

Session 160

Toldot – Israel at War: The Biblical Roots

19 November 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqe-i27iQxo>

Ari

Shalom, Shalom, are you with us? Are we all in together? Hi everybody. Ben, I think you may have just unmuted everybody, but I'm going to leave this up to you. It is very good to see all of you and strengthening as always. We're sitting here together and we get to go and see your faces and be grateful that we have the ability during these insane, crazy, volatile times to be together and to strengthen each other and to share. And so I'm going to start off Jeremy, and hand the reins to you.

Jeremy

Ok. So, shalom friends. It's really great to see you. People ask me, "So Jeremy, how long do you think this thing is going to last? And my instinct is Pesach." I don't know what that means, but I feel like that's a good way to prepare. Like a long-haul, a marathon, we have to pace ourselves. Everyday Ari and I are grinding it out on guard duty. Everyday we're trying to put out more content, strengthening people spiritually, strengthening people physically. There were three attempted terror attacks around our Farm and around the villages around us. There's signs that Jordanian tanks are moving now towards the border, a ship was just hijacked by the Houthi's, right off the coast. Things are constantly heating up and the black swans haven't even appeared yet. And so, knowing that this isn't just like kind of a fireworks explosion and then it's over, but really this is a process that's going on. And the process may have started at the end of Sukkot, and I hope to HaShem that it will last no longer than Pesach. And then just as the first redemption happened in Pesach, may the last redemption happen in Pesach as well.

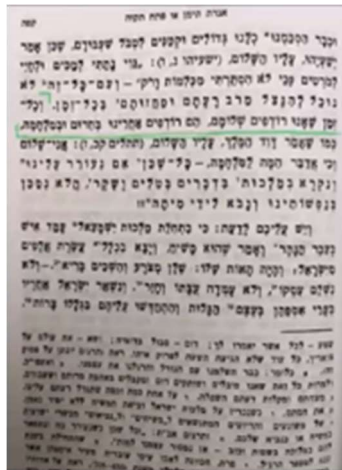
But with that, I thought it would be just an opportunity for all of us to daven together, to pray together. And so, every morning and every night, my family prays for all of the hostages. And that is a constant reminder of what this war is all about. The Jewish people, what did we want? Just to live in our Land, to develop technologies that would bless the world, to raise our families, and then the forces of evil came in and took our families away from us. And so, I want to pray for them, and I want to pray for the families that they left behind, and it's such a battle right now between good and evil and seeing all of the evil just come out of the woodworks. How people can side with a society that was given more money than was given to Germany after WWII. People don't know that. Gaza was given more foreign aid than the Marshall Plan after WWII. And they took all of that, billions of dollars, and instead of building schools and roads and infrastructure, they built terror tunnels and bought missiles and weapons and just on a genocidal mission to kill the Jews, and to kill the infidel.

And so, we are just in a war with evil. And the world doesn't recognize it, but we're all living in Israel. We just don't know it yet. The Messianic era is a consciousness where the knowledge of God covers the world and we recognize, oh, we're all the children of God. We all live in a holy land. God's Kingdom reigns all over earth. Right now it's like, "Oh, there's a war happening in Israel. Well, that's happening over there." No, no, no. There's a war happening in Germany, there's a war happening in England, there's a war happening in Greeley, Colorado, there's a war happening in Austin, Texas. There's a war happening... all of us are living in Israel. And that evil is after all of us, and for us to unite together the forces of good and what can we do more than pray? So I thought we would take this opportunity and just pray together.

HaShem, Master of the Universe, give us strength and give us courage. Give the hostages strength and courage, give their families strength and courage. Bless us with Your light to guide us in these dark times. Bless our soldiers, protect them, it's miraculous already that Israel has conquered northern Gaza and less than 50 soldiers have been killed. But those 50 soldiers are so precious. HaShem, guard all of our soldiers that are fighting these forces of evil. Bless their families, the sleepless nights and the anxious mothers and fathers that are every morning waking up to news. Give their brothers and sisters strength. You know the Jewish people have never been so united. HaShem, bless us to unite the great house of Israel, all of us together. Let us unite, not just in this tragedy, but let us unite for the positive. Let us unite to bring light into the world, let us unite to build Israel, to build a Kingdom that will banish the darkness. HaShem, bless all of the people here in the Fellowship that give us so much strength and so much encouragement that are literally the wind beneath our wings. That allow us to stand strong on the frontlines in Judea. That support us, that pray for us, that have lifted us up in our darkest and scariest times. Bless them and bless their families. And may we all merit to see the fruits of all of the seedlings that we've planted throughout these years together. May we see the fruits of Jerusalem, and may we bring that first-fruits offering to You together. Amen.

Alright my friends, so I have two ideas that I wanted to share with you today. I know that Ari has really been preparing a lot today, and I want to give him the opportunity to share the Torah that he has. But the two thoughts that I had today as I'm constantly on the news, watching what people are saying, trying to understand how evil is manifesting itself in the world. And so, one of the claims that is constantly being waged against Israel is saying, "Well, it's just been 75 years of chaos. The Jews came back and they made this country in the Middle East and there's been chaos ever since. There's an open-air prison in Gaza." And you know it's like, the Jews, we lived in Gaza and we wanted to offer them a state of their own. That's actually what happened. And we gave them Gaza and we totally removed all Jewish presence from Gaza and then after we did this act of peace, they called it an open-air prison, gave them billions of dollars and they waged war on us time and time again. I'm just trying to see like, "Where does this narrative come from? This idea, it's like this war is only 75 years old."

And so, I've been reading a lot of sources to try to find strength in hard times. And one of the sources that I was reading was Iggeret Teiman, the letter written by Rambam, Maimonides. And he wrote it to the Jewish community in Yemen, who at that time were suffering tremendously under the Muslim rule there. So much so that they were just going to give up hope, convert to Islam, and end it. And the Rambam sent this legendary letter that's learned until today and it was written almost a thousand years ago, 800 plus years ago. And at the end of the letter, this is a direct quote, maybe we can actually put it up on the screen. This is a direct quote from Iggeret Teiman. And here's what it says, right before the green line there:



We won't be able to be saved from the massive amounts of their evil and their violence at all times. And all of this time, we're chasing after them with peace, and they chase us with violence and with war.

And you think about that. That was 800 years ago. And you're going to tell me that the war between Jihadists, Islam and the Jews started 75 years ago, or in 2005 in the Gaza strip? This is an 800 plus year old letter that a rabbi in Egypt sent to the Jewish community in Yemen, saying even though we chase them and seek after peace with them, they chase us with violence and war.

So this is an ancient war. And you know, the Jews were the first people to reject Islam. The first people to reject Muhammed as their prophet. And so the existence of a successful country, the most successful country arguably, in the heart of the Arab world, is so deeply painful for their psyche and their religion and their thoughts, that the simpleminded among them, they can't wrap their minds around it. And they just hate us with so much rage.

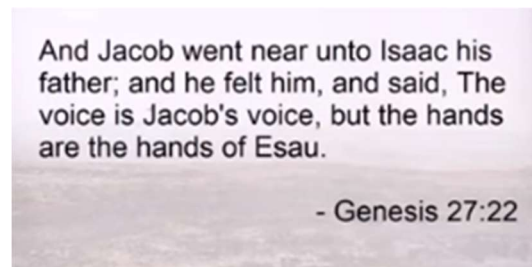
Somehow I tried not to watch any videos of October 7<sup>th</sup>. My soul can't handle it. But every once in a while, my eyes will read a little description of some of the things that happened there. And the hate and the violence is so gory and so unimaginable, it's like a hatred that's like a soul that was sown from the pits of hell came into this world. There's no other way to explain it. And how do we deal with it?

And this week's parsha that we learned, my son, Akiva, who's now in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. And you know he's kind of going through his growth spurt now. He's started to train. He's very motivated now to get into an elite unit in the IDF. He sees how important it is now. And so, he's training every single day, physically, spiritually, emotionally, in school he's trying to ace his grades. And he said, "You know when I read the parsha this week, Abba, you know I was looking at Isaac, and I'm looking at Jacob, and Esev. And Yitzchak, who did he love? He loved Esav. He saw these two types of people – Jacob and Esav. Esav was a hunter. Esav was tough. Esav was a go-getter and Ya'acov was like a pure, innocent man in his tent, learning Torah, a

nerd, quiet, just a simple, peaceful person. And Yitzchak was like, “No, no, no. The leader of the Jewish people, he can’t just be that nice guy that’s sitting in the tent learning Torah. It can’t just be an innocent, sweet, pure, holy person. No, no. Esav, I can tell.”

Yitzchak is saying intuitively, “He’s got to be tough, he’s got to be a go-getter, he’s got to be a hunter. Look at Esav. That’s going to lead the Jewish people. That’s the people that he’s going to give birth now to the nation of Israel.” Isaac was a prophet. It says that he was blind. Obviously, not only blind physically, but clearly he was blind spiritually because he couldn’t distinguish between what was right and wrong here. And it took his holy wife to sort of steer him in the right direction. And then, what does Ya’acov’s mother tell him? She says, “Alright, you need to go get the blessing. So you got to man-up. We got to put some hair on these arms. You gotta be tough, you gotta be tough.” And that’s the only way he was able to get the bracha. And I said, “Akiva, that’s really beautiful. You gotta grow some hair on your arms. You gotta really man-up. You can’t just be a simple, innocent, holy person. You gotta be a real fighter to go out and lead Israel.”

And I said, “That really matches up with a beautiful idea that’s actually quoted directly from the verses of the Torah. In Genesis chapter 27, when Isaac is about to give over the blessing. He quotes, I think we have the slide with the exact verse. And who is the one who will get the blessing:



And that combination is what Isaac wanted to bless. He wanted the inner voice, he wanted the voice of Jacob, but he wanted the hands of Esav. He wanted the Jews to be fighters. Now I’m telling you, Ari is a warrior. You should see him. When he’s on guard duty, watch out. I would not want to mess with him. BUT, if you don’t push Ari into it, he’s like a teddy

bear. He doesn’t want to fight anyone. He just wants to sit in his ohel and be holy and be with his children and be kind and be sweet, and be funny. That’s what Ari wants.

And I think in the heart of almost any Jew. The last thing we want to do is pick up a gun and go out and fight. But what’s being thrust upon us, is watching the brave, courageous soldiers of the IDF. It’s like the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esav. And it’s that combination that Yitzchak really wanted. That’s what he saw as what was gonna be needed in order to lead Israel and to lead the world.

And so, you know everything that happens to us happens for us. And what we’re seeing now in Israel is an absolute spiritual awakening that’s happening all over the country, but it’s also an awakening in us to be Maccabees. It’s an awakening within us to be soldiers of King David. It’s

forcing us to be the ultimate Jews that God dreamt us to be, where we have the voice of Jacob, but the hands of Esav.

And so, we should be blessed that we continue to grow and allow HaShem to do what He needs to do through us in order that His will be done on earth. And so, thank you all, thank you all for all of your blessings and all of your support. It's a long road ahead, but an eternal people...sometimes I almost laugh. Did the Chamas really think that they're going to defeat the Jewish people? It's like ridiculous. We've lived through the Babylonians, the Persians, the Medes, the Greeks, the Turkish, the Romans...these empires have risen and fallen. But Chamas, yes, Chamas, you're the ones...after God has brought us back to Israel, yes this terrorist organization. They're the ones that are going to put an end to us. Good luck. But it is forcing us to strap on our boots and to become soldiers of the King. And so, may HaShem do what He needs to do and may we be righteous, holy, vessels to bring His light into the world. Alright, here's Ari, friends.

Ari

Thank you, Jeremy. In the defense of Chamas, words that I never thought I would say, it's not just Chamas, it's Chezbollah, it's Iran, it's Syria, it's Russia, it's the Jihad, it's not like we're just dealing with Chamas here. You understand there's like a bigger thing happening. But anyways, it's good to see all of you. So there's a lot that I want to talk about. Some of it Jeremy just touched on a little bit, but I want to take it in a little bit of different direction. But you know one of the great themes throughout this Fellowship has been the idea that the Torah portion is a blueprint for our times. That the parsha illuminates the events that are enfolding both in our personal lives, but also what's unfolding in the world.

And so, you know, a cute example I thought I would start my piece with, that would demonstrate this principle...one thing that happened this week that Jeremy actually made a powerful, viral video about regarding the Washington rally. Did anyone see that? Raise your hand if you saw Jeremy's video. It really got out there, it was very good, it was a very, very powerful video. Every word was perfect there in my mind. Anyways, that rally was alluded to in this week's Torah portion. If you know where I'm going with this, raise your hand. So, Jacob successfully receives Isaac's blessing and he was told to flee to Beit Lavan, Laban's house. Now the definition of Laban's name, Lavan, is white. Meaning that Jacob was indeed sent to Beit Lavan, to the White House! In the very same week that the children of Israel, Jacob's children and the nation of Israel converged on the White House. So that happened. I thought that that was a cute way we could start.

But this idea of the Torah in general, the Torah portion of the week in specific, shining a light of context and understanding to our times, goes infinitely deeper. So let's start by looking at one very telling verse that I think opens up an entire world of understanding for us. A whole world, particularly for us in this Fellowship. So after many years of Rebekah being barren, the sages

say exactly it was 20 years, Isaac and Rebekah both prayed to HaShem and they finally conceived. And Rebekah's pregnant. And then, well let's look inside at chapter 25, verse 22:

The children struggled within her, and she said "If so, why am I thus?" and she went to inquire of Hashem.

-Genesis 25:22

So Rebekah is feeling this struggle inside of her, between Esau and Jacob. And you know, for many years now I've reflected on this idea because as we know, Esau is the father of Rome, of the West, which geographically is Europe and America. But even more so on a spiritual, philosophical, and ideological level, Esau is the father of replacement theology. Which I'm

sure many of you are familiar with. And for those of you who aren't, standing on one leg, replacement theology is the idea that took root thousands of years ago that HaShem has rejected His covenant with Israel in favor of Esau and Christianity. And this very perverse idea has been the root and the foundation of unimaginable persecution and murder of Jews throughout history. Really cumulatively, far greater than what we saw on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

And I personally started seeing this verse in a very different light in my personal encounter with the Christian world many years ago. Because throughout the years I've seen tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of Christians going through exactly the same struggle within their souls. Now keep in mind, I'm looking at this from the outside, so I don't know that I can really testify to, but this is what I've seen. I'd be very interested to hear from some of you in this Fellowship who are Christian or somewhere around there. I know that definitions are sort of getting old, lately.

But a quick disclaimer, you know we're family here and we're committed to speaking the truth with each other, even potentially controversial subjects. And this could be one of them. So please know my heart, that I love all of you. And if you any of you would like to speak up and share your feelings, I would love to hear that. But anyways, I'm going to go on. I see Christians today going through the same inner struggle between the Jacob within and the Esau within. Meaning within themselves. And the reason I say this is because according to my understanding and my personal observations, I've come to see Christianity as an essence, a mixture between Jacob, which is Judaism, meaning the Torah itself, as Christianity itself does believe in the Divine origin of the Torah, it's called the Old Testament. But there are also elements of Esau within conventional Christianity. Catholicism, I think, in particular, as there are also pagan ideas that have become infused in Christianity as well. Whether it's certain elements of Christmas or Easter, which in my understanding have pagan origins to them. We can get deeper into that another time because I intentionally don't want to over-focus on the theology part of things. But rather on the deeper, spiritual implications of it.

Because I've come to see that the truth gauge, what I believe is the true gauge of whether each individual Christian is refining the Esau out of themselves and embracing and identifying with

Jacob. Or refining the Jacob out of themselves and identifying and embracing with Esau, is whether they stand with Israel during these times. That's far more telling of the true condition of their soul than whether they celebrate Christmas or Easter. As some of the greatest friends of Israel and the Jewish people that I know, people that I love dearly with all of my heart, celebrate both of them. So I don't want to get into the ritual and the theology of it. It's really more of a heart issue. And so on the deepest level, if a Christian stands with Israel, I believe that that means that they are choosing the Jacob within themselves. That they are seeking with a passionate thirst. I've just seen over the years, this passionate thirst that so many Christians have to connect with and understand the Jewish roots of their own faith. And I'm seeing that more strongly than ever during these times when so many, so many around the world are turning their backs on Israel, even in the right-wing, conservative world in which so many Jews have come to believe that support for Israel is a given. So many of them are... wedges are being put in there from Tucker Carlson, Joe Rogan, Candace Owens. It's really happening, very much.

And I'm speaking to my conservative friends in America. They don't know what to do with themselves. Their idols are being shattered, also. So I want to give a few examples of what I'm talking about here. Considering the unbelievable strong contrasts that we're seeing today in this war between light and darkness, between good and evil, between Israel and Chamas, so many Jews like I said are recoiling in shock at the isolation of Israel and the isolation of the Jewish people from all sides.

And so, those that are standing up and speaking out for Israel from the nations of the world are being focused on, are being highlighted. Are deeply appreciated by the Jewish world, by the entirety really of the Jewish world. And my own family group in which I have family from around the world, countries around the world, they're religious, they're secular, they're right and some are even a little bit left, still. They're taking great comfort in what I'm about to show you. Now the video I'm about to show you, I can't remember whether I showed it to you before. But if I did, I'm showing it to you again because it just made me feel good. It's of the Maori tribe. Did I show you this yet? Hopefully not. Anyways, this Maori tribe, they are clearly Christians, and they're standing opposite a group of Chamas protestors performing something called a Haka, which looks very much like a pre-war, psych-out dance. And they're doing it with all their souls. You gotta see this:

(video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uxPvrgoo1o>



You know, I mean, my cousins are like, "I never had anyone perform a Haka for me before." And you know, like I think that the Chamas protestors were like, "From the river to the sea"... like I think the wind was just taken out of their sails there. And the fact that there was no push back on them I think says as

much about the encouraging conviction of the Maori as it does about the inherent cowardice of the Chamas activists. Let's see them rushing on them.

So that went viral and all of a sudden my family and pretty much every Jew I know has new found affection and love for the Maori. So one of the...by the way, Maori actually means, ma'or is like an illumination, a source of light which is a really cool idea. Anyways, one of the most powerful examples of the remnant of the nations that is fiercely standing with Israel is that of the famous cowboys. You guys know what I'm talking about. Have you heard of these guys? Of course you have. Everybody's heard of these guys! They just came to Israel and now they're like international sensations. I don't know anyone in the Jewish world who hasn't heard of them.

And the story of these cowboys started a few weeks ago when they were, the world was increasingly turning on Israel more and more and more. And there were even some Jews who were fleeing the country out of fear for what's in store. There were, there were really Jews who were saying, "I'm out of here right now. I don't know if what happened in Gaza is going to happen to the whole country." Really. That was a real fear that was happening. And I don't think anyone was judging anyone at this time. As a matter of fact, that's how I got my two dogs, that serve very little function, other than entertaining my children to no end. And so, I'm really sort of stuck with them. And now one of them is pregnant. And all I wanted them to do was to bark when someone comes near. Just bark. Nope, nope, they're not going to do it, unless it's another dog or a fox or something. Then they'll bark. But anyways, so I'm stuck with these dogs now.

And what was I talking about? Talk about ADD. Anyways, so there are Jews fleeing the country and I got these from one of the Jews that was fleeing the country, that's the connection. Anyways, as this was happening, someone snapped a picture at the airport that's been going around the world and it's a picture of these cowboys in the airport that are not fleeing Israel to the safety and serenity of their homes in Montana. No, they're on their way INTO Israel to stand with us and support us in whichever way they could.





And that's the picture of them. So everyone is contacting me, my friends, my family, trying to find out who they are, because they assume for some crazy reason that I would know them. And it seems like everybody just wanted a piece of these poor guys.

And then our friends in HaYovel, put out this video that they had been found and they were introducing themselves (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/yd2EXCLT9jk> )



You gotta love them. You don't even know them, you got to love them. So anyways, why was everybody contacting me? Because they wanted to invite them over for a Shabbat and show their gratitude to them. They wanted to meet them in person. And I think to ensure that they were real.

You know and this past Shabbat, that's exactly what happened. They were hosted in the Judean community of Efrat. Which is one of the most prominent settlements in Judea. And people were fighting with each other for who would have the great privilege of hosting them in their homes. Because you know, the Abrahamic hospitality thing is a real thing, particularly in Judea, across the board. Anyways, so they were hosted in the Judea community of Efrat. And they were in so much demand, that people so badly wanted to meet them, that Motzei Shabbat, Saturday night, after

Shabbat, they were hosted in one of the biggest, one of the largest synagogues in the community. And as you can see, there was standing room only. Look at these pictures:



Standing room only. Here they are. These poor guys, they're like...I don't imagine that they've had oratory classes and lessons in public speaking. They were just coming to prune some vines and do whatever they could. And here they are, like international sensations. But God doesn't always give you a heads up. Sometimes you're just there. And I just heard that the response was overwhelming and people were just so inspired and uplifted by what they had to say.

And all the fears and doubts by the way, that a very small group of loud people were spreading that these cowboys were missionaries with sinister motivations and evil intent. I just was so happy that they had an opportunity to speak because that was summarily put to rest. You know, the rumors started spreading and then you hear them. Who you are speaks even louder than what you say. And the simple, beauty, sincerity, tamim, you know that's what God tells us. You should be innocent before the Lord. There's just a certain truth and purity and innocence.

So one of my good friends, here's the testimony that he gave about it. He said this to me. He said:

"Whoever said the cowboys are missionaries, couldn't be farther from the truth. These guys are just here because they love us and believe stronger than many Jews that we're HaShem's chosen people. And this is where we're supposed to be. And those who bless us will be blessed. It was amazing meeting them and hearing them speak in Efrat over Shabbat."

It's so simple, so many Israelis that I meet, when I talk about Christian-love for Israel by non-Jews, they're like, most of the time a response is like a conditioned one. Like, "Oh, yeah, according to their whole theology, they want us to come back so then Jesus will come again and then we'll all die and that whole thing is going to happen and it's just some abstract theology" and I'm like...I'm sure that there are those that do believe that. I know that that's true, but that is not the motivation of the people that I know. That just have a love for Israel, just a Genesis 12:3, those that bless Israel will be blessed. And just that inner compass, moral compass in your heart that you just know is right and true. And anyways, Israelis are open to hear that. And in some ways they want to hear that. They don't want to hear that these incredible friends of Israel have these sinister motivations. It's a shame, it's a shame.

But you see there's a refinement process that we've been talking about here in the Christian world that's been a journey. It's a journey of truth and it's a journey of discovery. And I mean a journey of truth. Meaning, you have to have a heart that is seeking truth. They say that, emet, truth is God's seal. If you're seeking that truth, and you're willing to go wherever it takes you, even into no-man's, spiritual no-man's land, well that's often where you end up when you follow God's truth in a spiritual no-man's land. And that can be a scary place to be. But ultimately, that's where we are here together and that leads you to the holy land.

Anyways, all of that work that I've seen happening, with the Wallers, with so many of you, with so many Christians that are on this journey, has really been I believe, for right now. Because the whole world is able to see where each and every person is falling here. And it's inspiring to see because indeed there is a line in the sand. And the line is no less than the line between Jacob and Esau, between those who stand with the God of Israel and those that stand against the God of Israel.

And I know this is a little bit longer than most clips. But I just wanted to play it for you right here, it's not the end of the Fellowship, I still have much to share with you, so hold tight. But I wanted at this point to play for you a song that was composed and performed by my beloved friends, the Wallers. Which I've watched many times over the years. I think it was recorded seven years ago for this moment right now. So I want to share that with you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmsD904Hk8>



You know, it really doesn't matter how many times I watch that, it just touches me at the deepest place each time. I know many Jews that I've showed that video to and they have tears in their eyes at the end. I think it's because it's the ultimate affirmation that we really are not alone.

That the words of the prophets are true. That there will be righteous of the nations that stand with us against the entire world in the end of days. And when does it happen that another faith has come up and stood strong saying, "That faith, that religion, those people, they're God's chosen, not us, them." When has that even happened? Which is why, by the way, I have to come to love them so much over the years. That when this latest round of accusations against them came up, I was contacted by the Jerusalem Post to testify for them publicly. And so I want to read to you here just what I wrote. I said:

"I've seen over the years that coming to the defense of the Wallers can put you directly in the line of fire to receive the same outrageously slanderous accusations that are being leveled at them. But over the years I've come to realize that this is a hill I'm willing to die on. Not only because the Wallers have quite literally shown that they're willing to die on our hill for us or with us, but even more importantly because it's simply the truth. There's not been one Jew that has converted to Christianity at the hands of HaYovel, or even attempted to by the way. Not one. There is zero evidence supporting these false and slanderous accusations. There are, however, tens of thousands of Christians that have developed a deep love and appreciation for Israel and the Jewish people due to their influence. And while I don't know the motivations of those leveling these accusations, I would warn them to very careful as the laws of lashon hara, gossip, and even worse, false gossip apply to the righteous of the nations. I have known the Waller family for over 20 years. We've had countless hours of heart-to-heart conversations and they've become like my family. And if there's any doubt, let it be dispelled. They're indeed the righteous of the nations. So if you want to attack them, attack me. I have already sandbagged defensive positions in my home to defend from Jihadists on the frontlines of Judea. Hopefully they'll absorb your slings and arrows as well."

So, it was just published today in the Jerusalem Post. I think that they took out some of the more fiery language. So I don't know the updated version. But I wanted to share that with you

because you know there is a war happening on a lot of fronts and that is one very central, spiritual front that it's happening.

Anyways, so seeing this struggle in the womb of Rebekah in our Torah portion, it shines this entirely new light on the struggle that we see playing out. Not only in the Christian world, but really in the entire world. As a matter of fact, as I read through the Torah portion on Shabbat, along with the insights of the sages of Israel, I emerged with an insight, not only in what's playing out in the world, but perhaps even more importantly for myself, it was an insight into my own heart, into my own journey. And this has really been happening in me since the world changed on that fateful day on October 7<sup>th</sup>. And many of you have been here for years from the beginning. I'd be interested to hear whether you've seen what I'm about to talk about here within me.

Because this insight came to a head this past week after I had two back-to-back interviews on the Farm. Cause Jeremy and I have patrols and guard duty for at least 4 hours a day. And we're right there in the middle, so I can't leave the Farm very often, right there in the middle of the day like that. And so I say, "If you want to interview me, you're welcome to come out to the Farm," and a lot of people are scared to even drive out there. But on this day, two people did.

And the first interview was by my friend, Goel Jasper. Goel means redeemer. Anyways, he interviewed me for his podcast called, "Return Again," which focuses on the stories of Jews that have returned to the Holy Land, Shaena loves it. Maybe you guys would enjoy it also.

Anyways, the second interview was by a Christian friend who came out to the Farm to interview me for his podcast about the war and how it's playing out in the Land of Israel. Anyways, after both of these interviews, I returned to my family that night and I sat there and I was just reflecting on the words that I, myself said on these podcasts that were just echoing through my head. And I was feeling really uncomfortable about it, even a bit sad. I felt like someone who listened to those podcasts, or even past session, the past sessions of this Fellowship since the war would walk away with, I think a skewed perception of who I am. Justifiably, legitimately, based on my very own words. Because when I zoomed out, the things I heard myself saying and the anger and the vitriol with which I was saying it, it just felt unrecognizable, like it wasn't even me. Have you guys sensed that in me over the past few weeks? I feel like sometimes I'm channeling my father cause he sort of lived in that head-space.

But anyways, since the war broke out, I've been declaring again and again how badly I want to go to war. How badly I want the opportunity to kill as many Hamas terrorists as I could. How badly I wanted to kill each and every last one of them. And that if they fortified their military headquarters under schools and hospitals, that Israel shouldn't think twice before destroying them as well. And that if there were any innocent Gazans that were there, that were killed while wiping out Hamas...that their blood was on the hands of Hamas themselves.

And while I stand by everything I said in both of those interviews, as absolutely true. But on the deepest level, I was just feeling like it isn't . It isn't really true. On the deepest level, like Jeremy sort of alluded to, interestingly enough, it really isn't my desire to kill anyone. My greatest desire really is love and peace and harmony and friendship and those of you who know me well know that that's just true...it's not to kill. But I was saying these things, I think in the way that I was, not only for the interview, but even more so for myself. You know I was saying it to strengthen myself, I think, to keep this gevurah, to keep this very real strength and conviction alive within me. To keep this warrior spirit alive within me because it really isn't in my deepest nature. And when you go out to war, you have to want to be there, you have to be ready to fight, you have to want to fight. Because if they do and you don't it's not going to be a good thing.

Anyways, so I actually reached this level of self-awareness, of why all of this was happening when reading through the Torah portion, particularly along with the teachings of Rav Kook, this was actually a teaching shared by Rabbi Goldscheider who shared the teaching of Rav Kook from his powerful book called Midbar Shur. Anyways, he teaches about the fundamental nature of both Esau and Jacob. You see Esau's very name comes from the very word, asah, he made, like he came out of the womb big and hairy, ready-made. He was full of power and domination and brute strength. It was all like right there. It had to be fully made right there like, "That's the soup, give me the soup, I don't care what it is, I need it now!" Right?

Whereas Jacob's name, Ya'acov, comes from the word, heel. Which is the lowest part of the body, which symbolizes humility and kindness. Anyways, let's take a step back. In past Fellowships, we've discussed how Isaac may not have been fooled by Esau's trickery. Jeremy just talked about this a little bit. He touched on it. And he says that he wasn't tricked...and that's sort of comforting because you'd like to believe that Isaac, the wisdom and the prophecy, that he wouldn't have been so easily fooled by the trickery, the trappings of Esau's mouth. But rather he understood the violent, warlike nature of Esau and his hope in wanting to bless him was that Esau would be able to harness those warrior qualities to protect the meek and peace-loving Jacob. Because he saw that there would be vicious haters that would inevitably rise against Jacob. And he thought Esau could be his protector. There are two brothers, it was Isaac's desire to empower Esau to harness these qualities for the protection of his brother, Jacob. Isaac wanted them to work together as brothers. Each using their natural predispositions to further the goal of the nation of Israel. He felt that both of the qualities were needed within the nation of Israel. That was his hope which was understandable, right? What father doesn't want his sons to work together and to love each other?

But Rav Kook teaches that this was not meant to be. And the reason this dynamic duo of Esau and Jacob was not meant to be was because Esau's force and aggression was coming from the wrong place altogether. Esau loved the violence as an end in and of itself. And the love of war and the love of killing and death does not have a place within the nation of Israel. The love of

violence and carnage does not have a place in the collective hearts of the Jewish people. And that is why both blessings, the blessing intended for Esau, as well as the one intended for Jacob, both needed to go to Jacob. Because when a Jew does go to war, when a Jew does pick up arms to fight and kill, it can never be from a place of joy and glee. You know, perhaps from a foundation of happiness that we're able to destroy evil from the world and sanctify God's Name, but never joy and glee from the act and the murder and the killing and the violence, itself. It's just not us.

And the verse that Rav Kook quoted that revealed this truth, when I read it, it brought a sense of peace to my soul. And it brought me to a deep understanding of what's happening in my own heart right now. So Rav Kook explained that when Jacob entered the tent to receive Esau's blessing, as you know, right? He put the skin of an animal over his arm to imitate the appearance of Esau, as his mother, Rivkah, Rebeka had instructed. Let's look inside. Genesis 27, verses 22 and 23:

So Jacob drew close to Isaac his father who felt him and said "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau". But he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like the hands of Esau his brother so he blessed him.  
-Genesis 27:22-23

Rav Kook teaches that Jacob was merely wearing these war-like qualities of Esau on an external and a superficial level. Like for Jacob these qualities of war and violence and fighting are really only skin deep. They were never meant to be internalized into Jacob's essence and loved and revealed it. Even if Jacob is forced to step outside of his comfort zone and to fight and to kill, it would never be

from that place of love for those things. It would always remain, it must always remain external to his fundamental essence.

So if you want to see want to see an example of Jews functioning and behaving in our comfort zone, watch the IDF soldiers giving out water to the civilians in Gaza. Have you seen that? ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_stYYQl6gc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_stYYQl6gc)) I mean so many people are like, "Whoa, what are we doing to our enemies? Our enemies that want to wipe us out? What other people does that?" And I say that also, I'm frustrated by it. But on the other hand, deeper in my heart, I actually celebrate it. Because I don't want to lose that, because I love that too much about us. And I know that God is protecting us, even from our own suicidal tendencies of over-compassion to genocidal monsters that want to murder us.

But anyways, you know, these IDF soldiers, I have the video, but you know some of the videos that I have are not going to be able to be put into the Fellowship because as you may know, Tabitha, actually, her family lost someone very dear to her and she's at the funeral. Every day, I can't tell you what it's like to wake up and just see the names and to feel our hearts ripped and broken, but also there's another level of personal. Do I know them? Are they my family, are

they my friends? All of us have had the answer yes to that and today was Tabitha's. But I'll let her share that more with you.

But anyways, I don't know if you've seen that video of IDF soldiers giving out this water, but that's where our comfort zone is. That's where it doesn't take a lot of encouragement or pushing to get Jews to do this because that's just what we do. Which by the way, may be one of the reasons why Jews I think, excel at war so much, other than the fact that we excel at war because HaShem fights with us and through us and that is the number 1 reason, the primary reason and really the only reason. But there's also corollary reasons that strengthen that. And I think it's exactly because we don't love it. Because we don't revel in it. And at the deepest level of our hearts, we don't want it at all. Because we don't delight in it the way our enemies do. And this quality allows us to approach the war with a certain sober and dispassionate sort of posture. It allows us to think and strategize and fight with forethought and consideration. As opposed to Chamas, who we now know, pre-emptively launched their war against Israel without the agreed upon coordination with Iran and the Chezbollah, simply because they couldn't restrain themselves because they so badly wanted to slaughter and massacre and torture and rape the unarmed revelers at the Nova concert. And so that's why they love it so much that they see colors and they do stupid things.

But anyways, the more that I reflected on this teaching, the more I understood what I myself was going through, I felt like I understood why I was, you know, all this war-talk, this anger talk. I wanted to talk. I realized that I needed to keep the motivation and the desire for war alive within me because if I didn't keep reflecting on the purity of the evil that had been unleashed upon us, I feared that I may lose the zeal for the war.

And you know, I don't think it's healthy for people to watch these videos that the Chams filmed with their Go-Pros. At the beginning I didn't know what was happening, none of us did. And I watched a few of them. And it was horrific. And it has scarred me. But I often watch those previews, just in my head. I go back to those previews just in my head. And I watch those again and I watch them again because I can't lose it. We can't lose it. Because as King Solomon said, "There's a time for war and there's a time for peace." And this is a time for war and this a time to battle against the forces of darkness and evil in the world because if we don't then those forces will thrive and they will multiply and they will strengthen. It's like leaving the cells of a malignant tumor, just leaving a few of them there. And we all know that if that happens, then the indescribable horrors of October 7<sup>th</sup> are only the beginning.

Anyways, because I know myself, and the truth is that the real me, the me of least resistance is not only named Ari Abramowitz, but also Dr. Shmendrix Flucshtenstin. Right? The name of my medical clown persona. Because I love going to the hospitals dressed as a clown and making kids laugh. All the kids, all the kids. It doesn't matter who. Because by nature, I love them all. Whether it's Moshe or Mohammed or Joseph or Jihad, I love all of the children, I love all people,

it's just simply the way HaShem made me. I can't take credit for it, I don't deserve accolades for it, it's just the way I was designed from the womb. And I imagine, most of you in this Fellowship, you're exactly the same way.

So, you know, even when I drive on the roads in Judea, and I see Arabs walking along the side of the road in the sun, it's my natural impulse to WANT to pick them up and give them a ride. And I have to hold myself back and I find that I resent them that I can't give them a ride. That I can't give them a ride because if I do, then they may use that opportunity to stab me in the back, as sick and pathological as that is.

And so, after learning this teaching from Rav Kook and really letting it sit within me, digesting it, I really was able to look back on those interviews with all my fiery talk of war and understand it in a different context and be at peace with it. Even to be proud of it because everything I said was true, but that's the dimension and the level of energy and focus that I really need to be on right now. Despite knowing my deeper, deeper desires and motivations. Because you know, it's true, I really am ready to fight and to die. But preferably even to fight and to kill. You know, I knew that this desire was no different than you know the animal hair on Ya'acov's arm. He needed to put on that hair, on that fateful day, on that fateful moment, he needed to put that hair on. It was necessary for the time that he was in. And at that moment, he needed to don the hands of Esau. But never with the hands of Esau penetrating into his very essence. That would never happen, it could never happen. It just simply isn't who Jacob was. It isn't who Jacob is. And that's ok. It wasn't supposed to be part of his essence because if it was, he wouldn't be Jacob. He wouldn't be the Jacob that would eventually usher in the light and the peace and the harmony into the world that we will soon see, brought into the world at the end of days, which my friends, is any day now, between us.

I mean, actually Jeremy and I have spoken about this. We both feel like this coming Pesach is a big day, even though I promise I'm not going through that route again. You've been here from the beginning with me, you know that! But you know, any day, any day could really be it. You know because at his very essence, Jacob is a spiritual man and he dwelled in tents. And what was he doing in those tents? He wasn't scrolling through Facebook. He was praying and he was studying, he was seeking to bring the truth and the spirituality of the Torah and of HaShem into the world by infusing it into his very essence. And that's why, if you look past the war coverage on CNN and Fox news, if you look at what's really happening on the ground in the Holy Land, you see that Jacob is indeed alive and well.

And so, I want to wind this up in a second, but I want to let you in for a moment into the internal life of Jacob. Into the real war that is being fought in the heart of Israel at this very moment. The examples I'm going to give, it was actually very hard to give them because there were thousands of them. Everywhere I look, all day, there are thousands of them. I could have done three Fellowships just on this very point. But I thought I would start with this because I



didn't have a lot of time. This was the first one that popped up this morning. So here's a message that's being circulated through the Jewish world over the past few days. And this is just a small example of the spiritual dynamics of the real war that's being fought. If you could show that slide.



It says here that their group called Achim B'tefillah was created with one goal – to unite the Jewish people as we strengthen our soldiers with their strongest defense. Tefillah – prayer. Anyways, it goes on to say that it's well-known that the most dangerous and fierce battles in Gaza take place during the hours of 2 – 6 a.m., a time when Israelis are asleep. And the message goes on to say that IDF soldiers have shared that the time that they feel a weakening of their strength is with the lessening of the prayers that are during that time.

So, in short these guys, this sort of initiative, they were allocating ten minute time slots to be filled by Jews from around the world during the time when the soldiers needed it the most. And of course, it filled up like that, a hundred times over. Even though it's like just in certain groups. Just everyone jumps on this immediately.

You know, there are just so many examples of it. I actually just saw a picture that I've been looking for all day. I spent so long looking for this, so I just want to show you, I don't know if you can see, can you see that? Can you? Yeah? Hmmm...I'll send it to you. Anyways, it's a picture of like a little boy, reading the Psalms and praying, and then just right over, a soldier fighting. Showing the clear connection between those prayers and that soldier fighting. And you know, there's just so many examples of how the nation of Israel is intuitively standing together and understands inherently that our strength is in our love for each other and our strength is in our love for HaShem. Even secular Jews are understanding this on the deepest level. Maybe they can't always articulate with words, but is definitely very clear through their actions. And that this war will only be won, can only be won in the spiritual realm.

I actually just saw this picture this morning, so I thought I would share with you. Because it's just from this morning. Ben, can you show that?



It's a picture of a rabbi in one of the combat units. It's the same guy on both sides. And his friends were pressuring him to adopt a sort of fun trend in the army that I still don't fully understand, of the mustaches. I think it's a throwback to the Yom Kippur War, but I don't know exactly. Anyways, they wanted him to do it and he agreed on the condition that they would all put on tefillin every day until the end of the war. Right? I demand the phylacteries. You know the Bible tells us that we put on every day. And they all

readily agreed to it. Probably both because they were eager to see him take off his beard that he probably has never had off since he was able to grow a beard. But also, because all of them were probably doing it anyways because of the great spirit of return and repentance that is sweeping throughout the nation of Israel and the Land of Israel. And so that picture was of him before and after that.

And you know, one of the greatest movements in the spiritual war is the initiative to extricate and remove lashon hara from our collective national consciousness. And what is lashon hara? Gossip, slander, it literally means the evil tongue. Every moment after prayer, personally in my congregation, right after prayer the teacher gets up, one of the rabbis gets up and speaks and shares a different law of the complex and detailed guidelines of guarding our tongue and how we speak about each other. And although at first glance this may seem sort of random or arbitrary, or you know, like why are we hyper-focused on gossip out of all things? But the truth is, it's not. Because how we speak about each other is a manifestation of how we see each other. And how we see each other is reflected in how HaShem sees us. And if we love each other unreasonably, above nature, then that is exactly the way HaShem will love us. So here's actually a video of an Israeli tank...are you ready for this? You gotta see this. Ben, can you play it?



Did you see the sign there at the very beginning? There it is! It's the words and it has a red circle through it, it says lashon hara, no, forbidden here. Lashon hara, evil tongue, this is a gossip-free zone. In Gaza! In Gaza! That there's no gossip allowed in the middle of the deepest, craziest fighting in the middle of Gaza. No gossip allowed, no evil tongue. What other army do you know that puts up signs like that in the middle of their war zones? An army that understands that this is a spiritual war.

And this was actually the final video I'm going to share with you right now that was recorded by the holy, brave warrior, Yossi Chaim Hershkovitz. I'm sure many of you have heard of him. Father of five children, he was very beloved by everybody. He was like a famous guy as far as tzadikim are concerned. He was the principal of a boys High School in Jerusalem. Here's the first 20 seconds. We're playing the first 20 seconds, it's a 5 minute video, but I'll just play the first 20 seconds. Go ahead, Ben.



I'm asking, please, from every single person, the first and foremost important thing to me, my personal request, do not speak any slander against the Jewish nation. None at all!

That was all he wanted. That was his final request. That was his heart's desire, for the nation of Israel to love each other. To see each other in a positive, generous, loving light and to speak nicely about each other. He goes on to talk about, there's no leftist, there's no right wing, there's no left wing. And listen. I don't know if you remember, right before the war, there was very, very heated debates, fights going on about the Supreme Court, which I felt very passionately about. And the tactics I saw the other side taking made it very difficult for me to feel that love for them. And I'm sure that he stood exactly where I stood on this issue. You know what? Maybe not. I don't know. But one thing I can tell you, is that wherever he stood on the issue, it didn't prevent him from loving the diametric opposite of those that stood against his position. Because he was able to transcend all of that and love every Jew. And that's ultimately what this war is about on some level. One of the great fronts of this war internally within the Jewish people is for us to love each other and HaShem loves us in exactly that way.

And anyways, all of this that I'm saying, this is the real nature of Ya'acov, of Jacob. Love and light and compassion and spirituality. Spiritualizing everything in the world. And when your heart is connected to Israel, when you're fighting with Israel on whatever front that you can, then you're fighting the spiritual war with us.

And so, I want to bless you, I want to bless all of us that we're able to stay strong, keep our prayers strong, don't give up. Because there are going to be great, great pain and there's great, great pain and great, great challenges ahead, I know it. Before the great redemption that is in store, where there is going to be a lot of fear. A lot of very, very good reasons to fear. And we have to stay strong because the battle against that fear and the doubt in our hearts, that is what is going to be winning this war, that is the spiritual dimension of this war. And I know that there are times when I can feel you guys holding us up in prayer. And I want to bless you and I want to thank you for that.

And so, I want to bless you with the blessing that Aaron the High Priest blesses the nation of Israel every day. And as you know, I'm not a descendant of Aaron. I believe I'm from the tribe of Judah. But either way, we are told that the whole nation of Israel we're an am Cohanim, a nation of priests. And so it my greatest privilege to bless all of you as you are such a tremendous blessing to us.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

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

Love you all so much, shalom, shalom, stay in touch.