

Session 213

Va'era - Seeking Faith

26 January 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVcjNQ-UYX4&t=1s>

Ari

Shalom my friends, can you hear me? Can you hear me? I really hope you can. I went to great lengths, I think I was too ambitious. I went to great lengths to try to set up this new system and I don't even know if it's set up, I don't even know if it works. I really needed that time to put into the Fellowship...and I...do you ever become so OCD, hyper-focused that you just can't stop? Well, that's exactly what was happening. Anyways, I'm watching this slide show that Tabitha put together and really nothing else even needs to be said. I mean, it's so powerful, thank you, Tabitha, for putting that together.

You know, I'm just... another little bit of a disclaimer. It's been a rough week. There's been patrols, there's been guard duties, I'm coming down with something, and we're all just so spent in this country, in the hills of Judea – spiritually, emotionally, on every front. And so, I'm just sort of throwing myself at your mercy as my friends and my family in this Fellowship. And I'm just praying that it just comes out, because it really is so good to see you. You know, I'll tell you that since Jeremy convinced me to take this new root, with starting this new company, bringing on a team, and professional production, and all that stuff, so many things have been changing. And by the way, I do mean a new root because the destination has always been the same, to share the beauty and the truth of Israel with the world. But the ROOT, meaning the means to the end has been changing, which has taken me more than a little bit out of my comfort zone and has been very challenging, but at the same time I'm grateful that I let him convince me because it's been pulling out of me and pulling out of both of us entirely new dimensions of content and of light and of perspectives and of thoughts and of learning that I think may have otherwise just remained dormant within us, or within me I can definitely just speak for myself. And there's been so much.

First and foremost, the Judean Diet. Not only the weekly modules which I pour my heart into, but also the support groups which have been beautiful and magical and healing and you know, during the week, where I'm just doing patrols and there's jihad and there's Judea. And then, I'm just talking about my addiction to organic popsicles and how I fit it within my window. And it's just like such a nice little break. And so, that's been great, and I see the light of this program, what it's bringing to people and I'm just so grateful to be a part of it.

And then there's our weekly show with our beloved friends – Luke Hilton and Josh Waller. Who's been able to see the show? Have any of you been able to watch it? Oh wow, a lot of you, a lot of you. Thank you. Yeah, they're known as The Israel Guys, which I really feel is a blessed partnership that we have with them. We just feel it every time we come together. They're really like brothers.

But this Fellowship, this is really my home base, it's my safe place. It's the place just to put it all out there and share everything. And I was having this conversation with Tabitha, and we both felt like it would be a blessing if after my Fellowships at least, that we try to have Fellowship Connections. I always love that, maybe sometimes people wouldn't have any questions or things to share. And that's ok, but at the very least, I think it would be good for us to open it up and to try. And to create a space for that to happen. Raise your physical hands if you think that's a good idea, if you'd like to do the Fellowship Connections. Ok, well that makes me very, very, very happy. That we both want it. I want to be here and see you guys and connect. Like, I don't know. I'm really excited about that, and so that's a new facet, at least in my Fellowships which I'm excited to open up and connect with all of you. I think it's just these support sessions in the Judean Diet are so wonderful and healing and you're my family. So I really want to do that.



Anyways, before I open with a prayer, I want to start by dedicating this show to the aliyat neshimah, to the ascension of the holy soul of my very dear friend, Tom Schiffour, Ariel ben Dorit V'avraham Yehudah. These are just some pictures of Tom. He's been a beloved friend for so many years. A few weeks ago, he checked

himself into the hospital with a deep chest cough that he just wasn't shaking. Turned out it was pneumonia, and unfortunately, it was too late. And a few weeks later, he passed away, on Thursday night, this past Thursday night.

Truth is, it doesn't really matter how he died, what matters the most is really how he lived. And just a few words, if it's ok, he lived in the nearby settlement of Efrat, where he made aliyah. I think he was in Nashville, he was in Texas, different places in America. He was a musician and he played with some of the biggest bands, of famous musicians. He had stuff that was on the top charts. Like the Top 10. Anyways, I'm not in the musical world, but he was a big thing there. But he made aliyah because he felt his soul pulling him here, even though he had no idea what he would do to make it happen. And he came here and he was a fix-it man. And he fixed everybody's everything. Not just in their homes, but really in their hearts.

You know, Chassidic stories are written about people like him. Everyone that knew him, loved him. Everybody counted him amongst their dearest friends. I don't think anyone fully realized the scope of how many people loved him until the funeral on Friday morning, which was packed. I mean the showing was overwhelming. He wasn't killed in a terrorist attack, he wasn't a soldier, he wasn't a public figure. But he touched the hearts of so many people. So many children, all of the children of Efrat were devastated. Rav Shlomo Katz's daughter was crying the whole day. He was able to really able to touch the hearts of everyone. He was modest, soft-spoken, kind, loving, he was a man of the Book. My friend, Dov Kram, who is like a brother to him, said that his Tanakh, his Bible was like

tie-died; Tom was a little bit of a hippie. His Bible was tie-dyed because of all the different colored highlights on the well-worn pages of his Bible, of his Tanakh, of his Torah.

He would always talk about the nation of Israel, how we're the people of the Book, and we need to get back to the Book, back to the Book. And he didn't say it, he lived it. And he lived it so much that he followed the Book to the Holy Land, where he made his life without having any idea how he was going to do it.

And so, in the spirit of his holy words, and the ascension of his soul to the highest realms of heaven, I would like to open up a prayer that is really inspired by him.

HaShem, we stand before You today, in this Fellowship, as our ancestors stood before You at Har Sinai, at Mount Sinai, saying with one heart and one voice, "na'aseh v'nishmah." We will do and we will obey. For your words are life to our souls and a guiding light to our paths. Just as You commanded Yehoshua that the Torah should never depart from his mouth, we too commit ourselves to speak, to learn, and to live by Your holy Torah, every day of our lives. May it be a crown upon our heads and a shield around our hearts, binding us forever to Your will. HaShem, where can we find You? We seek You in the words of Your Torah, in the beauty of Your creation, in the hearts of Your faithful servants, and here in this Fellowship. Please gather Your people of the Book from the four corners of the earth. Unite us in love for You, for each other, and for the sacred mission You've entrusted us with. May our learning together in this Fellowship, our actions, and our lives, and our prayers, right now and always bring honor to Your Name and sanctify Your Name before the eyes of all of mankind. Amen.

Ok. So the song we play at the end of the Fellowship, you got to hang around for that. It's one of his beautiful music videos called "Bring Down the Heal." So that is a special treat at the end. And also, if you're hanging around for that, hang around for this. Because Jeremy Gimpel, we had him over, his family over, it's been awhile since we were able to come together for whatever reason, so our families got together over Shabbat, over lunch and I was able to hear some of his Torah ideas. And I'm eager for me...I'm eager to hear, and I'm eager for all of you to hear his beautiful teachings about the exodus from slavery. Here you go, Jeremy.

Jeremy

Wow, thank you so much, Ari. The truth is that I really wanted to actually start off this Fellowship, also. So Tom was a member of this Fellowship. He was never on live, but so many times he would come up to me afterwards and say, "Oh, I really loved that teaching, I really loved that speaking, I love what you guys are doing." He loved the Farm, he would come out all the time. And on Friday, we had to say goodbye. And so, it's beautiful that you've dedicated this Fellowship to him, and to his memory and to his soul having an ascension. But I just wanted to share some ideas of what he really was in the world. And the ideas that he spread.

And people would ask, “Well, all right Tom, what do you do?” And he answered really on behalf of everyone in the Fellowship, I believe. And he said, “Well, I’m in the family business.” And what did he mean by the Family Business? He said, “We’re all just building the kingdom of God. That is our Family Business. Like anyone who is a part of the Family of Israel, we’re all a part of the Family Business. And all of us, in one way or another, we’re all a part of that mission of bringing God’s light into the world, and it’s a Family Business. And I just really over the years, see this Fellowship as an extended family that extends beyond boundaries, beyond geography, beyond politics, beyond cultural backgrounds and religious backgrounds. And all of us are really a part of the Family Business.

And there would be times where I would be walking around Efrat and he would just tell people, “Hand-picked.” And people would kind of look at me and say, “Hand-picked? What does that mean?” And what he meant was, everyone that is connected to Israel today, everyone that’s picked up and moved to the Land of Israel today, they are hand-picked by the Lord. Hand-picked and selected to be connected to Israel in these times, to live in the Land in this generation. And he would say it’s like a puzzle, the pieces are all coming together and each piece fits perfectly into the next piece as we’re growing this Fellowship and growing this Kingdom in the Land of Israel. But the puzzle has no borders. And it’s just a puzzle that continues to grow and connect everyone from around the world to what needs to be connected.

And I just felt those ideas so powerfully because I lived with them, because of him. And then hearing so many people share those ideas, how they all touched their hearts, also, it was like going to the funeral of a public figure, a member of Knesset, someone that’s a famous man, because everyone that he reached, because he spoke from the heart and he spoke to the heart, he touched so many people. And so, I just wanted you all to know that a member of our Fellowship has moved on to the next world, but he has left a lot of light behind. So much inspiration.

And he would always be reminding us that it’s coming. The redemption is near, the Bible says so. We’re in this generation because we have been hand-picked to be in this generation. And you think about the exodus from Egypt. They were there in Egypt for 200 plus years. That means, there were people that were born in Egypt, that died in Egypt. Their children were born in Egypt and died in Egypt. They were born three generations as slaves, they were lost...just it was to be a slave in their mentality. And then, there was one generation that was the chosen generation to be freed from Egypt. Two hundred years to actually be the generation that’s going to change.

And we need to realize that we are indeed the generation that is transitioning right now. And that’s why Ari and I have taken on so many new tasks for this Fellowship and for our mission. With The Israel Guys on Thursdays, weekly show about the politics in Israel and making sure that people see Israel through a lens paradigm of holiness, through a lens paradigm of prophecy and the Bible, and God’s plan. To see current events as they’re unfolding. And it’s been beyond a blessing. So many thousands of people that have now never heard of us, know who we are, have learned about our

Fellowship. People are now starting to send in requests to join, to learn more. I mean it's like our movement is really growing.

And for those of you who haven't seen, I want you to get just a little taste of what the show with the Israel Guys is like. Because I've made media now for 20 years with Ari. We've never made a show like this where there's two Jews, there's two Gentiles, two Christians, we're from Judea, they're from Samaria. All four of us sitting around a table and just speaking the truth to the world. And there are sparks that fly, sparks of holiness. There was a Mennonite, that happened to be in the recording a couple of shows ago, and I didn't even know that he was in the studio. He was sitting in the way back, far in the dark, just kind of enjoying the show. And we walked out and someone asked him, "Oh wow, how was that?" And he said, "I really felt God was in the room." And I was like, "Wow, that would be a good show." So just so you can see it, check this little clip out, just for your own pleasure. If you haven't seen it, you need to see it.

(video clip)

Jeremy

The only land for peace plan, is give us our Land and we'll bring law and order, peace and prosperity...

Ari

The one state that they want, isn't here in the Middle East. The one state that they want is the global calphate. They're all fighting for the same thing. Global jihad, a global caliphate, one Islamic state which is the entire world...

Joshua

We had a drone land not so far from where we're sitting here right now. It was just a regular drone, they had this electrical-taped bomb, home-made bomb connected to it...

Ari

It's impossible to defend the State of Israel without Judea and Samaria. And so, we are on the tip of the spear in defending not only Israel, but the entire free world against the global jihad...

(end of video clip)

Jeremy

All right. I just wanted you to see that because it's a lot more politics, it's a lot more real, it's current, it's what's happening. And what we spoke about then, I want to bring into a real Torah perspective now. Because President Trump is changing the Middle East in his first week in office. Things are just...no one knows what's coming next. Hostage deal, hostages being released, terrorists being released. And now, he just called on Arab States to take in Gazans. He specifically called on Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia has been thrown out, and he's like, "That's how we're going to

solve this issue. We're just going to remove the Gazans from Gaza. We're going to rebuild Gaza great again."

And you know, in Hebrew we say, "Yeshuat HaShem, ..." The salvation of God, it's like the blink of an eye. It's like, you're in Egypt for 200, 300, 400 years, and then all of a sudden, "Nope, this is the generation where things are going to change." And things are literally starting to change. But before they change, lessons had to be learned. In this week's Torah portion, it says, "Bo el Paroah." And most English translations, I feel like sometimes miss it. Because it doesn't say, "Go to Pharaoh, Moses." He says, "Come to Pharaoh, Moses." And then, come to Pharaoh, he's away from him, he needs to come to him, but God is as if saying, "Come with me. I'm with Pharaoh. I'm the God of Israel. I am behind all of your hardships. Your hardships, your suffering, I'm there."

And they're a tool that HaShem uses to form us, and shape us, to mold us into greater creations. The nation of Israel is still molded by our experience as slaves. That's why we are on a mission, a national mission to liberate every person. Because if there's anyone that's trying to take away your freedom, whether it be freedom of speech, or 15-minute cities in Europe that you can't drive past your home, making little ghettos for the Europeans. Anytime where they're trying to take away your freedom, the Jews have a radar because our entire movement was a movement of freedom. A movement of freedom to serve God in any way that we saw fit.

And in some ways, the story is to teach us that all of us are in slavery right now. Even in this generation, we have freedom, we have food, we have comfort...all of us are born into slavery. I want you to know that I felt it, especially when I started the Judean Diet. I started the Judean Diet because how could I not start the Judean Diet if my best friend, Ari is doing the Judean Diet. I wanted to learn everything about this Judean Diet, and so I said, "I'm going to start the Judean Diet myself. I'm not going to talk about it too much, but I'm going to quietly join Ari's diet, and I'm going to see what happens." Because I realized at the beginning...Ari sort of surprised me with the Judean Diet. I didn't know he was launching it on the Fellowship.

But what he did was everything that I believe in. It's not a religion, it's turning everything that we do into the service of God. Every time we eat, so often, it's such a big part of our life. Can we make that a part of serving HaShem? That has nothing to do with what's kosher, how kosher this, kosher that kosher. It's just about being conscious and aware and using our food in service of God. And I said, "I love that idea!" Well, I'm going to make my own path. And so, that's the part of the Judean Diet. You can make your own path.

So for two weeks, I did something that I do not think anyone should ever do, unless they should do it, I guess. But I only ate meat and I only drank water. I was on a carnivore diet. I don't know why I wanted to do that, but I did that. Because I felt like I wanted to do something that would build my integrity and would be a part of this movement that Ari's leading in the world. And for two weeks, I just ate meat, not with any salt, not with anything. Just meat on a grill and water. And I did not like

my life. I did not like eating at all. I didn't feel good, I didn't like it, I'm not encouraging anyone else to do this.

But I did have a horse accident about seven months ago. And I lost all discipline in my life. I wasn't exercising, I was eating whatever I could eat, just to comfort myself because there were months where I existed in pain. It's not that I had pain, I WAS pain. And so I would eat gummy bears, just to ease my pain, just kind of comfort myself with sugar. And eventually I was addicted to sugar, because I was having so much junk food. And I had never been so pleasantly plump. So, I needed the diet. And so I said to Ari, "Well I am going to have to recalibrate my life. I'm just going to eat meat and drink water." And I did that for two weeks.

And it changed my life because I realized what a slave I was to food. I had no idea because I had never really been on a diet before. I've always been relatively fit, I'm always exercising, I try to eat relatively healthy. But sometimes...I just never really eat a committed diet. And when I did the Judean Diet, I actually felt true slavery. My body was pulling me in one direction, and I had to fight to break free from a slavery that I was in that I didn't even know about. And so sometimes we're caught up in a slavery that we don't even know because the default is going to be what your body dictates, which it wants to survive, it wants pleasure, it wants comfort, it wants sleep, it wants food. And to wake up our soul, to let our soul and our integrity be the leader of our life, is a breaking of that slavery.

And when you think about the slavery that Israel has been under now. It was 2,000 years of exile that culminated in the largest genocide in human history, the Holocaust. There was no hope, to the point where Ezekiel saw a vision of dry bones and ashes, just a field of dead Jews apparently after the Holocaust. And he asked God, "Is there any hope for them? I can't see how this nation could survive." And that is the point, that no matter what slavery, we can be set up against impossible odds. That's how the nation of Israel was born. Isaac should have never been born to begin with. Abraham was too old, Sarah was too old, we shouldn't even be here. And the miraculous reality of Israel was miraculous from the get-go. A slave nation in Egypt, slaves were the lowliest, the most helpless, with no future. They're going to defeat the largest and mightiest empire in the world? And that's how they're going to be liberated and born as nation? It's impossible odds.

And even today in Israel, right before Friday when I experienced what I've experienced together with Ari at a member of our Fellowship's funeral, I went to Chevron because my youngest daughter, Chen, finished the first book of Genesis in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She learned it in all of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, until now into the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and she finished the book of Genesis. And to celebrate, they took her whole class to Chevron, and they did a party celebrating the book of Genesis. And she got her own book for the first time.



And there you see Chen with the glasses, she looks like a little Tehila. And then right behind her is the Tomb of the Patriarchs. And it was so meaningful because she learned for a year and a half all of the stories of Abraham and Sarah and all the stories of the matriarchs and patriarchs of Israel in the book of Genesis, and here we are celebrating our completion in Chevron.

And I was like, “You can’t get a better Jewish education than you can in the Land of Israel. You can try to get a Jewish education in New York, or in New Jersey. But there’s nothing like learning the book of Genesis and then celebrating the book of Genesis, in Chevron, right next to Abraham and Sarah and Isaac. Everyone was there. It was so marvelous.

But as I looked around Chevron, I saw a small group of Jews that were, I don’t know, 100 Jews, 200 Jews, max, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of violent jihadist Muslims that are choking the Jewish community from all angles. And it really seems like impossible odds. And there are Jews that are picking up from America, moving to Israel, putting themselves into a situation that has impossible odds. It seems impossible. I don’t know how we’re going to liberate this Land, and then just like that...Trump’s like, well, they gotta take the Gazans and move them out of the Land. And just like that, it’s like, “What?” We blink twice and the impossible becomes possible.

And that is what emunah is. Emunah isn’t just having hope. Emunah isn’t just having faith about God. It’s a moment-to-moment choice. Living out faith. Faith practiced with loyalty day-to-day and being a part of the family business, knowing that everyone in this Fellowship is hand-picked by God, and we are puzzle pieces that are all being put together and our puzzle will continue to grow. And even if we’re up against insurmountable odds, to have emunah is to be unreasonable. And to believe that if I just paint my doorpost with some blood, somehow God will make a way and liberate us from our own slavery.

And so, may we all be blessed to have real Hebrew emunah. Faith that’s practiced with unreasonable loyalty. That’s the key. To really be able to connect to our hearts and speak to the hearts of everyone that we encounter because if HaShem chose us in this generation, He chose us to spread His light to everyone around us. So that’s a big responsibility. Our Fellowship happens to be right in the heart of the biblical Zionist movement that is moving to settle God’s Land and build His kingdom that will eventually spread around the world, a kingdom of light. And so, we have a huge task ahead of us. But that’s what unreasonable faith is really all about. So HaShem should bless us all, shalom my friends.

Ari



Beautiful, thank you Jeremy for sharing that. You know, it makes me think, there's something about this country, you drive around in the streets and the cars themselves have Torah radiating out of them, throughout the entire country. You know, one of the main, most popular bumper stickers on the back window is Ain ode milvado. There is nothing other than God in the world, right? The Torah tells us, the heavens above, the earth below, there is nothing else. It's only God.

Another very popular one that has become more and more and more popular, are the words of the sages – Yeshuat HaShem... - the salvation of God is like the blink of an eye. Meaning that moment when you blink your eyes, when you close your eyes? That's when the blink happens. That is when the greatest salvation comes. And that's who we're really...right now, it seems like we're so stuck in the mire of just impossible. How are we ever going to extricate ourselves from this situation with the global jihad? It just seems like Chamas, it's like Whac-A-Mole, it's just they're so filled with hatred and rage and murderous contempt. How are we ever going to get out of this?

And it makes me think of the verse from Psalms which I've shared with you so many times that I've learned to read in a different way:



From a place of constraints, mitzar, a place of constraints, I call out to you, HaShem. Answer me from a place of expansiveness.

That's how we always read it. But it can be also read in a different, I think more complete way. I call out to you HaShem from this place of constraints. How am I going to get out of this situation? And HaShem answered me, "You are in a place of expansiveness, you just don't have the eyes to see it yet."

And we have to remember that while right now it seems like sometimes the world is caving in on us, especially this last week, HaShem is with us and it can all, in the blink of an eye, it can be reversed.

Anyways, so there's so much happening in Israel and the world, and as always, the Torah portion of the week shines so much light onto what is happening and really gives us guidance to navigate through these very difficult times. And as part of the difficult times that we're navigating through at the very moment, a big part of it is this whole cease fire deal. Or should I say, cease-fire covenant? I want to say covenant, because let's call it what it is. We have made a covenant with Chamas. A covenant with evil. And the entire thing is really emotionally overwhelming. Really. I have yet to meet one person who isn't swept away with emotions and passions about all of it. Because I'm even afraid to talk to people about it sometimes because if they don't agree with me, I can imagine getting heated about it, it's just not worth it. I mean, I'm just so emotional, at least I'm aware of how emotional I am about all of it. There's just so much passion around the subject.

Because on the one hand, while I'm not abrogating responsibility, it is an objectively terribly deal that was pressured upon us by a president that was supposed to be a source of blessing. And this does not feel like a blessing. I mean, there's facets of blessing to it, but the deal as a whole, I don't think anyone in the country is delusional enough to actually say, "Oh yeah, it's all good, it's great, it's a great deal." Nobody thinks it's a great deal. Some people may think it's worth it for one reason or another, but it's a deal in which mass murderers and cold-blooded butchers are being released back to their jihadist communities which are receiving them with great fanfares, joy and celebrations.



Just one example, just one. This is Ashraf Zagair. Do you see him? He was a citizen of Israel with a blue ID card, the ones that are supposed to be all patriotic and liberalized.



Anyways, he used that blue ID card, and he drove the suicide bomber to Bus 4, killing six civilians and wounding 60 others, having limbs ripped off –

man, women, children. Here are the faces of the six people who he murdered. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, which to me, if you ask me, someone in the Fellowship wrote me and asked me about this, like what's the story with the death penalty? To me, it's a terrible sin that he wasn't executed. There should be none of these terrorists in prison left to release. No body left to trade because they should have all been put to death, all of them. But he was sentenced to life in prison, where of course, he flourished in prison. By the say, I don't know if you guys heard about this, tell me if you heard about this. But there were two terrorists who requested not to leave prison. They didn't want to leave prison and be received as heroes in Gaza, opting to stay in Israeli prison. One of them ended up leaving, the other one just said he refused and he wants to stay in the Israeli prison, which says a lot.

But anyways, Ashraf, he became a senior Chamas figure in prison and was released today to Jerusalem as a part of the deal. Israel said that there's no celebrations, you're not allowed to celebrate. No celebrations. But Israel is not arresting him, even though he led a Chamas march, firing weapons into the air upon his release, wrapped in Chamas ribbons. Here's a picture of him upon his release.



Anyways, that's Asherof, just surrounded by throngs of adoring people who just are so taking with his murderousness. Right now, at this very moment, he can go have a drink at a café in Jerusalem, or go on a stroll on the beach in Tel Aviv. He can, wherever he wants to go. Just watch this video to see the way

these vicious, blood-thirsty, murderous terrorists are being received as heroes by these “innocent” civilians of Gaza.



These are murderers, these are murderers who massacred babies. I could go on and on in detailing each of these terrorists and attempting to describe the indescribable evil that they have reeked upon the purest, the most innocent, the sweetest, the holiest. And now they're being released as heroes. Not only is it unjust, but it's also insane. Insane because this exact thing that the State of Israel is doing in releasing these terrorists for innocent hostages, is exactly what led to October 7<sup>th</sup> when Israel released Sinwar in exchange for the kidnapped soldier, Gilad Shalit. Of course, only after curing his brain cancer, paid for by the tax-payers of Israel. I mean, it's enough to literally make you sick. And we're doing it again.

On the other hand, you saw the videos that Tabitha played, of the reuniting of the freed girls with their parents. Here's a shorter version, just to see this beauty and this joy.

(video)



Ari

I just watched those again last night and I just cried through the whole thing. It would always touch my heart, but I think since being a father, I mean, I have reunions like that with Dvash, just from not seeing her from when I put her to bed the night before and it's morning time. And I cry and I hug her and I kiss her. And I cannot imagine what they're...as I'm watching that, and my heart is saying, there's no price that is not worth paying for those moments. But there is a price that is not worth paying. And that is, the parents of murdered children. It's just impossible not to see those videos and to celebrate and to be joyous, just that such a moment exists in time.

But just the evil around it. Even their release was done in the sickest and the most cynical evil way imaginable. Chamas released a propaganda video, showing the girls receiving certificates, little gifts, like keychains, and other party favors, and then bringing them onstage of course orders to wave and smile. Every single movement was choreographed and scripted and coerced, obviously coerced. They've since said that. I know it's a long video, but I really want you to actually see the actual Chamas propaganda video. I cut a little of it, but I really want you to see this:

(video)



Ari

What do you guys think of that? Right? I mean, it's just so sick and it's so cynical and it's so...ach. You know I heard someone explain it well by saying that forcing these women, who were cruelly held captive for 15 months to go on stage, smile, and cheer, as if they hadn't been put through hell is just as cynical as putting a sign reading, "Work sets you free," at the entrance to Auschwitz.



It's the same thing, it's even worse. Is this how things are supposed to be going? We're all asking ourselves this. Particularly here in Judea where this is very real. I can't even tell you all the details, being in the army, how very real this. From the most updated numbers I've heard, 113 of the most vicious, murderous terrorists have been released into the hills of Judea and Samaria. Our already heightened level of readiness has been heightened even

further as we brace for the inevitable consequences of this insanity. Which is particularly painful and particularly enraging as I explained on the Israel Guys show this past Thursday.

The warriors of Judea, the men of Judea, have left their wives and their children and have served significantly more days per capita in Reserves than anyone anywhere else in Israel. Not to mention that our very existence here in Israel, is thanks to Judea and thanks to Samaria. Before the October 7<sup>th</sup>, there were so many people in Israel that were buying BBC and Al Jazeera, and all the nonsense and saying, "Oh, it's the settlements, the settlements are the problem." Now everyone here knows. That without Judea and Samaria, without the West Bank, the settlements, Israel, the entire, Ra'anana, Netanya, Tel Aviv, they would all be getting October 7<sup>th</sup>. There's no question about it. Our existence here is critical to the safety and security of the entire county.

So we're serving more, we're protecting them by our very existence, and they're releasing these terrorists into our back yards? Where our children are playing? It's just beyond. You know the whole country, we fought like lions, we sacrificed our bravest and most beautiful souls, just to hand this victory over to our enemies?

I just keep thinking about the last words uttered in last week's Fellowship. In last week's Torah portion, in response to Moshe's demand, that the children of Israel leave Egypt, and Pharaoh, what does he do? He responds by greatly increasing the burden of the Israelites. And then Moshe turns to HaShem and he's like, "Why did you bring harm upon these people? Why did you send me?" This is what we talked about last week to which HaShem responds:

...You shall soon see what I will do to Pharaoh: he shall let them go because of a greater might; indeed, because of a greater might he shall drive them from his land.  
-Exodus 6:1

Meaning, as we said, the story is far from over. That is what HaShem is saying. Don't lose faith, the best is yet to come. And I've been working hard to internalize that faith from my head into my heart. But it's been taking work, it feels like there's more resistance than usual about internalizing this particular faith. That what's happening now is what is meant to be happening.

Because you know faith is something that is a constant service. Always, always, in our hearts and in our minds. Every single moment is an opportunity to exercise that spiritual muscle of trust in HaShem. And each moment is a unique, new flexing of that muscle. And if we don't see that, we're missing out on one of the most foundational opportunities that life has to offer.

Rav Biederman brings a verse from the plague of hail, which shows that something different is happening here in this plague. Something which could easily be overlooked because of the magnificence of these incredible plagues, but it's important, it's different from the other plagues. This is what it says:

This time tomorrow I will rain down a very heavy hail, such as has not been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Therefore, order your livestock and everything you have in the open brought under shelter; every human and beast that is found outside, not having been brought indoors, shall perish when the hail comes down upon them!  
-Exodus 9:18 - 9:19

This is the words of Moshe to Pharaoh and to the Egyptian people. That's what he said. He's warning the Egyptians that if they fear HaShem, they should bring their slaves and their livestock indoors and that if they didn't, they would all perish. If anything, it sounds like the biblical precedent for Israel's policy of knocking and warning the enemies to evacuate before an attack. You know, this thing that Israel does.

But this is different. Because a big part of when Israel does that sort of knock-warning thing today, I think it has to be from...at least partially from the desire to virtue-signal. Like we're the Israel Defense Forces. It's just that name...I used to be proud of that when I was a kid. Israel Defense...what other country has defense forces? That their army is called the Defense Forces? We're the Israeli army, where Israel defends Israel? Israeli forces. It's just so...we have to like... "No, we're only defending..." There's something really just mini about it. Especially in the region that



we're in right now. It's suicide. And we're so ridiculously over the top, humanitarian, that it really ceases being humanitarian at all.

But Moshe was not only issuing this warning at HaShem's directive, but also giving them an opportunity to really gauge whether the deeper lessons to Pharaoh and the Egyptian people are being learned at all. Whether they're being internalized at all. They wanted to gauge whether they're learning their lessons from these crazy, nature-defying miracles. There were those that listened and brought their animals in, as we see.

Those among Pharaoh's courtiers who feared Hashem's word brought their slaves and livestock indoors to safety; but those who did not put his heart to the word of Hashem left their slaves and livestock in the open.

-Exodus 9:20-21

Yes, some did. But we know that it was a very...almost no one heeded Moshe's warning and brought in their slaves and their animals. And they suffered a devastating loss, psychologically, emotional, financial. They pretty much lost everything. And so, the question is, how could they not have been afraid? How could they not have listened to Moshe after six devastating, nature-defying miracles had been inflicted upon them, the entire country, all of which Moshe predicted with exacting precision accuracy. How could they not have listened?

And I think the answer is, within the verse. It says, "Those who did not put their hearts to HaShem."

They didn't put their hearts to HaShem, meaning that it is possible to see the world around us and to see...I mean physically see the Hand of God. It's possible for us to honestly look with our own eyes and see the Hand of God. But without true intentionality and focus and reflection and spiritual work, all of it, no matter how powerful and clear and obvious and compelling it is, all of it can simply just stay in this cerebral, abstraction.

I've quoted in this Fellowship before the words from Maimonides. Maimonides says that the greatest distance in the world is the distance between your head and your heart. That it's possible to know something intellectually, but internalizing that truth is a whole nother world. That's why the Torah tells us that we are in this world to accomplish, as the book of Deuteronomy tells us, it's one of my favorite verses, we've done it a thousand times, we'll do it a thousand more:

Know therefore this day and keep in mind that Hashem alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other.

-Deuteronomy 4:36

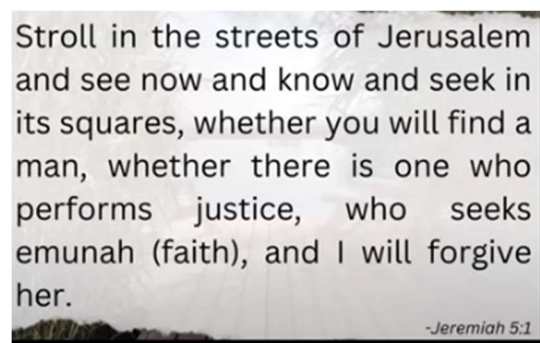
Shavuota means you should pull it down. You should internalize it into your essence that HaShem is all that there is, there is no other. And bringing that truth from your head to your heart takes work and prayer and reflection and honesty.

And the sages teach a beautiful teaching. That in the book of Numbers, Israel's arch nemesis, the Amalekites, were called Reishit Goyim Amalek, which in English

is translated as "First among the nations." Amalek is first among the nations, meaning the first to attack Israel from all of the nations. But the sages teach that the word reishit comes from the word rosh, meaning head. Because Amalek's agenda is that everything should remain in the head, in the mind. That people should not think and reflect too much. Because it's that thinking, it's that reflection and prayer which brings that truth from the head into your heart. And that...Amalek doesn't mind Israel having abstract belief in God. But a faith and a trust that is internalized into our essence? That is the antithesis of what they can endure in this world. That's what they're here to destroy. And Amalek's main battle is to prevent the truth from entering the hearts of the nation of Israel and manifesting before all of mankind.

Let's always remember my friends, that the wars of this world are all spiritual. What we are seeing with our physical eyes is this worldly manifestation of what is in truth, a war on a much higher dimension. So Rav Biederman brings down in these words, exactly, in these words by starting to quote Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, who teaches tikkun. The rectification is to believe that there's no mikreh, there's no "chance" in the world. The word in Hebrew for chance or coincidence is mikreh. And when you take those letters, mikreh, and you mix them around you get rak m'HaShem, only from HaShem. Our mission here is to really know that there is no coincidence in the world, that everything is HaShem's, from above. That everything is orchestrated by God. And we need to believe this with a complete belief. That nothing in the world happens by accident and that everything that occurs was planned by HaShem. This is truly the more important matter, Rav Tzadok says. The 613 mitzvot commandments, are all counsels to attain the knowledge that everything is from HaShem. That's what they're all directed towards, to bring us to that level of awareness and consciousness. That's what it is.

The prophet Jeremiah has a verse that's so powerful that I actually named this entire Fellowship after it. He said:



Stroll in the streets of Jerusalem and see now and know and seek in its squares, whether you will find a man, whether there is one who performs justice, who seeks emunah (faith), and I will forgive her.

-Jeremiah 5:1

Yerushalyim.

Meaning that HaShem will forgive Yerushalyim in the merit of even this one man who performs justice and seeks faith. And in the merit of that man, HaShem will forgive Yerushalyim? HaShem will forgive Jerusalem? The answer is yes. Our sages teach that even if there's one man that even has half perfect emunah, half perfect faith at all. If he's mvakesh emunah, if he's truly seeking that faith, that's enough. HaShem has already forgiven

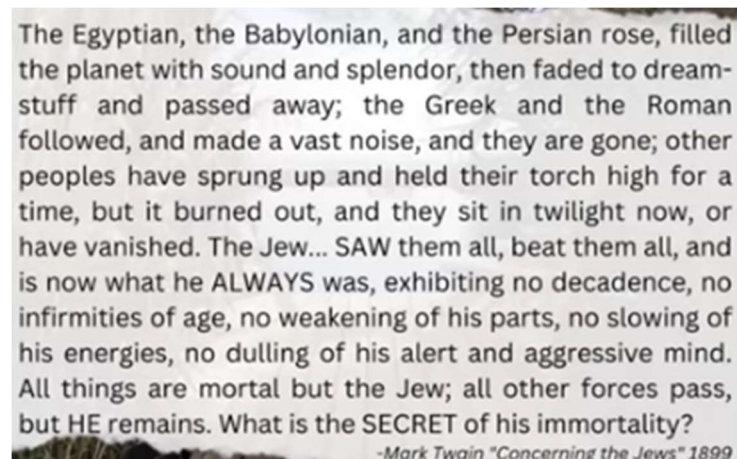
One of the verses that I very frequently reflect upon for my own life, it's one of my mantras, is a verse from chapter 2 of Havukuk, which ends with the words, Tzadik....the righteous lives by his faith. Which you know our sages bring down with a beautiful twist. That you could read the last words first. That if there's someone that truly lives his life by his emunah, he will become... that

very faith will create him into, a great Tzadik, a righteous person. That verse always comes back to me, it always comes back to me, constantly throughout my life, particularly since October 7<sup>th</sup>. Because throughout these days of extraordinary, existential, volatility and danger and instability, it's become really, increasingly clear to me on an experiential level. Meaning nobody can convince me out of this truth, that we are quite literally living on a prayer. And like Elijah said to the nation of Israel when they wanted to worship the ba'al AND the God of Israel. He said, "How long will you stand on both sides of the fence?"

At a certain point in time, you can't anymore. And that's why this verse comes to me because I personally don't understand how anyone...anyone can survive in a, at least in a healthy way and live lives of light and any semblance of happiness in the world we're in today without having true faith in HaShem and living it, living that faith. It's that faith that gives us our life force. I know that's just very vulnerable reality for me.

And so, when I read about these Egyptians that simply refused to see what their eyes were showing them...that the God of Israel is the God of the world. And that all else is lies and emptiness, I couldn't help but thinking of Chamas and Chezbollah. And really the whole deal, the whole lot of them, the global jihad, all of them. They launched their war at this tiny little nation of Israel, which they outnumbered hundreds, thousands to one. And not only were they not successful, but just look at the great miracles that HaShem has done for us, since then. The statistically impossible miracles during the numerous intercontinental ballistic missile attacks, to the Divinely inspired brilliance and success of the technologically, unparalleled beeper attacks. The bold and audacious attacks in the heart of Iran. Right? The deep underground attack getting Nasrallah. And not just have we had success in this war, but in the 1,300 years since the advent of Islam which was born out of a desire to wipe out the Jew. So many before them have just wanted to wipe us out. All the way back to the beginning of time, to the day of Abraham, they've been seeking to wipe us out.

And not only has no one succeeded, but as Mark Twain said so beautifully and I actually quoted it in the last module of the Judean Diet, but I'll quote it here again. He said:



The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew... SAW them all, beat them all, and is now what he ALWAYS was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but HE remains. What is the SECRET of his immortality?

-Mark Twain "Concerning the Jews" 1899

Does not one of them stop for a moment and just think about the miracle and the existence and the flourishing of the Jewish people who they're so hell-bent on destroying? Or is their hate just so strong that they can't see past it? That they can't reflect for a moment and ask themselves basic questions.





By contrast I actually wanted to share this with you. Here's the testimony of a Saudi leader, named Alisha Reif (sp) that has really taken a moment and actually reflected and considered truth from a place of courage. And here's what he says:

"The biggest misinformation that we have in our region, is that not so many people are relating Israel's existence to the 3,000 years old of history. They are considering Israel as a white, European, Imperialistic project. The Jews are colonialist from Europe, not indigenous people who lived in this region for a very long, not are the people who the prophets and the kings that we revere and honor are their ancestors. We keep disconnecting them. Yeah and I always say, so, it has to be reinforced in a way that would

tell the world that the Jews are indigenous to this Land because where does the word, Jew come from? The word comes from Judea. They were never called the Jews before the Babylonian exile. They were called the Israelites. But when the Babylonians inquired about their origins, the Israelites in Babylonia said, 'We come from Judea, we are the Jews.' Why was it called Judea? Because Joshua Ben Nun conquered the Land, partitioned the Land, he named that Land, he named that part of the Land on the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob, Judah. This is why the Jews in Israel still call it Yehudah v'Shomron, Judah and Samaria.

Ari

You know, how refreshing it is to hear that. How brave is that man? You know, but it just feels like so much of the world is simply not willing or desiring to take a moment and honestly stop and reflect and think. Perhaps they don't have the courage to let the truth take them to places they don't want to go. Or perhaps they simply don't want to think. They want to believe what they believe and they want to do what they want to do. Whatever the reasoning is, it's very clear to me that the phenomenon of the vast majority of the Egyptians who did not heed the warning of Moses to take in their slaves and their animals, keeping them outside and exposed to an imminent and absolute...without a doubt, they will be destroyed. They were clearly warned what's coming. The vast, vast, vast majority of them, left them outside. And I think it's clear that that phenomenon was not relegated to Egypt, 3,500 years ago, but it is alive and it is well and around today.

And here's the point that I really want to make. It's always very easy to point at the stubbornness of the other guy, at his blindness and his obstinacy. To point at Chamas and the global jihad and the rest of the world which is seeking Israel's demise. You know what they say? Always remember that when you're pointing your finger at someone, you've got three pointing back at yourself. We've spoken about this before in the Fellowship. That the Torah is the unfathomable, transcendent wisdom of God, Himself. And therefore, while the pure simple explanation that is written in the Torah is absolutely true, there are finite, there are infinite dimensions of wisdom and truth hidden deeper and deeper within.

And so, it's important to remember that every character in the Torah comes to teach us something personal. We have at least a fragment, a spark, a piece of every one of them within us. Meaning that we have a spark of Esau within us. We have a spark of Pharaoh within us. We have a spark of these Egyptians that didn't bring in their cattle and their slaves. We have a spark of them within us. And arguably, when we are able to vanquish that spark within our own hearts, we vanquish those sparks in their external manifestations of the world. Does that make sense? I really hope that I am articulating this in a logical way. If you want to dive in further, I'd recommend listening to past Fellowships around these portions. The point I'm making is that these Egyptians who didn't internalize the clear and obvious truth that was right before their eyes, and these jihadists like Chamas and Chezbollah, that cannot see the clear and obvious truth that Allah is with us and not with them. The point is that the more I reflected upon it over Shabbat, the more I realized that I have sparks of that within me as well. The more I realized that this is a universal human trait. And that the Egyptians of 3,500 years ago and the Chamas of today, both of them are a type of spiritual mirror which, if looked at with the right eyes, can bring us to a heightened level of awareness of those exact qualities that we have within us. Although to a much lesser degree, obviously. But we have them within us as well.

You know after a lifetime in which I have seen and experienced with my own eyes the overwhelming degree to which HaShem is guiding everything for me exactly as I need, all of the troubles and pain and hardships that I've been through up until now, I think for almost all of them, I had the eyes to see why I needed exactly that thing. I see HaShem has been with me unbelievably and irrefutably and there's no question in my mind but I still allow myself to be overtaken with these periodic waves of fear and doubt. I've shared it with you before on this Fellowship, despite everything that I know is true. Despite every experience I've had, I still find myself having moments of thinking that I'm on my own here. That things are not necessarily under control. That things are not as they should be, having these waves of anxiety.

Just this past Shabbat...maybe this is a poor example, it's just the most recent one because it just happens. I really feel like I fell short, it's the truth. We had a special group at the Farm of Chabad, they're Chassidim. And they pray at different times. And like rather than prayers being at 8:30 a.m., like usual that we have on the Farm on Shabbat morning, they start at 11 a.m., which is fine. But rather than go at that time, which was less convenient, and there was patrols and guards and I was tired and whatever, I had all these excuses in the world. I didn't even go. I did not go to Shabbat morning prayers. I prayed at home, which of course was no where near the amount and degree of focus and intent that I would have in synagogue, in Beit K'nesset. I know the unbelievable, priceless opportunity of prayer. I knew that in my heart. I've experienced it, there's no question about it. But I didn't go, I just stayed at home. Things like that happen all the time. This dissonance, this cognitive dissonance, it's like a break, it's a disintegration. You know, and it happens all the time.

I'm just sharing this one because it just happened yesterday, but I think we all have these lapses, these moments of willful blindness in which we cling to unhealthy habits, or false beliefs, or just believing in the rightness of our actions, despite the clear knowledge that we're wrong and that we have strayed. What I'm trying to say is that by studying these extreme examples of darkness and lack of consciousness and awareness in Chamas and in Chezbollah and in the Egyptians and in Pharaoh, and in Esau...by studying that, these extreme examples, we have the opportunity to see traces or possibly more than traces of these very qualities within ourselves. Maybe it's presumptuous for me to speak in plural here and include all of you in this with me, but I definitely feel this to be a truth for myself. Who here is this resonating with? Do you have these moments?

So to me, I mean, there have been many times when I see the Esau in me that wants it all now! That wants the pleasure now, who wants the satisfaction now, no matter what the price. Or that I see sparks of Pharaoh in myself, little sparks in which I actually believe that I'm the one calling the shots, that I'm the one in control, where I'm filled with anger and rage because I know the way things are supposed to be. Even leading up to this Fellowship, about ten minutes before the Fellowship! Nothing was working out and I wanted to review and I wanted to think, and I'm working on this technology and it's all falling apart and I'm like ahhh! You can ask Tabitha, I was getting so mad, so angry. The I...I...I...I...

You know, of course, it's sparks, but perhaps it's the illumination of those sparks within our own hearts that is what's holding up redemption. And without seeing that mirror in front of us, we wouldn't be able to identify it in ourselves. That's what's holding up redemption, whether our own redemption or perhaps by extension, the part that each and everyone of us play in the redemption of all of mankind. I think we can all benefit from just taking a moment to shut off our electricity and just to think, just to think. And to pray and to reflect and ask ourselves where we're holding onto pride and fear and ideology and falsehoods in ways that are damaging ourselves. To ask ourselves where we're being willfully blind in seeing the errors of our ways. Where we're being willfully deaf in hearing HaShem's voice telling us to wake up and return to Him in truth, in real truth, in the way that we're often most fearful and reluctant to return to HaShem, that is where He wants us to return. And that's where the fear is. That's where the resistance is, that's where the greatest task is. We just spoke about this also in the Judean Diet.

King Solomon says in Proverbs:

The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.

-Proverbs 4:19

Like I said, I wish I could say that I haven't had my own moments, that would be perfectly described by that verse. But I can't make the claim because I've been there in that place of darkness more times than I'd like to admit. The difference between us here in this Fellowship and them, in Chamas and Chezbollah and the Egyptians, is at the very least, it is our deepest desire to become aware of the darkness that lies within us. Whereas many of them don't even have the faintest awareness of the darkness of their ways or that they're even

stumbling at all. They wouldn't even believe that there's such a thing as stumbling. We would be doing ourselves a terrible disservice by simply merely externalizing the darkness around us rather than using it as a mirror with which we could look within. After all, Moshe makes sure to warn the children of Israel in no uncertain terms. He says:

Know, then, that it is not for your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

*-Deuteronomy 9:6*

We are a stiff-necked, stubborn and obstinate people on our own level, where we're at, whatever that means, it's true. And then in our own ways and seeing those very qualities manifest themselves in unique ways throughout the greatest of the adversaries that we face, is just a priceless opportunity for self-reflection and growth.

And so King Solomon says in Mishlei, in Proverbs:

The Lord has made everything for His purpose. Even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Nothing exists in the world without a purpose. And if we're able to fulfill the purpose for which something, particularly something that torments us and even scares us, something that we perceive to be adversarial, if we are able to harness their darkness, that darkness as a catalyst to rectify the blemishes and the darkness that they externally represent internally within ourselves, we nullify the purpose that this source of externalized projected darkness needs to exist in the world to begin with. We preempt a need for them to exist.

And so, my friends, it's easy for me to look at Chamas and to be filled with hatred and rage and desire to wipe them off the face of the earth. And I feel that way and those are not necessarily unhealthy impulses, but they need to be tempered with the deep internalized knowledge that they only exist because HaShem wills it. And therefore, if they exist, it's only because there's something within them that we still have to learn from them. That I still have to learn from them. There's some truth which we have yet to internalize. Because when we do internalize that truth and grow from it in the way that we need to grow from it...when that finally does happen, there will be no reason left for them to continue being. At least not in the form of the evil adversary that they are now. I have my ideas of what those truths may be and what we may need to learn from them. But that's not for now.

The idea is the principle here, the most important truth which I'm hoping to integrate within myself and to share with everyone here is the reality that nothing can exist unless HaShem wills it for a reason. And there is therefore a reason that we are facing the exact, precise darkness that we're facing at this moment. This is the exact darkness that we're being entrusted to illuminate with the light of redemption as we approach that very great day any moment now. We're almost there...!

know we're almost there, you know we're almost there, we all know we're on the cusp of redemption. And so, with that, I will end with a blessing and a prayer for all of us.

HaShem, please grant us with the wisdom to recognize the truth in Your warnings and in our adversaries and give us the humility to turn from our stubbornness and obstinance and receive Your light. Please, HaShem, grant us the courage to transform our own hearts, aligning our actions with Your will. May the forces of destruction and darkness in the world serve as a mirror to us, inspiring us to pursue peace, justice, righteousness, in Your truth. May we merit to see a time when we will eliminate the darkness of our own hearts and wipe it out of the world all around us, ushering in a time when there will no longer be a need for any of the darkness at all. A time when we will beat our swords into plowshares and the ways of war will no longer be learned in the world. May the day be soon when all of the nations walk together in Your light, in Your truth and worship You on Your holy mountain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final beit hamikdash. Amen.

I want to bless all of you with the blessing of Aaron, the High Priest. It's my great honor. And then we will play the beautiful, inspiring, uplifting video of my friend, Tom, may his memory be a blessing. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHZnJzjOXk>)

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May God bless you and protect you. May He shine His light and His countenance upon you, may He give you peace. Love you, my friends. Stay in touch.