

Session 204

24 November 2024

Chayei Sarah & Toldot - Are These the Birth Pangs of Mashiach?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NF46SjRcfw>

Ari

Shalom, my friends, it's so good to see all of you. Hi! I'm just looking through your faces and I'm...you know Tehila's theory is that I have like 500 times the amount of oxytocin, is that the word that fathers get when they have kids? Like usually it's mothers, but fathers, too. I don't know. But I'm just like a big emotional ball of crazy and I'm just looking at your faces and I'm feeling so much love for you guys. And I think it also has to do with the fact that last Shabbat we had Greg and his family, long-time brother and member of the Fellowship here. And when we have times and opportunities to have you come out to the Farm, actually Fellowship with us...like flesh and blood, like eye-to-eye as they say in Hebrew, it's just so magical and it's just so special and I just pray for that day that I really believe it will happen, one way or another where we'll be able to be together.

And you know, I want to start I think, by saying that both Shaena and I have been praying over this week's prayer packet, I mean I read it every week and I pray every week, but this week, it was just...it's a lot. You know, Ardelle, she selflessly puts it together for us, every single week. And you know, Shaena and I were just talking about the greatness of the people in this Fellowship. The absolute towering spiritual stature of so many of you. I have yet to meet one person in this Fellowship who I haven't learned something from or been inspired from in some way. And so I don't know, this week's packet, it just weighted heavily on me. Not in a bad way I don't think. I think it was in a good way, if such a thing were possible. I really...I just love you guys so much and even those of you who I barely know. It just hurts my heart that so many of you are going through so much pain, that you carry such heavy burdens.

I don't know if everybody gets this packet? How many people get it? I know a lot of us are involved in this prayer packet, but I really suggest that if you don't get it, or if you don't read it, it's a must read, it's a must pray, I think. And that's what Shaena and I were talking about. You know, the extraordinary faith and positivity and the strength that you all face in your burdens, it's just so inspiring. And I know that, on paper...you know, I'm the rabbi here, but the truth is that when I was reading this packet, I found myself so humbled by all of you. I really walked away from praying for everybody just feeling like I am the least of all of us. And I'm not just saying that, and I'm also not knocking myself. I would proudly be the least of the people in this group here. That is not...I don't think poorly of myself. It just is a commentary on what I think of all of you.

Anyways, so I'm sure Jeremy and Tehila feel the same way, but I can only speak for me and for Shaena because we were discussing it together. And the fact that we are pouring our hearts out

for each other in this Fellowship, it is really so important. You know Rav Biederman actually discussed it this week. He shared the story of Rav Zeira, who lived a long and healthy life. And when the students asked him why or what he could attribute this long healthy life, he said it was because he was never “happy” when his friend had a problem. Which seems like a pretty low bar. I mean, there are people, I know there are people who are happy or comforted when their friends suffer. Not because they’re evil, I don’t think. I think there’s something really human about that. Because life is hard and maybe it reminds them that they’re not alone in their suffering. And so, perhaps other people suffering makes them feel less alone or as a comfort to them and cause them to be less envious. Something like that. So I’m not like judging that so much, but I think that’s below most of the people in this Fellowship and it’s also below Rav Zeira. That’s was not what Rav Zeira was saying when he said that he was never happy when his friend had a problem.

Rav Yitzchak Barker explains that the Rav Zeira was saying that he wasn’t able to be happy with his own good fortune when he knew that someone else was suffering. Right? And I know that we’re always supposed to be happy, but I think that directive is for when WE are suffering. Not when our neighbor is. We’re not going to be happy at their suffering and at their expense. When it comes to them, then we join in with them. We connect with them there. It doesn’t mean that it’s not built on a foundation of deep happiness. It just means that we are going to join them in theirs. And anyways, I think if we’re connected to the truth of how interconnected we all are, we know that when our fellow is suffering, a very real part of each of us is suffering, too. We need to be connected to that in a real way.

There’s a famous Jewish tradition brought down from the great sage, Rashi on verse 21, chapter 6:

Sarah said “God has made laughter for me; whoever hears will laugh for me.”
-Genesis 21:6

And so, the tradition is, that many salvations happened on that day that Yitzchak was born. Many women were able to bear children that had not been able to bear children. Many people were healed on that day, that had been sick and were being healed. And there was a lot of joy in the world. And Rav Biederman teaches that these miracles happened in order to allow Abraham and Sarah to fully rejoice in the joy of Yitzchak’s birth, as HaShem wanted them to. He wanted them to fully enjoy and he knew who they were. Because Abraham and Sarah were so empathetic. They were so connected with the pain of others that if there were other mothers not being blessed with children, and if there were other sick people not being healed, they would not have been able to fully enjoy their own blessings. How beautiful is that?! You know, I can’t say that I’m holding there right now. But that’s why we’re taught these things.

Some people in this Fellowship, we have sort of a give and a take from my communications with you, where a lot of people feel like, “Is that true? Did that really happen?” You know, to me, it’s

not even so critical whether that's denotatively true, and it actually happened or not. The deeper truth of that story is no less true than if it actually happened. Stories like that that are not made up about me. Right? There's something there. I remember when I was young, maybe I was 15 or 16, and we were sitting at the table, at our Shabbat lunch table. And there was a rabbi, a very sagely, pious rabbi that was there at the table with us. And right before we benched, we said the birkat hamazon, the blessing after we eat, which is like the ultimate blessing that we recite together, that we sing together after the meals on Shabbat, or when we eat bread during the week. And he said, "Michael, (he said to my father) could you take that sharp knife off the table? It's Jewish law, it's Halacha." My father said, "Take the knife off the table." He said, "Yes, because we're supposed to take it off the table in case we were so overcome with grief and sadness when we are reading this blessing and reading about our hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple, that we'd be so grieved at the destruction of the Temple that we could take the knife and kill ourselves with it."

And I was like...as a kid I was like, that's crazy! I remember asking, "Do you think God really cares whether we take the knife off the table, so we don't kill ourselves with it?" He said, "It's not really about that. It's about conveying to us that if we saw things through the prism of truth, that is the grief we could feel or we should feel or we would feel. That it matters to HaShem that it matters to us."

I'm saying this because you know, sometimes in my heart I share like a Rashi or a teaching of the Rabbis and I know that we're in different places on our journey. And I just know that some of you may have different ways that you receive sort of those blessings. But anyways, this level of just being so empathetic and caring about our neighbor that we're not able to fully enjoy our happiness and fully laugh with reckless abandon while others are in pain, it may seem elusive to us or beyond us. At least I can speak for myself. But the sages teach that the way to cultivate this empathy is to pray for each other with all of our hearts. Not just for each other in this Fellowship, but for everyone in the world that is suffering in any way. But I think particularly for those that are suffering in the way that we are, and going through what we are going through, we should pray for them in specific.

You know, and as we learned in this week's portion, only when Abraham prayed for Avimelech, the king...it was actually last week's portion, the king who took Sarah and his house was smitten with terrible troubles, from gastronomical issues to women who weren't able to give birth. Only when Abraham prayed for his healing and for the women in his home to be able to give birth and to be healed, only then when Abraham prayed for them, was he finally blessed himself in the way that he was praying for.

Anyways, there were two extra prayer requests that came in after Ardelle sent out the prayer packet. Both of them were really challenging stuff. And because it was too late to include it, I'll share here very briefly. That one is for the healing and health and protection of Cadence, right

Ardelle? I'm looking at you right now. The granddaughter of our own Yitzchak and Karen Sloan. You know Ardelle will send out the details for those who want to pray in a more detailed way, which is always good. You know the more detail we pray, the better it is always. And the other was from our own Sister Christophora, well she's always praying for all of us. And well she needs our prayers for the miraculous and complete healing of her sweet sister and her new brother-in-law. It's like they finally found each other after such a journey and it's just a crazy, heart-breaking story. All of a sudden his leg...it looks like he has sepsis and what's going on and they're trying antibiotics and it's not working. She took him to the hospital, on the way back, she fell down in the parking lot of the hospital, severely injuring her arm and her shoulder. And you know, it's just so heart-breaking. And it's a crazy story and we are praying for Sister Christophora and her family as well, and we're praying for each other. And of course, we're praying for our fearless leader, the heart of this Fellowship, Tabitha, who just went through surgery and is still with us, even despite it all, she's with us right now. Tabitha, you are just the best, may you have a fast and a complete recovery and may all of your troubles wash away. All of your troubles and the troubles of everybody in this Fellowship.

Anyways, there's so much to talk about and to share and I'm so eager to hopefully hear from you, I hope we have time for our Fellowship Connection at the end here. If that's true, please try to think in your heads what you'd want to share, what you'd want to ask, whatever it is. But I know that Jeremy and Tehila have limited time with us today. So before saying anything more, I want to introduce them as I'm eager as always to hear their teachings. And you know, Shaena and I were actually honored that Tehila came by on Shabbat morning to brainstorm for what she would share with you. And it was an honor to both be a part of her process and even in the smallest way. She is a truly brilliant person to the degree where sometimes Shaena and I question whether it's intellect or just prophecy. Whether she's a prophet. You've heard the stories. She pretty much named my youngest boy, Mordecai Shimshon, like she was the confirmation that that was his name. She has a very close connection with him. And so, I'm praying that they're with us right now. I don't know the details of where they're going, but I know it's...there you are, Jeremy!

Jeremy

Yes, thank you very much, Ari, there's Tehila. So, yes, I asked Tehila permission if I would go first, and then I will pass it off to her with your permission. Is that ok, Ari?

Ari

Absolutely. You go ahead.

Jeremy

Ok, excellent, yes, it's wonderful to be here. Thank you all so much for coming. I love the Fellowship so much and someone asked me just this past week, "Why is it called the Land of Israel Fellowship? Couldn't you call it another name like, The Israel Fellowship or Jerusalem

Fellowship? Why the Land of Israel? That seems like a peculiar name. And here we come, right in the transition of the Torah portion where Abraham, who really is the father of many nations, who's the father of this Fellowship in many ways, is the father of the people of Israel. And he acquires the Land of Israel for the first time. And in fact, when you really read the entire Torah, it starts off with a journey to the Land of Israel. Abraham leaves his father's house on his way to the Land of Israel. And then the Torah ends with the exodus from Egypt and Israel making their way to the Land of Israel. So, the whole Torah is really about the Land of Israel and the whole covenant with the people of Israel in the Land of Israel.

And so I look at what's happening in the Torah portion and I'm trying to just figure it out because it seems as though there's a lot of suffering in the world, a lot of hardships. Ari just mentioned a lot of hardships. And Avraham, he really lived through a lot. He lived through ten tests, he had to go out to war, he had to be called to sacrifice his only son that he only received in his 100 years old. I mean, just...and that's the one son that God is asking to give. I mean just the amount of challenges that he had to go through.

And it says in the sages of Israel that *eretz Yisrael*...the Land of Israel is acquired through hardships, through challenges, through suffering. And you're going to have to work in order to achieve the Land of Israel. And I think about that, well after these ten tests that Abraham lived through, he finally passes the last test according to almost everyone, and then his wife dies. And it's like, what?! He was pushed all the way to his limit and then pushed a little bit more. And then he acquires the Land of Israel. And then he buys the Land of Israel. And you have to wonder, like what is this about that the sages of Israel they say that the Land of Israel is acquired through challenges, through hardships, through suffering. Why is it that?

I mean we clearly see it in the Torah, Abraham had to go through so much to finally acquire the Land of Israel. I have a friend that just made *aliyah*. He was born with a mixed heritage of a native American Indian and now he's living in Israel. And his *aliyah* has been a giant challenge. They had to move from place to place. And their kitchen and their sink, it's all just...and I said, "Listen, *mazel tov*." The Land of Israel is acquired through hardship. And so the fact that you're suffering and you're going through these challenges means you're actually acquiring your place in the Land of Israel. And it's when the sages of Israel say that the Land of Israel is acquired through hardship, it's not like a beautiful poetic saying. It's like a law, like the law of gravity. If you drop this apple, it will drop to the ground. If you drop it, it's like that's the law. The same way, if you want to acquire the Land of Israel, it's gonna be hard.

And we see that obviously in the Torah where Abraham finally acquires the Land of Israel after being pushed to his limits and then a little bit more. And the question that I think we all have is why? Why is the Land of Israel bought through such challenges? Why do you have to acquire it through suffering? And if the name of the Land of Israel Fellowship is called the Land of Israel Fellowship, well you know what? If you look around, everyone here is struggling. Everyone is

struggling with man and struggling with God and figuring out how to tell their families and how they're going to move to Israel, and how they're going to do something different, and they're all living this Abrahamic path, and it's not simple. And forget about ...I mean everyone has their own challenges, everyone has their own struggles. And that's what it is to acquire the Land of Israel.

But why? Why is everyone connected to the Land of Israel of Israel Fellowship? Why is anyone connected to the Land of Israel, itself? Why is struggling and hardship a fundamental ingredient to entering into the Promised Land? And so, I'm going to take a stab to answer that very deep question. And God is wonderful, God is perfect, God is one, God is great, God is everything. But you know what God can't do? There is a few things that God can't do. And that is, can God struggle? God doesn't need to struggle. And can God persevere? Not really, He's God, I mean, God can do everything. And can God be courageous? It's like, hmmm...and all of a sudden we start to enter into the Garden of Eden when we understand that God created a reflection of Himself in the world, chose the people that would live out His reflection of who He is. Even though He can't be courageous in the ethereal realm of heavens, but you know how He can manifest courage? How He can manifest perseverance? How He can manifest the struggle and overcoming the struggle? Israel. That's how He can manifest His ways in the world, through His chosen people connected to the Land of Israel. Do you want to be chosen? Do you want to be in the Land of Israel? Of course you're going to have to struggle. Of course you're going to have to persevere. Of course you're going to have to...it demands courage because in the Land of Israel, the people of Israel in the Land are quite literally a reflection of God's oneness in the world. It's so deep.

So the Land of Israel is acquired only through perseverance, through challenges, through courage, through strength because we have to manifest and reflect God's light because God's light is meant to shine on a particularly people, in a particular place, in the entire world. And Abraham is the father of all of us. And he showed us that way. Abraham wasn't a Jew, the Jew is a modern term made by Babylonians. Abraham was a believer in God. And you know, his children, Jacob, his name was Israel and ultimately, we serve the God of Israel. The God of Israel in the Land of Israel and there is the people of Israel. It's all one. And the reflection of that light that will emanate to the world, it really only comes through us expressing God's oneness and living out the attributes that God has and expressing it in this world.

And so, with that, after Ari said all of these challenges and all of these hardships that so many people that we know and love are going through, we need to know that's really all a part of the scenario. That as we are struggling, we are growing. And as we're growing, we're flourishing into who HaShem created us to be and who did He create us to be? He created us to be little sparks of light that will shine His light to everyone around us, around the world. With that, I bless you, and with that I want to introduce the genius of a wife that I have, the brilliant and marvelous and righteous Tehila Gimpel. Tehila, come.

Tehila

Hi, thanks guys. That was wildly over the top and crazy as usual. Nice to see everybody. So, yes, I did come to Ari's living room in a whirlwind on Shabbat and start chattering out about all of my struggles in the Torah portion. But, that is for a longer project that hopefully I will be able to crack open over the course of the week and share next week. So this week I just want to share another short idea that was really on my heart. And Ari, I just have to say, it's worth it to tune into you, just because of your great vocabulary words. I never even heard of the word, denotatively, I'm literally looking it up to figure out what you mean. So good for you, I love everything you guys both said and I'm learning new things all the time.

Ari

I immediately imagine that that means it's not a word that I just made up.

Tehila

I was 50/50 on it whether you made it up or not. Ok, hi everybody, I'm going to start that all over again. So, this coming week is Toldot, and I'm going to call this "Little Lies." I'm want to talk about the little bitty lies, the little bitty lies in this coming Torah portion. You know, last week I spoke about willful blindness, about that kind of ability that we have to sort of lie to ourselves and try to not to see the uncomfortable things that we don't want to see. This week I want to look at when we actually go one step further. When we find ways to justify, for all the right reasons, these itty bitty lies and what does that actually do to our lives.

You know this Torah portion is so interesting...I'm going to give you some homework, ok? Does everybody want homework? I'm going to give you a little exercise. This is the exercise I've been doing all week. Read stories of the portion of Toldot starting from the beginning of the pregnancy of Rebecca and going until Jacob runs away. You can read the story four times, but each time, only read it knowing what one of the characters knows. Like just write it from Rivkah's perspective, like what does she know? And how does this story look for her? And then you can tell the story a totally different way, only knowing what Yitzchak, what Isaac knows. But then there's what Esav knows, and that's a totally other narrative, and then there's what Jacob knows, and that's a totally different narrative.

Some of the interpreters of the Torah say that everyone was really sharing a lot of information with everybody, but the Torah actually goes out of its way to tell us when people do know things that are going on and there's information that it doesn't tell us that the other characters know. And so, I just want to kind of break this down. Everything starts well enough in the Isaac/Rebecca marriage. You know, a fun fact, Isaac is actually the only person in the entire Bible that it says that he loves his wife. This is like a really special couple. No one later, anywhere in the Torah does it say that they loved their wife.

Isaac loved Rebecca and if you just think about it, he's praying in front of her. What does that mean? He's opening his heart to her. She's able to see his heart, he's just being an open book to her, completely honest, like where he is. He's not just saying to her, "Oh yeah, yeah, I'm not worried about it. We're going to have a baby," and then running off and praying "Oh gosh, HaShem, I'm so nervous about this." He's showing her exactly what his heart is and that's really comforting to her and she's able to see that he's praying for her, they're together. You can imagine them in that room, just sort of sharing their hearts with one another, right?

But then, things start to go off the rails. Rivkah is struggling in this pregnancy. What do you expect her to do? I mean, she's married to a prophet. She doesn't go and ask Isaac. It says that she goes to seek God, and wherever that means, she ends up getting this prophecy that there are these two nations. Now, no where in the story does it tell us that she actually shared that prophecy with Isaac. So it can be, that they're going into their entire child-rearing parenting career with one knowing what lies ahead and the other parent not knowing at all. Meaning the Torah leaves that open-ended, but at the very least, the Torah doesn't tell us that she told him. So we're at least supposed to go into the story, the Torah is inviting us as the reader is to go into that story under the assumption that Isaac very well may not know what's actually up ahead.

Now, they're raising these boys and you kind of get a hint to this because it says that Isaac loved Esav. Why? The Torah actually gives us a reason. Just cause he's a really good hunter. He's obviously successful, he's a big, strong, muscular, athletic, jock son. And then, he's like, "HaShem, forgive me, he's the one sitting in the tent, he's studying, he's quiet." And Isaac has a reason, it tells us the reason. And then it says, "And Rebecca loved Jacob." Does it give a reason? It doesn't give a reason. Why doesn't it give a reason? Maybe because we are the readers and we already know the reason. We already know the reason because of the prophecy. But it's like, as if to tell you, Isaac's reason is already on the table. It's obvious, he expresses it, he explains it. But Rivkah's reason is like more cryptic. She hasn't shared necessarily that prophecy. So there's already the beginning of this much less transparent kind of behavior from Rivkah than what Isaac was having towards her.

And then, we have another little subtle dishonesty. You have this little dishonesty. Isaac says, "I want to bless Esav before I die." And then what does Rebecca tell Jacob? She says, "Run, run, run. Your father wants to give a blessing." And what does she say? Does she just give a blessing? He says, "Give a blessing before God." There's another little subtle change. Did Isaac say anything about want to bless Esav before God? Now why is that important? Because we see that Isaac actually has two blessings to give. One is for physical blessing, physical abundance, and that's what he blesses Jacob with, thinking he was Esav. And then later in the portion, we find out that he was planning on blessing Jacob anyway with the spiritual blessing, the godly blessing of Abraham.

And so, it's possible that she was trying to persuade Jacob to do this whole plan by telling him that this was going to be the blessing that he was more interested in, the godly blessing, the blessing that was passed down through Abraham. Not just a blessing of physical things, but maybe it didn't interest Jacob that much. So have another little subtle deception.

And then, it doesn't end there. When she's worried about Jacob needing to run away, what does she tell Jacob? She says to Jacob, "Run away because you have to get away from your brother." What does she say to Isaac? "I want him to leave so that he can get married." There is this constant, subtle, tiny little lie that end up leading to this massive deception of dressing Jacob up and then to cover up the outcome of that, we need more of these small little lies. And what happened? They sort of eat away at the fabric of the relationships in the family.

Now what's really interesting, is that on the one hand we say, "Well, what choice did she have? She knew who was the good one and she couldn't let the bad one get the blessing, right?" You have to really feel for Rebecca. Do you guys know what I mean? You feel for her because she's doing this for such a good reason, what choice did she have? But here's something that's so interesting. This isn't the first time that this is happening in the Bible. Because all we have to do is look back to Abraham and Sarah. Sarah also was able to identify who was the good one. And when even God, Himself said, "You know, you're going to have Isaac," what did Abraham say to HaShem? "If only Yishmael could walk before You!" Avraham, just like Yitzchak is not seeing the darker side. They're loving fathers and they're not seeing the darker side of their children, that their wives are able to identify prophetically.

And then, what happens? They actually put it on the table, they hash it out. What does Sarah say? She says, "I am so angry at you." She actually says that she's putting chamas on him. She says, "My chamas is on you. There's going to be responsibility of chamas on you for not listening to me." That's how serious this fight gets. The fight gets so bad that God, Himself, has to referee between them. But you know, truthfully, they resolved it painfully, but truthfully. But what happens is, is that here they do the opposite. There's this cascade of...imagine if Sarah, instead of just facing Avraham, had somehow like...made Yishmael disappear and just sort of like, "I sent Yishmael off to do some chores," and like that would have destroyed the fabric of their relationship. She saved their relationship by having this fight. She saved their relationship. She saved the family structure and in the end, we see that there really seems to be peace in the family. She saved it by saying her truth and hashing it out, even if it needed God to referee them. Even if God, Himself had to come and settle them from their squabble. At least they had it out and they lived it out in truth and they were able to save the fabric of their family.

Here, we have this cascade of good intentions, but little lies that lead to bigger lies and bigger lies. It's all for the sake of fulfilling prophecy, but in the end of the day, is it your job to fulfill the prophecy, or is it your job to just walk in truth. Now, what's so devastating in reading this story, is at any point, you can stop and retell the story...as you can tell, I've played around this story all

week. You can stop and retell the story without the lies and the story turns out better. Like imagine if at any point, the truth would have been spoken. What if in the beginning Rivkah told Yitzchak about the prophecy? Told him what was going on with the kids at some point. What if she stood before him and said, "You know, just like Sarah, we have to like...let's talk about how we're raising the kids. Let's talk about who should get the blessings." And at any point, when Isaac said, "I want to bless Esav." What if at that point she would have said, "I am seriously putting my foot down and not allowing this to happen." He loved her, he loved her and he wanted to hear her.

But she was so certain that it was all on her to fulfill God's vision that everything became ok on the way towards reaching that. And you know, it's horrible to say these things because it's not to say this to blame Rivkah. These stories are here because they're cautionary tales for us because they're so real. They're so painful because they're so real. And you can't put all of this responsibility only on Rebecca because you have to ask yourself, "Well, why did she feel like she had to lie?" Not that it answers the question, but the few stories that we have about Isaac, it's abundantly obvious that he does not like conflict. Because look at what happens at the wells. People fill up his well, he fixes them, but then what does he do? The Torah takes great pains to tell us that he moves away. He goes somewhere else. He doesn't want to fight for his wells.

So Rivkah knows that she has a husband who really doesn't want conflict. Every time there is a couple where one side is sort of blind to the other, there's another side there, perhaps, not always, but at least in this story, but it's encouraging that and enabling that in some kind of way. Like Isaac is saying, "I don't want to have these fights." Even when he's suspicious that Esav might not actually be Esav and that it might be Jacob, he doesn't want to hash that out. He doesn't want to hash that out, he doesn't want to probe it any farther. And so in this dynamic that's created between the two of them, there is this sort of fertile ground for just untruthfulness.

And then, what happens to that? What happens in this in the end? There's this painful part where Jacob says, "I don't want to lie, I don't want to lie, I don't want to be cursed." I don't think that he really thought that his father was going to curse him. He doesn't want the curses that come along with living a lie. And what does Rebecca say to him? She says, "Don't worry, the curse will be on me."

Now, on the one hand, that's so courageous, she's like, "I'll take all the curses on me. I'm taking full responsibility that we need to fulfill God's plan and fall on me." But at the end of the day, she says "Your curse is going to be on me," it really was. Because look what happens to her. And it didn't have to be that way. But she takes it upon herself and then look what actually happens to her. What actually happens to her is there's strife between her and her husband, there's strife between the brothers, and then eventually Jacob leaves because of all of this strife between the brothers. And then what's so devastating is that when we keep on reading the

story, she sends him away. She goes, "I'll call you back when your brother forgets about it." She never calls him back, seemingly she never saw him again. She sent him away saying, "I don't want to lose the two of you," and then what happens? She actually ends up, at the very least, losing the one that was her most beloved. She ends up losing Jacob.

What's even more devastating, we don't even read about her death in the Torah. We don't know how long she lived, we don't know any more stories about her after this. So it's like, she prophesizes, "Don't worry, the curse is one me," but that actually happened. And it was avoidable if at any point, like she may not have known that. In her place where she was standing, it looked like she had to do this in order to bring God's vision to reality. But us as the readers are blessed to read this as a cautionary tale.

What we were learning last week was on making sure to not allow ourselves to be willfully blind. I think this is a cautionary tale about being so careful in our speech, especially inside of a family, to not let those teeny, tiny lies start to eat away at our relationship just to keep the peace. This story is a story that tells us that at any point, the truth could have healed them, and they didn't go that way. And that sort of follows Jacob for the rest of his life. It's a lesson that keeps on following him because other people continue to lie to him throughout his life. He continues to be surrounded by people that lie. And that's why we say, "HaShem, give truth to Jacob." Jacob comes to actually represent truthfulness as his sort of spiritual embodiment because that is the ultimate lesson of his life.

And so many times in our personal lives, we can find two or three reasons to tell this small untruth. But the Torah is cautioning us against that. And then, you don't have to look very far into our public life, the things that we're asked to lie about in the world. When you see a person with a beard and nail polish, you're supposed to say that that's a woman...all these little lies. All these little lies. When you see Chamas amassing weapons, you're supposed to say that those are peace-loving humanitarians. We have to say that terrorists are freedom fighters and we have to say that...in the world you're expected to say that Israelis are doing genocide. It's the worst genocide I've ever seen...they just found out that the population of Gaza actually grew over the last year. We're told that we have to tell these small lies just to keep the peace, just not hurt anyone's feelings, just to not get in trouble. And this parsha is setting the bar for us, showing us what happens and what could have been. Imagine what could have been if somebody just stood up and spoke the truth. People just spoke the truth to one another. So, with that, I wish you guys a great week.

Ari

Wow, thank you, Tehila, incredible, incredible. You know, it makes me think of the words of the song of Almah. It's this band called Almah that is probably the band that speaks to my soul now more than any other. And they have these lyrics and one of the lyrics they say, "If I do not have truth, I do not have faith." Because those two things are together. Tehila, you expressed that

beautifully. And just how these intergenerational lies can really snowball and become an entire thing. I always thought it was incredible the way my parents were able to be whatever level of dysfunction they had, they had it in front of everyone, no matter who was there at the time. And I think sometimes it was like...people were like, "Oh, what's going on?" But I really appreciated it because I knew that a lot of families, behind closed doors, things get ugly and who they were behind closed doors was who they were in front of those doors. The beautiful, the less beautiful, everything. So anyways, Tehila, thank you so much. If I don't have truth, then I don't have faith.

And I think one of the great thematic messages that come from our learning together in this Fellowship is that faith. Is that everything that happens to us is from HaShem. And you know we get that originally, at the very core, from Abraham. Because you know, I always connected with Abraham, I think perhaps more than any other character in the Torah. Maybe it's because my name is Ari Yehuda Abramowitz, which means "Lion of Judah, son of Abraham." Son of Abraham, that's my family name. What is the last name, your family name? Is that inter-generational legacy you have. Abraham. That's what Abramowitz means, son of Abraham. So maybe it's that, maybe it's something deeper.

But I've always connected with Abraham and particularly the mitzvah, as many of you know, of greeting guests into your home. Abraham was all about this. And I always thought it was because he recognized that when he welcomed his fellow man into his tent, he was welcoming the spark of God, Himself. And so there was a real truth to that. And you know, one of the things I used to do in my quest to connect with Abraham, was washing feet. It was a little bit of shtik, but I really enjoyed it also. You know, when I first started trying to do that, I was here at the Farm already and I'm in Judea...I tried it originally with like a toothbrush. One of the first people was an early guest, Tommy Waller. And he's not a Jew, he's a Christian, and he's like, "Well, I guess this is what Jews do," and he took off his shoes and his socks at my pleading request and I was like scrubbing...and it was just awkward. And it just wasn't right.

And then I found these machines that you fill with water and you plug them in and it sort of vibrates the water. Have you seen those? You know what I'm talking about? So that was great and it sort of massages feet and it cleans them off and while I haven't been able to do that as much lately because of just a whole lot of reasons, I try to keep that spirit of the Abrahamic greeting of guests into my home. Because like we said, he was a foot-washer, chapter 18, it says, Abraham says:

Please let a little water be taken and bathe your feet.

So that was a question. And for years, I've heard this very famous Rashi that teaches that Avraham was aware that Arab merchants, also different pagan merchants in the area, they worshipped the dust of their feet. And I never really understood that. You know, he washed the

dust off their feet to make sure that that idol worship that they worshipped doesn't come into his home. And I just didn't understand that. How do you worship the dust of your feet? It's so prevalent, it's everywhere, I never understood it. It's just one of those things that I believed and I never really understood what it meant.

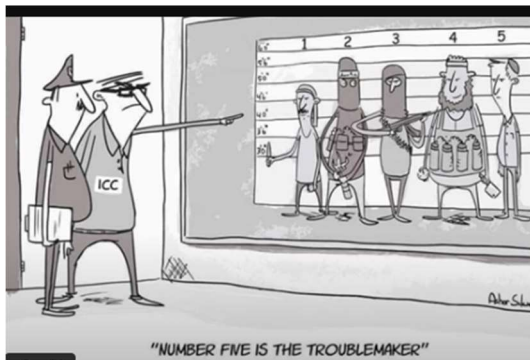
And then I heard, just now, through Rav Biederman, that what was this idolatry really about? What was it really about? He explained that these people believed that it was because of what they do and where they go that determines their success and their failures. You hear where I'm going with this? They attributed their success and their strength to their exertions. So where they went and what they did, the dust of their own feet. And Abraham wanted none of that in his home. Abraham's message was the ultimate truth. That everything is from HaShem and that everything that happens to us is for the best. And that everything that happens to us is perfectly designed with exact precision for us to grow closer to HaShem at exactly the way that we need to grow closer to HaShem. Not the way we think. We need to grow closer to HaShem, or want to, but the way HaShem KNOWS from the construction of our soul, He formed us in the womb, He knows exactly the way that we can come closer to Him. And He knows our hearts, that we want to.

And that way to come close to Him is always our Achilles Heel. It's always the most difficult thing, which is why sometimes it certainly seems to me that the most righteous go through the most pain. Why? Because ultimately on the deepest level, that's what they want. That's what we want is to grow exactly in the way that we most need to. And so, the teachings of the Torah, we're gifted with the opportunity to look at everything that happens to us in our lives, the good and the bad, right? Through the prism of faith. And therefore, with HaShem's help, we can maximize the great opportunity that the events in our lives offer us for growth and for love and for coming closer and closer and closer to our Creator.

And this isn't only true for us as individuals, but equally true for each nation, from nations all around the world, and each one of our nations are going through exactly what we need to go through. And all of humanity really is going through what humanity needs to be going through right now. Because you know, when a man beats a dog with a stick, the dog doesn't bite at the man, he bites the stick. He focuses on the object with which this painful lesson is being inflicted, totally missing out on the deeper message, the purpose of the punishment, the opportunity within the punishment. And you know, so many of us in this world are no different than that dog. I can speak for myself, that I've been there, probably more times than I haven't been.

While I try to keep this truth in mind in my own personal life, on my own personal journey, which is not an easy thing, I find it even more difficult lately to hold this consciousness of HaShem's orchestration on a national level. Because this has been a rough year. It's been brutal, it's been exhausting, it's taken us way beyond what we thought we could handle. Or I

thought I could handle, I'll speak for myself. It seems like nearly every other day, one of our precious soldiers is being killed, brutally ripped from our nation, leaving behind broken, shattered, traumatized families – widows, orphans, leaving behind a country that is reeling from perpetually fighting a war for our very existence in a world that is largely pointing an accusatory blaming finger at US! For having the audacity to just not die already. You know, someone just sent me this cartoon that I think really sums it up.



Saying, he's the trouble-maker. There's a line of like jihadist with like bomb-belts and knives and guns and it's like there's like one Jew with a kippah on his head and just sort of looks like an accountant. HE'S the trouble-maker. Right?

Anyways, you know, I'll tell you, I heard a report come in, just now, like right before the Fellowship. So this is not confirmed yet. I don't want to be spreading anything that's not true, but I heard that an Israeli was just arrested in Cyprus for being involved in the war in Gaza. Now this is in the wake of the unbelievably insane ruling which I'm sure you've heard about, by the ICC, the International Criminal Court, which issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and ex-minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant. And you know, that when they're issuing these arrest warrants against them, they're issuing against every Jew in Israel. All of us. And while I haven't heard a confirmation that an arrest was actually made in Cyprus, it doesn't really matter, it isn't hard to imagine. Because Cyprus has been one of these countries that just issued a warning that the ICC rulings are binding and they need to be enforced.

You know, not long ago, an IDF officer fled Cyprus at the urging of the Israeli government to prevent him from being arrested.

IDF reserve officer flees Cyprus over possible war crimes allegations

Authorities advise IDF officer to leave Cyprus and return to Israel after pro-Palestinian groups use social media footage from his service in Gaza to request arrest on alleged 'genocide' charges

Itamar Eichner | 11.18.24 | 19:48

Related Topics: Cyprus, Pro-Palestine, Israel, Gaza, War, Reservists



An IDF reserve officer who served in Gaza was forced to leave [Cyprus](#) and return to Israel over the weekend at the urging of the Foreign and Justice Ministries, fearing that [pro-Palestinian organizations](#) in the country might [pursue arrest warrants](#) against him for alleged war crimes.

This is just one of the articles of the many of what's going on.

Body of slain Chabad rabbi found in UAE; Israel condemns 'antisemitic act of terror'

Car reportedly found 150 kilometers from Abu Dhabi; several Uzbek nationals sent by Iran suspected to have killed him, fled to Turkey; UAE official says country in shock

By LAZAR BERMAN [Follow](#)



I don't know if you heard the devastating news, but the body of Rabbi Zvi Kogan was just found in the United Arab Emirates, did you hear about this? The slain Chabad rabbi, it is believed that he was murdered by jihadist terrorists who fled to Turkey. And I've just learned that he was the nephew of Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg who was the Chabad emissary that was murdered in Mumbai a number of years ago, if you remember that. I was at the funeral there. I mean, it's like when it hits the same family...you know Rabbi Zvi Kogan, he was a hero. I mean, for those that know the Chabad movement and in particular, if you know Chabad emissaries, these are among the most elite Jews in the war of light

versus darkness, holiness versus profanity. They are people of love and of light and of kindness and of welcoming.

You know some of you I think may have tried your luck going to various synagogues. Perhaps some of you were better received and some of you were not as well received by certain synagogues who are perhaps not aware of the revolutions that are happening spiritually in the world. But you go into a Chabad House...it doesn't matter who you are, you are going to be welcomed with love. Has anyone here ever been to a Chabad House who can testify to this? Raise your hand if you've been to a Chabad House anywhere in the world. A lot of you, a lot of you have. I actually thought for some reason there would be even more. I bless you that you are able to.

Anyways, you would see exactly what I am talking about. Now I don't have the full context for this video either. All of this information comes in, but I think these are the words of a fellow Chabad emissary at the funeral of Rabbi Kogan, or upon hearing of his murder. This is what he said.



(video) This is the time to take strength. This is not the time to ask questions, this is not the time to think, this is the time to do. We will answer the terrorists. The answer that will lead the governments. We will not fight them with AK47's, we will not fight them with grenades, we will not fight them with tanks. The rebbe taught us, a little candle in the room lights up the whole room, such brutal darkness can only be fought by torches, by torches of goodness and kindness and light. (end of video)

Ari

You know, that's just, that's the response, that's the response. Yet, we are the forces of darkness in the world. That rabbi is the force of darkness in the world against

the global jihad that throws acid in their wives' faces if they dare to walk outside not covered with their head correctly. Just...it's just the injustice of it. It's so infuriating.

And in the UAE now, of course threatening now, of course threatening to damage further the very delicate Abraham Accords that were damaged so much from October 7th. There's a lot of different parts to this, moving pieces. This after the Pogrom against innocent, unarmed Israelis in Amsterdam. And an Israeli was just murdered today in Tennessee, details are still coming in. But it seems as if it was an Israeli that had moved to Tennessee to try to get away from things. He started a locksmith company and went to install the lock and I think for...it seems as if there's a very high suspicion that for religious, jihadist reasons he was murdered. But anyways, we see this happening all around the world.

And here in the Land, you know, we're perpetually bracing ourselves for the next devastation.



Just last week, these four young, precious soldiers were killed in Gaza: Ohr Katz, Naveh Asulin, Gary Zolat, and Ofir Eliyahu. May their memories be for a blessing.



Here's a picture of the widow of Omer Moshe Gaeldor, who was comforting her three-year-old at the fresh open grave in which her husband is about to be buried. Look at that.



That's a picture of Omer Moshe Gaeldor, a high-ranking officer, hero of Israel. Anyways, we're being waged war against and targeted and vilified. And these are very extraordinarily trying times, but despite the horrible devastation and the infuriating injustice, the war being waged every single day against our existence, the nation of Israel just continues to fight, and continue to trust in HaShem as a people, as a nation. When I look at the response of this country after all this time, the way we are not wearing away and just falling apart just through...what's that called, when you're just being constant...attrition. An attrition of being attacked from every front, from every side, that's not

happening to us. There's like a wellspring of hope and strength and might. I just say, "How fortunate am I to be a part of this nation, of this people."

Because if we allow anger and hatred and fear to overtake our hearts, that would be missing the whole point. That would be biting the stick, right? In some ways, that would be losing the real war we're fighting, the spiritual war, the war in our hearts. Because every detail that is happening is precisely tailored for us to become the nation that we are destined to be in order to become the light that we are destined to be.

Now case in point, the Biden administration. They just unleashed yet another barrage of their insane, irrational, unjust, evil, sanctions against innocent Judean farmers. Soldiers, organizations, people who have done nothing wrong, most of which have not been accused of anything. And everything that they have is frozen and taken away from them. If you want details, feel free to watch my video about why I'm suing the Biden administration, I think I aired it maybe a month ago. We'll attach it to the link of this email. But you know now they're releasing a brand new and even more infuriating blitz of sanctions, the newest ones included an organization called Amana, have you guys heard of this yet? Amana is being sanctioned.



The United States is today imposing sanctions on Amana, the largest organization involved in settlement and illegal outpost development in the West Bank as well as its subsidiary, Binanei Bar Amana. Amana is a key part of the Israeli extremist settler movement.

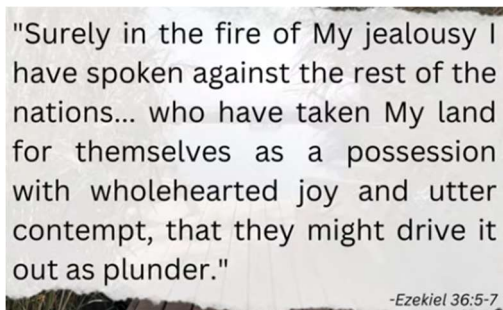
Ari

There we go. The Israeli extremist settler movement. You know I remember always everyone saying, "Trump gives these bullying nicknames to people like Sleepy Joe or whatever." Well, they're giving a horribly, untrue, anti-thetical to the truth, which is the extremist settler movement, even though they can't name one settler who is WOKE enough to commit a terrorist attack in the last ten years. But yet, the jihadist, every day, not one sanction against them. A construction company in Judea, Amana, that's who they're sanctioning. Why? What is this really all about? The truth is, that it's simple. Amana is building Jewish homes in Judea. And the Biden administration doesn't want Jews in Judea. They don't want ANY Jews in Judea. Not one. Why? Well according to them, the reason is so they can create a Palestinian state in the West Bank, which everyone knows would put millions of Jews under the direct, obvious, and imminent threat of being October 7th, of being whole-sale massacred.

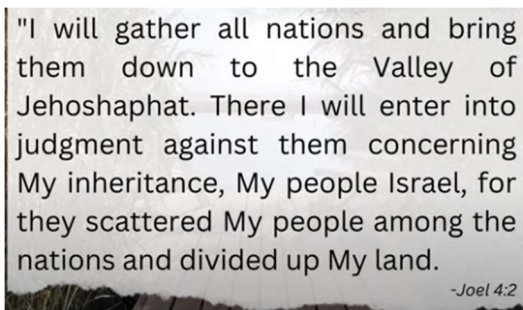
Which is why, by the way that they coupled these sanctions against Jews in Judea with millions of dollars that are sent via U.S. aid to the very jihadists that are taking that U.S. taxpayer money and funneling it directly to the terrorists with blood on their hands as payment for having murdered Jews. Look it up. It's called the Pay for Slay policy. That's the policy of the Palestinian Authority. You slay a Jew and you're paid monthly for the rest of your life and in the Biden administration's final farewell, they're sanctioning more Jews and giving money to them.

And so what do they want to do? They want to create a state for these jihadist death-cult terrorists in the heartland of Israel. That's right. They want to divide the Land of Israel to create another jihadist terror state, right within the beating heart of our nation. But what they don't realize, is that they aren't sealing Israel's fate. We'll be just fine. What the Biden administration doesn't realize is that they are sealing their own fate. Because the prophets of ancient Israel unbelievably predicted that this would happen. They predicted that not only would we be exiled from our Land for thousands of years, but after millennial of dispersion, we would be ingathered to our Land from the four corners of the earth which has never happened to any nation ever before, anything near like it. And when that happens, that we are ingathered, the prophets foretold, the nations would seek to steal and divide our Land.

Among others, the prophet Yechezkel, I thought I would start with him, he said it perfectly:



"Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations... who have taken My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, that they might drive it out as plunder."
-Ezekiel 36:5-7



"I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning My inheritance, My people Israel, for they scattered My people among the nations and divided up My land."
-Joel 4:2

Or the prophet, Joel who proclaimed...

Where does it say that they're going to be ingathered, right there? It says to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which means to the Valley of God's Judgment, not necessarily a geographical place. But it's a place of pure, absolute, true judgment which one cannot hide behind empty platitudes and gas-lighting and falsehoods. The judgment will be very clear and we'll be there. The nations will be judged for what they are doing to us right now. Not because it's against the Bible, but because it's wrong. And it's evil, and it's immoral and they all know it.

But they believe that they can get away with it because deep down, they believe that there is no God. Deep down they believe that they're the gods. And you know, there are a whole lot of them, and a whole few of us. And so they figured that they can. And in a godless world, that's

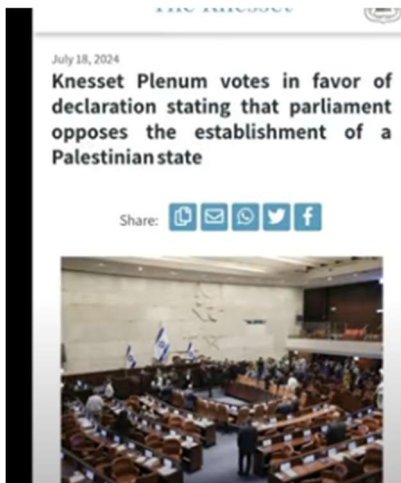
what survival of the fittest is all about. But they will soon learn that the world is anything but godless. They will experience first-hand that there is a God in Israel and while He is filled with kindness and compassion, He doesn't take kindly to those who persecute His people with murder and lies. Yechezkel, right back to that same prophecy, he warns. He says this:

Thus said Hashem Elokim: Behold, I declare in My blazing wrath: Because you have suffered the taunting of the nations, thus said Hashem Elokim: I hereby swear that the nations that surround you shall, in their turn, suffer disgrace... No more will I allow the jibes of the nations to be heard against you, no longer shall you suffer the taunting of the peoples; and never again shall you stumble—declares the Sovereign God
-Ezekiel 36:6,7,15

I really urge you to read the entire chapter. But the great beauty and irony of all of this is that the Biden administration and their anti-Israel, you know, their European Jew-hater friends don't realize that despite their perfidious betrayals and their backstabbing hypocrisy and their arms embargos during the times of our greatest need, despite all of that, or

rather because of all of that, they've actually been a blessing to us. Because the more they push, the more pressure they exert, the more they taunt and torment, the more they are arousing the lion of Judah from our slumber.

You know, it's due to the global isolation against us that they have been spear-heading that we've become more independent and more sovereign and more self-reliant than possibly we've ever been since the foundation of the State of Israel.



And it's in response to the Biden administration that the Knesset, here in the Land of Israel, the Knesset, the Parliament overwhelmingly voted against the establishment of the Palestinian state that they're trying to force down our throats, that they're trying to bully us.

That was just a little piece from the Knesset, itself. And like we discussed before, it was immediately after, Benjamin Netanyahu was meeting with Kamala and the Biden administration that Israel took a turn of boldness and strength and killing Chaniyeh in

Tehran, detonating the beepers in the pockets of Chezbollah leadership, killing Nasrallah in his underground bunker and many other things. It was only after meeting with the Biden administration and saying, "Wow, we are on our own here!" that he came back and the next day this whole thing started happening. A show of Jewish strength like we haven't seen since possibly the time of the Maccabees or perhaps the establishment of the State. It's been powerful.

And by the way, one more thing I just want to throw in here. Most people defended the administration and said that they're only doing this embargo on Israel, betraying Israel, and sanctioning Israel in order to pander to their far-left base and the jihadist in Michigan. That it was really just political expedience that they were doing. They felt like they had to do it. Well...the election was lost. Michigan was lost. They were thoroughly defeated, yet they're not only continuing their persecutions and sanctions against Israel, but they're accelerating them. Well, to me, this reveals what I have expected all along. That this wasn't only about political expedience, this is about a real and true, deep Jew-hatred, Israel-hatred. And while that hatred ultimately served as a blessing for Israel, propelling us to new levels of growth and strength and courage, that we never felt like we even needed to have. We didn't need that courage, we were under the illusion of America would always be there for us. I believe that the Biden administration will be held accountable for every drop of innocent blood spilled due to their evil policies.

Ok, so we've learned from the Biden administration that we can stand up to an enemy. Perhaps the test of the Trump administration may be whether we can stand up to a friend. Right? Because standing up to a friend can be even harder than standing up to an enemy. You know, it says that when Esau and Jacob were reunited, that Esau kissed Jacob. There's very strange markings in the actual texts on the parchment of the Torah, the actual Torah scroll, very unique dots that are above that word. And we're taught that that kiss, that sometimes the kiss of Esau is more deadly than his sword.

And because the truth is, that many people don't face this truth, that countries don't have friends. They have interests. I say this again and again, but it's important that we really are in touch with the reality of this situation. Some say that Trump may see America's interests as strengthening Israel's hands in this war. Which he will not only see as a war for Israel's survival, but a war for the survival of America and all of mankind because the global jihad, because that's what it is. They say Trump has learned from seeing what's happened on October 7th, and that he will recalibrate America's relationship with Israel by recognizing how critical Israel is to America's safety and security and that they'll finally treat Israel not as a little brother, but a brother. And treat Israel as the vital and indispensable ally that we are.

And others say that he's just going to pick up where he left off and continue his quest to strike the deal of the century, you remember we talked about it last week or the week before. And just twist our arm to establish a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria and say, "Listen Israel, there's never been a more pro-Israel president in history. You have to meet me half-way here." And however well intentioned he may be in that, we all know that the existence of a Palestinian state in our heartland would mean thousands of dead Jews at the very least and a very real existential threat to the State of Israel.

And the truth is that each of those scenarios provides a great opportunity for Israel. Both of them. And that is one of the keys to Israel rising up from the ashes and assuming our role as a nation of leaders, as a nation of lions. That realization is a fundamental key to ridding ourselves of any semblance we may have left of a victim mindset. Where we're at the mercy of everyone else. When we realize that no matter what happens, our fate is in our own hands and ultimately, obviously is in HaShem's hands. And when we're liberated from the illusion that our fate is in the hands of this flesh and blood leader or that organization or this UN or that EU...no matter how strong they may seem, when we realize that they have no power over us, that HaShem is our ultimate Savior, that is the beginning. Our eyes are towards heaven alone and when we realize that whatever hand HaShem deals us in the days ahead, whatever hand we're dealt, that hand is clearly the exact hand that we need to be dealt, the exact opportunity that we need to become the nation of priests unto the nations that we're destined to be. When we're able to operate and actually make policies, real policies from a place of faith in HaShem, then we will know that the time of our redemption is at hand.

And that's why I've been more vocal and I will continue to be even more and more vocal in the days ahead and I'm sure Jeremy, too, that we need to conquer and resettle both Gaza and southern Lebanon. Not only because that is the only way that our enemies understand that they have been defeated, when they lose the territory. And not only because that is part of the God-given land of Israel, but exactly because there's a voice in every Jew's head, "We can't do that. The international community won't allow us to do that. Nobody would tolerate that. We would be pariah." No we wouldn't be. Absolutely not. They would respect us. They would respect it because who we are speaks so much louder than what we say. And we could talk a big game, but if we actually act with courage and conviction and faith, the world will be inspired from it. They will get hope from it. So, that...when we do that, then we will know that the time of our redemption is at hand.

You know, perhaps we will need to stand up defiantly against the Trump administration who's pressuring us to divide our Land. That may be how it plays out. Perhaps we will stand up WITH the Trump administration against the global jihad and their allies. Maybe that's how it's going to be. Perhaps it will play out in a different way altogether. But which ever way it is, it will be fine with us because we know who we are, where we are, why we are, we're waking up from our coma and we're realizing the greatest "why" of all time. Which is we know that we need to remain true to HaShem and to ourselves. And when we do that, no one can harm us.

But I have to admit that I am optimistic. I don't know anything, but I'm optimistic that this upcoming administration will be a revealed blessing. Because from what I've seen, there's so many critical appointees that seem to truly love Israel. Not because of interests like I was saying before, which can easily waver or shift with changing circumstance, but their love seems to be rooted in God and in truth and in righteousness. From Pastor Huckabee who's always been very clear and outspoken, just one of the gems that he has proclaimed over Israel:



Mike Huckabee

My feeling personally, and I'm speaking only as a person. I think Israel would only be acting on the property that it already owns. I think Israel has title deed to Judea and Samaria. There are certain words I refuse to use. There is no such thing as a

West Bank. It's Judea and Samaria. There's no such thing as settlements. They are communities, they're neighborhoods, there're cities. There's no such thing as an occupation.

Ari

It's so hard for me to find Jews in Judea on my side that are not willing to use the word Palestinian or West Bank. They just feel like they have to if they're going to be in the international conversation at all. Mike Huckabee won't say it! Did that prevent him from being elevated to such a position for such a time? No. And I'm just so grateful and excited to see.

And then there's, you know...I want to play a video for you that was recently on the news here in Israel. It involves Pete Hegseth who's been to the Farm, who I really have a very special place for in my heart. But he's on the news here in Israel. I want to play this for you.



Because 1917 was a miracle, 1948 was a miracle, 1967 was a miracle, 2017, the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital was a miracle. And there's no reason why the miracle of the reestablishment of the Temple on the Temple Mount is not possible.



I am Messianic, and I want a Messianic leadership for the nation of Israel. We are a Messianic nation and it is for that purpose that we were created.

Ari

Did you see that? The anchor, she said, “But isn’t that crazy and Messianic what he said?” To which Moshe Feiglin, who’s a dear friend, and an incredible leader, he said, “I’m Messianic!” Which in Israel has been like so taboo to even say such a thing because it would immediately brand you outside of the Overton window and desecrate... “I am Messianic,” he said, “And I want the Messianic leadership for the nation of Israel. We are a Messianic nation and it is for that purpose that we were created.” It was for that purpose that we were created. I could not have said it more beautiful myself. Those words are being said throughout the Land of Israel. All that we’ve gone through is waking us up to that. Those words are being said on the front lines of this war in Lebanon and Gaza and Judea and Samaria.



Those words are being said by every soldier who takes off the patch of their unit, however beautiful that may be and puts on the Mashiach Temple patch. This is one Jeremy and I printed and handed out thousands. It’s the Messiah above the Temple and soldiers are putting these on in droves...in droves, because that speaks to them on the deepest level, what they’re really fighting, what they’re really giving their lives for. If you’re willing to go out and leave your family behind, orphans and widows, you better know your “why.” And that is the why. So what I’m trying to say, my friends, is that while this year has been the most painful and devastating year of my life and I’m confident to say in the lives of the Jewish people, and I’m sure many, many, if not all of you who are so connected to us at the soul. You know, this has also been a year that I know we will look back at as the year of the final birth pangs of redemption.

You know, which brings us back to Abraham and Sarah. I know that we’re a little bit over time. I hope that it’s ok, I just want to share this thought with you. This brings us back to Abraham and Sarah. The sages of Israel have a tradition brought down that all of Sarah’s years were good, right? That her whole life was good, which is a strange thing because we know from the simplest reading of these portions, that she suffered a lot. She was kidnapped twice, she suffered infertility, and torment by Hagar, her handmaiden. And how can we believe that all of her years were good? So the great sage known as the Chida, said that we can know this from the secret that’s hidden within the first word of the portion. The first words...



The first word is “v’yihiyu.” I made it bigger there. V’yihiyu – Vav, yud, hey, yud, vav, which as you see magnified as a palindrome. Meaning it is read the same going forward as it is going backwards. And according to the Chida, this teaches us that even when Sarah’s days seemed totally backwards and filled with pain and torment and difficulty. Even then, in Sarah’s eyes,

every day was equally good. Because Abraham and Sarah understood what no one else did. They understood that everything that happened in the world was from the same source, from the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and therefore, everything is good. Abraham and Sarah did not only believe this in their heads, but from the great tests that we see that they faced, they believed it in their hearts. They had fully internalized this truth. And perhaps the test didn't reveal that, but it helped them infuse that from their heads to their hearts.

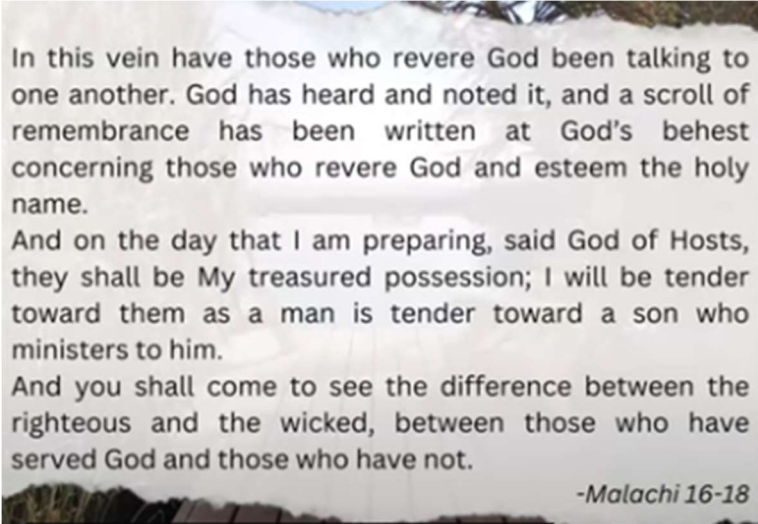
And you know, I want to end with a story from Rav Biederman that he shared about the Chofetz Chaim. And here's the exact way he shared it. He said:

The Chofetz Chaim said over a teaching during the First World War when many of his talmidim, his students were gathered around him, they were terrified and people were dying and there was famine and they were starving and they were being drafted. And they thought that there was no hope or future for them. And the Chofetz Chaim said, "Adam, first man, cried on the first night because he thought that the world had come to an end because of his own sin. But he didn't cry the second night. By the second night he understood that this was the pattern of the world. There was darkness and then, light. Darkness and then, light. Darkness and then, light again.

The same is for us, bnei Yisrael, the Chofetz Chaim said. In the history of the Jewish people, we have suffered through so many dark eras. So many times the sun set for klal Yisrael. But the God of Israel saved us each time and we have seen the light again. So why are you so worried, he said? The darkness we are going through right now will be followed by light.

And you know I wanted to end with that my friends because I know that no matter how hard we all fight, we all have our down moments. More than moments sometimes, down days, entire days. Maybe even a week. Ardelle, who's the compiler of this prayer book, shares very openly and honestly the challenges she goes through. Yesterday was a down day for me, she said, I so appreciate it. Because we all go through that. But it makes sense that we would because we're human beings and these are times of great darkness in the world.

But just as the Chofetz Chaim said, "That's the way of the world, darkness and then light, darkness and then light." But what I want to remind us of, is that the intensity of that light is determined by the degree of the darkness which preceded it. And so, my friends, we are in store for a light beyond which we can even imagine, a light of redemption, and a light of salvation, and a light of revelation. And I want to bless all of you, my friends, with strength, and faith to keep fighting these holy fights that I know that you're fighting in your lives. Your stories, they are not disconnected from the story of Israel. They're not disconnected from the story of the unfolding of redemption right now. You are a part of it. And I believe it was exactly our times, exactly our times that the prophet Malachi was referring to when he prophesies:



In this vein have those who revere God been talking to one another. God has heard and noted it, and a scroll of remembrance has been written at God's behest concerning those who revere God and esteem the holy name.

And on the day that I am preparing, said God of Hosts, they shall be My treasured possession; I will be tender toward them as a man is tender toward a son who ministers to him.

And you shall come to see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between those who have served God and those who have not.

-Malachi 16-18

So I bless you my friends to remember in your head and bring into your heads that there is nothing trivial, nothing is being overlooked. We are here to serve HaShem. Right there we read it, just as the prophet said. That is how we can hasten redemption. And how do we do that...how do we serve HaShem? He says, "You shall see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between those who have served

God and those who have not. What is that difference? How can we serve God? We can do just as Abraham and Sarah did. We can do just as the greatest and most faithful throughout history did. The Torah tells us very clearly why it lists all these curses in the book of Deuteronomy. Then it says why it happened. Let's open up to chapter 28, right, verse 47. Why did all these things happen?

Because you did not serve Hashem, your God, with joy and gladness over the abundance of everything.

-Deuteronomy 28:47

So let's remember, my friends, our service is the joy. That joy that can only come if we know in our heads and bring into our hearts that everything is from HaShem, and everything is for the good. That is faith and that is trust, and I bless all of you that you should continue to be granted with that faith and that strength and that

trustfulness. I bless us all that we're able to trust in HaShem. That everything that is happening right now is laying the groundwork for redemption. And if we just hold on tight my friends, and don't waver, then each one of us, every single one of us is a part of it.

And with that, allow me to bless you with the blessing of Aaron, the High Priest. And as you know, I'm not a descendant of Aaron, I'm not a Cohen, but I am a Jew and as the Bible tells us, we are a nation of priests. So it is my greatest joy to bless all of you. And even as you have been a blessing to me in my life.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

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