

Session 203

Vayera – The Need for and Path to Revelation

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDi7kk99noM>

Jeremy

First of all, it is awesome to see you. It's wonderful to be here together with you. I can't tell you...in my life, I don't remember feeling so optimistic and so hopeful for the United States of America. It's like they've been given another chance. And the people of America, they've elected really the leadership of the New World, of the free world. And so, it's very, I guess amazing to be an American citizen to participate in electing the leadership of the free world. But right now, in the same way as in the army, when there is a good commander of the unit, the whole unit benefits. When there's good leadership, then it's good for the whole team. When there's good leadership for the world, when Elon Musk is on the Executive branch of the government, that's going to be a blessing for the whole world. And there's really so much to say and it's exactly perfect timing with the Torah portions that we're reading, obviously. And that is what this Fellowship is all about. It's about really trying to see how the Torah is speaking to us all the time.

So, in order for us to hear from the Torah, I think we first need to give it up to God. And we pray together, open our hearts, open our minds, open our ears. And so, with that, I saw that there are people from Holland and from all over the United States, and Africa and all over Europe, Germany and Holland...it's just such a marvelous opportunity because I keep on looking for another Fellowship like ours. And I would love to collaborate. I would love to meet them, I would love for them to meet you, and for us to grow, but we're the only ones. We're the only Fellowship like our Fellowship in the entire world. And that ... someone joined us from Cape Town right now. And so, with that, from southern tip of Africa in Cape Town, all the way to northern Europe, all the way to Montana in America. I mean we're just crossing the whole world here. I would love to start this Fellowship with a prayer. And may I be the chazan, may I bring our hearts together, bring our minds together through these words and through this Land we will connect and lift up this prayer to HaShem.

So, HaShem, Master of the Universe, thank You for new beginnings, thank You for this new season of hope. Please give us the strength and the courage to do what needs to be done. Finish the job and finally bring Your light into the world. Here we are, Your loyal Fellowship, a living sign of the times we're living in. Thank You for growing us on every level – growing our friendship, our relationship, our Torah learning, our prayers. Each one of us is on the path that You've chosen for us, and we're all courageously walking together toward Yerushalyim. May we please be Your city, Jerusalem, rebuilt and bigger and better than ever before. Amen

And so, friends, times are changing. And you know, it's like you can get whip-lash because last year was so difficult and so challenging. Right now, it really looks like this may just be a year of triumph for the good team. And may it just be a year of absolute blessing. But with every challenge, or with every blessing there comes a challenge. That's probably the best way to say it. And so, I of course took our sheep out...I try to take them out every morning. But it was the morning when I first heard that Donald Trump won the election. And I was so excited and happy about that...that the evil was sort of retreating back into their holes, that good was going to take the leadership again and good people in charge. Now it's like Hegseth and Huckabee and such an all-star team that's being assembled. I was just really excited, but I wanted to send a message specifically to the Jews in America. And so, this is a video that is live, right as I heard that Donald Trump won the election, early in the morning in the mountains of Judea as I'm taking my flock of sheep out into the mountains. Check this out.



Wow, Donald Trump won. Jews of America, you better get the flock out of there. I'm getting my flock out of there. I'm getting my flock out here into Judea. I think you should get the flock out into Judea as well.

That's what I did, I just thought it was so cute, so funny. Get the flock out of there. And then I got so much feedback saying, "Jeremy, are you upset that Donald Trump won?" And I'm like, "No, I'm quite happy that he won, but you need to get the flock out of America anyway." Meaning, what does one have to do with the other? I would have made the same, exact video had Kamala Harris won, had Donald Trump won. The Jewish people need to leave America and make aliyah to Israel and it doesn't matter who won.

And that is the new challenge that's being faced American Jewry. Now they feel like, "Oh, Columbia University, the anti-Semitism that we saw...they have another four years of quiet." And they're now being given an opportunity. To not run away from America, but to run TO Israel. And what we're about to see in Israel is so marvelous. People really wanted, me included by the way, we wanted Ambassador David Friedman to be the ambassador from America to Israel. He moved the embassy to Jerusalem, he's become a dear friend, his second favorite place after the City of David is the Arugot Farm in Israel. What better ambassador can I ask for? And then I got an answer – Mike Huckabee. He could not be any better.

And so I just want you to watch this short video of his visit to the Arugot Farm and the time and the prayer that I had with the new ambassador of the United States to Israel, my good friend, Mike Huckabee. Check this out.

(video)

I'm sitting here in the mountains of Judea just having my breakfast and I hear the news that Mike Huckabee is now going to be the Ambassador to Israel. My first response? Praise the Lord! I think we're about to see the Psalm that was sung for thousands of years since the exile. Every time the Jewish people celebrate Shabbat, and they pray their grace after the meals, we sing:



Then the nations will say, "How great are the things that God has done for you." And then it says, "How great are the

things that God has done for us."

Mike Huckabee, before he became governor, his profession was a pastor. And so now, we're about to have a real believer in God become the ambassador of the United States to America and you just never know. Maybe, the prayer that I said as I was rocking out with Ambassador Mike Huckabee on the Arugot Farm, a prayer for the Messiah, you never know, it may just come true.



Hallelu, Hallelu, Halleluyah... Look at us now, we're on Your mountain, singing Your praise, people from all over the world have come, the righteous among the nations...kings of the world to help Your people, to help Your Land. Look at us. Bless us, bless them, bless their families. Thank you for this day, thank you for all these people. HaShem will make miracles and watch

over us. You raise kings up and cast them down. HaShem, raise a king up in Israel. Make him strong, make him faithful like David. Eradicate the enemies of Israel. Bring light into the world.

Mike Huckabee

This is Mike Huckabee, I'm in the beautiful Judean desert here on top of a beautiful piece of property, the Arugot Farms and it is amazing what God is doing right here on this property. He's been preparing and orchestrating this Land for a very special purpose. And it's being fulfilled right before our very eyes.

(end of video)

Jeremy

That's pretty exciting. Me and Mike Huckabee, we're literally making a prayer and asking God to raise up a leader like David. And now, here is the Ambassador of the United States to Israel. And the headquarters of this Fellowship is at the Arugot Farm and so what can I do? It seems that HaShem has chosen a marvelous place that the center of all activity is somehow centered around this barren mountain in the middle of the desert. And it's now slowly, but surely, attracting world leaders and flourishing into a Garden of Eden-like oasis.

And so, I'll tell you, Mike Huckabee told me such a funny joke...me and Tehila, we say it all the time now. He said, "Well there was a farmer (I don't remember, was he the governor of Arkansas, I can't remember, Kansas? He was the governor of some place in middle America where there are a lot of farmers. I fell off a horse, so I can't remember names.) And so he said to me, "A man came up to this farmer and he was working his land for five years and it was growing nothing and now it became productive, it was successful, now the crops are yielding. The man comes up to the farmer and says, "Look at what you and God have done. This farm is amazing." And then the farmer looked at the pastor and said, "You should have seen what God did before I got here." And so, that was a pastor joke. And so I just really, really like that. He came to the Farm and he told me that joke, he's like, "Look at what you and God have done here." And I'm like, "Well actually, it really was me and God, that's really true." I really like that story.

And so, there's just such a shift from being like this, our dukes up, protecting ourselves from United States, it's like wow, we really have an ally. Our little brother has become bigger than us. I had a lot of dynamics like that, that I know of, where the older brother is little and the younger brother is like three feet taller, 250 pounds. And so, America is really Israel's little brother, they're just so much bigger and stronger than the older brother. And now, it's like the younger brother has chosen to stay with the covenant.

And of course, you all know that America can be said in Hebrew as "am rekah," an empty nation. Or it can be called in Hebrew, Artzot HaBrit, the Lands of the covenant. And America has decided to choose the covenant, in God we trust. They've decided to live with the Bible as their guiding principle. And it was really, I believe, the Christian vote in America that came out and really...it wasn't just a win, it was a landslide. But talk about a win for the good team.

And so, I want to share one more video with you that I made today earlier. And I made it together with Tehila, although Tehila's video is totally separate and her's is leagues ahead of mine and that's why I'm sort of building up to her video. But I do want you to realize that Israel right now and the Jews in America and the righteous among the nations in America, although this is a wonderful opportunity now that there will be good leadership, it really is another test. It's a different kind of test, but it is a test nonetheless, calling us to act with righteousness and act with faith and to do what's good and what's true. And so, right now, as we're kind of

culminating in all of the tests of Abraham, I made this video for you. So, check this out and we'll take it from there.

(video)

President Donald Trump has been elected by the American people to be the leader of the free world. I don't know anyone in Israel that isn't happy, hasn't celebrated, made a l'chayim, but the truth is...everything that happens to Israel, happens for Israel. And this is just another test. What do I mean by that? October 7th, however painful it might be, has turned us into the people that God created us to be. We weren't able to be the people we were created to be before October 7th. We were fighting, there was the judicial reform, there were battles in the streets of Tel Aviv about the Yom Kippur prayers. All of a sudden October 7th happened, we became united, we became powerful, we became more independent. We understood that we had a mission as a people in our Land and it molded us much closer into becoming the people that HaShem chose us to be.

And right now, there is a new test. Are we still going to remain independent? Are we going to make all of our arms in America because now our friend, President Donald Trump is the president of America? Are we going to be who we were created to be or not? Are the Jews in America...are you now going to be comfortable and stay in America for another four years? Or are you already going to make your plans to move to Israel?

A nisayaon comes exactly at the right time. When we learn about the nisayanot, the tests of Abraham. Everyone says Abraham had ten tests. But there is one person that I know of that says that the 10th test wasn't just the binding of Isaac. That nisayaon was the 9th test. First we need to understand though, what is a nisayaon?

TEST - NISAYAON - נִסְיָוֹן
FLAG/BANNER- NES - נֶס

Nisayaon comes from the Hebrew word, nes, which means to raise up a flag or a banner. And so, when you pass a test, what you've done is, you've lifted up a banner and said,

"Here I am." This is who I am now because until you're pushed to the limits and beyond, you don't know how strong you are. You don't know how faithful you are. When you pass a test, you've raised a banner and said, "Yes, this is who I am, and this is where I stand."

NES- MIRACLE - נֶס

And then, the other word, of course, is a miracle. Nes literally means miracle because who gave you the strength to pass that test to begin with? And so,

when we have a nisayaon, we have a test. We need to realize that we're about to raise a banner and lift ourselves up with the help of HaShem.

And so now, what was Avraham's test? He already did the akeidah, but there is a marvelous Rashi on this week's Torah portion that reads like this –

Sarah's death is written immediately following the binding of Isaac because through her hearing about the binding, that her son had been designated to be slaughtered, and was almost indeed sacrificed, but not, her soul departed from her and she died.

So imagine now the test of Abraham. He had passed all of the tests. He had moved to the Land of Israel, he had fought kings, he had lived through God knows what, finally he sacrificed his only son, only to then say, "Abraham, stop, you've passed the test."

And then, what happens? His beloved wife hears about the binding of Isaac and her soul leaves the world. And now he has to live with this final test of what on earth is God doing to him? And I think that that is the most powerful message for all of us to take with us today. Life is a test. Everything that happens to us, happens for us. It's only for our good, but no matter who's the president and who's not the president, the test remains the same. Will we live out our destiny? Will we become the people that God chose us to be? Will you become the person that HaShem created you to be? Everything that happens is a nisayaon.

And that's why Abraham is the father of many nations. Because his spiritual life wasn't easy. It doesn't mean that...oh, if you follow God, you'll be blessed materially, you'll be blessed in your family. No, you may have many, many challenges. But Abraham is paving a path for us to realize that whatever the challenge, the challenge is a test and it's time for us to raise the banner, raise a banner to ingather the exiles because it's time for us to be ingathered to Israel, and ingathered to ourselves and be the people that HaShem created us to be. (end of video)

Alright, thank you very much, that was good. And so now, I want to share an idea with you. And I really want to transition into Tehila's Torah. Because this is a Torah that we were studying for most of last week together. And she just kept on with insights and to download and to insights and to download, and I'm like, "Tehila, we got to bring a camera crew here. This needs to be saved. I've never read this anywhere. I've never heard this anywhere. This is an absolute insight in the Torah."

A friend of ours came up to Tehila, "You are one of the greatest Torah teachers in the world today. You are maybe the greatest woman Torah teacher. Where do you teach?" And she's like, "Well I teach for the Land of Israel Fellowship. It's one of the greatest Fellowships in the world today."

And we are so blessed to have Tehila as a wife and as a mentor and as a teacher. But this little idea came to me actually from our son, Akiva. And he's the one that pointed out to me the idea that super heroes and villains, they actually have the same background. Meaning, if you look at

their stories, usually something very painful happens to them in their childhood. Bruce Wayne, Batman, his parents were killed in front of him. Superman's planet exploded killing everyone, all of his family. And also the villains have some sort of trauma that happens to them in their childhood. But the hero takes that experience, that pain and becomes good. The villain takes that experience and takes it to evil. It's like, the world hurt me, I want to hurt the world back. And the hero says, "I was hurt, I want to make sure that no one ever gets hurt again."

And Akiva said that the hero uses the pain and the villain, pain uses the villain. And that's really the idea that God is one. Meaning, pain is just another vehicle and a tool that HaShem has given us to grow, given us to make us into a superman wouldn't be superman without his background. And Abraham, it's such a difficult life. He had so many false hopes, promises that weren't met, and war, and kidnapped people. His wife was kidnapped, his nephew was kidnapped, and then his wife died, it was just like...test after test after test, and yet he always used that pain to grow. He used that pain toward his meaning, he used that pain to become the most influential man in world history. Who very soon the Abraham Accords will be revived and under Abraham's name, the New Covenant is going to be established and that's really marvelous.

And so, with that, I want to give you an insight into Abraham and into this parsha, Vayera and Chayei Sarah, an insight that I've never heard before. It was so beautiful. And I made this video to share with you and hopefully we'll share it after this Fellowship. But you always have the first sneak peak at the brilliant, Tehila Gimpel. So check this out.

Tehila

Hi everyone. A question that comes up again and again during our war here in Israel is, "How could our leaders have been so blind? How could we have let the Chamas and Chezbollah be building up arms and tunnels all of these years? How did the army turn a blind eye? Even on the night of October 6th? There's so much discourse in Israel, even going on now as to how these red flags that were all over the place were just ignored. How could we have been so blind?"

There's this feeling that you get again and again hearing the stories of October 7th that people were just refusing to see what was right in front of their faces. And reading the stories of Avraham and Yitzchak this week it hit me that the stories of our portion are exactly speaking to this issue – both on the personal and national levels. Once I saw it, it was so obvious that I couldn't unsee it. That the theme of this entire portion is about willful blindness. I want to talk to you for just a second about what willful blindness is in the laws. You know, I'm a lawyer and when you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

So one of the first things that I learned in law school, in criminal law is the doctrine of willful blindness. That is that people will often claim to have not been aware of something, to be blind

to it as it were, as a way of avoiding responsibility. Like when you buy a Rolex on a street corner in Manhattan for \$100...well, I didn't know it was stolen. Or the store owner who sells alcohol to someone who looks like they're 12 because they say they're 18. I didn't know. You could have checked, but you chose to be blind, you chose to avoid the uncomfortable facts that you could have seen if you'd have opened your eyes a little. The law obviously discourages that kind of choice to ignore what you could know and says, "You can't use your intentional blindness as a way out of responsibility."

So as I'm reading the stories, the stories of our portion this week in Vayera, it is so obvious to me all of a sudden that this is a theme. Let's take a look. In Bereshith, chapter 20, Avimelech takes Sarah and then HaShem appears to Avimelech in a dream and says, "You're going to die." And Avimelech defends himself and he says, "I didn't know." And it says in verse 5, "Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister?'" and she even said, 'He is my brother.' With the innocence of my heart and the purity of my hands have I done this. When I kidnapped that woman from the street, I didn't know she was a married woman. I was just thinking I was kidnapping a single woman."

And so you know, HaShem lets him off the hook for the death penalty. But it's obviously not a good thing he was doing. HaShem could have said, "Whoops, you made an innocent mistake, let her go." He says, "You really do deserve to be punished." He's spared because technically he didn't know exactly what he was doing. HaShem forgives him. But this is obviously a case where if you would have just done the smallest bit of examining, he would have been able to figure out that this woman was a married woman.

Now let's look at Avimelech at the end of the portion. Avraham says, "You know your servants have really been messing around with my wells." And he says, "Oh my God, I had no idea, my servants? They were digging your wells?" Now he had all this surplus of water and had no idea where it was coming from? And then again, we have Lot. Lot goes to Sedom because there's good fertile land. But he knows...or he should know what an evil community it is. And even when the angels tell him to leave, they literally have to drag him out because of his dilly-dallying. He chooses to be blind to the evil of the people around him.

And then look at what happens to him with his daughters. The Torah goes out of its way to tell us that on the one hand he didn't know, he was drunk, he didn't know what his daughters were doing in the cave on the mountain. On the other hand, the Torah is like, "Don't marry into Ammon and Moab. There is something wrong with them." Because come on. Maybe it could happen to you one time, but two times? He really didn't know? You could have known something was fishy in that family situation. Don't tell me that you suspected nothing.

All these stories are essentially the same thing happening again and again in the portion. The Torah is telling us that people don't know things that they...with the tiniest bit of thought,

caution and examination, really could have easily known. But it was more comfortable, profitable, pleasurable to just not know. I mean I'm going to say this part with great caution, maybe even Avraham himself was turning a blind eye in our portion. Sarah sees that Yishmael is a bad influence on Yitzchak. But Avraham doesn't want to see it. And then he turns to HaShem and HaShem says, "Whatever Sarah tells you, you should listen to her."

And Yishai Fleisher told me this on Shabbat, "HaShem doesn't just say, 'Yeah, you have to send away Yishmael, he's a bad influence.' He says, 'Listen to Sarah,' meaning you could have known this on your own. Remember Sarah told you about this? You could have been aware of what was going on and made the decision not needing prophecy. Even with your human eyes. You just didn't want to see it. It was just too inconvenient and too painful to face. So you turned a blind eye.'"

And through the whole Tanakh we see this time and time again. People that really should have known what they were doing, turning a blind eye to a reality that they wished that they didn't have to see. And it always leads to these very unfortunate events. Think about Yitzchak not seeing Esav's shortcomings, Ya'acov choosing to not really see the level of jealousy between the brothers and sending Yosef out unchaperoned to check on his brothers in the fields. Later in the book of Samuel and the High Priest, Eli chooses not to see his sons' indiscretions. And the Torah will often even tell us that someone was blind and their spiritual blindness also manifested physically as physical blindness, just to highlight the concept. And so I think that there is something that the Torah is telling us here about choosing to be blind.

But then, you have this counter-story at the end of Vayera, the story of the Akeidah, the sacrifice of Yitzchak. The interpreters of the Torah, the classical Meforshim go back and forth, back and forth, did Yitzchak know or not know that Avraham was taking him to be sacrificed? What's interesting is that he's asking questions like, "Where is the lamb?" The answer is a little bit shady, a little shifty. And he goes on anyway. Rashi and Radak and the Ramban, they said, "Of course he knew, but he went willingly." Then the Iben Ezra, the Abarbanel, the Rashbam, they say, "No, no, no. Yitzchak didn't know, he really didn't know at all."

I think in light of this theme that's jumping out at us about willful blindness throughout the entire portion, maybe everyone is right in a way. Because, just like Lot, just like Avimelech, maybe just like Avraham even with Yishmael, Yitzchak chose to be willfully blind. He had a suspicion. His question had been answered in a weird way. He could have just dug a little bit more, said, "Wait a minute, dad, are you really getting a lamb?" But he didn't, he chose to purposefully and intentionally not know, not to investigate something that he could have very easily investigated. But to move forward, putting his suspicion out of his mind, out of the front of his consciousness.

And this story becomes one of the most profound and emblematic stories of faith, the ultimate test to pass, the test of the greatest faith, the symbol of faith for all of history is the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. And he says, "Where is the lamb?" Avraham says, "HaShem will show the lamb, my son." Just a little scratch on the surface, he would have known the truth. He chose to be blind, blind to the risk to himself and to the self-sacrifice that would soon be asked of him. And he just moved forward to that mountain.

You know, when it comes to our own well-being and our own risk, everyone has a tendency to think ten times about all the things that can go wrong. Right? When we have a nice car we make sure to get every kind of insurance, we think of all the possibilities. When we have a nice house, we get a security system, we lock our doors, we protect our valuables, we check safety reviews on everything we do. It's not that we have specific intel that something bad is going to happen, but we try to see ten steps ahead, examine all the risks when our own benefit is at risk.

When it comes to OUR pleasure and OUR interests, we often on the other hand turn a blind eye to problems that are inconvenient for us to see. The Torah portion is showing us that you need to do the exact opposite. All the bad stories are people who chose to turn a blind eye to what they should have known and ended up doing something that in the long term really came out poorly. They should have known, but they didn't want to. Yitzchak is teaching us to do the exact opposite. When it comes to self-sacrifice that's for something greater, that's being asked of you, that's what HaShem is asking you to do? That's when he turns a blind eye. He doesn't think about the pain that he's going to endure, he doesn't ask questions that would allow him to escape.

That's true in our personal lives and in the place that we are as a nation. You know in our personal lives, sometimes you know that you have to do something and it's the right thing. There's no way to do it without choosing to be willfully blind. When you get married, when you have children, don't tell me that you can't do a little research on ChatGPT or what are the divorce rates, what are the disease rates that children can have, what are the hardships that you can endure in family life? But you move forward. You choose to be blind. When you need to follow your truth, maybe that's leaving things that you've been taught your whole life or moving to Israel, whatever it is, you have to choose to be blind, choose to not think about all of the hardships that you're likely to encounter and only focus on that goal, focus on getting to the mountain.

But when it's your own self-interests, the Torah is teaching us that that is the place to be super vigilant and resist the urge to be blind. It's so easy to be comfortable and to choose not to see the neighbor, that their kids aren't doing so well, not to pay attention to that shady business deal that might be going on in your business, just to ignore what is inconvenient. The Torah is saying, those are the places that you have to open your eyes and not be blind like Lot, blind like Avimelech.

And when we take it to the national level and the fight for Israel right now, our entire nation is called upon to be blind to the dangers of the mission that HaShem is sending us on. Who could be crazy enough to come after the Holocaust to begin with? To establish a Jewish homeland, surrounded by countries that want to kill you? To a barren land that hadn't borne fruit in 2,000 years? You had to choose to be blind to all of the logical things that you should have been afraid of. To make aliyah? You have to blind yourself to the difficulties that you know you're going to face in your income, in learning a new language because you know it's the right thing.

I look at every mother who sends their child right now to Gaza or to Lebanon, do they not know the risks? How do these superhuman human people, these moms go to work and cook dinner and be normal? They're forced to be like Yitzchak that says, "Ahhh, where's the lamb? Ummm, ok, HaShem is going to show you the lamb." And just keep on walking without stopping to be afraid.

And on the national level, our leadership was so blind for so long to the reality that was just in plain sight, all for the sake of making everything fit conveniently into their ideology and political interests. You know, 19 years ago, so many of us were screaming in the streets about the dangers of handing over Gaza to terrorists. No one wanted to see it. For years, people were saying, "They're building tunnels, they're amassing weapons in Gaza and in the northern border. Wake up!" But it didn't fit with the narrative that the world wanted us to have, that the UN wanted us to have, the U.S., Europe, the media. Two state solution, it just didn't fit, so we made ourselves blind.

You know the youngest babies that were ripped out of their mother's arms and thrown on to busses in Gush Katif 19 years ago, they turned 18 on October 7th and were enlisted to go into Gaza a year ago, the same place that they were torn from, they now have to risk their lives to clean up the mess that was blindlessly and recklessly made. You know, the symbol for the fight over Gush Katif was the orange ribbon that we all waved. We had them on our cars and our wrists and we surely remember. And today I saw a picture of terrorists that were just captured in Gaza, miraculously, and these terrorists, actually somebody blindfolded them as they get blindfolded when they're arrested, with the orange ribbons that look just like the orange ribbons of Gush Katif. And it's like, the symbolism is too powerful, it's like saying to us, "You chose to be blind back then, now you're going to have to be dealing with these terrorists that you were blind to seeing."

Now, how do you know when you're being honest with yourself? How do you know when you're supposed to look deeper or you're supposed to be willfully blind? I think the key is hidden right here in plain sight, still in the sacrifice story. And you can see it in the actions of Avraham. Because the word "to see" is the loudest motif in this story. When you actually read the story of the akeidah, of the sacrifice of Yitzchak, it is all about what you are willing to see or not see. Avraham it says, lifted his eyes and saw the mountain from afar. His vision was set

clearly on following HaShem's directions. How convenient would it have been for Avraham to procrastinate a little, "Oh, sorry, HaShem, I got lost, I stumbled around a bit." He sees it from far away and he moves forward.

And then Yitzchak asks, "Where's the lamb?" Avraham says, "HaShem will see to the lamb." This word again of seeing. He goes, "I don't know exactly what's going to happen for sure, but HaShem will show me what needs to be done. He'll decide what the lamb needs to be." But then mid-sacrifice, what does it say? He's trying to do exactly what HaShem asks him and it says again, he lifted his eyes and he sees the ram. The ram is stuck, Avraham is not stuck. Avraham is not stuck in his ways, he's continuing to look for HaShem's guidance, even when he thinks he knows what he's supposed to do. Whether it's uncomfortable or whether it is comfortable, he doesn't get stuck in what he thinks is the truth. He continually looks up, raises his eyes up to HaShem to see what the truth is.

And what's so incredible is that this mountain, where the sacrifice almost takes place is Mount Moriah gets a new name, right in verse 14 in chapter 22. It says, "Then Abraham named that place, 'The Lord will see,' as it is said to this day, the Lord will be seen."

But the word here is very, very interesting. It says, "He names the Mount Moriah, Har HaShem Yireh." But the word Yireh is very interesting. The word Yireh is Yud, Resh, Aleph, Hey. Now, in the Torah, we don't have the dots that teach us how to pronounce the word. That's passed down from generation to generation. Those specific letters can have three meanings at the same time. It can be yireh, yeraeh or yareh, meaning either it could mean HaShem will be seen, or HaShem will see you, or HaShem will show you.

In the Torah, the Torah scroll that doesn't have all of the pronunciations dotted in actually all three of those pronunciations could be there. But these three meanings are all interconnected. HaShem appears to you and you see HaShem and in that relationship, HaShem will show you and guide your life. He will show you what you need to do. When you're lost and wondering, HaShem Yareh, HaShem will show you the way to the goal that you're being called to achieve.

And what's so cool is the entire portion is called Parashat Vayera, from the idea of HaShem appearing to Avraham, but it also means Yireh, Vayera means to see. It's like a flashing light saying this whole portion is going to teach you about what to see and what not to see. When do you need to underthink and just put on your blinders and say, "I am moving forward without doing all the calculations and when do you need to overthink? When do you need to say, 'Am I being self-interested here? Do I need to open my eyes to a deeper issue that's going on?'"

And when Avraham and Yitzchak are here, they're showing us the model. We can seek HaShem and say, "I am willing to open my eyes to what you demand of me, whether I like it or not. I am going to open my eyes to doing that thing that I'm being called to do, whether it's convenient or

inconvenient. But when it comes to my own sacrifices, that is where I'm going to use the skill of willful blindness. The human ability to ignore inconvenient truths, to allow me to push forward."

So this portion is setting such a challenge for us about what to see and what not to see. What are the places in our lives that we know we're sweeping things under the rug that we shouldn't be and what are the places in our lives that we know we should be doing something, but we're allowing or overthinking or over-examining our fears to deter us from doing it. It's giving us the answer. The answer is Har HaMoriel, the Mountain of HaShem, that's called HaShem Yireh. Knowing that we go towards this mountain with an honest and an open heart because when we ask HaShem to show us the way, we say to ourselves, "We're going to follow what HaShem tells us to do, with an open and an honest heart. Voluntarily accepting upon ourselves to follow wherever that leads us, just like Avraham and with the strength of Yitzchak. To close ourselves off to those fears, to the over-examining and just say, "I am moving forward," and constantly seeking out HaShem's guidance in my life. So with that, I wish everybody a great week. Bye, guys.

Jeremy

Wow! Guys, I have to be married to that. Do you know how hard that is to be married to that? Richard, I see that you're laughing and clapping. I'm telling you, it's hard to be married to that. You're laughing, I see it. I'm so proud to be married to that, but talk about a help-mate that is here to help me in the world. I mean she is an unbelievable person, every time I learn Torah with her, it's like I'm learning with one of the great Torah minds of our generation, that's really what it feels like.

I mean I've never seen that the parsha is called Vayera, and you will see, and the whole thing is about what you can see, and what you can't see. And she just somehow is able to unlock the secrets of the Torah in the most marvelous way. And I want you to know that she doesn't just talk the talk, but Tehila and I, baruch HaShem, have like the merit of walking the merit. When I first came out to the Arugot Farm, I was sent there by the mayor of Gush Etzion. And they said, "Listen, Jeremy, this is the deepest settlement in all of Judea." There wasn't really an idea of farms, ten years ago. Since we started the Arugot Farm, over 80 farms have been established in Judea and Samaria. So in some ways, we are sort of like the father of the farm movement in Israel.

But when we first went out there, it was a new idea. And I came out to the mountain and I brought with me the Waller's, who bring Christian volunteers to help farmers in Judea and Samaria because they heard that there are farmers that need help. Well, I know an organization that helps farmers, so I brought HaYovel out there with me. And I pretty much introduced them and said, "Well, Yossi, it's time to meet Tommy, Tommy meet Yossi, and well...good luck, guys. My mission is done here." And then I walked right past my house, except it wasn't there

obviously, and I stood at the edge of the cliff. And that cliff is the beginning of the drop, really that goes all the way down to the bottom of the world, the Dead Sea.

And I don't know how to explain spiritual things in physical words. But I was taught as a kid that Abraham was a prophet and no one could ever really understand what Abraham experienced and how could we really even understand to hear from God to the point where you're sacrificing your son. We could never understand Abraham. But as I stood on that mountain on the Arugot Farm, it was as if my soul woke up and my breath was taken away. It was breath-taking views. And breath is neshimah and neshima is soul in Hebrew. And so when you have a breath-taking moment, your soul has just woken up a little bit. And it felt like my soul leaped out of my body and was just doing cartwheels and summersaults in the air, stunned at the views, and then it went into the rocks of that mountain.

And it's been almost ten years and there hasn't really been a day when I've been in Israel that I didn't go back to that mountain. It was the closest thing that I've ever experienced to maybe what Abraham experienced when God said, "Go to yourself to the Land that I will show you." And my whole life in some ways since then has been an experiment with Tehila what that will look like if I actually live by that calling. And so, we sold our home, we sold most of our possessions, and Abraham, he left his father's house and he just started walking. He didn't even know where he was walking to. God said, "To a land that I will show you," and then God never showed him the land and so Abraham just had to sort of walk in a random direction. I knew exactly where I needed to go.

But it was the most dangerous place in Israel, the most politically contested place in Israel. What about the Arabs? What about the jihad? What about the Chamas? We'll be alone on a mountain? What if the Supreme Court, what if the Europeans try to stop us? There were just so many reasons NOT to do it. And in the Torah portions that we read, as Abraham comes to the Land, he is shamed because he is speaking in the Name of the God of Israel, the God of Abraham. And all of a sudden, there's a famine that strikes the Land, and he meant to bring blessings and his God is blessing him and he has to escape down to Egypt.

And all of a sudden he's now dealing with his wife getting kidnapped, he then has to go to war, I mean the amount of time that I had to battle against the Arabs over the Land. I would wake up in the morning and there would be shepherds in my back yard. I had to get a police dog. I mean, I was battling and it was so shameful for me because I didn't know how I was ever going to win. And we were sued, not by Pharaoh in Egypt, but by Norway, Denmark, and Germany. I mean it was like I was living this Abrahamic test without even realizing that I was living an Abrahamic test.

But it was so challenging for me and Tehila, the entire time, she never really wavered. I was willfully blind. I was like, "We're following the Lord, we're going to be blessed." And I was just

so excited to move out to the Farm. And Tehila, “Well, it’s probably going to be pretty hard, and I’m up for it being really hard.” And so, she was just ready for hardships so when hardships came, she was like the rock of Israel. But when hardships hit me, I pretty much crumbled into a pile of mess and I might as well have been sucking my thumb to go to bed at night. I was like, “What have I done with my life?” We were in so much debt and we were being sued in Israel’s Supreme Court by nation states. We had no front door. I promised Tehila that we would have a family protection dog. We had a chihuahua named Dreidel. That was our protection. And it was just like, this was my life, it was like I was on a rollercoaster that I couldn’t get off because you can’t get off of your life. We sold all of our possessions in this attempt at trying to get to the Land that God had showed us.

And Tehila was so faithful in coming out there with us, but we just lived through unbelievable hardships. And what I realized this week, was that even after the Akeidah, after the binding of Isaac, then Sarah dies. And Abraham’s journey never really ends. You know a few months ago I fell off a horse, I was knocked out, people thought that I was dead. They had to helicopter me because the ambulance that came said, “If we don’t helicopter him to the hospital, this boy is not going to make it.” And so, the challenges don’t ever end, and Abraham’s story never really ends. And that’s like a fantasy that we’re sold as kids. And they lived happily ever after. They lived in a palace and they lived happily ever after. Friends, that is a lie of Hollywood. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, there is no happily ever after. Happily ever after is in the world to come. This world is a world for working, a world for growing, a world for flourishing, and really transforming ourselves into becoming the people that HaShem created us to be.

The expectation that one day we’re going to sit by the pool with a martini in our hand and we’re going to live happily ever after, that is delusional. It’s a lie because it sells Netflix movies, but the real world is the world of Abraham. He’s the father of many nations. And his continuous journey of really test after test, of everything he passed the test, he discovered more about himself than he knew earlier. He also allowed God to discover more. And God even knew, cause if man has free choice, then until man chooses the right path, then it’s up for grabs. And Abraham, himself, showed the world what it is to be a believer.

And what’s happening now is that all of us have a chance now to enter into the covenant of Abraham, to enter into the faith of Abraham, without a religion, without a doctorate, without a theology, without some sort of baggage that humans have attached to so many things. It’s really allowing for a complete revolution. Because what is a revolution? It’s to revolve all the way back to the beginning. Abraham is the beginning. And what did he live by? He lived by the guidance that he had in his life. He wasn’t always right. It doesn’t mean that you’re always going to choose the right path. He was wrong about Yishmael and God had to say, “Listen to your wife, Sarah.”

And what's so funny about that, is that I have so many Christian friends and me and Tehila, together. All of our Christian friends tell me that I'm supposed to be the authority in the home. I am the authority in the home. And then Tehila says, "You know, in this week's Torah portion, God says, 'Listen to the voice of Sarah, your wife.'" She always brings the Torah right back at me.

And so, to live like Abraham means to live in a relationship with God. And that really is the ultimate, to live with the living Presence of God in our lives and to courageously, no matter what anyone says, follow that path until we get to Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem.

And I believe that that is what this Fellowship is all about because even as I scroll here now, I see all of the faces and there's Harold and Brigitte and they're in Germany. And there's Jim in South Dakota, and there's just all of these people from all over the world that are just a bunch of misfits. No one here fits in any sort of box. No one here fits any sort of...there's no label we can put on any of us. We're just literally walking the path of Abraham and Sarah. That is the biggest blessing because we are a living example of what it used to be, what it used to be to actually live the covenant of Abraham and Sarah.

So with that, my friends, I want to bless all of us that we should continue to walk on the path of Abraham, lech lecha, go to yourself. Because as we continue to go on that path, it may not be easy, but it will bring us to who we were created to be. So with that, I want to bless you from this Land and from this holy city.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May God bless you and protect you. May God shine His light and be gracious to you. May God lift His countenance upon you and bless you with peace.

Shalom my friends, have a beautiful week. We'll see you again soon. Shalom.