal distribution of sacrifices. And the terrorists are shooting in the dark like the verse says. But somehow the arrows are striking in the dark, the most upright of heart. Exactly as the Psalm says.

And what is David's question? It's not really a theoretical, philosophical question of, "Oh, why do bad things happen to good people?" He's actually saying, "Is there even a point of being righteous?" Sometimes it feels so hopeless, like why are we in this fight? What should righteous people do? And the verse says in number 4:

ד יְהוָה | בְּהֵיכַל קִדְשׁוֹ יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם
כְּסֵאוֹ עֵינָיו יַחְזוּ עֲפַעְפֵּיּוֹ | בְּבָחֲנוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם:

4 The Lord is in His Holy Temple. The Lord-His throne is in Heaven; His eyes see, His pupils try the sons of men.

In verse 4 David tries to tell us, HaShem does feel like He's so far away. It's like He's in heaven, but He's seeing this. He's with us and He's watching us. But where does that go? How does it express itself? You know we kind of hope that the bottom line is going to be, "Don't worry, guys. Good stuff is coming. Everything is going to be ok, everything is going to feel good soon." But that's not what David

tells us. Look at verses 5 and 6:

ה יְהוָה צְדִיק יִבְחַן וְרָשָׁע וְאֹהֵב חָמָס
שִׂנְאָה נַפְשׁוֹ:

5 The Lord tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

And here we see for the first time in the book of Psalms, the word Chamas. He says, "God hates the ones who love Chamas.

ו יַמְטֵר עַל־רָשָׁעִים פְּחִים אֵשׁ וְגַפְרִית
רוּחַ זֶלְעָפוֹת מִנֶּת כּוֹסֵם:

6 He shall rain upon the wicked charcoal, fire, and brimstone, and a burning wind is the portion of their cup.

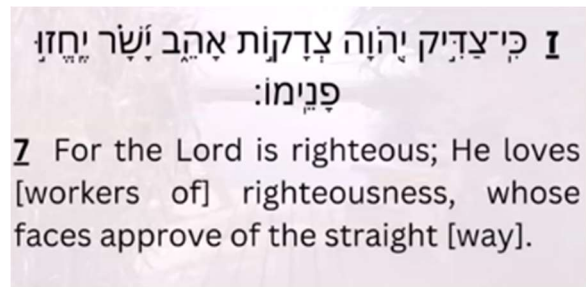
So David is not selling us a bill of goods. He's saying, that is going to come to the evil ones, but not through any easy road for the righteous ones. Because it says HaShem is going to test the righteous, meaning don't be surprised if the hardest challenges come to the most righteous people. That's built into the system. It's not going to be easy for the righteous, but HaShem hates the wicked. And the ones who love violence, the ones who love Chamas, HaShem will

rain down fire on them.

There's not really any better way to describe what's happening to Chamas right now than fire raining down on the evildoers, but the price that we're paying is so unbelievably difficult. It's such a difficult test. For the most righteous people of Israel.

And as I'm reading this, I'm asking myself, "Is David even comforting himself? Because it sounds like there's really not much difference in the outcome. And he says the good people are going to go through rough times and that's going to be a really tough test for them. And the bad people are going to go through rough times and that's going to be really tough for them. Well then what's the difference? Right?

The answer comes in the last verse. He says:



That's how it's translated, but in Hebrew it actually says, "HaShem is righteous and He loves the righteous and the upright people will be able to see His countenance. Meaning those that follow the straight path and choose righteousness, it's not because they're going to get something out of it, some sort of self-interest. The reward will be to see HaShem's face. What does that mean? It means you will have a

relationship with HaShem. You will feel HaShem's love. If everything was clear in the world and it was good to be good and bad to be bad and everything was self-evident, we would just be like doing good for the sake of the reward.

The world is set up so that the reward is not apparent. And the outcome of being good is not that everything is going to go great for you, but that you'll have an actual, honest, real, love relationship with HaShem. And that's something that we're really seeing now. And Jeremy started to mention it as well. In the nature of things, you would imagine that people would want to connect with Torah when it's worthwhile, when things are going good for the Jewish people. In the book of Esther, it says that when we won, a lot of people in Persia started trying to be Jewish. When the Jews were on top. But when we're on the bottom, that's when everyone's supposed to jump ship, right? You didn't see a lot of people becoming Jewish when Haman was about to kill us.

But that's not how the true lovers of HaShem act. The true lovers of HaShem come out of the woodwork when the things are worst for us. And as Jeremy said, "We've never in our lives seen so many people coming back to Torah right now at this time." The time that you would most want to run away from being Jewish, when things are so bad in Israel, and so bad in the world, isn't it a great time to go and hide and hide your Judaism?

In Israel one of the most famous film directors and writers, Omer Barak, he's a best selling author. So secular that up until now, he doesn't even call himself Jewish. He only called himself Israeli. He wrote the most moving thing. He said, "These days, the only word that comes to my mind is I am a Jew." For the first time in my life I realize that it doesn't matter how hard I try, I can't run away. For the first time in my life I realize that I don't want to run away. I might not wear a kippah or go to synagogue, but I want to search for God." This is one of the most secular, famous people in Israel. Who said, "I'm going to start searching for God." He said, "And for the identity that for so many years people tried to destroy, and I almost destroyed with my own hands. But for the first time this week, I lit Shabbat candles with my kids. I didn't know how to say the blessing, so I said the blessing of the Chanukah candles cause that was the only blessing I knew. And then I prayed, and I prayed for the hostages, and I prayed for the soldiers, and I prayed for us."

And there's just waves of stories like this. Story after story because that is our super-power. What David is revealing to us in this Psalm is that this is our super-power. While our enemies dream of 72 virgins in heaven, we're not driven for what is in it for us, but for the deepest yearning of our soul, what we dream

of when everything is stripped away from us, is just feeling HaShem's love and having a relationship with Him. And that's our secret power that awakens in exactly these moments when HaShem tests us the hardest. It awakens something in our soul that calls us back to Him.

So may we merit that even in these times, we'll chose HaShem's way and feel HaShem's love no matter how hard the tests we have to endure along the way. And maybe in the merit of those fighting, and of those who are gone, we can pray this Psalm together, each of us wherever we are in the world and find strength and courage. With that, my good friend and rabbi, Ari Abramowitz. Bye guys.

Ari

Shalom everybody. It is so good to see you. I see a lot of smiles and a lot of tears. Tehila has that affect on people. I can't even tell you how much Tehila and Jeremy have been a source of strength and encouragement for Shaena and I and our family. It's a very big deal. So I have some things on my heart that I want to share. Tabitha, it just goes so perfectly with Tehila's piece. Do you have that clip, stronger, can you play that?

(video)



Alright, so I have a confession. And I think it's going to be true for a lot of Jews out there. And it's a big lesson for you Jew-haters so I suggest you listen, all you anti-Zionists. Growing up, my Jewish identity was a completely secondary part of my life. I never even thought about it really. You know my parents had told me stories about what they went through. My mom had to escape Iraq because she was a Jew. And my dad, sadly most of his family was killed off in the Holocaust, but I never personalized it. It was never something that was super, super real to me. And it was just stories of things that they went through. But then after October 7th, seeing the way that the world responded to the attack and the amount of Jew hatred that actually exists, kind of woke up my Jewish side. Made me reconnect with it fully. And I think people don't realize just how many Jews out there have reconnected with their Jewish identities. You know we were disappearing. We were marrying non-Jews at exceptional numbers. Most of us don't follow the religion. I mean, look at me, I'm covered in tats. And now, so many of us are activated. You strengthen us when you attack us. We were disappearing, so I have to say, "Thank-you to everyone who has reminded all of us Jews what it actually means to be Jewish. Thank-you for showing us the true face of anti-semitism. And thank-you for uniting us once again. Because I promise you, we're stronger than ever now. (end)

Ari

So, that's a powerful testimony there and there's really truth to that. I spent this Shabbat at my sister's house. It was my birthday Shabbat. We all have our birthdays around the same time and so it was my birthday Shabbat. And Shaena made me a wonderful beautiful cake with a big lion on it. I should show you the picture of it. It's so cool. But you know, I was trying to tell my sister, who's really struggling like we all are with the evil and good and how this is and what HaShem is doing. And I was just trying to explain to her that ain ode milvado, there's nothing but HaShem. And everything is good, even if it's so far beyond what our human, mortal mind could possibly grasp, that everything is good, including what's happening to us, it's happening for us.

And she was struggling with that and this is just a very, very small example. And you have to be careful saying things like that considering the horrific tragedies, the orphans, the widows, the kidnapped, the trauma that an entire nation is going through. You gotta be careful saying, "It's all for the good." But we're just us here. The Fellowship, we're a family here and we're at the place where you can understand what I'm saying right now. And that's just a small example of that.

And I want to talk to you about how this is all for the good and I want to talk to you about what we're facing right now at the Farm right now. And specific, a lot of you have been reaching out and saying, "I'm reading articles that something happened at the Farm, what's going on." And so I want to talk about that, but before I do, I just want to start with the Torah portion. Because these portions are so rich and there's so much happening. Never in my life has it been such a struggle for me to learn. To sit down and to learn Torah. I feel like in-between guarding and patrolling, and my family. Everything that we're going through it's just so hard, and I know I'm not alone. I speak to my friends and they say that also. And you know and I'm trying to forgive myself. But ultimately we really need to learn. We need to learn Torah now because it's the blueprint for us, it's guiding us through everything that we're going through right now, everything we've been through up until right now and everything we will go through up until now.

And the Torah portion really speaks to us. And in some ways, this Torah portion was somewhat of a consolation for me, just at the very end when it says that Isaac and Ishmael buried their father, Abraham, together. And it says that only will there be able to be truly peace when Ishmael comes and proactively and voluntarily through a place of understanding, sort of yields the way and says, "This is my brother, Isaac. He was the chosen of my father." Then we can turn and say, "Well you were chosen as well. We're all chosen, but we're chosen to tell you how chosen you are." And so you see reconciliation there. And that gave me a glimmer of hope because it feels like we're so far from that right now. So far from that, it's hard for me to even imagine what reconciliation would look like. It's hard for me to wrap my mind around it because I just don't know how we can possibly go back to the level of co-existence that we had before.

You know, the nearby settlement of Ibei HaNachal, you know there was Arab construction building homes there, right next to my daughter Dvash's kindergarten. And it always made me uncomfortable, and I was constantly going and checking and making sure that the guard there was vigilant and whatever. We're going to go back to that now? Who's going to let that happen? Who has the trust that they just won't go in and butcher babies? I don't know how we're going to go back to what it was.

But this week's Torah portion, it gives us that sort of hope at the very end. And so this week's Torah portion is called Chayei Sarah, the life of Sarah because it starts with a conclusion of Sarah's life, right? This is one of the verses that I memorized since I was a little boy, because my rabbi was teaching us a certain methodology, we talked about it in the past, of memorizing the Torah. So we would sing it together – And the life of Sarah was 100 years...anyways, we would sing it together so that it has a special place in my heart. We learned about Sarah's life because she left world at the beginning of this week's Torah portion. And Abraham, I'm going to try to make it a little tighter, because I see that I'm already running out of time, but Abraham goes and purchases for her a plot in Hebron called Ma'arat HaMachpelah, the cave of Machpelah.



We have a beautiful piece of art, Shaena and I do behind our Shabbat table, done by the famous Barak Nachshon. Shaena's parents gave it to us for our wedding, as a gift. And it says it right there, it quotes the midrash. It says – There's three places that the nations of the world cannot say that we stole from them. Right?

Let's just take a step back. Through prophecy, Abraham knew that this Hebron, Ma'arat HaMachpelah was the divinely selected place where the mamas and the papas, our forefathers and our foremothers would be buried. I don't know if that's a word – foremothers. This is where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah would be buried. And of course, we know the famous faith, belief that we have that Adam and Eve were also buried there as well. And on some level, it's the entrance to the Garden of Eden, whatever that means, we don't fully understand that. We of course know Rachel was buried on the road between Bethlehem and Ephrata where she weeps for her children on a spiritual dimension to this very day. I think at this very moment.

So this rabbi in Modiin, Rav Sobel shared a very important idea about the city. He was saying that Western thinking tends to focus on the conflict in the world, through a prism of finances and materialism. Everything is about money. Everything is about money and the inequity of money or whatever and that's what it's all about. And if you just throw enough money at anything, then you can solve it. And I think that of course they're projecting their own Western culture on the world. Just projecting their own hierarchy of values and force-fitting that to the rest of the world and insisting the world is exactly like them. There's a certain arrogance that's part of the human condition, but particularly in the West.

But our enemies, he pointed out, can't be bribed or bought. Right? So the midrash says that there's three cities that we cannot, that our enemies cannot say that we stole from them because in the Torah itself, it teaches us, we see that they were purchased for good money – Shechem, the city of Shechem, the Temple Mount and Hebron. And in this week's Torah portion, we learn about Hebron. So they were purchased for money so our enemies can't say that we stole it from them. But it's exactly those cities that they are focusing on and saying that we stole from them. And because of the enemies that we're dealing with right now that are our enemies, they can't be bribed or bought out. Maybe for a few weeks or so, or for a few months they will delay their genocidal plans for the right financial incentive. But they're only taking that incentive in order to further their final goal which is the wholesale genocide of the nation of Israel. They're so single-mindedly focused in the most obsessive way imaginable on murdering every single Jew. Just that alone, we should look and say this is obviously and clearly a spiritual war. This isn't about their level of financial stability in Gaza. That's just so ridiculous. You know their focus is on wiping us out. And of course, the rest of the infidel, shortly thereafter. But their focus right now is on the nation of Israel.

And you know, I've been watching the narratives of our enemies and I listen to their arguments and they say, "Gaza is an open-air prison and they've been oppressed and they want their own state." And somehow in their twisted minds, this can somehow explain and justify the most savage evil of putting a baby in an oven while raping the mother to the cries and shrieks of her dying, burning baby. I'm sorry that I'm saying this. But we have to keep it alive within us. We can't forget how savage and evil and sick and dark and twisted they are. And that's just one of the thousands of examples.

And you know, so we hear the world explaining this stuff away, justifying it, whitewashing possibly the greatest evil the world has ever seen. Right? And I just don't know how to come to terms with it. So Jews are coming to terms that we're dealing with an extraordinary dark, spiritual force who revels and celebrates murder and torture and absolute horror. And that this is a spiritual war, and the world may not see it. They may buy the very simple, shallow, TikTok posts. But this spiritual force has already declared war on every single infidel in the world. And the Jewish people are simply the vanguard, we're simply the tip of the spear, the frontlines in the battle against evil on behalf of all of humanity.

And one of the greatest pleasures of my life is to bless all of you. You're such an unbelievable extraordinary blessing to us. And now, I would like to bless all of you with of course the blessing of Aaron the High Priest, blesses the children of Israel every single day. And as you know, I am not a descendent of Aaron, but I am from the nation of Israel, I'm from the Jewish people and we are a nation of priests. And so, with that -

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless and protect you. May He shine His countenance upon you and may He give you peace. Amen.

Session 159

Chayei Sarah – Israel at War: Facing Your Fears

12 November 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2eSD1T-6JU>

Ari

Shalom everybody, good to see you, good to see you! Jeremy, is it good to see them or what?

Jeremy

Yeah, very good to see you guys. Shalom everybody. Tehila's here also. She's on the side here, waiting to be called into duty.

Ari

Yeah, this is an intense Fellowship. There's a lot going on in Israel, there's a lot going on in the world, there's a lot going on at our Farm, in our corner of Judea. And so we want to share all of that with you. We're just sitting here literally up at the moment of it starting and saying, "Who should go first, who should talk first, who should do what?" And so we decided, Jeremy, you're going first this time. Then, Tehila, then for some reason, I keep doing this to myself. And I'm going to go after Tehila. Which is number one rule, NEVER go after Tehila. Impossible to follow Tehila. But for whatever reason, I need to be humbled. Perhaps at some point I will be raised up after the humility that I keep having. So anyways, Jeremy, you go first and I'm going to let Tehila sit here. Ok, next to you.

Jeremy

Shalom, everybody, ok, a lot going everyone. So, ok, a little bit of background. The last week has been very intense around the Farm. I'm not going to give over too many details, but our surrounding is becoming more volatile. There's more attempted...let's just call it like it is...more attempted terror attacks all around the Farm right now. And so Ari and I are responding accordingly, so is the army, so are the villagers that live around us. Just for example, in the last hour, there were 15 rockets fired from Lebanon into Israel, just this last hour. And so, we don't know if it's necessarily connected to the Shifa Hospital, which is one of the Chamas headquarters that the IDF now is slowly but surely evacuating the people and going after the terrorists that are in there and maybe this is sort of backup that is coming. It is unclear, but what is clear is that it seems as though this conflict is not going to stay located in the Gaza Strip. It is spreading, and we're feeling that. We're feeling it. Definitely the tense realities around the Farm are sensed by everyone.

And so, what I want to do today is, I want to talk a little bit about God. That's what I want to do, that's what's on my heart. I feel like God needs to be brought a little bit more into this reality in Israel. You know there's so many pundits and speakers and analysts and journalists and everyone's talking about their opinions about everything. But everything that happens in Israel is connected to God. And it's like the separation of church and state in Israel is like taking the water out of the pool. It's not a pool anymore. Everything that is happening here is a spiritual battle, a physical battle, it's a biblical battle, it's all intertwined.

One of the verses in Tehillim says it like this – From my enemies, I shall become smarter. And the sages of Israel say that you can actually learn Israel’s chosenness from Israel’s enemies. And when you look at this, some people say, “How can you even believe in God in such a scenario? Look what happened to Israel on October 7th, I mean, where was God, where is this, where is that?” And I’m looking at Israel’s enemies, and the people who stand with Israel’s enemies, and most of the time, since the Garden of Eden, good and bad has been interwoven within each other. Within every good, there’s a little bit of bad, within every bad there’s a little bit of good.

But as we come now to this end in our history so far, in transitioning to a new era, the good and the bad is actually being separated out. There’s never been a clearer line dividing between good and evil. There’s the side of the Jihadists, rapists, murderers, kidnappers of toddlers that are still holding hostages, that are still holding our babies underground, and then there’s the people that are siding with those rapists, murderers. And then there’s the people that are trying to free the hostages and fight against these murderers. And it’s like, look at the Jew’s enemies, whether it be Nazis that attacked the Jews in the last generation. Imagine living under their rule, or imagine living under the rule of Chamas. Imagine if Iran and Chamas and ISIS and the Jihad won the war and they actually defeated the West. Imagine living under that civilization.

So yes, always as soon as evil arises in the world, it attacks the Jew first. But note that when evil arises in the world, it attacks the Jewish people first. It’s like, how do you not see God in that? I mean of all of the people the Jews are less than a quarter of 1%. Zero point two of one percent of the world population. And when evil arises in the world, it’s like attracted to the Jews like a magnet. And you can become very wise from looking at our enemies. You can know the truth of goodness by encountering the truth of evil in the world.

And so, as I’m watching some of these people that are siding with the Chamas, it’s almost like they have these glass eyes and they’re just so filled with hatred that it makes you believe that the Jews must be good if you look at our enemies. The enemies of evil are attacking the forces of good. Now, we’re just the front lines, because they’re after all of us, they’re after all of us. They’re after you in England, they’re after you in Australia, they’re after you in New York and Los Angeles. And so, we’re just, you know Pearl Harbor’s right down the road, folks. If you don’t know that, then wake up. They are not just after Israel, and they’re not just after the Gaza Strip, and they’re not just after Judea and Samaria. They are after London, and they are after Berlin, and they are after America, and the evil force that arises in the world, that’s just the way that mechanics of this world works. It attacks the Jew first. And you would think the world would be smart enough now that when some movement immediately attacks the Jew...I mean, right now in London, right now what’s trending in social media is “death to all Jews.” That’s actually trending in London now, that is the most popular tweet that’s happening in London now. Hashtag deathtoallJews. And so, when that happens, yes there are Jews in London, but all the others that are non-Jihadist Muslims in London, watch out. Cause once the Jews leave London, they’re coming for you.

The second thing that I wanted to talk about was at the very, very beginning of the war, I haven’t really talked about this, but because Ari and I live alone on a mountain, every once in a while, I have an opportunity to just like walk off into the wilderness and just have moments with myself and moments with God. There was one point when I was really like, shaking my fist at heaven, really calling God out.

“How did You let this happen to us? How did You let this happen to us? We’ve been burned, we’ve been raped, we’ve been killed...how did You let this happen to us from these forces of evil? Maybe we weren’t perfect, but look at this!” And immediately, it was, “I gave you tanks, I gave you airplanes, I gave you the most sophisticated technologies to uproot the evil from the Land. Why are you turning to Me?”

It’s like there’s a part in the Torah where God says, “Why are you calling to Me? Go, travel.” There’s like a time for prayer, there’s also a time for action. And right now, the Holocaust, there could really be theological questions there. But at this stage in Jewish history, the entire responsibility is on our shoulders. To defend not only the people of Israel, but the good people of the entire world. We’ve been given every tool at our disposal to protect ourselves. And I think one of the tools that’s really lacking, that we have not been using is actually prayer. You know, I wish that I had a larger microphone in Israel. But I would like to propose a new peace plan. Because we’ve tried everything in this country. We’ve tried to offer them Land, we’ve tried to offer them money, we’ve even given them guns. That’s how crazy the Israeli left is. And I’m like, “Let’s try a new peace plan. What about a mass movement of teshuva? We’ve tried everything else. Can all of Israel actually repent? Can we just call on everyone in Israel to actually call out to God? Let’s just...why not try? We’ve tried everything else. Can we just try to see...I don’t know how to say it. Put God in a corner here and force God to like reveal Himself? Like if we could all call out to God, maybe that would actually be a better peace plan than all the other nutty things we’ve done like giving our enemies guns to attack us with.

And I’ll tell you. This is a story that was published by one of the soldiers that learned in Yeshivat Ramat Gan, which is one of the most unique yeshivas in Israel because it’s placed right in the heart around Tel Aviv, in that area. And their idea was how to be a light in secular Israel. And so this was posted on the bulletin board of that yeshiva by one of the soldiers that’s fighting in Gaza. So I have the letter here with me in Hebrew. And I’m going to read it to you and just translate it automatically into English. Here’s what it says:

Yesterday, one of my boys, one of our friends, one of the chevre, called me and told me this story. He’s from Givati, he’s from the infantry unit, Givati. Last night we were in the middle of battles. I was in the headquarters and all of a sudden my commander comes up to me and says, “I have a very important mission for you. You’re religious, right? (With a kippah on my head.) Go, pray now.” And I said, ‘What?’

This is a totally secular commander, he lives with his partner in Tel Aviv somewhere. And he tells me, “Listen, what I’m telling you right now. This is a time only for prayers, for the longest time, we have two armed personal carriers that have broken down in the middle of an open area in Azah. This could be a catastrophe. We are not able to fix them. Go pray, or they’ll fix them, or the Chamas might not attack us. Pray now, we are in a dire situation.”

It took me time to process what was happening and I wasn’t able to concentrate. I immediately went out to just talk to God. I said, “HaShem, these are Your boys. They’re here fighting on behalf of Your people. Let there not be a desecration of Your Name, and these things happen.” I wasn’t able to concentrate, but ok, I did my best. A quarter of an hour later, I came back to the headquarters, as I was asking for God to hear my prayers, as I gave them over. I got to the headquarters and the commander comes to me, filled up with light. And he says to me, “You do not understand what has happened here.

A minute after you left, the first armed personal carrier was fixed and started working. A few moments later, another one was fixed. And now all of them are fixed and they're moving toward battle. You are not going in to Azah, I need you right here for you to just pray." And that was the story that happened.

And you know, it's like, slowly but surely what we're seeing in Israel is a real awakening. An awakening among Israelis from all walks of life. The most sold item in Israel right now are tzit-tzit. There's not enough kids to tie the knots in the strings because so many people are feeling compelled to wear tzit-tzit now. Soldiers want them as guards and protection, and the people that are praying for their soldiers want them as guards and protection. And so you're seeing what's happening here. It seems as though we're just being brought to a place where two things are going to happen. One, the Jewish people are coming to grips that we are Jews. And what does that mean for someone that has denied their Jewish identity their whole life? It's forcing them to come to grips, they're watching the marches in London, and the demonstrations in New York, and they're yelling, "Gas the Jew, death to all Jews." And these Israelis are like, "I don't really even identify as a Jew, I am sort of just a human, an Israeli, I don't really even know what that means. But they hate us."

And Jews, it somehow taps into this intergenerational hatred for thousands of years and now it's like, what is it about us that they hate so much? Look at who hates us! Like the derek of all humans, the worst of society, the most evil, that must mean something good about me. And so the first thing that's happening is the Jews are being forced to come to grips with their own Jewish identity.

And the second thing that's happening, whether we like it or not, is that Israel is standing alone. The pressure is melting, slowly but surely. Calls for ceasefire, more and more pressure, more and more news articles about the Gazans, more and more news articles. And in some ways, when you think about the process of redemption. Last generation we had to deal with Esav. And we dealt with the Western world at their worst. And it manifested as the Nazis, the pinnacle peak of western civilization, the most advanced society, the most advanced scientists, Beethoven and Bach and all of the culture of Western civilization coming out of Berlin. And then Esav went and just attacked the Jew, the evil spirit that came out. And remarkably Germany today, even more than other European countries, is standing relatively strong alongside Israel. Like what a fixing may be happening there, with that relationship.

And before Esav, is Yishmael. And imagine the pathway that's happening now. We had to do something, fix something there, go through a battle there, and now we are one step closer to Avraham's children – Yitzchak and Yishmael, fighting right now inside the Land of Israel, all of the Arabs around us are kind of coming together. And now, it's like a final, final battle. But where is it bringing us back to? It's bringing us back to Abraham. And Abraham was the man that stood alone. He said, "All of you child-sacrificing idolaters are wrong, and I am right." And so, Israel confronted with the evil of Chamas and what they did to our children and what they're still doing to our children and our elderly, have to have enough courage and resolve to say, "All of you are wrong and I am right." And the Jewish people alone will stand for the truth. Because when you stand for the truth, you stand with God. And that's this dual process that's happening to every Jew on an individual level and the Jewish people collectively as a nation in Israel.

And so, the state of Israel is going through a process and the mystical writings of Judaism would say it like this:

That the peel comes before the fruit.

The State of Israel is the peel. And now slowly that peel is being peeled away to get to the fruit. But God's vision for Israel was not the modern State of Israel. I mean the State of Israel. We're not even a country, we're a state. Forget about a Kingdom. We're a State. It's embarrassing. Is Germany a state? Germany's a country. England's a country. The State of Israel. And so that's clearly not the vision of the prophets. But what's happening is that that is the peel that comes before the fruit. And the peel is slowly being peeled away and a new fruit is emerging. And that's what's happening now here in Israel.

And you know, for the world to say, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." That's what they are saying in all of these marches. What that means is, they're calling for Jewish genocide. They're calling for all the Jews in Israel to be wiped out. They're calling for all of us to be killed. After we experienced what we experienced with our hostages still being held by the Chamas terrorist organization, no demonstrations are calling for the Chamas to surrender and release hostages. They're calling for the destruction of all Jews, for the annihilation of all Jews.

And so the separation is happening now, between good and between evil. And you know, I don't know if it's going to be facial recognition, or if it's going to be posts on Facebook, but a record is being kept right now, for every lover of Israel and every hater of Israel. Maybe it's simply in God's mind, but I think it's actually going to be really provable in this world as well. Where everyone will be able to hold up either a badge of honor, or a real mark of shame. And there will be judgment, judgment for those that came against God's chosen people. That could not differentiate between good and evil and who stood on the side of evil. Where Israel has just wanted to live in peace and yet just riddled with terror and war and this is the beginning of the war that will end all wars.

And so, choose your sides wisely because a record is being kept. And so, this is the last war. Yishmael was the last one. You know in Tehila's Torah a few weeks ago, she quoted a mystical writing that Yishmael was circumcised at the age of 13. And, it says that he will have a merit to the Land of Israel for 1,300 years. And if you just google really quickly, "When was the Arabian conquest of eretz Israel," you'll see it lasted almost to the day, 1,300 years until the Jewish people came back in 1948 and established the State of Israel.

And so, there's some things that are so glaringly true. And when people say, "Ahh...the Jewish people, you stole the Land." There's just never been a stronger claim of a people to a land than the Jewish people to Jerusalem. Every rock you pick up in Israel, you find Jewish writing. Every name of every Jewish city you find in the Bible. I mean the interconnectedness between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, I almost don't even want to have the debate because it's ridiculous to even give it credibility. Because they're no people in the world that is more connected to the Land of Israel than the people of Israel.

And so the truth is now revealed for the world to choose. And so, what's so marvelous about this Fellowship is that we are a living example of the way the world should be, of what the world could be. And we're living it right now, in this time, in this transitional period. And so we should be blessed to know that as we're going closer and closer from Esav to Yishmael, all the way back to Avraham, that we should have the clarity, the courage, and the emunah to stand alone like Abraham, to say, "All of you demonstrators, the hundreds of thousands of you around the world, all of you are wrong. And we are right."

And so, with that, I am very good at saying that she is always right. Because most of the time, she is. So I'm going to introduce Tehila for you guys, she's been working on this Torah that she's going to teach for quite a while now. And it is beyond challenging for her to find the time, come here, broadcast, and so she loves you all, we love her, and with that, I will pass it over to Tehila Gimpel.

Tehila

Hey guys. Thank you, Jeremy. Hey, so great to see all of your faces. So you know, I apologize. It's been a little bit of a time. I haven't been able to put out so many videos. I don't have any actual good excuse other than not having really anything to say. And I don't want to talk to you guys if I don't feel like I have something to say, but sometimes HaShem just speaks so loud. I don't have much choice. And so here I am. In the spirit of the videos and the Torah I've been trying to give over since the beginning of the war, I'm looking in the Bible for the meaning of the word chamas and seeing what that means in different places in the Torah and how our biblical heroes struggled in the face of chamas, which in Hebrew is this horrible, horrendous evil. And you know to try to draw inspiration from them and in our struggle in the face of what seems to be this insurmountable evil in our own times.

And I want to focus back on Psalms because at the end of the day like Jeremy said, it's really, for those of us who can't be in physical battle, being in prayer battle is really the most that we can do. And I've been getting inspiration lately from my little boy, Noam. Noam, he'll be playing, and our kids kind of live their normal life. And he'll be playing soccer, working in the garden, but then suddenly I'll see this sort of sadness come over his face and then he'll just say, "Ima, can I light a candle for the hostages?" And you know, it's really heartbreaking. And every single night, when I finish telling him his bedtime story, he'll ask me for the book of Psalms. He'll ask me for Tehillim. And every night I'll find him with his light on in his room with his little book of Psalms open because he fell asleep reading Psalms for the hostages and for the soldiers. And I just thought that was so precious. And so I said, "Ok, Noam, you inspire me, we're going to focus a little bit on the Psalms."

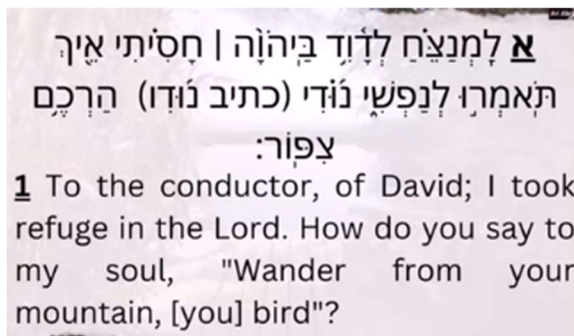
And I want to, today, if you guys want to grab your Psalms if you have it nearby, I want to look at Psalm 11. And Psalm 11 is the very first time that we see the word chamas in the book of Tehillim, in the book of Psalms. So my go-to was to open Chanan Peratz book on Tehillim. He wrote a book called, "To Live the Psalms." And he usually has really nice insights on the meanings of the words, but here, you know I felt like drawn to this...I felt drawn to this particular Psalm. And then, I open up the book and what does he say? Chanan Perat was fighting for Gush Katif. He was in Gush Katif, in Azah, in Gaza, before it was evacuated and he was one of the last people left in Gush Katif after everybody had been evacuated. And he was in the synagogue of Neve Dekalim, one of the last places of Gush Katif to be destroyed. And he

says in his book, "I'm sitting in the synagogue, I'm pretty much the last Jew in the Gaza Strip," this is in 2005, in the disengagement. And he says, "I felt drawn to read Psalm 11."

And so I said, "Ok, that's a confirmation that this is what I'm supposed to be studying." And he said that this Psalm gave him strength at that moment. And it was so striking, but even with all of that, I was just having trouble getting up my strength to try to really dig into this, and then my birthday rolled around last week. And thank you Nancy for your kind wishes, I just saw them. Hi Nancy. And it was my birthday, and I wasn't really in a birthday mood. And my beloved sister-in-law, Avigial who I hope you guys are following her amazing work that she's doing during this war, she knows me so well. She said, "I know you're not going to want a birthday present for your birthday, so I sent you a devar Torah, I sent you a Torah." And I see a word file in my WhatsApp, and I open it up...you guys are going to fall off your chairs. I open it up, I hadn't said anything about this to her. I open it up, she says, "I wrote you a Torah on Psalm 11 because I know you've been having a hard time, making videos and making Torahs. Maybe this will get your engine going."

I said, "Oh my gosh, ok HaShem, I hear You loud and clear!" And then, my wonderful friend, Bretta, and my wonderful friend, Deborah, they both asked me to do another video on Psalms. So, this is a collaborative work, and I have to thank all of my friends that have been pushing me forward.

So, if you guys are with me, I would love if you would open up Psalm 11. I just want to study it because when we study it, then we can really understand the meaning and pray it together, but not just from reading the words but from actually understanding it. So the first verse says:



You guys know what it means when it says, "To the conductor?" There are about 50 Psalms that start with "to the conductor." It means that in the Temple, that was something that was sung with like an orchestra and there was a conductor. And this was something that was read in the actual Temple with beautiful music. So it says, "To the conductor of David..." Now it says, "I took refuge in the Lord..."

It's an interesting opening. David starts out by saying that he takes refuge in HaShem. Now what's interesting about this particular Psalm is that it has no actual prayer in it. Look carefully at Psalm 11, David is not actually asking HaShem for anything. He's actually sharing with us his inner dialogue about how to exist in his emunah, in his faith in HaShem in the face of a really difficult reality. He's straightening himself out, straightening us out, not the external reality, but actually how we maintain our relationship with HaShem in the face of a difficult reality.

So David starts with this fundamental problem...how do you say to my soul, wander from your mountain o bird. What is the problem that he's facing? He's facing a problem that everyone keeps telling him to get off of his land. He's saying, "Everyone is saying, get off your land."

You know the sages tried to figure out, if you have all these problems, if you would just get off your land, just fly away, everything will be ok. The sages tried to figure out, which point in David's life is this taking place. And Rabbi Menachem Ma'eri says this is happening in the 23rd chapter of the 1st book of Samuel. Now this is amazing. Because in the 23rd chapter of the 1st book of Samuel is when David and his men go out of hiding from Saul because they hear...get this...that the Philistines are about to attack a community called Kehila. A city bordering near the Philistines. You can't make this stuff up. We know that the Philistines were mainly in Israel in the area that's now the Gaza Strip. Right? And then they're attacking communities that are next to the Gaza, next to this Philistine kind of Gaza strip in order to terrorize them. And David takes his men to go save them. Does this sound like it's speaking to our times, guys? You can't make this up, right?

David takes his men to go save them and then what happens? Their response is so ungrateful because they basically turn him over to Saul after he saves them from these godless Philistines. And it's such a painful thing for David. He's essentially protecting people from these horrible enemies and they turn him over and he has to run away and become a fugitive again. Imagine reading this when you're Chanan Perat and you're the last person in Gush Katif, you're the last Jew in Gush Katif, when the settlements were there in Gaza were there to protect the cities around the Gaza Strip by creating a presence there that wouldn't allow terror organizations to take hold. And the self-sacrifice of the people who went to live in the most dangerous areas in order to protect other Israelis were then treated so horribly and thrown out of their homes and turned into fugitives. It's like you can't make this stuff up.

Now what's so interesting is the word that David uses in Hebrew to say that the bird...they tell him to fly away like a bird is (נִוְדִי) nudi, which is in the singular. But the texts...this is one of the several examples...there's a few places in the Torah where the written word is different than the way we pronounce it. The way we pronounce it is nudi in the singular, but the text actually says nudu (נִוְדוּ) which is plural. You will ALL be told to fly away from your land, fly away from your mountain. So it's like the verse is already hinting to us that there's going to be a double story here. There's going to be David's single story in the singular, but it's going to be ALL of your story, Israel, time and time again. It's the singular and the plural at the same time. It's something that we're going to face not only in David's personal life, but in our life.

And we feel it so much now. When you see the proportion of soldiers that are falling to protect Israel right now, it's so unbelievably noticeably disproportionately made of settlers and believers from Judea and Samaria, the ones who are the most vilified so wrongly as if we are the ones that are endangering peace and turn out to be the only ones who properly identify the real danger posed by these terrorist organization. And now instead of saying, "I told you so," those are the same people that are running out most courageously and giving their lives to save people once again. And the world, and even people in Israel still talk about turning these very heroes over from their homes. Like you know, "Get out of Judea, guys."

It's the singular and the plural. It happened in David's life and it's happening over and over in our national story. And so the basic problem being faced in this story is, "Ok, you gotta get off of your land." And you know, it feels so familiar because we finally have our place to be Jews in Judea and they're just like...when Jews lived in Europe, they said, "Why are you guys wandering around Europe, find your own

place.” And once we find our own place, they’re telling us, “Why are you living in someone else’s place? Go back to Europe, go back to Brooklyn.” And we’re like these birds, constantly being shuffled off of our Land, as if for our own good.

And now, verse 2 it says:

ב כִּי הִנֵּה הַרְשָׁעִים יִדְרֹכֹן קֶשֶׁת כּוֹנְנֵי
חֲצִים עַל־יָתֵר לִירוֹת בְּמוֹאֲפָל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:
2 For behold the wicked tread the
bow, they set their arrow on the
bowstring to shoot in the dark at the
upright of heart.

And then in 3 it says:

ג כִּי־הִשְׁתּוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִהַפֶּעַל:
3 For the foundations were destroyed;
what did the righteous man do?

Think about what David is saying here. He’s saying they’re shooting in the dark at the upright of heart. And the foundations are being destroyed. There’s a feeling right now in the world, I’m sure you guys feel it, too, that the foundations don’t make sense anymore in life. Like the obvious good is being seen

as bad, the obvious bad is being seen as good. And we live in a world where Iran is the head of the UN Human Rights Counsel, and where the President of Syria who has killed half a million of his own citizens is condemning Israel for not being humane enough and Israel is offering humanitarian aide to help evacuate the babies of the terrorists.

And you know, and then David asks, “What can the righteous man do? The arrows being shot at the upright in the heart of darkness. You know most of the battles in Gaza are taking place at night. And every morning we wake up and the count of how many of our righteous people are dead is so obvious that HaShem is taking the best ones. Do you guys get that sense? It’s just like HaShem is taking the best ones and it’s so unbelievable. The people that are being killed here, sometimes they don’t even seem like real people. I’m like, “I’m a good person. I try my best, I give charity and I try to be a good mom, right?” And then, you know, as soon as I meet like a really righteous person, that’s like one in a hundred, right? How many really super-duper righteous people do you meet? It feels like every person that’s falling for us here are mythically level good people.

Like yesterday we heard the terrible news that Yossi Hershkovitz died. His son is a counselor in our children’s youth group. He’s a 44-year-old school principal and a Torah teacher who’s also an unbelievable military warrior and a gifted musician who played violin for sick people in the hospital. I mean, could you be more David-like than being a musician who’s also a Torah teacher who’s also a warrior? Like, what are we going to do with that? And each story, it seems like there’s not a normal distribution of sacrifices. And the terrorists are shooting in the dark like the verse says. But somehow the arrows are striking in the dark, the most upright of heart. Exactly as the Psalm says.

And what is David's question? It's not really a theoretical, philosophical question of, "Oh, why do bad things happen to good people?" He's actually saying, "Is there even a point of being righteous?" Sometimes it feels so hopeless, like why are we in this fight? What should righteous people do? And the verse says in number 4:

ד יְהוָה | בְּהֵיכַל קִדְשׁוֹ יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם
כְּסֵאוֹ עֵינָיו יַחְזוּ עַפְעָפִיּוֹ יִבְחֲנוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם:

4 The Lord is in His Holy Temple. The Lord-His throne is in Heaven; His eyes see, His pupils try the sons of men.

In verse 4 David tries to tell us, HaShem does feel like He's so far away. It's like He's in heaven, but He's seeing this. He's with us and He's watching us. But where does that go? How does it express itself? You know we kind of hope that the bottom line is going to be, "Don't worry, guys. Good stuff is coming. Everything is going to be ok, everything is going to feel good soon." But that's not what David

tells us. Look at verses 5 and 6:

ה יְהוָה צְדִיק יִבְחֵן וְרָשָׁע וְאֹהֵב חָמָס
שִׁנְאָה נַפְשׁוֹ:

5 The Lord tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

And here we see for the first time in the book of Psalms, the word Chamas. He says, "God hates the ones who love Chamas.

ו יַמְטֵר עַל־רָשָׁעִים פְּחִים אֵשׁ וְגַפְרִית
רוּחַ זֹלַעְפוֹת מִנֵּת כּוֹסֵם:

6 He shall rain upon the wicked charcoal, fire, and brimstone, and a burning wind is the portion of their cup.

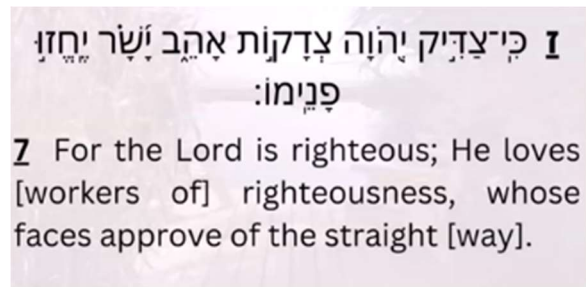
So David is not selling us a bill of goods. He's saying, that is going to come to the evil ones, but not through any easy road for the righteous ones. Because it says HaShem is going to test the righteous, meaning don't be surprised if the hardest challenges come to the most righteous people. That's built into the system. It's not going to be easy for the righteous, but HaShem hates the wicked. And the ones who love violence, the ones who love Chamas, HaShem will

rain down fire on them.

There's not really any better way to describe what's happening to Chamas right now than fire raining down on the evildoers, but the price that we're paying is so unbelievably difficult. It's such a difficult test. For the most righteous people of Israel.

And as I'm reading this, I'm asking myself, "Is David even comforting himself? Because it sounds like there's really not much difference in the outcome. And he says the good people are going to go through rough times and that's going to be a really tough test for them. And the bad people are going to go through rough times and that's going to be really tough for them. Well then what's the difference? Right?

The answer comes in the last verse. He says:



That's how it's translated, but in Hebrew it actually says, "HaShem is righteous and He loves the righteous and the upright people will be able to see His countenance. Meaning those that follow the straight path and choose righteousness, it's not because they're going to get something out of it, some sort of self-interest. The reward will be to see HaShem's face. What does that mean? It means you will have a

relationship with HaShem. You will feel HaShem's love. If everything was clear in the world and it was good to be good and bad to be bad and everything was self-evident, we would just be like doing good for the sake of the reward.

The world is set up so that the reward is not apparent. And the outcome of being good is not that everything is going to go great for you, but that you'll have an actual, honest, real, love relationship with HaShem. And that's something that we're really seeing now. And Jeremy started to mention it as well. In the nature of things, you would imagine that people would want to connect with Torah when it's worthwhile, when things are going good for the Jewish people. In the book of Esther, it says that when we won, a lot of people in Persia started trying to be Jewish. When the Jews were on top. But when we're on the bottom, that's when everyone's supposed to jump ship, right? You didn't see a lot of people becoming Jewish when Haman was about to kill us.

But that's not how the true lovers of HaShem act. The true lovers of HaShem come out of the woodwork when the things are worst for us. And as Jeremy said, "We've never in our lives seen so many people coming back to Torah right now at this time." The time that you would most want to run away from being Jewish, when things are so bad in Israel, and so bad in the world, isn't it a great time to go and hide and hide your Judaism?

In Israel one of the most famous film directors and writers, Omer Barak, he's a best selling author. So secular that up until now, he doesn't even call himself Jewish. He only called himself Israeli. He wrote the most moving thing. He said, "These days, the only word that comes to my mind is I am a Jew." For the first time in my life I realize that it doesn't matter how hard I try, I can't run away. For the first time in my life I realize that I don't want to run away. I might not wear a kippah or go to synagogue, but I want to search for God." This is one of the most secular, famous people in Israel. Who said, "I'm going to start searching for God." He said, "And for the identity that for so many years people tried to destroy, and I almost destroyed with my own hands. But for the first time this week, I lit Shabbat candles with my kids. I didn't know how to say the blessing, so I said the blessing of the Chanukah candles cause that was the only blessing I knew. And then I prayed, and I prayed for the hostages, and I prayed for the soldiers, and I prayed for us."

And there's just waves of stories like this. Story after story because that is our super-power. What David is revealing to us in this Psalm is that this is our super-power. While our enemies dream of 72 virgins in heaven, we're not driven for what is in it for us, but for the deepest yearning of our soul, what we dream

of when everything is stripped away from us, is just feeling HaShem's love and having a relationship with Him. And that's our secret power that awakens in exactly these moments when HaShem tests us the hardest. It awakens something in our soul that calls us back to Him.

So may we merit that even in these times, we'll chose HaShem's way and feel HaShem's love no matter how hard the tests we have to endure along the way. And maybe in the merit of those fighting, and of those who are gone, we can pray this Psalm together, each of us wherever we are in the world and find strength and courage. With that, my good friend and rabbi, Ari Abramowitz. Bye guys.

Ari

Shalom everybody. It is so good to see you. I see a lot of smiles and a lot of tears. Tehila has that affect on people. I can't even tell you how much Tehila and Jeremy have been a source of strength and encouragement for Shaena and I and our family. It's a very big deal. So I have some things on my heart that I want to share. Tabitha, it just goes so perfectly with Tehila's piece. Do you have that clip, stronger, can you play that?

(video)



Alright, so I have a confession. And I think it's going to be true for a lot of Jews out there. And it's a big lesson for you Jew-haters so I suggest you listen, all you anti-Zionists. Growing up, my Jewish identity was a completely secondary part of my life. I never even thought about it really. You know my parents had told me stories about what they went through. My mom had to escape Iraq because she was a Jew. And my dad, sadly most of his family was killed off in the Holocaust, but I never personalized it. It was never something that was super, super real to me. And it was just stories of things that they went through. But then after October 7th, seeing the way that the world responded to the attack and the amount of Jew hatred that actually exists, kind of woke up my Jewish side. Made me reconnect with it fully. And I think people don't realize just how many Jews out there have reconnected with their Jewish identities. You know we were disappearing. We were marrying non-Jews at exceptional numbers. Most of us don't follow the religion. I mean, look at me, I'm covered in tats. And now, so many of us are activated. You strengthen us when you attack us. We were disappearing, so I have to say, "Thank-you to everyone who has reminded all of us Jews what it actually means to be Jewish. Thank-you for showing us the true face of anti-semitism. And thank-you for uniting us once again. Because I promise you, we're stronger than ever now. (end)

Ari

So, that's a powerful testimony there and there's really truth to that. I spent this Shabbat at my sister's house. It was my birthday Shabbat. We all have our birthdays around the same time and so it was my birthday Shabbat. And Shaena made me a wonderful beautiful cake with a big lion on it. I should show you the picture of it. It's so cool. But you know, I was trying to tell my sister, who's really struggling like we all are with the evil and good and how this is and what HaShem is doing. And I was just trying to explain to her that ain ode milvado, there's nothing but HaShem. And everything is good, even if it's so far beyond what our human, mortal mind could possibly grasp, that everything is good, including what's happening to us, it's happening for us.

And she was struggling with that and this is just a very, very small example. And you have to be careful saying things like that considering the horrific tragedies, the orphans, the widows, the kidnapped, the trauma that an entire nation is going through. You gotta be careful saying, "It's all for the good." But we're just us here. The Fellowship, we're a family here and we're at the place where you can understand what I'm saying right now. And that's just a small example of that.

And I want to talk to you about how this is all for the good and I want to talk to you about what we're facing right now at the Farm right now. And specific, a lot of you have been reaching out and saying, "I'm reading articles that something happened at the Farm, what's going on." And so I want to talk about that, but before I do, I just want to start with the Torah portion. Because these portions are so rich and there's so much happening. Never in my life has it been such a struggle for me to learn. To sit down and to learn Torah. I feel like in-between guarding and patrolling, and my family. Everything that we're going through it's just so hard, and I know I'm not alone. I speak to my friends and they say that also. And you know and I'm trying to forgive myself. But ultimately we really need to learn. We need to learn Torah now because it's the blueprint for us, it's guiding us through everything that we're going through right now, everything we've been through up until right now and everything we will go through up until now.

And the Torah portion really speaks to us. And in some ways, this Torah portion was somewhat of a consolation for me, just at the very end when it says that Isaac and Ishmael buried their father, Abraham, together. And it says that only will there be able to be truly peace when Ishmael comes and proactively and voluntarily through a place of understanding, sort of yields the way and says, "This is my brother, Isaac. He was the chosen of my father." Then we can turn and say, "Well you were chosen as well. We're all chosen, but we're chosen to tell you how chosen you are." And so you see reconciliation there. And that gave me a glimmer of hope because it feels like we're so far from that right now. So far from that, it's hard for me to even imagine what reconciliation would look like. It's hard for me to wrap my mind around it because I just don't know how we can possibly go back to the level of co-existence that we had before.

You know, the nearby settlement of Ibei HaNachal, you know there was Arab construction building homes there, right next to my daughter Dvash's kindergarten. And it always made me uncomfortable, and I was constantly going and checking and making sure that the guard there was vigilant and whatever. We're going to go back to that now? Who's going to let that happen? Who has the trust that they just won't go in and butcher babies? I don't know how we're going to go back to what it was.

But this week's Torah portion, it gives us that sort of hope at the very end. And so this week's Torah portion is called Chayei Sarah, the life of Sarah because it starts with a conclusion of Sarah's life, right? This is one of the verses that I memorized since I was a little boy, because my rabbi was teaching us a certain methodology, we talked about it in the past, of memorizing the Torah. So we would sing it together – And the life of Sarah was 100 years...anyways, we would sing it together so that it has a special place in my heart. We learned about Sarah's life because she left world at the beginning of this week's Torah portion. And Abraham, I'm going to try to make it a little tighter, because I see that I'm already running out of time, but Abraham goes and purchases for her a plot in Hebron called Ma'arat HaMachpelah, the cave of Machpelah.



We have a beautiful piece of art, Shaena and I do behind our Shabbat table, done by the famous Barak Nachshon. Shaena's parents gave it to us for our wedding, as a gift. And it says it right there, it quotes the midrash. It says – There's three places that the nations of the world cannot say that we stole from them. Right?

Let's just take a step back. Through prophecy, Abraham knew that this Hebron, Ma'arat HaMachpelah was the divinely selected place where the mamas and the papas, our forefathers and our foremothers would be buried. I don't know if that's a word – foremothers. This is where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah would be buried. And of course, we know the famous faith, belief that we have that Adam and Eve were also buried there as well. And on some level, it's the entrance to the Garden of Eden, whatever that means, we don't fully understand that. We of course know Rachel was buried on the road between Bethlehem and Ephrata where she weeps for her children on a spiritual dimension to this very day. I think at this very moment.

So this rabbi in Modiin, Rav Sobel shared a very important idea about the city. He was saying that Western thinking tends to focus on the conflict in the world, through a prism of finances and materialism. Everything is about money. Everything is about money and the inequity of money or whatever and that's what it's all about. And if you just throw enough money at anything, then you can solve it. And I think that of course they're projecting their own Western culture on the world. Just projecting their own hierarchy of values and force-fitting that to the rest of the world and insisting the world is exactly like them. There's a certain arrogance that's part of the human condition, but particularly in the West.

But our enemies, he pointed out, can't be bribed or bought. Right? So the midrash says that there's three cities that we cannot, that our enemies cannot say that we stole from them because in the Torah itself, it teaches us, we see that they were purchased for good money – Shechem, the city of Shechem, the Temple Mount and Hebron. And in this week's Torah portion, we learn about Hebron. So they were purchased for money so our enemies can't say that we stole it from them. But it's exactly those cities that they are focusing on and saying that we stole from them. And because of the enemies that we're dealing with right now that are our enemies, they can't be bribed or bought out. Maybe for a few weeks or so, or for a few months they will delay their genocidal plans for the right financial incentive. But they're only taking that incentive in order to further their final goal which is the wholesale genocide of the nation of Israel. They're so single-mindedly focused in the most obsessive way imaginable on murdering every single Jew. Just that alone, we should look and say this is obviously and clearly a spiritual war. This isn't about their level of financial stability in Gaza. That's just so ridiculous. You know their focus is on wiping us out. And of course, the rest of the infidel, shortly thereafter. But their focus right now is on the nation of Israel.

And you know, I've been watching the narratives of our enemies and I listen to their arguments and they say, "Gaza is an open-air prison and they've been oppressed and they want their own state." And somehow in their twisted minds, this can somehow explain and justify the most savage evil of putting a baby in an oven while raping the mother to the cries and shrieks of her dying, burning baby. I'm sorry that I'm saying this. But we have to keep it alive within us. We can't forget how savage and evil and sick and dark and twisted they are. And that's just one of the thousands of examples.

And you know, so we hear the world explaining this stuff away, justifying it, whitewashing possibly the greatest evil the world has ever seen. Right? And I just don't know how to come to terms with it. So Jews are coming to terms that we're dealing with an extraordinary dark, spiritual force who revels and celebrates murder and torture and absolute horror. And that this is a spiritual war, and the world may not see it. They may buy the very simple, shallow, TikTok posts. But this spiritual force has already declared war on every single infidel in the world. And the Jewish people are simply the vanguard, we're simply the tip of the spear, the frontlines in the battle against evil on behalf of all of humanity.

And one of the greatest pleasures of my life is to bless all of you. You're such an unbelievable extraordinary blessing to us. And now, I would like to bless all of you with of course the blessing of Aaron the High Priest, blesses the children of Israel every single day. And as you know, I am not a descendent of Aaron, but I am from the nation of Israel, I'm from the Jewish people and we are a nation of priests. And so, with that -

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless and protect you. May He shine His countenance upon you and may He give you peace. Amen.