

Session 166

Israel at War – Vayechi, Bearing Witness

31 December 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rxj4nuSlvM>

Ari

Shalom everybody, good to see all of you. Hi! I love the faces, I love the smiles. A lot of chizik, a lot of strength you give us. Good to see you, I want to start off by thanking you for your blessings and your prayers and for all of your messages from the last Fellowship. I had no idea what type of Pandora's Box I was opening with that teaching that I shared about the descendants of Joseph and how whether some of the people alive today, even in this Fellowship who have this sort of deep and abiding love for the Jewish people, which they themselves can't explain. About whether that they're perhaps descendants of Joseph. I thought I was just sharing an idea. I didn't understand how deep and meaningful this idea was for so many of you. I think a lot of the Jewish members in our Fellowship, it may have really gone over our heads. I mean, it's a very powerful thing. And you know usually, as you know, I don't get into speculation about genealogical roots, for a number of different reasons. But I thought it was right when I encountered such a special teaching from Rav Ginsburgh. And you know, there are some things that I want to share with you about this whole issue. And I hope we'll get back to them soon, I trust that we'll have enough time in the Fellowship to bring it back there.

But I wanted to start this Fellowship with talking about a trip that Jeremy and I took down south this past week. We went to see the villages, the cities, the kibbutzim, the intersections that were ravaged in the most horrific ways imaginable. You know we went down with like trepidation with what we were going to encounter. It was a very new experience, I know for me, I think also for you, Jeremy. And to tell you the truth, I was conflicted much more so than Jeremy about whether I should go or all. I wasn't sure why I was reluctant to go. I also wasn't completely sure why in the end I decided to go. There are times when my thinking around everything that's happening hasn't been very clear. And this is one of those times. And it left me with little choice but to sort of bypass the entire intellectual decision-making process and just listen to my heart.

For as we know, we've talked about it here before. When God came to King Solomon in his dream, his one request was not merely for wisdom, which is often assumed based on certain translations. But what did he ask for? Right? His prayerful request was that he should be blessed with a lev shomeah, a listening heart. And this is not always such an easy proposition. You know, it's sometimes difficult to strip away our ego and our self-interests and really listen to what our heart is telling us.

But when trying to decide whether I should join this mission down south, I decided it was, it was the right thing for me to go. And I did, I went. And I want to share with you about that.

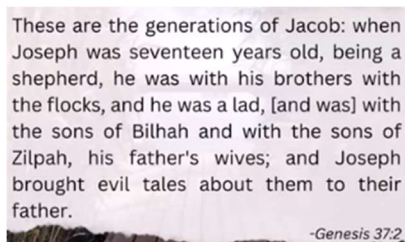
The group was called, "Bearing Witness," right? Bearing Witness and it was led by our dear friend, Moshe Rothchild, Rabbi Mosh Rothchild, and it was powerful to say the least. It's still sinking in, I'm still digesting it. I'll probably be digesting it for the rest of my life. And so, I want to share my experience with you, but first I want to yield the microphone, which Jeremy is not happy with, he thinks it looks really silly and ghetto that we're using like this headset. And I'm sorry, I'm going to make it a point to get something more professional. But I'm going to yield to Jeremy who will share his heart about the trip down south.

Jeremy

Ok, thank you. Hi friends, so good to see you guys. Is this microphone working, this works, it's all good? Excellent, ok. So, there's a lot going on in everyone's lives. There's happy times, there's sad times, there's ups, there's downs. It's become clear to me that God doesn't like boring things. Nothing is boring in Israel. There is just constant drama. I just became a great uncle, that's a new thing. My older brother just had the first grandchild of the family. And so, it's like happy times, sad times. I visited a mourner's house, four times in the last five days. I've never done that before, but I've been so compelled to go back to this one family over and over again. And I've been so touched by the story of their son who fell in Gaza that I'm going to dedicate the next Fellowship really to Efraim Yachman, the son that fell in Gaza. When there's so much chaos, I think the key to life is to turn to the Torah to find that the Word is speaking directly to us as a people, directly to us as individuals, it's a living Word.

And when you read the end of the book of Genesis, it's like this whole war just kind of gobbled up Genesis. It's like, what? It's already over?! And one of the greatest literary questions of the Torah is, did Jacob know? Jacob dies, did anyone really tell him what really happened? Did the brothers or Joseph ever tell Jacob that actually it was his brothers had sold him down to Egypt? And I've asked already now about 15 relatively scholarly Jews and it's split down the middle. Half say yes, half say no. Because really from the text of the Torah, you can't tell.

And, I just want to share a thought that came to me this year. And however you read that story, it really changes the entire dynamic. If Jacob knew it's one thing and if Jacob didn't know, it's another thing. And my instincts, after reading it this year and the blessings that Jacob gave all of the children, never mentioning the sale of Joseph, is that Jacob didn't know. That Joseph never told him. And that's really a remarkable thing because when you look at the first verse that introduces Joseph into the world in Genesis chapter 37, verse 2, here's what it says:



These are the generations of Jacob: when Joseph was seventeen years old, being a shepherd, he was with his brothers with the flocks, and he was a lad, [and was] with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought evil tales about them to their father.

-Genesis 37:2

That's how Joseph starts off the story. Speaking poorly, kind of being the tattletale to his father. And then, the saga begins. Joseph is sold down to slavery, the brothers are devastated, Judah leaves the family, comes back around. Only at the end, for Judah to rectify himself, to allow himself to be forgiven and for him to forgive himself, the brothers become united.

And you also see that in that whole process, Joseph changes, too, if you read the story that way. He never told Jacob. Where he starts off as the tattle-tale, now he really has the ultimate revenge to tell Jacob what really happened. And he guarded that closely, never to betray his brothers and not to sadden his father. And so you see after this whole process, everyone went through a transformation, everyone became better, everyone became who they were destined to be.

And that's what it feels like right now in Israel for me. It feels like Israel is on the operating table and there's no anesthesia. And we're just being cut open and having heart surgery. And it's so painful right now, just like the stories of Joseph. Just parsha after parsha of pain and struggle and distress and anxiety. And then finally, our hearts are being fixed. Israel is being fixed on so many different fronts.

And Ari and I went down to the south this last week. And I went down to the south primarily with the purpose of sharing my experience with our Fellowship. So I did my very best to document the journey that I would be able to share it with you. Because so many of you would love to be there, would love to chip in, give a hand, feel the pain of the Jewish people with us. And so, I made this video as best as I could to sort of bring you alongside us in the journey.

But as we see just the horrors of what Israel has gone through, what we're going through. I mean, I would say, every three or four minutes when we were down south, a massive explosion went off and we're like...you know, we get nervous...it's so loud because Gaza is just a few kilometers away from these kibbutzim and these little communities that we went to visit. But with all of the pain and with all of the...it was really a life-changing trip for me. And I feel like all of us are going through heart surgery. God is opening our hearts right now. And hopefully, just like the book of Genesis that we finished, that painful process, where we were all a little bit more fixed, I believe that Israel is right now being corrected and being fixed and we're being staked to grow more upright and to pull out and grow us into who we were created to be. And so, here is my journey down south.

(video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ku7wSGBZWnI>



Shalom friends, this is Jeremy Gimpel from the Arugot Farm. Yesterday my friend Moshe Rothchild organized a tour down south to visit the kibbutzim, to visit the site of the music festival, to see the outcomes of October 7<sup>th</sup>, and to meet the people that lived through

it, and how Israel is responding now. I think it is one of the most important things for every Jew

living in the Land of Israel today. Everyone must go down and see reality with their own eyes. And until then, come with me on one of the most meaningful journeys of my life.

We first stopped at Shokeda, which was one of the religious communities that somehow miraculously, although they were surrounded by terrorists with pick-up trucks and machine-guns. Just as they somehow guarded Shabbat, Shabbat somehow guarded them. And the terrorists were never able to enter into the community, itself. Ari and I have gone down to the south for the first time since the beginning of the war, just to visit the communities, to see what's going on.



And we're in Shokeda now, which is one of the real headquarters of activism and volunteering. And as you can see behind me, these soldiers right here are literally just out of Gaza. They're here on a little break. And in these tents here, are hundreds of volunteers all over Israel, some from Europe, Germany. They've come here just to make sandwiches, to clean, to do whatever they can to support the people of the south and the soldiers in Gaza. I was scared to come down here today. I didn't know and I don't know what I'm going to see, but what I see now is really beautiful.

So you know, in hard times, we saw during Covid, societies, they just fell apart. People were burning down cities, wearing masks, breaking into Best Buy, stealing, thieves, just total disintegration. And what you can see, the beauty of the Jewish people, is in our hard times, what happens? The Jewish people, they don't take, they give, they come, they volunteer, they support. And so, what an honor to be a part of such a beautiful nation.



We ask people to donate money and stuff and food. And now we are about 2,400 a day, 70% are going to the fields to get to the warriors and 500 around here, they are coming. We are doing laundry, we have barbers, we have masseurs and everything. That's what I'm doing here.

The next stop after Shokeda was to go to Teshuva, which is a graveyard of cars. It's the largest forensic operation in the history of Israel. Where still cars are coming in and people are trying to find the remnants of the DNA of the victims of October 7<sup>th</sup>. But until you see it with your

own eyes, you can't believe how many cars and how many Jews were just slaughtered on the roads, trying to escape the savages of October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Hey friends, I'm right now outside of Takuma and what's behind me here is the graveyard of all of the cars that were either burned to a crisp here during October 7<sup>th</sup> and all the cars behind me that were just shot up and the people were killed in. And the reason why we're here is because there are still forensics going on here. And cars still coming in.



This car that's right behind me, there's a red car, you can see on the side here, bullet holes. And they're now bringing that car in and the Rabbinic psak was that for the bodies that were either burned to a crisp and not found, but remnants of pieces of body or blood, they're actually going to bury the cars.

And that's never happened before in human history. But when you think about visiting the concentration camps in Auschwitz and you see room filled with just baby shoes. That's the closest thing that I can really express with what we're seeing behind us here. Just hundreds and hundreds of burned cars in all of this parking lot of Jews that were just hunted down and taken from this world.



I'm just on my way back now to get on the bus. And as I'm leaving, I see these white bags here that are right behind me. I'll go take a picture of them for you. And I asked the people, what are those white bags. And they said, "Those are white bags that are filled with ashes, with potential human remains and they're still going through them in order to try to find out people that are missing, people that haven't been found, the remains of the Jewish people that were murdered right here behind us.

So we just now arrived at Rei'im, which is the site of the music and peace festival that was here on October 7<sup>th</sup>. And you can see all around, are little memorials with Israeli flags. Over there and in the trees there, all the different places where Jews were just massacred. Unbelievable to see it with our own eyes.



You know this place behind me here is a memorial for all the people that were killed here at a music festival. It's like on these stakes it has the pictures of the faces of each one. And just really unbelievable. And bombs are going off here all the time. It's a war zone.



I'm taking time now to walk through the music festival here in this area where this Pogrom happened. So many hundreds of Jews were just slaughtered. And I'm driving down the south and all of these communities, the map that you see, all of these communities are evacuated? This entire region of Israel, that they're all refugees? There's no country in the world that would put up with that. It's as if the generation of slaves that left Egypt didn't die in the desert, and they came into Israel and now they're running the country. And their mentality is so off. And their leadership is so poor that they would allow us to be living under this reign of terror and bombs and evacuees. I

mean, it's time for law and order and peace and prosperity. And the only way to do that long-term is to make sure that there is never another Arab government in the Land of Israel. Ever!



So we just arrived now in kibbutz Be'eri. And in some ways, it's sort of like the climax of the trip. And as we're walking around just looking at some of the burned buildings, it smells like death in the air. And one of the women that's here with me just vomited, just cause the smell is so horrible.

Unbelievable to be here.

So here we're just walking through the kibbutz here. And as you can see behind me, the houses are just devastated, bullet holes in all of them.



This is one of the first houses that they broke into after breaking through the fence. And it's just house after house, just totally destroyed. One of the members of the kibbutz here told us that they are not planning on coming back here for at least a year and a half.

So we're just walking around Be'eri now, and you just can't imagine what has happened to this kibbutz. Everywhere you look, there's just absolute devastation inside the homes, outside the homes. Our guide here from the kibbutz is just saying just horror stories, just absolute monsters came in and mercilessly took children, women, kidnapped them, killed them, smoked them out of their homes.



Guide translates:

Father and Carmela are wounded. Please get there as fast as possible. Please come help us. Carmel in his hand, in his hand, father all over his body are holes. Father is lying on Carmel to stop the bleeding. Call anyone you can. Please, please, please. Send him 200 times if you need. I don't know if he will make it. There's no

help. Now, now, now. (You can hear that they're trying to open the window in the background.) We are dying here. They threw three grenades. They are shooting. (You hear the shooting in the background.) We love you, we are dying here.

You know, there is no separation between Hamas and the people of Gaza. They are all the same. Some had guns and some didn't have guns. The only difference is the gear that they packed. There were a lot of civilians, local civilians who came and raped and kidnapped and murdered and they did the most horrible things. I've never seen anyone in Gaza. Every body were celebrating what went on on October 7<sup>th</sup>. I think they understand that we have to bring our security back. We have to fight back and fight for our security, for our safety, our ability to have families here, to raise children, to live in this country. This war is not about just the people who live here. It's about our ability to live in this country. It's also important to understand, to know how united the Jewish people are these days. Even those from around the world, the Jewish people from around the world that can't be here today, I know that they are here in their heart, and we are feeling it from here, that everybody supports us. Really heartwarming. This is our biggest comfort, the love that we receive from everybody from day one until now. (end of tour guide's talk)

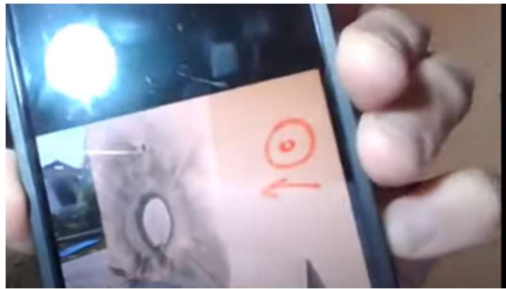
Jeremy

So that was my day. And let me tell you, I'm busy, everyone's busy. Everyone has a million things that they need to do. But there is nothing more important right now, that every single Jew in the Land of Israel go down to the south, see what's happening, see reality with your own eyes, meet the people there. We always said, "Never again," about things that happened in Poland and in Auschwitz. Far more important that we learn the lesson of never again here in the Land of Israel. And until you see it, you really can't believe it. So please, find the time, go down south, and go and see Israel.

Ari

Ok, I'm really grateful that Jeremy put that together. I don't think that I was at the mental, emotional place, the awareness to put up the camera and talk to it and report and do it. I know that what sort of allowed him to do that was you. It was that, I know for a fact, that it was the fact that he was sharing it with you and you were there with him. And it wasn't randomly Face-

book live streaming it, but he was talking to the Fellowship, to our family, to all of you is what gave him the strength and the awareness to do it. I also think, knowing Jeremy, it's a little bit his coping mechanism of dealing with things. When it comes to things of this nature, Jeremy and I try to stay away from each other because we have very conflicting ways of handling the emotional thing that was going on. And so he really did his piece well and I'm grateful for that.



Cause there's a lot of videos, images, stuff I sort of as he's talking, I want to show you, but I don't know if this works. This is one of the bombs that they put on the wall to try to burst into the shelter. You know that guy that was giving us the tour, I'll never forget it because I've given a lot of tours, I've been on the receiving end of tours before. Our tour guide was...I don't know the

English word. Tabitha, how would you define? Still in shock, really in shock about what he had just endured, he lost his brother, he told us the story about how his brother fought for seven hours against Chamas. And then he ran out of ammunition and then he was just executed. And he lost so many of his family, his friends, his community. And he said that his only way of dealing with it up until then is giving tours like this to groups that come through.

And he said he's actually sleeping there in Be'eri. He's sleeping in his house in Be'eri, even though it's a closed military zone. They've evacuated the whole place, but he's like, "Come evacuate me. This is where I want to be right now." It was a powerful experience, I'll never forget the look in his eyes, and his energy just being with him. Such a brave, sweet loving guy. You know, and it's like, I know intellectually that it's like the bastion of secularism, of leftism. But when you're there, you don't even think about that for a second. I just saw a fellow Jew with a shattered, broken heart that is just trying to breathe. That's what I saw in him.

And I think I'm glad that I went on the trip. I think that the reason that I was reluctant to go was part of me felt like maybe it was too early to make a monument out of this thing. You know what I'm saying? Maybe it's too early for tour buses. That we're not there yet. There's a lot of baggage around the whole issue. I guess I felt it isn't time to make a march of the living out of it. Have you heard of March of the Living? Do you know what March of the Living is? I don't know if non-Jews have heard of that before. I'm sure the Jewish members of our Fellowship have either definitely heard about it, or been on it. But I don't know if the nations know about that.

But the March of the Living has become a huge thing in the Jewish world for many years now. Jews of all ages, children, adults, seniors, survivors, Jews from every background, they go on these trips to Auschwitz to see first-hand what the six million endured. And I won't go into the reasons that I felt uncomfortable about that trip. And let me be clear. I'm not saying I'm against it. I even went on one myself. But there are things about it that just make me uncomfortable.



And it's not the huge amounts of money that these trips generate for the tourism industry in Germany and Austria, which directly benefit the children and grandchildren of those who perpetrated the Holocaust. It's deeper than that. I think the issue I've had is the "why" of the trip. The why. You know, many of the groups that go on these March of the Living trips, aim to make the take away lesson about how bad intolerance is. I don't know if you've heard of the ADL. There's like an ADL type of thinking that is just...they make something generic out of the whole trip, that it's about stripping it of what makes it so unique and special to the nation of Israel. To me, the justification for the trip lies in the reason that you're going on it and what lessons you take away from it. The trip in and of itself is neutral, it can be a good thing or a negative thing depending on what you get out of it. And so many of the trips that go, do take away important lessons.

You know I personally know people living in Israel that have told me that after seeing first hand what happens when the Jewish people don't have their own state, don't have their own land, that they decided to make aliyah, and make their homes and their lives in Israel, which is a great outcome. And that would indeed justify the whole thing in my mind. But many come away with very different conclusions, which makes the trip questionable about whether the trip is really worth it. You know, if you're just going to make it about general intolerance, and intolerance, then carry it over to LGBTQI, whatever and make it about that. And don't roll your eyes and say no one would do that. People do that. They take it into the craziest directions.

And so, I think the root of my discomfort and deliberation about personally going down there was around that. Around this question of why. Why I should go, why I was going, why anyone should go. Because although both trips, the one to Auschwitz and the one to Be'eri are encounters with different types of holocausts, you know one happened when there was no Jewish state to run to and the other happened in the Jewish state that was established in many people's minds to ensure that a holocaust like that would never happen again! Right? So part of me felt like the trip, I know I'm talking a lot about this and going through my whole journey, but I'm still figuring it out right now. Part of me felt like it only made sense to go down there once the war is over and Chamas is wiped off the map. That going now at this point when the soldiers are still dying in Gaza was just premature. That we haven't arrived at the stage of healing yet to really properly experience a trip down there. I'm just giving you a glimpse into my confusion, I just didn't know.

But ultimately, I followed my heart and I went. And I figured if it wasn't the right thing to do, I could always blame Jeremy. He was pressuring me to do it. But I'm glad that I did go and I'm glad that he really spoke to my heart and really I think he convinced me to go because if anything from an emotional level because when I walked away, I had a feeling of a fire burning stronger within me than I felt before the trip. Or maybe not stronger than me, a different fire. It was coming from a different place. A different thing had been aroused in my soul.

And I'm glad I went because when we got there and we were being take around by Yonatan, that guy you saw speaking at the end, one of the survivors of the massacre who took us into the devastated, burned out homes that the murders took place in. And he told us that the people of Be'eri have already said that they are not going to leave the homes up as monuments like Auschwitz. No, they have resiliently and courageously declared that they're going to knock it all down, he didn't even want to take anything from his home. Knock it all down and they're going to rebuild. So I realized that when I was down there that now is the time to see it. Now is the time. Not to see what happened to us in the past tense, but to see what's happening to us right now. That's I think what was making it so strange. That we're not on the other end of this thing at all.

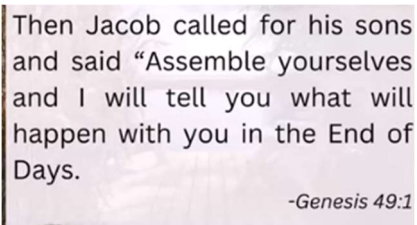
You know one of the most memorable moments of the trip was when we were standing outside of the home of one of the families who bravely resisted Chamas within their safe room. Because they didn't really even have locks on their saferoom doors because it was about missiles. They never in all the years since the establishment of Be'eri in 1946 had Arabs that penetrated into, so it wasn't about that. So it just became about who is stronger – the people inside that are holding the door closed? Or Chamas on the outside that is keeping the door open.

And we're hearing the story of the father and the son holding the door closed with all of their might until the terrorists shot through the door. The mother was inside, the girl was inside, you heard the girl's messages. We heard it from his phone! You know he was playing it off of his phone. This sweet little girl's messages. Anyways, the father and the son were holding the door closed, and then the terrorist just shot through the door, ripping both the arms off of the 16-year-old boy, shooting the mother in the stomach, eventually because it was seven hours, they both just died of blood loss, while the father and the daughter miraculously survived. The father lost his leg, and the daughter had serious injuries.

We listened to the recording that you got to hear there, a little bit of the 14-year-old daughter. She was trying to keep her mother awake. She said, "Mother, don't fall asleep, don't fall asleep!" I'll never forget the feeling of the entry. I saw the door and I had my hand on one side of the door where the bullets went in and the other hand where the bullets existed. Hundreds of Kalashnikov bullets through the door. And in the middle of the story that this survivor was telling, an incredible guy. In the middle of the story, the siren goes off. And we couldn't tell, was it from Be'eri or the community next to it? It turned out being from the adjacent settlement. But it took us some time for us to realize that. And at that moment I realized that if it was in Be'eri, if the missiles were launched just .01 degree closer to Be'eri, then we would most likely be taking shelter in that very bomb shelter which just weeks ago was filled with the innocent Jewish blood and death of the son and the mother in that same shelter and we would have to be taking refuge in that very same shelter.

You know, we weren't witnessing something that happened in the past. We were experiencing something that's happening right now. The bombs were constantly going off. I realized that now is the time to see, firsthand why we are fighting this war. I knew it before, I didn't need to see it, but the experience of it, it just pierced me even deeper. Now is the time to be very clear about the depth of the evil that we are fighting. Not only on our own behalf, but really on behalf of all of mankind. A mankind by the way that does not seem very grateful for the battle that we're in on their behalf. But we don't have the luxury of waiting for their gratitude, which I don't think will come until the times of Messiah when everything becomes clear. You know, we need to fight right now because that's what we need to do. And ultimately, that's the reason that I'm grateful I went. Because as a nation, we need to understand the deepest "why" of what we're going through right now.

And as I was reading and reflecting on the Torah portion of Vayechi, the last Torah portion of the book of Genesis, I found myself discovering deeper insights and deeper dimensions of the why behind all of this. So let's try to look inside to understand. So Ya'acov, Jacob, starts by calling for his sons to come around his bed before he leaves the world. First he of course blesses Joseph and Manasseh and Ephraim, and that happens. But for our sake, I want to start here in chapter 49, verse 1:



Then Jacob called for his sons and said "Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will happen with you in the End of Days."  
-Genesis 49:1

So Jacob calls his sons and his intentions were to tell them what will happen to them, like he said, at the end of days. He wanted to reveal to them the secrets of what will happen in end times. And what's the very next verse? The very next verse starts with Reuben. "Reuben you are my first-born, my initial strength and my vigor."

It's like he just he just skips over. He had something to say and he just sort of skips it. He goes right to the blessings. He launches right in. And it's universally understood that at that moment, as Jacob wanted to reveal to his sons the secrets of the Messianic era, all of a sudden those secrets...whoosh...they dissipate. They're hidden from him. He wanted to tell them what was in store, what to expect, but all of a sudden, it's just gone.

So ultimately the sages teach that Jacob thought that the prophetic clarity about the end of days was removed from him because perhaps one of his sons was undeserving. At least one of his sons. Perhaps there was an Ishmael or an Esau amongst them that would misuse that knowledge, those secrets. But at that very moment, we learn that his sons declared in unison, "Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad." Hear O Israel, the name of their father, Israel. Jacob was Israel. Hear O Israel, they're speaking to their father, the original declaration came right here. Here O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. And upon hearing his sons proclaim this ultimate truth together as one, Jacob is overcome with gratitude that all of his

sons are indeed righteous. And he declared, “Baruch shem kavod, malchuto, la’olam va’ed.” Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and forever.

To this day, morning and night, when we proclaim the Shema, when we proclaim this transcendent truth of God’s oneness, we say the same words that Jacob’s sons assured him of their faith. Shema Yisrael, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And then we follow that by whispering Jacob’s response. Blessed is the Name of His glorious Kingdom forever and ever. And within Jacob’s response I felt in my heart, was the deeper why of what we’re going through as a nation. The deeper why of why I found myself in Be’eri.

So the murderous terrorist attacks on October 7<sup>th</sup>, comes to teach us, I believe, I was gleaning from this, teaches us that clearly the Holocaust did not happen merely to show us why it's so important that Jewish people have a Jewish state. That clearly six million Jews were not murdered merely to demonstrate how important it is that we have a refuge to retreat to when the inevitable genocidal urge of the nations comes for us and now we have a place to go. Now we have a refuge. That’s not why the Holocaust happened. Because if that was the reason, well that has just been totally debunked because within the very Jewish state that was supposed to be the remedy which would prevent future holocausts, well within that state, we have just endured horrors that were arguably in some ways worse than the Holocaust, itself.

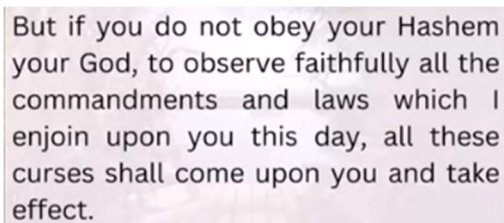
We haven’t returned to our ancient homeland and established a state merely to prevent a holocaust. We didn’t return home to fight against something, against dying in a genocide. That’s not what it was all about. After 2,000 years, we’ve returned home to fight FOR something. And Jacob said it right there. We’ve returned home to establish the kingdom. The kingdom of Israel from which we will bless His Name forever and ever. The Kingdom of HaShem from which all of mankind will come to know the God of Israel in a way that’s so intimate and so impossible for us to imagine, so profound, that it will transform the world from a place of war and hatred to a place of love and peace. The contrast between the reality that we’re in right now and the further reality we’re going into and the reality immediately afterwards, the redemption, could not be a starker contrast between light and darkness and peace and war and love and hate. And so that’s what the entire scenario was being established for. For us to experience that contrast.

You see, all of you know this, right? In the months leading up to October 7<sup>th</sup> and the massacre that we endured there, the nation of Israel was in a state of greater conflict than perhaps we’ve ever seen. I’ve never seen a greater conflict in the Land in all my years here. And the crux of this battle that we found ourselves in within the nation, was surrounding the Supreme Court and the system of justice within the State of Israel. You remember this. This is where we left off. We had a number of Fellowships about this. You know I won’t go into the details, but in short, some of the country wanted to keep in place the unelected judges with veto power to overrule any legislation passed by the Knesset, merely by saying it seemed unreasonable to

them. While the majority of the country wanted to liberate themselves in the State of Israel for what they experienced was an authoritarian rule of unelected leftist tyrants. Now as you see from my position, where I stood on it. I can't even present it in the normative, objective way.

But anyways, among the core challenges, with this whole thing, cause you know we have debates and debates, Jews love debating, we're always running in circles about it, was that Israel has no constitution. So what would the Supreme Court use as a basis of legislation? What would be the guide for the nation, what would represent our national values, our priorities from which legislation would come? This conflict felt like it was a battle over the very heart of the country. And that heart was being violently ripped in two. And many in Chamas have said that viewing that from the side and seeing what was happening within Israel, they said, "Now is the time that is right for this attack, as they're fighting each other with such zealotness." Not just on a practical, strategic level, but also on a spiritual level.

Anyways, so there I am in Be'eri, and I stood on the ashes and on the rubble, and the devastation, it became clear to me that this massacre on at least one dimension was a wake-up call. That if we think that we've returned to the Land to establish just another state, just another liberal democracy in the Middle East, then we will suffer the consequences of this godless reality. You know, measure for measure, that's how we will experience it. We see it in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, verse 15:

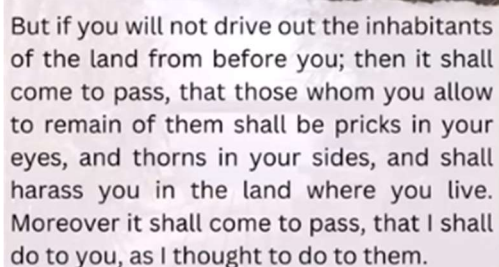


But if you do not obey your Hashem your God, to observe faithfully all the commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect.

-Deuteronomy 28:15

And the curses are powerful. We've gone through them before. We know the Torah. We know that part of Deuteronomy, the warnings and the curses. And what life will be like if we seek to live in the Land, divorced of HaShem's light and guidance and truth.

And we read in the book of Numbers, chapter 33:



But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those whom you allow to remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall harass you in the land where you live. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do to you, as I thought to do to them.

-Numbers 33:55-56

When we entered the Land of Israel in this most recent return, the ingathering of the exiles, we were just out of the ashes of Auschwitz. We had experienced so much war, I try not to be judgmental, but we just wanted peace and harmony. And so we entered the Land, and we had these tremendous, miraculous victories, and I don't think we were prepared to be winners. We weren't prepared for victory and because of misplaced mercy. And a misunderstanding of our enemies. And most critically, a lack of adhering to the

Torah and the instructions of HaShem, we invited our enemies to stay. Our enemies who immediately launched a genocidal war against us, known as the War of Independence. Their goal was October 7<sup>th</sup> then. Their goal has been October 7<sup>th</sup> from before the establishment of the State of Israel. The moment that the State of Israel was declared, already a genocidal war against us.

And I guess we just didn't have the strength, the faith, the clarity, the conviction to overcome our natural predisposition and our natural desire for peace and reconciliation. We didn't have the strength to banish them from the Land. And instead, we constructed fantasies of co-existence and illusions of peace and reconciliation, which we've been paying the price for in this long, protracted war of terror that they've declared upon us since the very beginning.

And on October 7<sup>th</sup>, those illusions, those idols were literally smashed over our own heads. Jeremy showed you in his video. The villages in the south used to be...I mean, beautiful homes. Really beautiful homes. I don't mean like ostentatious and massive and mansions. Just really beautiful. And just serene. The contrast of the serenity and the beauty that you see, to what the horrific terrors that those homes have become. You can see them at the same time.

So Jeremy showed you the video of the village in the south that used to be these bastions of leftists, secular utopian delusions. And now from all I've heard and from all I've seen with my own eyes, from everybody that I've spoken to, hundreds of people, the people of Be'eri and of the south have recognized by and large. I mean I've actually noticed a lot of it has to do with how old they are. If they're above the age of 70, by and large they're still sort of holding onto their delusions, because it's really hard at that stage to rewire and reconsider and to rethink. But really the people of Be'eri have recognized the fatal errors of their delusions. Our guide himself, he told us that. That he used to be on the left. And he had already started before October 7<sup>th</sup>, moving over, as much of the younger generation has, but this was a huge eye-opening moment for him.

And you know, there's an outcry on the nation to stop bringing in Arab labor to our communities. I'll tell you, even in the nearby village of Ibei Hanachal, where my little daughter Dvash goes to kindergarten. I was really nervous about her going there because they're building up that community in such a beautiful way. But there was so much Arab labor. And I just was so torn and so...the very thought of her going there with all of these Arabs with pick-axes, all it takes is for one of the hundreds of them to go jihad and run for the kindergarten, which is their first target, obviously. It was just so horrific. And I felt just such a relief, since the war has happened, now that Dvash has started that there are no Arabs there that are threatening her. By the way, I'm past the whole thing about worrying about how I'm going to be perceived, if racist or xenophobic or whatever phobic, or whatever thing it is, I don't care.

You know, obviously also, it's clear that this is not an issue of race. You know, an Arab that converts to Christianity, an Arab that converts to Judaism, can pray in my synagogue, his son can marry my daughter, it's not an issue of race. It's an issue of really horrific spiritual bad ideas.

Anyways, so there's this move to stop the Arab labor from going into the communities. But there's a price to stopping this addiction that we have to Arab labor. Building projects have been frozen and they lie stagnant and people are losing money and home are lying unbuilt. And many of the leadership in Israel, many of the members of the government are saying that, "What can we do? We gotta bring them in," they said, "We will be more careful. We'll screen better for terrorists. But we have no choice but to let them back in, regardless of the clear, imminent, obvious threat that they pose to our lives and the lives of our children."

I mean, all the polls are showing what they believe and what they stand for. All of these divisions that we have in our minds, dividing them from each other, it's just an illusion. You know it's clear that regardless of what the government promises, the nation itself is against it. There's all these different ideas coming out from different...you know there's Pilipino workers and Romanian workers and Hungarian workers that really want jobs, they would love to come from Israel. And they won't go on Jihads and try to kill us. Also training more and more Jews to become builders. Jews want to become builders, they're trying to become builders. But they just can't compete with the Arabs that don't have to pay the taxes, don't have to go to reserve duty. It's impossible to compete. It's a crazy incentive structure the State of Israel has set up.

But anyways, you know Jeremy and I have been approached to help in the campaign to end this Arab labor once and for all. I was actually about...I really thought I was going to get arrested because just less than a week after October 7<sup>th</sup>, I took my son, Shiloh, to his little kindergarten in Efrat. And as I was driving up, I saw three Arab workers working the machine and the trash system, right outside his gan and now they know where his kindergarten is, they have that information, they have that intelligence. You know, it's been made crystal clear that without the real-time detailed intelligence provided to Chamas by these trusted Arab laborers. Without that information that they provided to Chamas, October 7<sup>th</sup>...I don't know if it would have been successful. It definitely would not have been so horrifically lethal. And so, here's a video that Jeremy made, appealing for only Jewish labor.

(video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbBfrUzOho4>

Shalom the good people of Efrat. This is Jeremy Gimpel, I'm just driving through your beautiful Yishuv right now. I went to High School here, my family lives here. I absolutely love it here. And I just bless you with havat Yisrael. Because there are Jewish electricians, and Jewish plumbers, and Jewish workers. And I know that that there is a big bruhaha now about letting in poalim that will do the blue-collar work. Because you know, they're cheaper, they don't have to pay taxes, they can just take the money and they just go back to their villages. And then, with that money, they build more houses on Eretz Yisrael, and we continue to feed the cancer. And I

myself, in my Farm, 90% of my Farm was built by Arab labor. But since October 7<sup>th</sup>, I took it upon myself. Never again. I was just in the south and heard the stories of what the Arab poalim who worked in Be'eri did to the people of Be'eri. And polls are coming out. More than 80% of them support October 7<sup>th</sup>. Have havat Yisrael, not only for your children, but for the Jewish workers that can easily be hired here. And so, why is it havat Yisrael? Because you might have to pay an extra 10 or 20%, but are the lives of your children not worth that? And so, there will midat keneged midah, that's just the way the world works. So may we be blessed with havat Yisrael and be blessed with avat Yisrael. And so, Shabbat Shalom my friends. Choose life!

Ari

So that's one of the videos and people are putting more and more and more of these videos out. And so, you know, I started telling you the story that I saw these Arab workers right outside and I sent a voice memo to the mayor in a moment of anger. I was angry. And I said to him, "Please explain to me why these Arabs now know where my son goes to kindergarten. Should I tell them, should I send Chamas pictures and videos of where your children go to kindergarten or your grandchildren go to kindergarten? Because that's what you've just done by allowing...less than a week later, it's already happening."

I don't know if you remember, it wasn't clear what was going on then. It's still not clear what's going on. But people felt so vulnerable, and then to bring them into the communities. It's like, "Jews can do it. We can do it. We can work the little machine, we can do it. We can do it."

Anyways, so the government forces that say yes we can bring them back, but Israeli Arabs of course. Only Israeli Arabs they say, citizens. Because although the polls say that they're overwhelmingly support Chamas as well, for some reason we believe that Israeli Arab citizens are so fundamentally different because they are citizens? Just two days ago, only 15 minutes from the Farm, a terrorist viciously attacked two soldiers. One, a young woman who is in critical condition – stabbed all over her body. Her neck, her chest, all over her body. And one in moderate condition. And here's a picture of the teudat zehut, the citizenship ID of the Arab who committed the attack.



That picture says it all. That bloody identification paper because yes, that is an Israeli ID. He was a citizen. And not only a citizen, but he was on the construction crew that was assigned to Hadassah Hospital where my beautiful baby boy, Mordecai Shimshon was born just a couple weeks ago. Hadassah Hospital. Are we nuts? Thorns in our sides. That's what the Torah tells us. If we do not expel them from the Land, then what HaShem wanted to do to them will be done to us. HaShem told us what to do, but we're a stiff-necked people and we didn't listen and we're paying the price. And if we don't establish a constitution of the State of Israel as the Torah,

then we will continue to pay the price. And I know it's so scary to say that, establish the



constitution as the Torah. You know people picture Iran and the mullahs, but there's a little difference here. And that is that we are not Islam, we are not the mullahs, we are the nation of Israel, a kind, compassionate, loving nation, bringing light to the world. And the Torah is to be our constitution.

The problem is, that before October 7<sup>th</sup>, we were not in a place as a nation where we were ready to even hear this idea, to hear this truth. But as we've discussed in this Fellowship, the sages of Israel teach us that wars open our hearts, you know, that wars have the power to wake up our souls, and bring us to a greater awakening, that perhaps would have ever been possible without the war. The Torah is not something to be coerced upon the nation of Israel. The Torah is to be embraced. The Torah is to be loved and cleaved to with all of our hearts and all of our might and all of our soul. For as we declared with one unified voice on Mount Sinai, and what did we say together? Na'aseh v'nishmah – We will do and then we will understand. We don't even need to understand, so great is our faith and our trust in HaShem, na'aseh v'nishmah. That is exactly the way the nation of Israel must accept the Torah now. Faithfully and voluntarily as a nation. We are to seek out and embrace the Torah as our guide and our light in establishing the Kingdom of Israel.

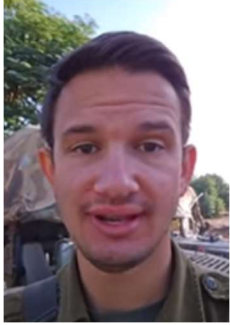
And that's what I see happening to the nation right now. There's an awakening going on. I'm not just saying this. It's true. It's really happening. When you're here, you feel it. Notice that when Ya'acov blessed the brothers around his bed, he didn't bless them in private one at a time – each one came in and each one left. He blessed them together, in front of each other. He blessed them as one unit – to convey to all of them that each and every single one of them has gifts and talents that contribute to the beauty and the perfection of the nation as a whole. That we're not to resent the differences between us, we're to embrace them and love them. And so each of the tribes was able to hear and see the strength and the talents that each of the other tribes brought to the greater whole of the nation of Israel. They heard it directly from the mouth of their father.

And that is perhaps the greatest spiritual shift that I see happening in the nation now. There's a unity that is so deep that it's impossible to explain. A unity that transcends the cliché term – unity. You know, it's this unity that is penetrating the hearts of the nation in a way that only HaShem can do such a thing. I want to show you a couple of videos that I think hint at this unity, that allude to the consciousness that is so very describe and put into words.

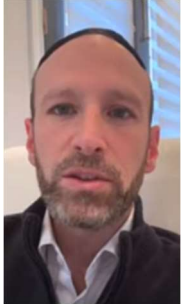
(video) <https://twitter.com/i/status/1740740008070537402>

We kept asking the soldiers, what could we outside Israel do for you.

Baruch



My name is Baruch Margolis, and I'm a soldier right now in the ParaTroopers.



We kept hearing these same answers. Pray for us, do a mitzvah for us.

Baruch

Normally I'm home with my family, observing Shabbat, but unfortunately when at war, we're aren't able to do this together. I know how important this mitzvah of protecting my country is, but wish that I could be back home to do Shabbat with my family. It would mean a lot to me, my family out there, who doesn't usually observe Shabbat, to help us by trying to keep one Shabbat with their family on my behalf.

Video presenter

I thought – what if we pair up soldiers who normally keep Shabbos fully, but can't, with people who don't normally keep Shabbos, but can.

Jewish couple



Hi, it's David and Sasha. We just finished Havdalla, we kept Shabbat for you this week, which we don't normally do. We were very happy to do it. And...we had a great Shabbat dinner. We had friends and family here. We're just so happy that we got to do this for you because as David said, we don't normally keep Shabbat, but it was so much more special knowing that we were doing it on your behalf. So we hope that you're being safe and that this brings you comfort and warmth in the same way

that Shabbat would have if you were able to keep it. So thank you for everything that you're doing for us and for Israel. And we're sending you all of the positive vibes and energy that we possibly can. Thank you, Baruch. Thank you so much.

Video presenter

I was so moved by that, I had to send it to Baruch.

Baruch

Wow, that's so amazing, that video, so emotional, made me feel great. I had a Shabbat meal in Gaza and we weren't able to do any davening or Shabbos meals or anything like that. So I really appreciate it, like I got so emotional watching your video and it made me feel really good and I hope you got as much out of it as I got out of it. Thanks so much.

Ari

Wasn't that beautiful? I mean there are...just think about that. There's this deep, intuitive recognition that we are one body. You know, that we're one people. And where one of us ends, the other begins. And that ending and beginning is not as clear a distinction as we think. Meaning we're all really one. And you know, these are not people, like you heard, that are religious. You heard them say that they don't keep Shabbat. But this isn't about religious practice or ritual. This unity is greater than that. This unity is about the deepest truth of our very essence as a people.

And last week we learned about the death of the young man named Efraim Yachman. Jeremy spoke about him. I'm going to let Jeremy talk about him in greater depth. But he was Jeremy's neighbor from Neve Daniel. I wasn't able to go to the funeral, but I've heard legends about the humility and the holiness and the greatness of this exceptional, young Tzadik. And I'm excited for all of you to hear some of those stories when Jeremy shares them and how he wants to share them.

But here's a video of one of his friends, that had 24 hours to leave Gaza. And this is the initiative that he took upon himself on behalf of his whole unit that sent him.



I'm here with Choshen in our chamal in Efrat. A few days ago, Choshen came to us and requested two things. Why did he request two things? Because he knew the ultimate protector of our soldiers, of our people, is Torah. And he said he needs a meshuvurah and a Rambam for his chevra in his unit. Tell us, what's going on.

So my friend died two days ago in Gaza. One of the most strong things about him, that he learn every day. So he finished kiddush inside Gaza and after yesterday, I said to my friends in our unit, "We must to learn every day. It's so important. So I asked for the meshuvurah and the Rambam and I committed to learn every day.

HaShem should protect you and HaShem should protect all of our chayalim, everyone should come home. And we should only hear good news. Thank you. (end of video)

Ari

Ok, I know that there are probably a lot of words that are in there that I realize you may not have understood what exactly he was talking about. But you understood the message there. That they are carrying forth the torch of his Torah learning. And running with that, even though they were not all religious or pious or whatever, they said that he's going to continue living through us. He recognized that we're interconnected on such a deep level. That by continuing this learning, he's literally doing...he's allowing Efraim to literally do it through him. All of them, all of those soldiers. He still lives within them. That's the mystical blessing that people who pass away, it actually says it on the metzevah, on the tombstone. That their soul... I can't translate it, I don't know how to translate it. But that their soul should be forever intertwined within the bundle, or the chain of life. Tabitha, close enough? It's hard to explain. And even if I translated it right, go try to understand it.

But it's actually, we've been saying these words for thousands of years. But now more than ever in my life, the nation is internalizing this truth that there's a bundle of souls, that we are part of one. And we're infusing this knowledge of our oneness into our very essence. And that is happening from above. That's something that we can't do. That's why you know the sages say that the Torah says that in the end of days there will be a circumcision of the heart. Doesn't say of the mind, because the mind is sort of under our control. The heart? That is something that God is doing. That's something that's really out of our control.

And so, despite everything that's happening, it's this transcendent unity that is emerging from within the nation of Israel that's giving me hope. And that's why when the secrets of the end of days fled from Jacob, he lost that knowledge and that prophetic insight...it was the unity of his sons, wholeheartedly expressing their faith in the oneness of HaShem that gave Jacob hope. Because you know the unity of the nation of Israel together, our love for each other, not despite of our differences, because of them? In some ways, I hear myself saying these words and I've said them about this Fellowship. And in some ways, I feel like what's happening in this Fellowship and what's happening in the nation of Israel, is sort of happening on two parallel tracks. And there's this transcendent love that is inexplicable that brings us all together here right now in this Fellowship. And it's also happening in Israel at the time. Something is going on, on these different fronts where the same love and the same unity is being aroused.

And that is what will bring about the arrival of Mashiach. Because the unity of Israel is what will catalyze the unity of all of mankind. And the love of the nation of Israel for each other is what will catalyze the love of all of mankind for each other.

I wanted to talk to you now about Joseph and about that whole chapter thing, but I think my heart is telling me, we'll talk about it, we will. Let's talk about it next week. Let's talk about it next week. Soon, we'll talk about it. But for right now, I think we need to bless each other, to pray together, that HaShem circumcises our hearts and sparks the love for each other that is the most clear and direct consequence and blossoming of our love for Him. And that blossoming love that is happening for each other and for Him within our hearts, that will bring about the blossoming of the Son of David, of the Mashiach that we've been praying for. That will bring the Temple and the light and the love that the world so badly needs. And I know that we here, we're a part of it. And it's really up to us to decide how great a part of it we want to be and all we need to do to make it happen is just keep kindling that flame in our own hearts, that flame of longing and of yearning. Not about us and our story and how we fit into it. This isn't about us, this is about bringing the revelation of HaShem into a world that is such a void and is such a lacking right now. Such darkness and that feeling of emptiness. And we want God to be powerfully revealed to all of mankind. And that light and that love will bring the peace and the healing that we've been praying for, for so long. HaShem please let it be soon and in our days.

Now, it's my greatest joy to bless all of you.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

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

I love you all very much. Please keep reaching out to me. If you ever don't know how to reach me, I'm not so good at emails. WhatsApp's, that's great. Reach out to Tabitha, she'll give you my WhatsApp. Everybody in this Fellowship is invited always to reach out to me personally. I love hearing from you. May you be blessed in only happiness.