

Session 201
Noach – Israel’s Faith Must Go Biblical
3 November 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9whby3ZtAM>

Jeremy

It was of the most beautiful weeks that I can remember. We had a whole team of German volunteers literally live on our Farm for one whole week. And they were doing so...every day was a different adventure for them. They were so talented and such hard workers, you can see pictures.



They’re building the pergola roof and they’re going out with the sheep in the morning and they’re just...they did so...and now that pergola roof is beautiful! That’s the House of Prayer, the sukkah outside they fixed, the prayer deck toward Jerusalem, out with the sheep.



And this was my final right there that we did just this morning before they said goodbye. But all of them are members of our Fellowship. And some of them have become some of my best friends in the world and this last week has been so busy for me. I barely had any time to spend with them.

And then we got the gift of Shabbat and all Shabbat we spent together, we ate together, we learned together, they were at Ari’s house, they were at my house. It was one of the best Shabbats that Tehila and I remember in I don’t know how long, since I fell off a horse. It was just such a good Shabbat and it really felt like a taste of the geulah. And why was it a taste of the geulah? Because there’s a difference. You know in Hebrew, it’s really important to know that there’s like languages. Because sometimes things sound so fluffy in English. It’s like, “I

want a salvation, I want a redemption, I want the pre-trib..." I don't know what. There's just words that are being said, but no one actually knows what they mean. But salvation, we needed salvation from the Holocaust. We needed salvation, they needed to be saved. We needed Yeshua, that's to save you. We needed to be saved. Geulah though is like after Yeshua. It's like a totally different level. It's not just being saved from the problem, it's actually internalizing and feeling and knowing that everything that we had gone through in the past was really from HaShem and really for the good.

And I grew up with my mother as a tour guide at Yad VaShem. I grew up with the horrors of the Holocaust and Christian anti-Semitism and Nazi anti-Semitism and Communist anti-Semitism. And of course, it culminated in what the world had never seen before, a systematic annihilation of the Jewish people. Invading other countries, rounding up God's chosen people and doing their best to exterminate them. And I mean, I feel like the Jews are still recovering from the Holocaust and the Germans are still recovering from what they did to the Jews during the Holocaust. It's not easy for them either to realize that their grandparents were so filled with hate and so immoral in their essence that they could just exterminate human beings.

And having Germans just spend time with us and take their vacation days from Germany, come to Judea to the front lines of the Jewish settlement, where Germany today would love to make a Palestinian state. They would love to kick the Jews out of Judea and then make our borders only nine miles wide. To see those Germans that are now standing against their own country and building alongside the Jews in Judea and then allowing us to celebrate Shabbat together, I feel such a soul connection with them that I never would be able to have if we didn't have the history that we have together as Jews and Germans.

It was really like geulah. We felt like "those who sow with tears, they're going to reap with joy." And only because Jews and Germans have such a complicated, scary, horrible background, does it even allow for such a special relationship to exist now. And so this last week was so beautiful, watching each other, working together with them, trying to give them whatever they needed, buying them food, giving them shovels, just helping them help us and we're all helping Israel. It was so marvelous and it was like right as we're reading about the Tower of Babel where they made the Tower of Babel to build their name. That's what it says in the Hebrew at least.

And here we are, no one here is working for their own name. We're all working for the glory of God. We're all working to build up God's kingdom and everyone is giving what they can to build that kingdom on earth. And to have Jews and Germans together, and actually the first Shabbat that they spent on the Farm, my mother was there for Shabbat. She was so touched after spending years as a guide at Yad VaShem. She's one of the most knowledgeable people in the world about the Holocaust. She knows so much. And she was so moved by them that she bought them a little gift and she asked me to deliver it to them and it's just like little fixings. It was like a taste of redemption.

And so, with that, I want to enter into this Fellowship with a prayer for redemption. But so often in Hebrew, we say, "May our eyes see Your return to Zion, God." And my whole life I always understand that to mean, "God, I really hope that I'm alive to see it. I really hope You give me the eyes to see it." And then I learned that Rav Kook teaches that the right prayer in our generation is God give me the eyes to see Your return to Zion, right now. Just give me the eyes to see it. It's happening. And I'm praying for eyes to see Your return to Zion. And so...

HaShem, thank You so much for letting us all see the beginning of the geulah in our times. Thank You for establishing this Fellowship which is pioneering a new path in the world. Thank You for letting us experience Your glory and power as Israel is crushing enemies much larger than us. We are living inside a miracle every day. And You're allowing us to just exist in Your miracle. And we recognize that it's a miracle. And we love the fact that for whatever reason, we were chosen to be alive in this generation and we are committed to doing everything that we can to play whatever role You have for us in this unfolding story of redemption. Thank You for this Fellowship, thank You for Ari, thank You for Tehila, thank You for all of my dear friends that I continue to get to know and get to grow even closer to as we grow this Fellowship and they spend time in Israel and I spend time outside of Israel. And may this Fellowship spread like wild fire around the world. May the Torah go forth from Zion and Your word from Jerusalem. And thank You for choosing us to be an example and to share Your light with everyone around us. May You bring us all together very soon, to sing together and pray together in the courtyard of Your Third Temple. Amen.

Alright my friends, so I'm just a little bit like floating, Tehila and I both. It was like I told this to the Germans that were there, that sometimes in the Torah, and we see it in this upcoming Torah portion, you don't know who's an angel. Abraham is walking, living his life. Oh, there's three pagans over there. I'll invite them in. Turns out, oh those aren't humans, those are angels. And that happens a lot of times in the Bible. Samson's parents didn't know...was that an angel that visited us? Was that a person that visited us? And that's a deep lesson that we have no idea who's a person and who's an angel. And in some ways, every person is an angel.

The word in Hebrew, malach, literally means messenger. So everyone that you encounter, in some ways, if you have the eyes to see it, is a direct messenger for you, for that time, if you look at the world in that way that everyone that you're encountering is actually orchestrated, a messenger directly for you, then you know what? You'll have Shabbat tables with angels sitting at your table. And if you treat them like angels, then they'll feel like the angels that they really are, because that's the truth. And all of a sudden, we can all discover our real identities. We are all pieces and sparks and rays of light that HaShem has sent into this world. And that really is the ultimate geulah.

And you know, this Fellowship this year, we've decided that we're going to talk about last week's Torah portion like we always do, but then go into this week's Torah portion. Because we have so

many people in the Fellowship that are leaders in their own Fellowships. That have their own congregations. And everyone is a leader in their Fellowship with their family. And so this Fellowship will also help people sit at their Shabbat table and have beautiful content for their family, for their friends, for their Fellowship. But always, at least I hope are going to begin with a little bit of last week's Torah portion. And last week's Torah portion, I really want to speak to you about how the Torah is literally speaking to us all the time. When it's a Divine Word, a living Word, where Torah in Hebrew isn't even a noun. It's not a book, it's a verb. It is a Torah, it is guiding us, it is teaching us.

And everyone knows that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights in the flood. But not many people know that Noah spent one year on the water. And he lived one year in his ark, and everyday he was exhausted. The Midrash says he barely slept because he had so many animals to take care of. Imagine, you're taking care of all of the living beings and God puts you into an impossible scenario where it was forcing him to develop the attribute of caring for the other. You're going to build a new world, you're going to have to love on this world, you're going to have to take care of not only your children. That's obvious, but you're going to have to take care of all of God's creations. But for one year, he lived in his own ark, in his own bubble as the floods of chaos were all around him.

And I look back to Parashat Noach and going into Lech Lecha one year ago, and it really sinks in. We have spent one year now, because it's really been exactly one year since Israel retaliated from October 7th. October 7th, it was like, we were stunned, we were shocked, and then it was like Israel had to call up reserves, call up reserves, call up reserves, get people ready, make a battle plan. And I remember the feeling, "When are we going to respond? When are we going to crush these enemies? We're going to destroy Amalek, what is going on? What's taking so long?" And it was right around the parsha of Noah that Israel actually went into Gaza and started bringing light to that darkness.

And it's amazing that all of us have been in this ark, surrounded by the floods for a full year. And at that time, the Chamas actually called the war the Al Aksa Flood. The flood of the Temple Mount. It's almost like God was speaking directly to us. I'm going to put you guys into a flood and you're going to have to live in an ark for a whole year. And all we talked about on the Fellowship for years, before the war, was "Friends, we have to build our arks." And I think that was inspired originally by Jordan Peterson. And we just kept on pounding on that. Build your family, build your values, build your mission, make sure you're strong on the inside because who knows what's going to happen on the outside. And all of us now have lived through an entire year.

And amazing, when did this flood happen? When the world was filled with Chamas. That's the first time the Torah uses the word, chamas, "And the world was filled with chamas," and a flood comes and destroys it all. And last year, Tehila gave the most beautiful understanding, but this

year it really sunk in. And what she did, was she went through all of the Oral Torah. And she said, "What does that word, chamas, really mean?" And what that allows us to do, is not only see the brilliance of Scripture, because of course, the Scripture is beyond brilliant. It is by far the greatest literature ever written. But what is even more revealing of the Torah, is the Oral Torah. The Torah of the Jewish people throughout the centuries, and we can actually now track it, and we can learn it, and we can absorb it. And then you can see that the Torah through Zion, through Israel is still speaking to us in the most profound way.

So I'll just go through what Tehila taught last year, but quickly. Moses was the first one to talk about chamas. And what he says in Deuteronomy chapter 19, verse 17 is there's a thing called an ed chamas, which is a witness that is saying a reality and blatantly lying about what they saw, claiming someone did something that they didn't. And so, chamas, according to Moses in his words in Deuteronomy, means the evil of lies and manipulations. Moses died at about 1,271, before the Common Era. Then Isaiah the prophet says in chapter 59, verses 5 and 6, they hatch viper's eggs and weave a spider's web. He who eats their eggs, dies. Their works are works of iniquity and the acts of chamas in their hands.

So, Isaiah is saying, chamas actually means murder. And Isaiah died in 715 BCE. Then Onkelos is one of the oldest Jewish interpreters of the Torah. He lived in the times of the Temple, itself. He died after the 2nd Temple was destroyed. He lived between 35 and 120 of the Common Era. And he is one of the most famous interpreters or translators in the Torah, and he translates the Hebrew into Aramaic. But every translation is a commentary. So, his translation of the word chamas, he translates it as "kidnapping, and taking hostages." Then a little bit later, the most famous of all of the Jewish commentators, his name is Rashi. He lived around the year 1,000, and he died in 1,005. And he says, and this is how almost every Jewish translation in Parashat Noach says, "Chamas means violent theft," meaning robbery. You're not stealing in secret, you're going up to the people, gun to the head, give me your wallet.

And when God saw that the world was filled with violent theft everywhere, like society couldn't function, He was like, "Alright, we've got to start all over." And chamas, according to Rashi, is violent robbery. The Iben Ezra was a little bit after Rashi. Still a rishon, but maybe a hundred years later. He died 1,167, and Iben Ezra says, "The word chamas in Parashat Noach, means rape. Men were just going around and just raping women, no children were being born, and God's like, "Whoa. This is not a society that can sustain this world. Delete. We need to bring a flood, it's over." And Chamas, according to the Iben Ezra is rape, and that's 1,167.

Then the holy, Ohr Hachaim HaKodesh, his name is literally the holy light of life. He lived in the 1,700's. And when a Jewish rabbi gets to get the name, "The Holy light of life," it's worthwhile to listen to what that man has to say. And he says, "What do we think the word, chamas means in Parashat Noach?" I mean, is it murder? Is it rape? Is it kidnapping? And the Ohr Hachaim HaKodesh in the 1,700's says, "It actually means all of the above. It was such a corrupt society

that they were doing it all. And like a prophet in his day, he said, “One day, people will know that Chamas is exactly that combination of evil. The Ohr Hachaim HaKodesh, the Holy Light of Life, he died in 1,743, and was buried in Jerusalem. Now just watch this because I made a slide for you of all of the dates of the Oral Torah.

The Jewish Oral Torah	
Name	Date
Moses	1271 BCE
Isaiah	715 BCE
Onkelos	35–120 CE
Rashi	1105
Ibn Ezra	1167
Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh	1743

October 7th 2024

We start off with Moses, and then we go to Isaiah, then we go to Onkelos, Rashi, Iben Ezra, and the Ohr Hachaim. And here we are now, October 7th, 2024, and what do you see? Lying, murder, kidnapping, hostages, robbery, rape, and now...years, hundreds of years later, after the Ohr Hachaim HaKadosh, we actually see that all of them are right. That is the definition of chamas. The definition of chamas that the Torah is speaking us today took almost 2,000

years of the Torah to actually come into the world to allow us to understand what God originally said with the word, chamas. We just couldn't understand because there were so many layers. And then the layers are contradicting each other, and the Jews love to argue. And at one point one rabbi had the courage to say, “I want you to know, all of them are right. That is chamas.” And today, I just feel like the Torah is speaking to us louder than ever before, and that in fact is going to be how I want to delve into this Fellowship.

But before I do that, I want to introduce Ari, who I know has prepared something marvelous and beautiful for you. And so, Ari, you now have the Conch of the Fellowship.

Ari

Thank you. Just for those that don't know, the Conch is the Lord of the Flies, it's a reference. But anyways, there's just so much going on right now in the Land of Israel. It's hard to focus, you know, on these Fellowships and know exactly what to say and what to share. And I really hope I'm coming with a good thing here to share with you. But because on the one hand, war, like seems imminent. All out war, the war, I mean I've lost credibility by now, but I'm just saying, right now the intelligence reports right now, hours before the Fellowship were saying that Iran is transporting ballistic missiles and launchers to 68 different locations in the country. Arab media is saying that Iran is preparing an imminent attack on Israel. The Iranian officials are saying that the next attack will be much more significant than the previous one. Ayatollah Khomeini is saying we'll be crushing, the word nuclear is being thrown around. And America is saying that they won't be able to restrain Israel if Iran attacks again, which makes me fear that they will be restraining Israel if Iran attacks again. There's so much going on, and so there's that, we could talk about.

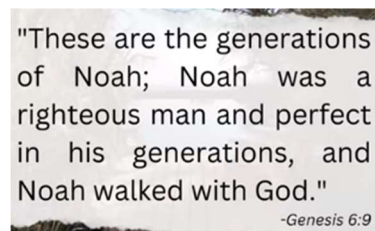
But instead, I want to talk about a different subject altogether. And I really hope this is the right thing to do. Because I've come to believe, you know from our time here on the Farm, that we

only have success in building our mission out here when we are winning the inner war in our hearts. Right? The war of faith over doubt, and the war of love over hate, the war of unity over division. When the partners here, when we're able to overcome that, then beauty happens and we start to win.

And I believe that is true for the country itself. And while what I'm going to share with you now, may seem like sort of an unrelated internal conflict between different demographics in Israel, I personally believe that this issue is one of the keys to whether we're going to emerge with great victory or face continued pain and losses and sorrow. Now there's some people that say that we in Israel should be very careful about airing our dirty laundry with the world, that we shouldn't share some of the less inspiring things that are happening in the Land with outsiders. And while I do hear the wisdom in that, I do not feel that that principle applies to this Fellowship at all. Because I do not consider you, any of you, outsiders, looking in. Over the years it's become clear to me that we are in this together. That we are bound together with chords of love, of love for each other, love for the God of Israel. You guys are not outsiders. And so, you know just like when I ask a family member, someone I love how they're doing, I really want to know the answer. I want to know the good and the bad and that is how I feel about all of you. I feel like you really want to know the inner stuff that's happening here. The details. You know, sometimes I feel like your ears, I can feel them perking up when we share things about the Land. And I feel like you're just thirsting to know it all. And to pray for all of it. And it's from that place then, and that confidence, that I'm sharing this. Are you guys with me so far? Does this make sense?

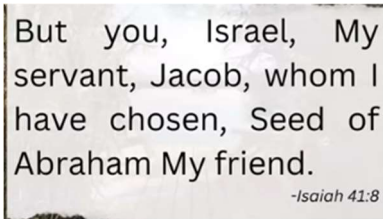
Ok, you know, there's a wakening happening in the Land. We talk about it often, sometimes it can be painful to wake up. It can look really ugly sometimes when you're really waking up. And that ugliness is actually a necessary part of a process. It's like pus rising to the surface when you're draining an infection. Part of the curing of that infection is going through the painful and the ugly process of bringing it up to the surface and getting it all out.

So, let me start with laying the groundwork which I saw very clearly in this week's Torah portion. Because at the beginning of this week's portion, we're introduced to Noah. And we meet Abraham at the end of the portion. So that's a big thing, those are a lot of big introductions. So let's look inside chapter 6, verse 9:



And so that is how we are introduced to Noah. That he was righteous in his generation. And in his righteousness, he walked with HaShem. But our sages teach us that the Torah says that he was righteous "in his generation" in order to contrast him to Abraham who "walked before God." Whose righteousness outshined Noah, to such a degree that if Noah lived in his time, he wouldn't have been considered righteous at all.

So what's the difference between them? What was it that made Abraham, Abraham? What was it that made Abraham the only person in history of mankind that HaShem called His friend? We've seen Isaiah, chapter 41:



But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, Seed of Abraham My friend.
-Isaiah 41:8

Abraham, my friend. What does it take to be called a friend of the Creator of Heaven and Earth? What more would any of us want than that? What was Abraham's secret? And we've discussed this in the past. To me the clearest and most glaring answer is the fundamental difference between how each of them defined their relationship with God. Their service of God.

On the one hand, there was Noah, who had 120 years, as Jeremy said, to build his ark. He had over a century to teach the evil inhabitants of the world the ways of righteousness. To warn them of their impending demise. And inspire them to repent and return to HaShem. But Noah wasn't about that. For him, his relationship was HIS relationship. He had his own thing going on with HaShem. And as far as other people were concerned, live and let live, or live and let die, as Guns and Roses I remember saying when I was a kid. His service was very personal and didn't extend to his neighbor, let alone to all of mankind. He made no concerted effort to either change them or to change HaShem's mind about them.

But Abraham, we know about Abraham. He dedicated his entire life to inspiring people about HaShem and teaching them ways of righteousness. And as we saw with his audacious negotiations on behalf of the city of Sodom, people he didn't even know, Abraham loved all of humanity. And he recognized the deepest secret, that one of the most precious ways of loving God, perhaps the most, is through loving people, by loving humanity, by loving His children that were created in His image.

So for thousands of years, the nation of Israel as a whole, I would say since the destruction of the Temple and the exile around the world, we've been Noach Jews. As Tevia said in Fiddler on the Roof, "God should bless the Czar and keep him far away from us." The entirety of our service lies within the four cubits of Jewish Law. And then the Temple was destroyed and we were exiled around the world and we became just so insular and we were very content with performing our mitzvoth and keeping our heads down as much as possible. And we often tried to shy away from our heritage and our identity and assimilate into the nations of the world, as if such a thing were possible.

But I think perhaps, during the exile, we couldn't really expect anything more. That was our lot. That's the most we could really aspire to. Because as we all know, outside of the Land, we can't really accomplish our mission of being a light and a blessing in any true universal way. Maybe one on one that could happen here and there. But in a real sense of the world and redemption, it just is impossible. We need to be in our Land.

And so, the ingathering now, is happening every day. It's been happening for over a hundred years. Right? But it's happening every day and the war that was started last October 7th has catalyzed this unstoppable transformation that we're witnessing all the time. And part of the transformation awakening that we're going through is the journey of being Noach Jews of the exile to Abraham Jews of the Land. That's how I would explain it. The nation is awakening to the spiritual thirst of the nations who are looking to us expectantly, awaiting for us to assume our destiny of being a light unto the nations and broadcast the Torah from Zion. The word of God from Jerusalem.

And I believe that and most people, that deep desire to Israel assuming our mission, fulfilling our mission, is from a deeply subconscious place. And a lot of their hatred to us, is resentment for us not doing that. I really believe that. But to many, including many in this Fellowship, that desire is very conscious. And it's real in the hearts of the righteous remnant of the world. And that desire and that prayer is actually hastening it and making it happen. So many of you in this Fellowship, non-Jews in specific, you are actually, I believe, hastening redemption through your encouragement and your prayers and your hopeful expectation of the nation of Israel finally accomplishing our mission.

But the realization of what it is to be an Abraham Jew is manifesting itself, not only regarding taking responsibility for the nation of the world, but even more so, being an Abrahamic Jew means that we take responsibility for each other, within our nation, within the covenant of Abraham, for all the Jewish people. And this issue is, to get to the point here, is most painfully glaring within the nation regarding the issue of universal service in the army. How many of you are following this subject matter in Israel that is so painful and divisive right now? I see a lot of hands going up.

There's a long history regarding the arrangement of the Ultra-Orthodox, Chareidi population not serving in the army. It was one of the early deals struck between Ben Gurion and the secular Zionists with the Ultra-Orthodox. They just worked something out. And it wasn't great, but it's politics. And I would even say that historically there has been very legitimate and understandable reasons why the Ultra-Orthodox have been averse to serving. Jeremy and I have been debating about that over the past few days. He still sort of wants to defend them and agree with them, where I don't agree with them. But perhaps those reasons why they were so averse exists today also.

But today, in the shadow of one of the greatest and most demanding Jewish wars in Jewish history, this issue has proven to be, I think, the Achilles Heel. You know the Achilles Heel, that idea that the weakest and most vulnerable spot, that spot that's really preventing a lot of unity and cohesion that could be in the country. It's this point about the Ultra-Orthodox not serving in the country and really divides the Nationalist religious from the Ultra-Orthodox, from the secular, it's very divisive, and it's a very big issue.

But just like any Achilles Heel in our lives or our relationship, at least in my life, I see that HaShem always aims His arrow like right for that weakest spot. Because it's in those weakest spots that the most growth and the most service happens. Right? And right now, the disconnect between the Ultra-Orthodox and the rest of the nation is feeling very strained and there's resentment and animosity at a time when we can't afford resentment and animosity.

And painfully, I think the demographic that feels the most betrayed by the Ultra-Orthodox, is the National Religious. I guess if I had to be in a box, I don't like the boxes and the labels, but I just didn't see another way of having, other than painting with broad strokes to convey what's actually happening in the country. But that's the one I would be in. And the reason is because the National Religious, for lack of a better term, also believe in the supreme value of the Torah. So many of our pious scholars whose love for the nation and the Land and the God of Israel, that is our motivation to serving and to sacrificing. It's not despite that, it's because of that.

This past month, a full 60% of those who died in combat, were from the National Religious demographic. If not for any other reason than because our demographic is the most motivated and lit up to serve in the best units and fight on the front lines to defend and protect Israel. And so, if we're the most motivated to fight on the front lines, we'll be the ones paying the ultimate sacrifice and price more than anyone else.

Anyways, these holy souls of God-fearing, Torah scholars, I would not include myself amongst them, but we've had them to the Farm and we see that they're dying in the war at such rates. You can see it on their faces. Many communities around Judea and Samaria, they're coming from those and they've been apart from their families from upwards of 250 to 300 days out of the last year, serving in the army. And they're being called back again and again. And the fall out on their families and their marriages and their children and their professions are very real. And they're shouldering the burden on behalf of the whole country, but in specific, the Ultra-Orthodox, who simply are not serving at all in the most greatest term, that's the truth, they're just not. And that has been changing over the last decade or so with the formation of the number of Ultra-Orthodox units, but it's really not approaching numbers that would change things for the army in a significant way. There's yet to be a true acceptance of these Ultra-Orthodox soldiers by the head rabbis in the Chareidi world. No one looks at them and says, "Yes, they're following the Torah, they're fulfilling the mission, they're doing the way." You just don't see that.

And so there's this very divisive legislation being proposed and discussed and drafted that would exempt the Ultra-Orthodox from serving or force them into serving. And so if they were forced into serving, one could expect mass riots in their communities, mass refusal of orders, and even greater animosity and division within the country. That they're being forced to serve in an army that they don't believe in and that they believe in existential danger for them spiritually. And if it doesn't pass, well there would be an equal anger and resentment going the

other way. It's like, I don't see a way out. And so, I myself, I feel deeply conflicted about this whole thing. Because while I would like to see them serve, I don't think that anything productive will come about through coercion. HaShem loves our free will, free will offerings. And I wouldn't want to serve next to someone that didn't want to be there. And I feel strongly that we have to speak to their hearts and appeal to them from that deepest place of Jewish mission and the fundamental value of being responsible for each other. From the clear directive in the Torah, that this a milchamat mitzvah, this is a war that is a mitzvah war, a war for our very survival. That everyone can and must serve.

And you know, as this deep division and resentment in the nation is starting to boil over in painful ways, there are voices arising. There is a video put out by the great pious sage Rav Tamir Granot who founded a prestigious Yeshiva in Tel Aviv. He lost his son Amitai in fighting this war. And he put out this loving and deeply moving and very compelling call to the Ultra-Orthodox of Israel to put aside their differences and serve. And so, I want to play just the beginning, it's in Hebrew, but I feel like who he is speaks louder than even what he says.



He saying, "I'm just dust and ashes, I'm no one, I'm just sharing from my heart." And the arguments that he makes in this video, I really would love to translate it so that all of you can really be privy to the depth of what's going on, but they're not legal ones, they're religious ones, they're spiritual ones. And I found it so beautiful and compelling that it brought me to tears. And he's really not alone. There's so many that feel deeply betrayed that they're Chareidi brothers are allowing them to fight and die while they sit on the side-lines.

And you know there's signs throughout the country hanging out of windows, on cars, on buildings, signs printed and posted throughout their neighborhoods.



Like this one, quoting Moses from Numbers 32 when he reprimanded the tribes that wanted to stay east of the Jordan. Remember Reuven, Gad, and Menasseh: Shall your brothers go out to war and you sit here? Those words are echoing throughout the centuries to this very day.

-Numbers 32:6

And this past week, Shaena and I went to the shiva tent of the Goldberg family. A family that we were sort of loosely connected to. That's not why we went. It seems like there wasn't a family in the country that wasn't touched by them in some way. They simply had an extraordinary open home. And hearts that were more open than words can even describe.



Here's a picture of Rav Avraham Goldberg. You can just see the goodness and the righteousness exuding from his face. You know this is actually the last video of Avi Goldberg, choking up as he's randomly interviewed as he was in Lebanon. They came to him from channel 14 and said, "Do you have a message for your family?" And here's what he said:



And he just said, "I'm sending love to my family, I love all of you so much." And you could just hear his voice breaking, just thinking about his family that he's been apart from for so long. And just three days before his death, his wife, Rachel, a woman filled with love for everyone, submitted a letter to be read at the Knesset, ahead of this Ultra-Orthodox draft bill.

And here's what she wrote. She said:

I'm married to IDF Captain Avi Goldberg who serves in the Nachal Brigade. He's done over 220 days of reserve duty in the last year and in the past ten days he fought in a village in Lebanon and I didn't even have an opportunity to talk to him. As a nurse, I served diverse populations, including Charedim, Ultra-Orthodox. I don't understand how it's possible to support a law that exempts large groups from military service. Where's the morality? Where's the sense of shared obligation? Why do we as a family need to sacrifice so much for the State at such a significant risk?

And three days later, she was a widow of her beloved, righteous husband. And she read that letter on national news for the country to hear. And from her mourning tent, she gave the most heart-piercing, visceral cry to her Chareidi brethren, not from a place of hatred or resentment at all, but really from a place of love. That you're our family, how can you not serve by our side? It's like the expectation that you have from siblings, how can you not be here for us right now? It was just heart-rendering.

So anyways, I'm bringing this to a close, but you know Rabbi Goldberg spent nearly 300 days of war not only the capacity of spiritual leadership, because he was a rabbi in the army, but as I heard with my own ears from soldiers who visited his tent of mourning, he insisted on serving in a capacity of combat. Leadership within combat, going this way, going that way, approach from here, I'll go this way. General leadership, and the soldiers they all loved him and respected him. And then he was killed in Lebanon, leaving behind his holy wife and his eight children who were now widows and orphans and it was just so heart-breaking to look at this. I just really cried, I just cried.

And his family, being the righteous, holy, loving people they are, they broadcasted messages of love to the whole nation. Unity to the whole nation. And as the nation sought to comfort them, they ended up being the ones that were comforting the nation. They put out this statement that was disseminated throughout all of Israeli media. And they said this – politicians from any party or camp are welcome. But only if they arrive in pairs – one from the coalition, one from the opposition. Meaning one that is religious and one that is secular. One that is to the right, one that is to the left. They said that this is the spirit of their family and their father and their husband, Rabbi Avram Goldberg, that his whole life was committed to, of bridging gaps and building bonds, that that’s what they wanted to do. And I have to say, it was just a little glimmer of light that the nation actually heard, and the politicians heard. And during such a divisive time.

You know in honor of the Goldberg family, they actually paired up. In pairs! Just like the animals in this week’s Torah portion, as they ascended the ark, the politicians entered in pairs when they visited the family.



Here’s a picture of many of the politicians from opposite sides of the spectrum, during such a divisive time, such a divisive issue, holding hands and walking into this sacred mourning tent of the Goldberg family in Jerusalem. So, you know, listen, we’re a stiff-necked people and fears don’t give away easily and there’s no clear solution to this painful issue. And I don’t think anyone can see a total solution on the horizon. But there are signs of hope and there are signs of change.



Here’s a screen shot I took from an article about one prominent Ultra-Orthodox Mazuz who announced “Those who go to war are guaranteed a heavenly wage.” And there’s been others like him that are saying this. And he’s not alone, but it still is not, it was not an outright call for his students to serve. And while HaShem can do anything, it’s hard to see how this decades old, deeply rooted conflict being resolved at the highest level, mutual level, but it can

happen. It really can, and I believe it will, and I believe it must happen. And it must happen because unless we in the nation of Israel realize truth from a place of unity and love and shared responsibility for each other, it’s really hard for me to imagine how we’ll be able to shine a light of unity and love to all of mankind and bring redemption.

And so that’s what we’re going through right now. I’m sorry, Jeremy, if it was too long. I wanted to share this issue with the entire Fellowship to let them know, also what’s happening on a deeper and deeper level. Because it’s painful and it’s divisive, but it’s exactly what we need to

be going through in order to evolve from being Noah Jews to Abraham Jews. Because only when we return to our national identity as the children of Abraham, only then can we truly shine a light of love and unity and redemption from Zion to the entire world. May it be soon my friends, hope that was good and fitting to share with you. Love you all, back to you, Jeremy.

Jeremy

Yeah, thank you Ari. So, I disagree with just about everything that Ari said which is totally fine because we're allowed to disagree, but it's such a complicated issue that people need to understand that the establishment of the State of Israel was formed by godless, secular people. But it was like an anti-God movement. But now, the establishment, even the leadership of the army, that kind of was responsible for October 7th, they are still such godless people that last week, the Chief of Staff of the IDF, came up to a combat soldier and he had a patch on his soldier that said, Mashiach, Messiah. He went up to that soldier and ripped off his patch and said, "Not in my army, that's not what you wear in the army."

And at the same time, they're like, "Hey, Ultra-Orthodox, those who believe in God and love the Lord, come and serve in this army with that Chief of Staff." And they're kind of like, "Whoah, I'm not going to serve in that army." And so right now, it's such a painful thing because that literally in the transition period of the nation that has come back to the Land, like Ezekiel said, with a stoney heart. And God is now pouring His Spirit out now upon the nation. And there's a transition now that's happening and we want the transition to happen quickly. Of course we want the Ultra-Orthodox in the army. But there's a reason why they're not going in the army. Everything that's happening is happening for a reason.

And so, I would love to invite Ari to actually...let's talk this out on this week's Tuesday Night Live in Judea, on our podcast. It's not the right thing for the Fellowship, but I do want you all to know that it's such a complicated topic, that painting in such broad strokes, I think yes or I think no, everything is a little bit more complicated in Israel. And everything is a process. The Jewish people are like a dinosaur, it's like until they finally move their tail, it's like a very slow movement from a very ancient people. And so everyone wants the movement quickly, but Israel right now is transitioning and we're not there yet.

And so, I have more of a heart for the Ultra-Orthodox who are like...as five million rockets are being shot at us, miraculously they're not landing on us and they're being stopped. And I think that that is the power of prayer and faith. And they at least represent that in our nation. And so, to give honor where honor is due, but I think it is really a conversation that we should really talk it out because it's ok to have different opinions and I'm sure that I have a lot to learn from you and you have a lot to learn from me and everyone would learn from this whole conversation. But I at least want to make it clear that it's not such a simple topic. Meaning that as long as the Chief of Staff is ripping off patches from combat soldiers that are giving them morale and faith and courage and saying, "Not in my army," and they rip off the Messiah patch,

there's something about that army that needs a question about like...Who's running this army again? Any why are we blindly following the people that orchestrated October 7th? Maybe there's something to the other side. And there's righteous critique to the army.

Anyway, so I also wanted to say that I don't agree with your conversation about Noah. I think that Noah was so righteous. And I know that he has a reputation of being not like Abraham, but he was chosen to be the new Adam. God could have just destroyed all of the world and made His own Divine creation, like Adam and Eve. Instead, He chose Noah and his wife to be the new Adam and Eve. That means that he had to be really righteous. Was he the one to be chosen to be the people of Israel and God's chosen people in order to inspire the world? No. But Noah and his wife were chosen by God to create all of us. And in that way, they were so righteous.

And to me, if I was surrounded by the Chamas in Gaza, and I saw rape and killing and murder, and kidnap, and lying, and the Chamas and God would say, "Jeremy, I want you to know, I'm going to press delete and erase all of Gaza and all of the Chamas." I wouldn't be like, "But God, please pray for the Chamas." I'd be like, "God, You are righteous and You know best. I'll build my boat tomorrow." And I would just build my boat and trust in the Lord and I would just not be the guy praying for the Chamas in Gaza.

Abraham, ok, he was the father of all nations and he was extra special. But to say that Noah wasn't righteous, I think is a mistake because Noah for 120 years built a boat. And for 120 years, people came up to him and said, "Hey, Noah, why are you building a boat?" And he's like, "Well, I think it's time to repent and God is going to bring a flood if we don't repent." And he's doing his best. He may have not actually confronted God in prayer and tried to argue with God, but he was building his boat for 120 years, talking to everyone that came to see his boat, building his family and building his ark. And he is in fact the one that gets the credit for building all of humanity.

And so, I think that it's wrong and a misguided interpretation to say, "Ah...in Abraham's generation, he wouldn't even be righteous." When I think about that, I think about Thomas Jefferson and the WOKE people taking down his statute in college campuses. "Thomas Jefferson, he had a slave." And it's like, "Well, he was righteous in his generation. The whole world had slaves in Europe and they had slaves in America and they had slaves in Asia. And that's what everyone in the world did. So Thomas Jefferson was righteous in his generation when that was just an acceptable way of having labor at that time. Humanity had not evolved closer to the Messianic era at that time."

So Noah in his generation was like Thomas Jefferson in his generation. And they were just righteous for their time. Alright, with that said, I want to now give you guys the best thing that I've made all year. We had promised that with the new Land of Israel network and the new

Land of Israel Fellowship, and we were going to take this to the next level, Tehila and I did our best last week. And we actually made a special video with a film crew and a back drop and we did it as professionally as we could and of course, we are sharing it with you first because we are literally doing it for you. But hopefully, this idea is so brilliant from Tehila, and I try to add my little bit at the end, that I wanted to make it done as professionally as possible and we did it just for you. And hopefully the light will just spread from our Fellowship to the rest of the world. And so with that, I'd love you to enjoy this new teaching from me and Tehila. Check it out.

Tehila



Hi everyone. So this week, as we're coming on the stories of Avraham, what really jumped out at me was the subject of emunah, of faith in HaShem. Looking around, especially since the beginning of the war, we can just see how so many people are accepting upon themselves mitzvahs and to do good deeds and people are davening, more prayer, more people are saying

Psalms. People are trying to be kinder to one another for the sake of our soldiers and for the terror victims.

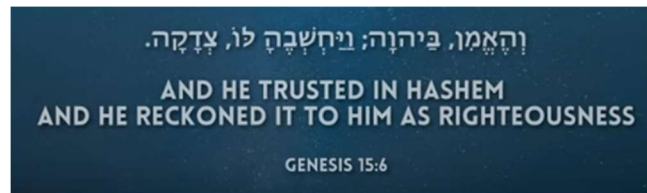
But at the same time, I don't know many people who in the face of so much suffering, and so much pain, haven't had moments of doubt, maybe some questions about their faith in HaShem. If HaShem loves us and if HaShem is good how can He let all of this happen? And throughout the war, so many incredible people have lost their lives, given their lives, but something in the spirit, even with all the pain in eretz Yisrael, here in Israel, seemed to be ok, we're keeping our heads up, we're doing good things, but something about the past few weeks, and I don't know how it is outside of Israel, but here in Israel, it's like it's hard to breathe. I can't explain it because it's been hard for a whole year, but something about, just lately, so many amazing, righteous tzadikim, fathers of children, being taken away one after the next. Crying orphans, it's just so piercing, that we can't breathe. How do we hold on to our emunah, to our faith in a time like this?

Perhaps in the nick of time, maybe when, at least when I need it most, these week's portions of Avraham really might be just coming to help us with this question. Avraham is actually the first person we are told that has belief in HaShem, that he's ma'amin in Hashem. And so, this could really be a place that we can look to draw strength for our own emunah. So in chapter 15, we're only two chapters into the Avraham story and he's already been through a lot. And he's actually getting pretty old. And HaShem says to him, "I am going to make you into a great nation."

But Avraham is doubtful, he says, “Really, how so? I only have Eliazer my servant. He seems to be the one that’s going to inherit me.” And then HaShem says, “No, no, no, no. You’re going to have an actual biological child that comes from your body.”

And to convince him, it says famously that HaShem took him outside and said, “Please look heavenward and count the stars. If you are able to count them,” and He said to him, “So will be your seed.” So HaShem makes this beautiful metaphor showing him the stars and saying, “That’s how many children you’re going to have.

And then in verse 6 it says:



So that verse is a little bit tricky. In Hebrew it says... The verse I want to try to unpack. There are these two parts and there’s kind of a double meaning that can be understood from this verse. Let’s take a look at it. The

first part of the verse says, “That he believed in HaShem,” and then it says, “He considered it a tzedakah,” which is translated in most of the translations as a righteousness. Now for those of you that know Hebrew, modern Hebrew, and even Hebrew in Halakhic texts, we talk about tzedakah as charity, like voluntarily giving out of kindness. You don’t need to give. But in the biblical Hebrew, the word tzedakah is used in a similar meaning to Tzadik, justice. Tzedakah actually means something more akin to doing something that is just and right and required more than something that is just voluntary.

Which as a side point is a very cool lesson that’s encapsulated in the Hebrew when it comes to charity. Because in English when we use the word charity, that comes from the Latin, *charitas*, meaning love and benevolence. And the Greek word also means love and benevolence. In Hebrew giving tzedakah, giving charity is not just a sweet, loving gesture, it is something that you are responsible and required to do.

In any event, what is strange about our verse is that it is unclear who the second part is actually referring to. When it says that Avraham believed in HaShem and He considered it a tzedakah for him, he considered it a righteousness for him. Who is considering it a righteousness for who? In some translations, they put a capital H to say that it is HaShem considering Avraham to be righteous. But there’s no capital letters in Hebrew. The verse can actually be read either way. That Avraham was being considered righteous by HaShem, or vice versa, that Avraham was thinking that HaShem is righteous.

Now the conventional wisdom, the popular interpretation given by Rashi and others is the simple accepted interpretation that HaShem considered Avraham to be righteous because he was believing in Him. Fair enough. And that’s why you’ll see that capital H in many of the

translations. That works. Avraham was a man of faith and he was beloved by HaShem for that very reason.

However, you have to ask yourself, “What is actually so righteous about Avraham believing in HaShem?” You have to look at the nature of all of this, of this faith that Avraham was having to understand why HaShem would be appreciating it so much as righteousness. If you look at the verse itself, it’s a little bit odd. Because we rightfully think of Avraham as the real first monotheist, the father of faith, and the midrashim are full of stories of Avraham breaking his father’s idols and trying to find HaShem, looking to the sun, looking to the moon, and then coming, at the end of this search, coming to the conclusion that there is one God who created heaven and earth. He was the one who grew up in idolatry, where everyone was worshipping all of these gods. And then he decided to believe in the one Creator and to believe in HaShem and to listen to His calling, that’s amazing.

And so we aren’t surprised essentially that the first person in the Torah referred to as having emunah, as having faith in HaShem, is Avraham. But it’s a little bit funny that it appears here. It doesn’t say that he just believed HaShem’s promise. But HaShem is here doing a whole light show of stars to convince him. It doesn’t say that he believes he will have children or that he believed this promise. It says that he believed in HaShem. What do we usually mean when we say that someone believes in HaShem? Well, HaShem is hard to see. You can see an idol, you can see the sun, you can see the moon, you can see the physical world. But the Creator of the Universe has no body, no physical existence. That’s hard to believe. People say they are atheists because they don’t believe in God, meaning you can actually exist in the world and not believe that there is any God. And you can just say, there is nothing. And then other people, people of faith say, “I do believe in God, I believe that there is a God.”

So when Avraham was a young man growing up in idolatry and then chooses to believe in God, a God that you cannot see and you cannot speak to, he had emunah. He had faith. That would be the time to tell us that from his spiritual sense and his search for God, he connected with the Divine and then he believed in HaShem. Wow. And then HaShem would say, “Look at Avraham, he is so righteous, he is so amazing.”

But where does it tell us, where does the Torah choose to finally tell us that Avraham had faith and that HaShem was so impressed and so pleased with his faith? It appears literally, midway, in the middle of a conversation between HaShem and Avraham. Imagine you’re in a conversation with God, He is speaking to you, promising you things, you take a star-light stroll, and He even gets a little sarcastic. He’s like, “Yeah, right, I don’t really believe this. What about my servant?”

And it’s not exactly the point where you’re asking yourself, “Hmmm...I wonder if Avraham believes there’s a God?” They’re talking to each other. They’re having a conversation. It’s like,

“Yeah, really righteous, I believe in the existence of the God that I’m speaking to right now.” That’s an easy sell. That’s a lot harder than coming to the belief in God when God doesn’t speak to you.

So, while grammatically the construct and the interpretation could work, we could say that HaShem loves Avraham because he believes in Him. I want to look at the other way of understanding it. Especially when the Torah leaves something open for numerous interpretations. It’s really an invitation to us to at least entertain that there is a lesson to be learned from numerous interpretations. So I want us to not jump to any conclusions, and I want us to kind of examine the multiplicity of meanings that could be drawn out of this pasuk. So as I said, while the traditional interpretation is that the verse is referring to HaShem, considering it righteous of Avraham, he believes in him, there is a tradition tracing back to the Zohar to the great work of Kabbalah, of Jewish mysticism, that actually says that this entire sentence is Avraham’s inner world. He believed in HaShem, and the continuation of the pasuk is that he considered there to be tzadkah, righteousness of HaShem. So now, if that’s an interpretation that I want to follow, I want to go back and read the whole thing again.

Avraham is a ma’amin, a man of faith, that believes in HaShem. Now, that obviously is not going to mean that just mid-conversation he comes to the conclusion that God exists. He’s believing something clearly about God. He’s understanding something or coming to a conclusion about what is God about? Right? And so we have this mystical tradition that says that Avraham is not only believing in God, but also drawing some kind of conclusion about HaShem’s tzadkah. About HaShem’s righteousness. So maybe that second part of the verse can explain to us the nature of his very belief. Maybe he believes HaShem’s promises and believes that HaShem is going to keep His word.

But what about the whole way of getting there? It’s difficult. Hashem doesn’t give him children. I want to suggest that he is believing something about the nature of the way that HaShem is going to fulfill His promise. And I saw an explanation offered by Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch. That maybe this idea of tzadkah, of righteousness, is not referring only to the belief in the promise itself but to the hardship that leads up to it. That is a seemingly disproportionate amount of challenges that Avraham has to face on the path towards becoming the father of nations.

That explanation really resonated with me. When we look at the context of the verses and what this whole story is coming on the tail of. HaShem didn’t just appear out of no where and say, “Here Avraham, you’re going to have children.” The very first introduction to Avraham, in the beginning of Lech Lecha, HaShem says:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבְּיַת אָבִיךָ
 אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה: וְאָעֲשֶׂה לְגֹי גְדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְתִּי
 שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:

AND THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM,
 "GO FORTH FROM YOUR LAND AND FROM YOUR BIRTHPLACE
 AND FROM YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE, TO THE LAND THAT I WILL
 SHOW YOU. AND I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION, AND
 I WILL BLESS YOU, AND I WILL MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT
 AND [YOU SHALL] BE A BLESSING.

GENESIS 12:1-2

When Avraham gets that promise, that promise that he's going to be a great nation and have children, he's 75. He's not young. Sixty-five, it would be weird, but it's doable.

Retired doctor, 67, gives birth in China after getting 'pregnant naturally'

By Julie Zaugg and Jared Peng, CNN

2 minute read

Updated 6:51 PM EDT, Mon October 28, 2019



There has even been documented medical cases of spontaneous pregnancies at that age. It's a long shoot. Cool. I'm going to go to Israel, I'm going to be a great nation. He doesn't express any doubt at that first time that HaShem promises him children. But now we're in chapter 15. This conversation is not happening in a vacuum. It's a conversation that happens after two chapters packed with dense challenges that Avraham managed to face. He had to face famine, he's had to face his wife being kidnapped, and being held hostage, he's had to face family strife, needing to be separated from his beloved nephew, and then a war between five kings and four kings and then seeing that same beloved nephew taken hostage. He has to rescue hostages

and then just imagine, he had been telling everybody HaShem told me to come to the Land. Like the shame, the international shame he had to face, among the people in the Land and the people back at home. And HaShem says, "Oh Avraham, it's going to be great, you're going to have kids!" Avraham must be like, "Are you kidding me? I have nothing! I have one servant. That is all I have, is this some kind of dark joke?"

And HaShem is like, "No, no, no, look at the stars." Well what kind of proof is that? He didn't make a miracle, he made a metaphor. Nothing happened. HaShem made promises years ago, he's faced unspeakable hardships and tests, and then He gives the second promise, with not really any real explanation. HaShem doesn't say, "Well, I know you've had a rough go of it. But I was really doing that to make you a better person. And now you're going to be a great dad because of everything you've experienced in life."

No, HaShem just says, "Here's the promise. Look at the stars." At that point, Avraham makes a choice. He's not given proof that will just settle all of his doubts. He's not given compelling explanation that forces him to believe, he chooses to believe. And then it says at that point, "I am choosing to believe in HaShem." Avraham believes in HaShem that He's going to keep His word. And then if you go according to the interpretation of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, he

doesn't only choose to believe in HaShem and the faithfulness of HaShem, but he believes that the whole way that he had to go to get there... I had to face family problems, and hostages, and wars, but I believe that HaShem is going to keep His promises and the way getting to the promise...even if it's a winding path, had a righteous purpose. He believed in the righteousness of HaShem, not only in following His word, but in how and in the path that He takes to get there.

Now I had a conversation this week with a friend that's going through a rough patch. Got married later in life, and expecting baruch HaShem, a baby, but going through a very difficult times relating to the pregnancy. He said, "Maybe I'm being punished because I was so happy about the pregnancy too soon and I didn't deserve it. Maybe I'm being punished because maybe one of the mezuzahs in my house isn't kosher or not written properly."

And I said, "You know for people who don't believe in HaShem, then all of this is just random genetic lottery and everything is pointless. Those people aren't troubled by the tragedies of the world philosophically because everything is just random to begin with. But you believe in HaShem. And so for those of us who believe in HaShem and the belief that HaShem created the world, there are really only three ways to live. The way that you're describing," I said to my friend, "Is of a vindictive God who randomly strikes at us because we bought a defective mezuzah. Ok, you can be like that. The other way you can be is to say, 'there's God, maybe He created the world, but He doesn't really care about you and your little problems. Maybe He just deals with the big things. He gave you the mitzvahs and the Torah. You have to be a good person, but He doesn't go into the details of your life. He set the world in motion, just lets it run. He doesn't get involved. So be good, that's what you have to do.'"

Those kind of believers also don't have terribly, horrible, philosophical problems with suffering because God is, you know, He's just sort of out to lunch. He's not really involved. And this is sort of makes sense in its own way. And then there's a third way of course, which is to say, that in some way, whether we understand it or not, whether it seems impossible or not, I believe that HaShem is actively involved in my life and in all of our lives, and that He rules the world in a way that ultimately is just and kind and for our betterment, even if we don't understand it now. In some way, that is going in the direction of goodness.

So, I said to my friend, "Those are your options. Do you want to live in a world where HaShem is out to get you? Probably not. Do you want to live in a world where everything is random and HaShem is not involved? Might solve your philosophical angst with HaShem, but then you start a cascade of all these other problems because, yes, HaShem isn't mean to you, but you've put all of your fate in the hands of nature and other people. So, what are you going to do with that? What are you going to choose?"

I read a great story this week about Rav Amital, and having a conversation with the famous Israeli poet, Abba Covner. Abba Covner survived the Holocaust. In the Holocaust he led the rebellion in the Vilna ghetto against the Nazis, and he fought with the partisans. He was actually the first person to realize and to put into writing that Hitler was actually going to systematically exterminate the Jews. Because up until then people really thought, "Well, this is another round of pogroms, this is anti-Semitism, but it will blow over." And he said, "No, no, no, no. There is going to be an actual genocide." He was the first person to coin the phrase "sheep to the slaughter" in context of Jews going to their deaths in the Holocaust and needing to fight back. And then he made aliyah and fought in the Independence War and became a famous writer.

And one time he asked Rav Yehuda Amital Zt"l, the founder of the Gush Etzion Har Etzion Yeshiva, was also a Holocaust survivor, who also took part in the birth of the State of Israel. And Abba Covner, one survivor to the next speaking to Rav Amital said, "How can you believe in God after the Holocaust? We've both seen it. How do you believe in God after the Holocaust?"

Rav Amital said, "Believe in God? Well, you know God, I never really expected to understand His ways. But how can you believe in your fellow man after everything you've seen in the Holocaust."

If you let go of your belief in God, you're just stuck at the mercy of people who will arbitrarily just do the worst things. You're just at the mercy of nature. Pick your poison. So that's a choice. It's not provable, it's not like we can know over every other option what is going to be precisely true. It's a choice, and it's a choice to believe in the ultimate tzadkah, the ultimate righteousness, the long winding way that HaShem leads us, both personally and collectively. To say, "I believe, I believe in the promises, and the end of everything is ok." That's important, but also to believe that the path to get there is also just. Even if it seems so unbearably hard. But in the end, what other choice is there?

Now I said to my friend here, "You're worried about this pregnancy, the outcome is not going to be what you're hoping for, but what will happen to you if you believe that HaShem is leading you on this path for something good and that HaShem is really taking you exactly where you need to be, even if it's to grow, even if it's difficult. It's not random, then you're also going to act differently. You're going to live that out because if you believe, for example that HaShem is testing you to build you and to strengthen you and to correct you, whatever it is, how are you going to act in the face of your challenge?"

On the other hand, how are you going to act if you believe it's all random nothingness. When you believe everything is random or bad, why should you change yourself? Why should you strive to be better if reality is out to get you or if reality just doesn't care about you? If HaShem

made the world in a way that you don't actually matter, why should I go out of my way to treat anybody better than God actually treats anyone?

But if you believe that ultimately everything is for the good and HaShem is driving everything, even your suffering for something that is deeper, and something that is righteous, you will become ennobled and righteous for that. And if you believe that this is for your good, you're going to act that in every aspect of your life. And you see that even in the P.S. of the story that I just told you about Rav Amital and Abba Kovner. These are two Holocaust survivors, two fighters for Israel, two great leaders, two great thinkers. One chose to believe in HaShem despite his suffering, and one chose to see reality as just random and put his faith in man and nature.

Rav Amital left behind him thousands of righteous students, many of whom were actually Torah scholars and warriors fighting today in the war and many have lost life and limb to save other people.



It just came out in the newspaper a few months ago that the son of Abba Kovner after October 7th, it says that the Arabs of Gaza are freedom fighters and that he would join them if he was Gazan. Because without HaShem there is no objective, ultimate standard of righteousness. So even if you have great accomplishments and courage and great vision, what will you pass to the next generation without having emunah?

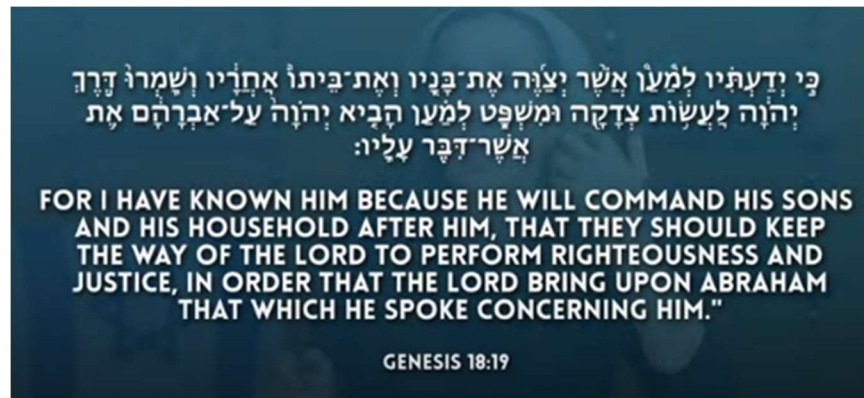
And so that is what Avraham chooses. HaShem doesn't convince him with any kind of proof. HaShem knows how to convince people. HaShem can turn a staff into a snake, or give him a magic trick, give him leprosy that disappears. But HaShem right now is not in the convincing business. It's up to Avraham. And Avraham chooses because really what is his choice? He can look at the suffering that he went through, all the tests that he went through and believe that they were dark, believe that they were random. But he chooses to believe that there's a covenant that HaShem made with him. And to believe the covenant that even when things are so hard, even when they're so hard they're really for his betterment.

And so I think that understanding here of the pasuk of the verse makes so much sense, especially for the time that we're in. So if that's what it means, maybe both of the interpretations are legitimate and we need to look at it from both angles. You know he believes that HaShem is acting justly, and in doing that, HaShem considers him to be righteous. And he's

also believing in the righteousness of HaShem's path. They don't even need to contradict one another.

And now if we follow that, Avraham makes his choice to believe, well what happens? What happens if he believes that all of HaShem's ways are just? Well he becomes Avraham Avinu. He becomes Avraham our father, someone who can be the father of a great nation by choosing to believe in the way that he did, he essentially sets the groundwork for HaShem's blessing actually being justified, for the tzedakah, for the righteousness of HaShem's blessings because he ennobled himself and became a person who could carry the mantle and could withstand the tests, and then pass that down to his children.

Now what's interesting is the word tzedakah doesn't only appear here in the Avraham story, it appears another time in the context also of Avraham's lineage. But it's after HaShem sends the angels to announce to Avraham and Sarah, the pregnancy, he decides to tell Avraham about Sedom. And HaShem explains why he's chosen to tell Avraham about Sedom and not anybody else. And it says:



So here's that word again, tzedakah. So when HaShem promises him children, we see the word tzedakah, and now we hear it again. HaShem says that He chose Avraham because he will command his children to do tzedakah, to do righteousness. And that's

why he was chosen, he was chosen because he sees tzedakah in reality. He chooses to believe that all the good and all the difficult are from HaShem for a purpose that's not meaningless. That kind of person will ultimately act out their belief in their own life, be an example for the future generations of what it means to courageously face suffering, to believe that HaShem is just, that reality is ultimately good, and to be a good person as a result of that.

So then you are a person who actually deserves to be judged as righteous. Those two readings are both real and they're both right and we are the children of Avraham. And now in our times, we too felt called to come back to eretz Yisrael, to the Land of Israel. We, too, were inspired by the promises of HaShem, that this Land will be ours and we would have redemption. And we, too, are facing wars and we are facing hostages and we are facing international pressure and we're facing every manner of suffering. And now, we have Avraham to draw strength for to say, "Do we believe in the promises? Yes, we believe in the promises." But like Avraham, it's more than just believing in the promises. This story calls us to say we don't only believe that the end

will ultimately be good, but that even the path, itself, even the difficulties themselves, are part of HaShem's plan and we have to strengthen ourselves in the emunah of the ultimate tzedkah of reality. Because in doing so, maybe we'll actually be partners with HaShem in not only the fulfillment of the promises, but in making ourselves and the generations that come from us, people that are deserving in some way of those lofty promises because we chose to accept the tests and accept the challenges and grow from them to the greatest of our ability.

So with that, I wish everybody a good week and that we should all just reach into the very depths, plumb the depths of these Avraham stories to strengthen our own faith in HaShem in these times and always.

Jeremy

When we talk about faith, there's clearly a breakdown in communication. There's a reason why Mashiach, Messiah, and Masiach, communicate are the same word in Hebrew. Because ultimately, to bring world peace, we need a great communicator. And in order to really understand faith, we have to understand the Hebrew language. And that's why there's a prophecy in the book of Zephaniah that the whole world will soon learn a pure language that we can finally speak the same language, a pure tongue.



And so the word faith in Hebrew is emunah. And that comes from the same root as the word imun, which means practice, and ne'eman, which means loyalty. And so what does the word, emunah, faith, actually mean in Hebrew? It means faith, practiced, with loyalty. Faith, practiced, in life, with loyalty. Faith in action is Hebrew faith.

So what does that mean for us? That means that not only acting out our faith will build us into the people that God created us to be. In all of the challenges and all of the doubts, we stay true and loyal to our faith. That's why the Torah speaks about brit, about a covenant. Because you need to be good because your good, no matter what, that's in fact the entire secret of the book of Job, of Iyov. This righteous man who has so many horrible things happen to him. And at the very end, he never wavers. He was a true Tzadik, a true righteous man in the face of disaster and tragedy. And satan, himself, coming after Job, Job never leaves the path of righteousness because that's true righteousness.

If everyone is always blessed every time they follow God, then what's their righteousness really worth? They're just being righteous in order to receive the blessing. True faith, biblical faith is faith practiced in loyalty, a covenant, no matter what.

In some ways, the biblical ethos is the foundation of real Western civilization. What do I mean by that? What are the most popular movies today in the world? They're all the super-hero, Marvel, comic book characters. And when you delve into the story of both the super hero and the super villain, they all tell the same story. Some tragedy or pain happened to them earlier on in life, and the villain says, "The world hurt me, I'm going to hurt the world back." And he takes it to evil.

The hero though, whether it be Bruce Wayne, whose parents were killed and he was just a child, or superman's planet that was destroyed. They lived through some sort of trauma, and they took the pain of that trauma and they said, "I want to put an end to other people's pain and suffering." That's real faith. That's what emunah is all about. And in that way, Avraham avinu, Abraham, was the world's first super-hero. That in the face of all of the challenges and unmet promises, he continued to be faithful. In some ways, to have emunah is to be faithful. To have trust, and to live out that trust, that's why:



As they're walking through the Red Sea, it's not that they believed in God, like they believed in aliens, or they believed in this theology or that theology. They believed in God and in Moses. Well, Moses was right there before them. What does that mean? It means that they had faith and

trust and action and loyalty. And they followed Moses and God into the desert. That's real faith and that's the faith that all of us need now. And the world is going to push us to a place where that faith is exactly what's demanded.

And with that, I want to bless everyone that we live with true emunah, that we live with true faith and we actually become the super-heroes that we were created to be. Shalom. (end of video)

Guys, I didn't want to like ruin it. It was too perfect. And so, I am a blessed man that that's my wife. And I brought a film crew...we were learning that all week and as she kept on teaching me more and learning more, this angle and that angle, I was like, wow, this is just such a deep teaching about emunah for this world, for our generation right now. This needs to go out to as many people as possible.

And so, I'm so happy that we got to show it here on the Fellowship first, and I hope that millions of people watch that, learn that, internalize that, to really take the faith of Abraham. And with that, I want to bless everyone here in the Fellowship that you should be blessed with the faith of Abraham, the righteousness of Abraham and that we should march together in the covenant of Abraham and bring us to the Land that God chose for Abraham and his children.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Thank you, my friends, I'll see you again next week. Shalom.