

Session 175
Ki Tissa – Israel's Second Chance, Israel's Last Chance
3 March 2024
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=163G_hMs2NI

Jeremy

Shalom everybody, welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship. I hope everything's going well. Can you hear me? Yeah? Excellent. Alright, wonderful, it's wonderful to see you all. It's great to see your faces. I was just here chatting with the people, telling them that this has been the hardest time that I ever remember in Israel. And this Fellowship has been a source of so much strength and hope and encouragement and emunah. And just an anchor of sanity, that it forced Ari and I and Tehila, every week to try to find God in all of this. To try to find the pattern, the path toward redemption. And I feel like it not only helped bring clarity to me, but there are hundreds of people in Israel that are members of our Fellowship, and there's people all around the world, that have just been strengthened. And it would not have happened, had we not gathered. And I wouldn't be able to see your beautiful faces every week.

And here we are together, just plowing into this unknown territory. Because in Israel, it feels like the ground is shaking here. I don't know how else to explain it. But it feels like something is getting ready to let loose. We're just like waiting for the earthquake. The IDF is gearing up for a confrontation up north. There are currently, five hundred thousand Israeli civilians who have been displaced from the south and the north and haven't been at home for more than 4 months. They're living like in a hotel room with kids. I mean, I can't even imagine...a country cannot function like that. Something is going to have to give in order for Israel to finally bring law and order here. And pressure is mounting. And it feels like we're just bracing ourselves for the flood that is sure to come.

And so members of our Fellowship have sent us tactical gear, and my house is just ready. We are like a little military post. In fact, our Farm was designed to be a military outpost, a guard and really a shield and a bridge between two small villages. And you know, there's a tactic in hand-to-hand combat where if you keep on pretending like you're about to strike, then the other...the defender has to sort of flinch and tighten up because he's getting ready to defend himself. Well that's exhausting, to constantly be on defense like that. And then once the defender gets exhausted from clinching like that all the time, then you really attack.

And I'm concerned because so much of Israel right now, we're like on this defensive mode in this defensive stance. And it's exhausting, and it can't last. So eventually something is going to have to break and Israel is preparing. We're going to talk about that in a little bit, for an offensive up north. And then who knows what dominos that may fall after that cause and effect.

And so, what has always sort of led us in this Fellowship has always been something so unique, because all of us pray that one day, instead of Jerusalem being a House of Prayer for one nation, it will be a House of Prayer for all nations. It's like a mirror of exactly the wrong thing. It's amazing, that there's this giant, golden idol, like a golden calf in the heart of Jerusalem that's so out of place. Like everything is stone in Jerusalem, and everything sort of blends into the mountain. And then, there's a giant gold dome that is there, and if you are a Jew or a Christian or anything else that's not Islam, you can't pray there. And it's like that place was destined to bring the whole world together to be a House of Prayer for all nations. And here we are, fighting this war toward that liberation. And our Fellowship has the opportunity to be a House of Prayer for all nations in the virtual.

And so, how special it is that we have people here from Nebraska and South Africa and Holland and just all over the world. And so, what an opportunity it is for us live here now and for all those around the world tuning in later, to have a moment where we all connect and sort of bring this global consciousness to this Land, and then from this Land with one heart, lifted up to HaShem. And so...

HaShem, Master of the World, look over this Fellowship. Every week we gather here together from around the globe. So many souls from so many countries...so many languages from so many backgrounds. All of us are seeking to do Your will in the world, seeking Your truth. We take this time and we lift it up to you, every week. We dedicate this time to learn together and to align our lives with Your will and Your plan. With Your truth and with Your good. We learn Your ways to live and we live to learn Your ways. Our whole lives are our prayer to You. Guide us in that life, guide us and give us the strength and the tools and the blessings we need to serve as a blessing to all of our loved ones around us. As the world is coming apart at the seams, let our faith sew it back together. As the world is getting darker, let our lives shine a greater light. Give strength and protection to our soldiers and give hope and comfort to all of the hostages and their families. They are a reminder to us of the evil that Israel is at war with. Give us the strength to defeat the evil from this world and from our own lives and help keep our eyes toward Zion. Give us all, everything that we need to march our way to a new and rebuilt Yerushalyim. Amen.

Alright, my friends, so there's a few things that I want to share with you. The first one is a video that I came across. It's in Hebrew and it wasn't very popular outside of Hebrew speaking people because how could they understand it? But the power of the Jewish people is not only in the Torah, but the people of Israel received so much from our fathers and our mothers and our ancestors. Jewish history is so unparalleled to anything else on earth. That if you know how to lower your bucket into the well of our past, into the wellsprings of our fathers and mothers, you can literally drink living waters that can sustain you through very hard times. And that's one of the reasons that the Bible itself, the Tanakh is written as a story over time. From Moses to Joshua to the Judges to the Kings to the destruction of the Temple, to the return to Israel. The

whole Bible is one long story. And it's to teach us to live, not as a religion, but as another generation in our time, in the unfolding plan of God's creation.

And so, I saw this video. I added sub-titles for it because it was in Hebrew. But I thought it was so beautiful, it's a video from the elders of Israel. They call themselves, the generation of 1948, the founding generation of Israel who somehow survived the Holocaust, who lived through the horrors of Hitler and then fought for their independence in 1948 and established the State of Israel. And so this is a video now of the first fighters of Israel to the new fighters today. You'll love this:

(video)



I was a man who conquered the Gaza in two days.

From generation to generation. A message from the heroes of 1948 to the heroic fighters today.

I am ninety years old. I have been through a lot in this country.

I participated in all the wars that were there.

In a little bit I will be 100. You remind me of ourselves.

We, the fighters of 1948 are in awe when we look at you, how you are saving the country.

You continue us proudly.

You are a generation that is going to renew the establishment of the country.

I'm really proud. In this generation of yours.

You will be our heroes.

You are a wonderful generation.

You are brave.

Your generation fights so well and so good.

I salute you.

The generation of 1948 salutes the fighters of Israel today. (end of video)

(Jeremy)

And so, they all just made a video to send into the soldiers that are on the front lines now. To just give them that encouragement that they should see themselves as we see those generations. The heroes and the founders of Israel, that these are the warriors of today. The warriors of King David that have been resurrected in this Land. And so, as the people of Israel are becoming stronger and more united and more faithful, it's like a perfect balance because the world is turning on us.

So, I wanna put these two things into perspective. The latest news that came out is that the Biden administration is sanctioning farmers in Judea.

Israel National News > Global News > US launches...

US launches unprecedented investigation of company producing Iron Dome parts

Israeli officials alarmed after US launches investigation, sanctions against Finkelstein Metals in a move which could affect Iron Dome supplies, Israel's defense industries, and exports.

Now, they just decided to sanction the company that produces critical parts to the Iron Dome Defensive system. Now think about that. We're not talking about sanctioning a company that's creating bullets to go on the offensive. No, the Biden administration is right now, sanctioning a company that services the Iron Dome DEFENSIVE system. Think about that. Over 10,000 rockets have been shot onto Israel since October 7th. Without the Iron Dome Defensive system, there would be hundreds, maybe thousands, of dead in Israel. Just lobbing Israel at civilian populations on purpose in order to kill and destroy, and the only thing right now that is protecting Israel from these missiles that are being launched from Gaza, and perhaps soon from the north, is the Iron Dome Defensive system. And the Biden administration has pretty much right now trying to cut off supplies that the Iron Dome won't be working anymore.

And so, you think about that, I want you to look now at this video that was just released from an Arab telegram group that I sort of snatched and I wanted to share with you. But if you just keep your eyes open and you drive through the Highways of Israel, what you will see is preparation.



Massive preparation of tanks, of armored vehicles. Israel is now shifting from the south and they're preparing to go to battle in the north. Everyone knows it's coming. It's just a matter of time. They cannot allow 100,000 civilians in the north to just be displaced because Chezbollah has decided to launch rockets and to fire on Israeli civilian populations.

So Israel is now gearing up for another war. Now the Chezbollah is different than the Chamas. Now the Chamas, this has been quite a war of four months, but they're considered a rag-tag army compared to the Chezbollah. The Chezbollah – their weapons are bigger, they're more sophisticated, their army is bigger, that is going to be a very difficult war.

And right now, as Israel is trying to defend itself from the north, the Biden administration is cutting off our defensive system? That's just evil. So what are we going to do now? Israel now needs to realize that there is no one that we can rely on. And so, I don't think we need to rely on America. I think that everything is being put into place in order to teach us a valuable lesson. That we are destined to stand alone, and we are destined to stand with God. And that's happening now whether we like it or now. And so, that's sort of like in the plays.

And then I just saw last week, this beautiful video that was taken from someone's cell phone. And it is quite literally a document of the first Jews going back into Gaza on foot. And so, check this out, you'll love this.

(video)



Guys, this is crazy. We are in Gaza. It's so fun for us! Everyone will be returning here soon. We're all going to return to Gush Katif. We're going to build four times as many villages as there were here. Ten times more! All of this will be ours again. These are the ruins. None of this will remain this way. We are here! Abba (Father)! Thank you! Abba, we are here. Abba, this is remarkable! We are in Gaza! Come all us to here! It's unbelievable! We all want this. Even the soldiers want this. Even if they are escorting us out now, they really want us to be here. Everyone is with us.

Jeremy

And so, you should know that all of the settlements in Judea and Samaria, they weren't ever established by some sort of government decision from above. It was an awakening from below where Jews just picked up and decided to walk and to start building. To walk and to go out and pioneer a new way and the government sort of followed the people. It was never directed by the government.

And when I saw that video of the first Jews actually walking into Gaza, that's still sort of in the middle of a war, and they're like, "Alright," and they immediately, of course, got evacuated. That's what was happening in that video. It doesn't matter. The fact that there are still enough faithful Jews that are ready to even walk in and to even try, that's actually the beginning. That's the first rays of sunlight that's coming at the dawn of a new day. And so I wanted to share that video with you because when I saw it, I was like, oh, the Jewish people are still strong. We haven't lost hope. Because that is the definition of emunah. It is to act, knowing that God will meet us along the way and somehow, good will emerge. Somehow, we will be victorious. It is to walk in emunah, trusting in God, that if we are doing what's right and what's true, everything will work out.

And so, with that as like things are happening in the north, and America is strangling us from the west, Jews are still strong enough to say we're going into Gaza and we're rebuilding now. And so, that was very hopeful for me. And so, with that, I just want to take sort of a break for Torah. I got to spend Shabbat with Ari, my parents were on the Farm for Shabbat, that was very nice. And I know that he has a lot to say. And so, I wanted to introduce Ari onto the Fellowship and let him kick off the Torah learning for today. So, Ari, are you with us? I don't see you. Oh, there you are.

Ari

Yes, Jeremy, can you hear me? I am with you. But I'm going to be just very brutally honest. I'm even conflicted about whether I should share this, what I'm going to share because I'm just listening to you and it's uplifting me and you're thinking very clearly and with faith. And I'm in the middle of sort of a storm, like an internal storm. And I think the storm that's happening within me, it's not just happening within me, it's happening within a lot of people within Israel. But sometimes I feel like maybe I shouldn't be sharing it all, putting it all out there because it's sort of the inside game of what's happening. But I feel like we're a Fellowship, we're on this spiritual journey together through the ups and the downs. And this to me is just...it would feel disingenuous for me not to share this with you, even though I'm so conflicted about it. Because it's so real for me. And a lot of people are going through it.

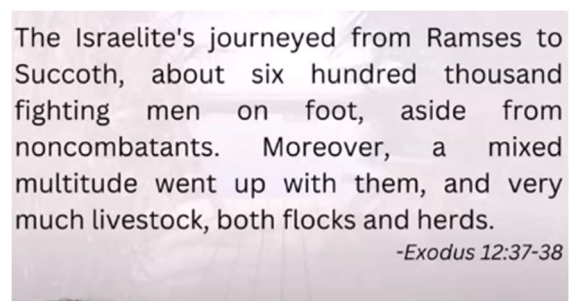
Because you know Jeremy is sharing these interesting insights and divrei Torah, you know Torah ideas, and that's beautiful. But lately I feel like more often than not, I'm not just sharing a simple devar Torah. I want to get back to that a little bit. I feel like I'm sharing my own journey, real time. And I'm not necessarily sharing a conclusion, but rather a question. And from what my rabbis have taught me, a good question is more valuable than a good answer, so that's not necessarily a bad thing. Because that's what I have for you today. I have what I think is a very good question. A question that I can tell you I'm going through. I know Jeremy, you're asking this question too, you could probably ask it much more succinctly and articulately, but a lot of people are asking this question and I'm not sure that I have the answer. I want to share with you sort of my development in it.

But lately, whenever I meet some big rabbis or Torah scholars, it's this question I ask them. And when I do, it's often received by like, "Oh my, ok." And sometimes it feels like it's dodged or dismissed altogether. And I think the reason for that is it's not only a good question, but it's a dangerous question. And there are three reasons I want to share it with you. First reason is because of where we're at in Jewish history. I feel like this may be a question that we may need to ask ourselves, not only for our survival, but to achieve the redemption that we're trying to achieve, that we've been praying for, for thousands of years.

And the second reason, is because I believe that more than in any other portion in the Torah, this week's portion reveals why at the very least, this question needs to be asked. And the third reason is because this past week's Shabbat when we were together, Jeremy, at the Farm, with these very special guests. And one of them is a very great rabbi, who I merited to spend a lot of very valuable time with. And when I asked him this question, he shared with me a powerful and beautiful insight that got me as close to an answer as I've gotten so far.

And so here we go, the question on my heart is about the erev rav. Erev rav, the mixed multitude. How many of you in the Fellowship have heard of the erev rav? Ok, a lot of hands are going on, some couples one hand going up, some two. But it's the mixed multitude. It's an idea that is really pervasive within Judaism. At least within Judaism. I don't know how much we broadcast it out to teachings of the nations of the world, nor perhaps should we. But I don't feel like you are outsiders, I feel like you're among us. You are truly connected to us. So I'll hopefully go into depth in that a little bit soon, if I don't take up too much of Jeremy's valuable time.

But we first encounter the concept of the erev rav in Exodus, chapter 12, verse 38. When the Israelites leave Egypt, the Torah tells us that an erev rav emerged with them. Let's start with verse 37:



The Israelite's journeyed from Ramses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand fighting men on foot, aside from noncombatants. Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.
-Exodus 12:37-38

Who are these mixed multitudes. As always, there are various opinions. But the most widely understood answer is that they are...they were non-Jews who saw the wonders and the plagues that the God of Israel performed against Egypt and they wanted to jump on the band-wagon. They wanted to join the Jewish people. Whether they were intermarried to Jews or they wanted to

convert. You know it's universally understood that they were non-Jews who interspersed themselves among the Israelites, seeking to be attached and integrated into them, one way or the other.

But while they may have physically joined the nation, we're taught that they still cleaved to their corrupt and idolatrous ways in their hearts. And while it's not 100% clear what this means, it's widely accepted belief that it was the erev rav who inspired and incited much of Israel's greatest sins, from the golden calf to the Moabite women, to the spies. Not only in the desert, but throughout all of Jewish history. They tell us, the sages tell us that whenever the word am is used, it's referring to the erev rav. And am Israel, it's referring to the nation of Israel. And that is sort of where the distinction is made. And you can see that tracked throughout...but that will be for another time.

But many believe that the prophet Isaiah was speaking of the erev rav when he said:

Swiftly your children are coming, those who have destroyed you and ruined you have emerged from within you.

-Isaiah 49:17

And while these ideas about the erev rav, they're not new to me, it feels like they've been dormant in my heart for all this time. And now something is happening to bring them to the surface. And I think what's bringing them to the surface is what I see happening before my eyes in the State of Israel

that's causing me this conflict that I'm just throwing on you guys. Because like I said, the concept that the erev rav was always there, but I think that the threat of delving too deeply into the subject of the erev rav, the threat to the unity and the love in my heart towards my fellow Jews would simply be too great for me to go there. So I didn't think about it too much. I guess I always perceived the erev rav as this negative force, seeking to impede redemption, but redemption was coming. It's coming anyways, despite the erev rav. They're just a force of resistance. But I never perceived them as an existential threat to the nation, itself.

But what can I say? I feel like now I do see it that way. Since the war, I've been thinking about it more and more and more as there are these very sinister energies within Israel that are causing so much damage and so much harm. You know during one of the last Fellowship, I asked a rather controversial question, which I got a lot of pushback on. I asked whether it could be that the current U.S. government, not the people of America...Mrs. Gimpel, I love Jeremy's mother like my own mother. But she really made a point of that, and I think it was an important point to make. Not the people of America, but the administration. Polls are showing that the people of America are really with us. But however you look at it, the administration that they elected, I was saying, perhaps they may pose a greater existential threat to Israel than Chamas does. Right? I pointed out, like Jeremy said, that the U.S. is funding and empowering our enemies, weakening Israel in every way possible, that they're tying our hands behind our backs while maximally pressuring us to prematurely end our war against these genocidal jihadist Nazis...by doing that, they're ensuring that Chamas will have the chance to fulfill their promise of inflicting as many October 7th's as possible in the future.

The U.S. administration is leveraging every bit of its power and influence to unilaterally establish a genocidal Palestinian State in the heartland of Judea. There was just another terrorist attack yesterday. Two Jews killed. And who was the terrorist? A police officer from the Palestinian Authority, that they want to use to establish the Palestinian State. You know, what is a ceasefire essentially mean? Someone pointed it out. It means that our children will be indefinitely left with rapists in dark tunnels. And that's the U.S. policy towards Israel. So is the U.S. a greater threat to Israel than Chamas? It's a fair question at least.

But my new question may be even more controversial, and I probably shouldn't even ask it, and I'm so conflicted about it. But I can't help but to wonder whether the erev rav, is it a thing? What is it? Whether this force of the erev rav, of the mixed multitude, lurking within the nation of Israel, is perhaps even a far greater threat than the threat posed by the U.S. administration. Meaning they're threat number one. Chamas is number three. Right? Because they're a force within us, that is not only yielding to these foreign powers, but inviting them in to have their way with us. It's this force within the nation of Israel, that in their great arrogance, ignored the clear intelligence and warnings that the October 7th attack was coming and they confiscated the weapons from all the southern villages that were massacred because of their faith...their faith in their weapons, in their billion shekeled walls and fences and their advanced technologies. It's this force within us that seeks the love and affection and approval of the world with such single-minded focus and zeal, that they refuse to fight this war to actually win it. It doesn't matter how many young Jews die, they need the world to love us. Our dependence, our existence depends on this.

So here's my question, here's the question. For my entire life, one of the fundamental principles of my spiritual outlook...one of the tenets of my faith, as all of you was ahavat Yisrael – love of my fellow Jews. I believe that the love that we have for the nations of the world, for all of humanity will come and emanate from that love for our fellow Jew. And the older I found that I was getting, the more intensely dedicated to that principle I've become. Every morning when I drive Shiloh to his daycare in the morning, every day, we sing the words:

(Ari sings)

I hereby take upon myself the positive mitzvah of "Loving your fellow as yourself."

-Leviticus 19:18

Jeremy

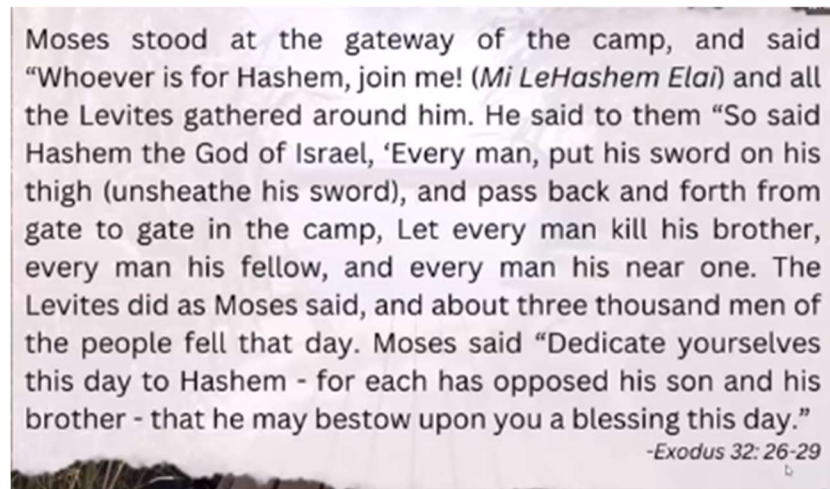
I just saw five people just left the Fellowship. That was it for them.

Ari

It probably broke their computer. Their computer is just shattered. But anyways, what does it mean? I hereby take upon myself the positive mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew as yourself. That's what...and I sing that with him every morning because it's one of the foundational

principles, I want to have him deeply drilled into his very essence and his sub-conscience. And I've never had any questions about it.

But now, you know, despite all the dangers involved in even asking the question, I do question it. I'm not saying that I don't believe it's true, all I'm saying is that I have questions. Who were the erev rav? What is the erev rav? Should we love them? Should we hate them? Should we try to defeat them? I really don't know. Right? Because we do see in this week's Torah portion, as Moshe descended the mountain and witnessed the disgusting and idolatrous and hedonistic debacle of the golden calf, this is what happened:



Moses stood at the gateway of the camp, and said "Whoever is for Hashem, join me! (*Mi LeHashem Elai*) and all the Levites gathered around him. He said to them "So said Hashem the God of Israel, 'Every man, put his sword on his thigh (unsheathe his sword), and pass back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, Let every man kill his brother, every man his fellow, and every man his near one. The Levites did as Moses said, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. Moses said "Dedicate yourselves this day to Hashem - for each has opposed his son and his brother - that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."
-Exodus 32: 26-29

The Israelites were ordered to kill their brothers and they were blessed for it! Right? And this isn't an isolated event. The more I think about it, the more examples I can think of. I mean even the story of Chanukah. The first person killed in the Maccabean war against the Greek Seleucid empire, killed by Matisyahu the Maccabean

priest was a Hellenist Jew, killed by this Maccabee priest Cohen. This Hellenist Jew was offering a pig on the altar of the Bet HaMikdash, of the holy Temple. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. It wasn't frowned up that he killed him. But it was killing of that Hellenist Jew that sparked the miracle of Chanukah.

Ok, so you hear my question, right? Are we really required to love all of our fellow Jews without any reservation? Or is it more complicated than that? What if people who we think are Jews are really not Jews? And what if people who we think are not Jews, really are Jews? Because like I said, there are some Jews today who not only do they not believe in or adhere to Jewish values...because that would be one thing. Ok, they don't believe in Jewish values. Fine, that doesn't make them not a Jew. But they're dedicating their lives to actively undermining every Jewish value that there is. Not only on a personal level, but on a national level. And by the way, I'm intentionally not naming any names, although I definitely have some great contenders. And not only are they undermining Jewish values, but they're undermining the Jewish people and our very existence.

There are some Jews who it seems they are so committed to their idolatrous agenda that they are willing to sacrifice the lives of their fellow Jews. The sweetest and the holiest and the purest of the nation of Israel, to achieve their desired vision of whatever, of the secular, goddess,

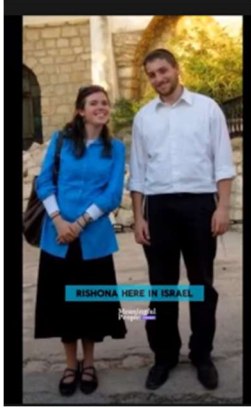
Westernized, godless, Westernized Israel in which Europe will finally allow us to sing in the Eurovision Competition. We just had to change our song for the second time, just to allow them to sing in their competition, they hate us so much.

And it seems that no matter how committed the rest of the Nation is, to considering these Jews, that they're brothers, that these Jews don't seem to consider the rest of the nation they're brothers in return at all. I mean, despite the fact that the nation is...they're professing their love for them. And they're not only willing to die for them, but they're actually dying for them. These Jews I'm talking about, possibly this erev rav. They don't consider the rest of the nation their brothers at all. They consider them the enemy, they consider them the other who needs to be defeated and overcome by any means necessary.

And I want to make it clear, that there are Jews on the right and there are Jews on the left and there are religious observant Jews and secular, less observant Jews. And in my mind, there's no question, we're all brothers, we're all Jews. It's this extreme minority. It really can't be more than 1% that I even question. People so twisted, that by their own admission, they're actively seeking civil war. They want blood in the streets. And they prefer national defeat, whatever they need to do in order to prevent the people of Israel from achieving self-actualization and becoming the godly nation, the light to the world that we're destined to become. And so this small minority, that's what I've been describing. What if these Jews aren't Jews at all? Right? What if the descendants of the erev rav who continue their subversive mission of undermining the Jewish people and the Jewish mission of sanctifying HaShem's Name. What if they're not Jews at all? This is like a question that's been haunting me.

Meanwhile, there are Jews...there are people in the world who are not card-carrying Jews, people in the world who have no genealogical proof that they have any Jewish roots, nonetheless, they have proven not only in word but in deed, and in action, that they love the nation of Israel. They love the Land of Israel, they love the God of Israel, with a pure love. They're willing to sacrifice everything for Israel. Tabitha, I think I want to skip that video. It's a beautiful...should I play the video for you? It's just someone...someone just sent it to me. That it's just an example of this...Ok, let's play it, Tabitha. It's clearly a convert. This young, Jewish girl that's a convert. And she sent this video about her non-Jewish father that's clearly a righteous Gentile. Go ahead.

(video)



Wife

We were in Shana Rishona, here in Israel. I was expecting my first child, and my dad came in for the birth because he wanted to meet his first grandchild. And we were so broke, we were so broke. I mean like...we had no money. But we were like trying to keep it on the DL, because like what is my dad going to understand that my husband's in Kollel? Like how is my dad going to get that? You know? And so...my dad came and so my husband was like...this is the Talmud, this is what I learn, you know...and we took him to the mir. We had this whole thing going on with the apartment. We needed to rent a new apartment. And we had no money

for the rent.

Right before my dad left, he sat us down on the couch, and he was like, my dad is from Texas...so..."Well, listen, ya'all. I can see something is going on here. He's not able to study the way he's supposed to be studying those books that he told me that God wants me to study, he's not able to study those books because of an economic issue." He's like, "So from what I figure, God wants him to study those books and the economics is keeping him from studying the books. So from here on out, I'm just going to pay ya'all's rent every month." And my dad paid our rent every single month so that my husband could sit and learn Torah. My non-Jewish father is my marbitz dora. My non-Jewish father gets the power of Kollel and the power of Torah learning. It's just...like it's amazing. I don't know, he's a great guy, he's a great guy. My dad's amazing.

Jeremy

I am so happy that you played that video. I love that.

Ari

It sort of broke up my own insanity for the moment. And it really just showed, it's a perfect example of what I'm trying to show here. That there are these Jews that are ahavat Yisrael, that love every single Jew. Meanwhile, they are doing everything to hurt Israel and the Jewish people. And this holy man...bottom line, I think I probably chose this because it made me Texas-proud. I'll admit it. It's Texas-proud. But it made me think of so many of the righteous, holy, non-Jews in this Fellowship. It made me think of all of you in your love and your loyalty and your support that you show Israel, the support you show us unconditionally. It gives me the confidence to ramble on the way I'm doing right now. Particularly as the rest of the world seems to be headed in the opposite direction.

So it's incumbent upon me to love all of my fellow Jews no matter how much darkness they may bring, but it isn't incumbent upon me to love all of you? Because I'll tell you that whether it's incumbent upon me or not, I do. It takes zero effort to love all of you with all of my heart. The love that I have for you guys is overwhelming and it comes very naturally. But the love that I

have for this very, very small minority of Jews that are seeking to effectively destroy Israel, Jews that I sometimes feel pose a greater existential threat to Israel than any other force in the world? Well my love for them does not come as naturally, I'll be honest. And lately it feels very forced and not really super real.

Which brings me back to the question of the day. Are they the erev rav? Am I supposed to love them at all? Are we supposed to love them at all? Now please understand, I want the answer to be yes. I want that with all of my heart. But as you can see, this is a very difficult, painful and dangerous question to even ask. It's difficult because it can potentially undermine one of the spiritual foundations of my life and the lives of the vast majority of Torah believing, God-fearing Jews. And that's scary and painful, particularly during a time in which we're all cleaving for dear life to what seems like the most beautiful of the silver-linings of the October 7th war. Which is Jewish unity. And it seems to undermine this, this very conversation seems to undermine that. And it's dangerous because whenever we start categorizing people who we disagree with, not only as the "other," but as a subversive force undermining not only our Jewish values, but of sacrificing Jewish lives to accomplish their goals. Well it's pretty clear where that could lead and how dangerous that could be.

Which brings me to the end here, which brings me to the discussion I had with this sweet holy rabbi that was staying with his family in one of the guest houses on the Farm over Shabbat. And without saying his name, he was one of the most respected and revered rabbis in the city of Sderot. And he had to flee from Sderot with his family on October 7th. And he was saved by what he calls "Divine intervention miracles." And since then, they have been moving from home to home and place to place ever since. And so if anyone has the right to accusatorially point an angry, blaming finger at the erev rav? It was him.

And so he sat with his family eating herring and crackers on my balcony, on my merpeset, after synagogue service, where we read about the erev rav and the golden calf. And that's when I asked him the question. I said, "My whole life I've loved every single Jew. It doesn't matter if they came to uproot our vineyards, or destroy our Farm. No matter what, I always loved them. But now I have these doubts in my heart. What about the erev rav that's seeking to destroy our Land and our nation. Am I supposed to love them?"

And he looked back at me. It seemed like the question took him aback. And he looked back at me with piercing...these piercing crystal blue eyes and he declared...it felt like a prophetic clarity, declared, "Yes, yes." He said, "No matter what, we love every single Jew with our entire hearts." As if he was prepared for this question which he probably never received in his life. He quoted the esteemed Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman, known as the Vilna Gaon, who taught that the erev rav is no longer individual, physical people that you can point a finger at. The erev rav, he said, is a set of attributes that were within them. The erev rav today is the values, the mixed multitude brought within themselves from Egypt. Their idolatry and their faithlessness and

their arrogance and their baseless hatred and their hedonism. And our battle with the erev rav today, he went on to say, is our battle with those attributes within ourselves. Our battle with the erev rav is to courageously look into our own hearts and destroy any trace of the erev rav that lurks within us. And when we do that, he said, then the erev rav will be defeated. When we do that, the erev rav will disappear. Because it's dangerous, he was explaining, it's dangerous to point at individual people and say they're the erev rav. Because yes, we will have an angry, accusatory, finger-pointed at them. But even more so, we won't see the other four fingers pointed back at ourselves, you know that saying. It's dangerous and it's counter-productive to look back at all the great sins and the great falls of the Jewish people throughout history and blame them on the erev rav. Right? Because not only do we deprive ourselves of these precious, valuable lessons that we've learned from these sinful mistakes...because all of a sudden, it's not us, it's the erev rav, but we end up shirking the very responsibility that we know that we must take upon ourselves to be worthy of the very redemption that we're blaming them for sabotaging.

So what's the ultimate truth here? Honestly, I don't know, I don't know. But, when this holy rabbi looked into my eyes and shared that teaching, I looked right back at him and I said, "Kibalti, I've accepted your teaching." And I have, and it just brings me back to the words in Deuteronomy, chapter 29, it came to mind:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah.

-Deuteronomy 29:28

The secret things...it's not up to know...this person there is the erev rav. And that person there, the erev rav. I don't think, maybe it is, maybe we can identify them. And there's certain things, I don't know. I'm not going to pretend I have the ultimate answers. But, in my mind and in my heart, there is a certain peace that I came to. That for me right now,

that's the answer. I have my answer. And it feels true, because ultimately this redemption isn't outside of us, it's within us, it's an inside game. And that feels like the true answer for me and the right answer for me, at least for now.

But I want to hear from you guys. I want to hear your thoughts. Please don't hold back. I want to hear your thoughts about the identity of the erev rav, about our identities, about redemption, about all that we're going through. It really keeps me going and it encourages me tremendously. Jeremy, thank you so much, back to you.

Jeremy

Ok, thank you very much, Ari. I really liked that video. That was my favorite part was that video of the woman from Texas whose father is not Jewish and he's like, "You all need to learn those holy books, well I'm going to help you learn those holy books." I love that guy and I want to meet him and give him a hug. Because that's why maybe this erev rav idea is there. Because

it's not really meant to be a Jewish thing. The ultimate movement is a God thing. And you may be Jewish and you may be an enemy of God. And you may be non-Jewish and you're like a child of God. And this final movement, it's something that's beyond those sort of old-school ways of seeing things and denominations and boxes that we've put ourselves in. And the erev rav actually forces us to not say, "Oh, this is our team and there is that team." It's like, no, no, no. We're all on God's team. And so that's at least how I see, sort of this unfolding process. It's to sort of break through all of those man-made ideas that have kept us stuck for so long and hopefully as we sort of move forward toward a House of Prayer for all nations, the focus will not be on us, but rather on HaShem.

Ok, so here's some Torah that I wanted to share with everyone. So, the Torah is written in a certain order. First we have the revelation at Sinai, we have the Ten Commandments. Then we take a break for awhile, and then we talk about the Tabernacle. We talked about the building of the Tabernacle, we talked about the insides of the Tabernacle, and then we talk about, right now, the sin of the golden calf. And there is a century-long...I mean millennia's at this point. What was the actual chronology of events? Was it, Sinai, golden calf altar, Tabernacle...or is the chronology Sinai, Tabernacle, golden calf?

And so, two giants within Jewish sages of Israel say, "We don't know." The Ramban says, "Exactly as the Torah was written, that's the chronology. Sinai, Tabernacle, golden calf." Rashi says, "No, the Midrash says something else. It was actually Sinai, golden calf, and then the Mishkan." And the reason why the Mishkan was written there was to teach us something. But the Torah doesn't need to be written chronologically. It's not a history book, it's teaching us something.

And so, I want to take that apart for a little bit because that seems pretty fundamental. Because it's not necessarily about the chronology of the events, but rather is the Tabernacle, is the Mishkan an ideal? Is it optimal? Is it the best case scenario? Was it God's original plan? Or is it sort of a second best compromise, that as a result of the sin of the golden calf? Because as you order them in chronology, what the sages are saying, is actually a qualitative comment on the Tabernacle, itself. Was God's plan originally to have a Tabernacle in the desert? Or because of the sin of the golden calf, we really needed to build a Tabernacle?

And so, I want to talk about that and think about it for a little bit because the sin of the golden calf is like one of the top two. The two biggest sins were the sin of the golden calf and then we had the sin of the spies. Those are the two big ones that we're still paying for today. And even until today, like on Yom Kippur, we have a tradition to not wear any gold. We don't wear any gold jewelry, gold watches, gold rings, gold earrings, not to like remind God or to remind ourselves of the sin of the golden calf. And we're talking now about 3,000 years later. We're still carrying that with us.

And you think about those mistakes and what is that really about? And I want to take Rashi's opinion here. And Rashi's opinion says, Yeah, Yeah. It was actually...the Torah is not written chronologically. And the Tabernacle is actually a reality, a reaction to the golden calf. And in that way the Tabernacle is sort of a medicine to a sickness that we had. It was fixing a mistake that was made. And the ultimate truth was, we were just supposed to build the Temple. God was just going to dwell within the camp, we didn't need a Tabernacle, what was all that about?

And then you think about this mistake of the golden calf, and you really look all of the Tanakh, it's like the book of the recorded mistakes of Israel. It's the only spiritual book that records the mistakes of the heroes. You've got King David. He's our hero, but recorded his mistakes. You got Moses, our hero. No, we're recording his mistakes. You have the nation of Israel who received the Torah. No, no, we're going to record all of their mistakes. The Tanakh is like a series of lessons and mistakes that we made along the way. When you look at other religious writings, it doesn't really have that about Mohammed. It doesn't have that in the East. They sort of idealize their heroes and we sort of whitewash their mistakes. No, no. The Bible is a book of our mistakes.

And in some ways, it's like, what is that really about? Well ultimately the Messianic vision is that the knowledge of God will cover the world like water covers the sea. That's what Isaiah says, that's the prophecy. But the word da'at in Hebrew, when it says, "The knowledge of God will cover the world like water covers the sea," it's dei et HaShem, it's a biblical knowledge. And what is a biblical knowledge? Probably the best translation for biblical knowledge, is an embodied knowledge. Where what you know in your head enters into your being and transforms who you are. You don't need to think about being nice anymore. You are nice. You don't need to think about being kind, you are kind.

Probably just a really good analogy to embodied knowledge, we've spoken about this before, is driving a car. You're not really thinking about...you're hand is going like this, stepping on the gas, stepping on the brakes...you're talking on the phone or listening to a podcast. You're just...it's an embodied knowledge at that point. You just know how to drive. You don't even think about it, you just are a driver. Because you've been doing it for so long. And so that's ultimately what da'at is. It's that the knowledge of God, will come embodied in us, in our hearts. Written on our hearts means, it's just a part of how we are in the world.

And I think the Torah is teaching us the only way to grow in true da'at, in true knowledge, is through failure. And you think about that. The Garden of Eden. We were just given the Garden of Eden. And it was like...no, there's going to be a snake in there. There's going to be a tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And then it's like, we had to get kicked out of the Garden because to just receive the Garden of Eden, no it's like a design from the beginning that we were going to be removed from the Garden in order to somehow work back to a true knowledge, to a true attainment of that Garden of Eden.

And then, when you think about, we had Mt. Sinai, the revelation of God, just given to us as a gift. They didn't really work for that. They were just walking out of Egypt, they're standing at the mountain, and all of a sudden, humanity is changed forever. The fabric of the moral reality of the universe was just revealed to us. How to live and the ultimate truth. And it's like, whoah! Golden calf. We gotta like crash from that. And then slowly but surely, through the work of the Tabernacle, through living with God in our lives, through like building our inner antenna to receive His messages, we can actually live that truth, that it's not just given to us.

And I think about Israel. And it was like 1967, we were given the Temple Mount in a miracle. Like I think about this war in little Gaza, six days we conquered Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Desert. How did that...it's like, I wasn't alive in 1967. But looking back, I don't understand how all of Israel was not on their knees and just worshipping God for obvious, blatant miracle. Cause here we are fighting in this little strip of land in Gaza and it's taking us four months. But in 1967, we were just given over the keys to the Temple Mount. We could have done whatever we wanted. And it was like, "No, our leadership is going to take those keys and give it back to the Jordanians, and we're just going to worship some other golden calf. Our fear of the nations, our fear of what the world will say, our inability to actually comprehend what we had just experienced."

And now, since 1967, it's like we're working and we're working, and we're working to try to get that House of Prayer for all Nations. But it's not just like gifted to us. It's like something we have to live through, to work through. Even now, in this war in Israel and all the pain that we're going through, you can see that a new knowledge is being ingrained in Israel's hearts. A new understanding, an elevated consciousness. It's a way that Israel is now seeing the world, experiencing the world, drawing closer to God, that never could have happened without this horrible failure.

And I was learning with Ari this last week with Rabbi Shlomo Katz, who you know is a mentor of ours, one of our best friends. We try to learn with him on Monday's and Wednesday's. And Rav Shlomo, when he was younger, he would listen to the teachings of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach that were just on cassette tapes. And he would transcribe them as he was listening to them. And he pulled out a little piece from one of Rav Shlomo Carlebach's teachings from 1976 in Jerusalem. And I just want to read an excerpt from the performance, the concert, the class that he was giving over in Jerusalem in 1976 that I feel like really gives us a deep understanding of the sin of the golden calf, of the Garden of Eden, of what Israel is going through right now and why the world is designed in such a way. You can see it from creation in the Garden of Eden, through Mount Sinai in the fall of the golden calf, to entering into Israel, to the destruction of the Temple, to the rebuilding of the Temple, to exactly where we are now. There's a certain process that we are destined to go through. And so, here are the words from Rav Shlomo in 1976. Here's what it says:

So here I want you to know the deepest depths of the Torah. Anything which is outside of me, is not that important. Anything which my whole life doesn't depend on, I can know by simply learning it. All the things that the essence of my life depends on, I can only learn by mistakes. There are certain things that unless I know them through the deepest depths of my heart, unless they reach the deepest depths of my neshama, my soul, they haven't reached me at all. So I want you to open your heart in the deepest way. What is the deepest depths of Yiddishkeit? What is it to be a believer in the world? For the first thing, it is to mamash believe in God. As simple as it is, the second thing is the holy Land. What were the two greatest mistakes we made in the 40 years in the desert? One, is the golden calf where we didn't know what God is all about. And the second thing was the sin of the spies. Where we didn't know what the Land of Israel is all about. And here, I want you to open your hearts. The four books of Moses are all about the generation of the desert. Moses was talking to the generation who were on Mt. Sinai, crossed the sea, went into the desert. Sadly enough, after 40 years, they're all gone. Now it's a new generation. And here comes the book of Devarim, the book of Deuteronomy, the Mishna Torah. And Moshe Rabbeinu is talking to the generation that is going into the Holy Land. And what is he telling them? He's telling them the whole story of what happened to their parents for the past 40 years in the desert. He's telling them all the mistakes their forefathers made. Now imagine, I would take a Jew and I really want to make them proud of their forefathers. Do you know what your grandfather did? Don't ask. When he was in New York, the things he did! Then he came to Chicago...givalt! What he did there! You want to hear more? Then he came to Miami. Strange. Moshe Rabbeinu wants them to be good Jews, to keep the Torah. Moshe Rabbeinu wants them to take over where the generation of the desert left off. Is this all he has to tell them?

And now a story. Imagine I'm on a subway in New York. Next to me is the absolute most beautiful girl in the world. I'm instantly in love.

"What's your name?"

"Schprinshalei, from Burrow Park."

In a few seconds we're getting to our stop. Schprinsa, you're so beautiful, what's your phone number?"

I have no where to write it down, but she tells me the number and I try to remember it. 435 6688. I'm asking for a pen and paper to write it down. I was so overjoyed, but in the meantime, I already forgot the exact number.

Now the other side. I met this girl, Schprinsa, on the subway. I got her name, I got her number. I wrote it down on a piece of paper. That night I called her up and next Sunday I meet her

parents. Four weeks later we get married, then we start having children. It's very sweet. But does that do it for you? It's a nice story. But does it bring tears to your eyes? Not so much.

Back to the other side. I remember the first three digits, but not the next four. I want you to open your hearts. I'm dialing for 2,000 years. Every combination of numbers in the world. One day, I can't believe it myself. Suddenly, Schprinsa answers. The number I dialed. I can't believe it. Let me ask you something. Would you say now, after knowing the right combination, I know it the same way as if I would have remembered it from the beginning? Givalt is deeper. Do you know how God gives countries to every nation? It's on the first level. They meet their soul mate on the subway, write down the number and mazel tov. The Germans get Germany, the Chinese get China, the Dutch get Holland, it's all beautiful.

But you know the way God gives us the Land of Israel? We're dialing the wrong number for 2,000 years. And when it comes to us yidden...first we make mistakes, then the world wants to kill us for our mistakes. But the way we are getting to know God, is not to be believed. The way we know God after the golden calf and the sin of the spies is so deep. And here, I want you to know, the generation of the desert who crossed over to the sea, who were so holy and so deep, only they could have had the guts to make so many mistakes. We would have given up.

Can you imagine how much this person loves Schprinsa? And he's dialing for 2,000 years? It's not normal. And so now Moshe Rabbeinu says to the yidden, "I want you to know it took 40 years to go to Israel because you have to make so many mistakes until you hear that God really forgives you.

And now, he goes one step deeper. The Torah you can learn without mistakes is given to you on Mt. Sinai. The Torah of mistakes is given to you in Jerusalem. (end)

So there's a Torah of instruction...follow the rules, follow the laws. But the Torah of experiencing God can only come through mistakes. And that's why everyone in this Fellowship is charting their own course through the desert, on their way to the Promised Land. And they're stumbling and they're fumbling, and all of us are trying to figure it out. Mistakes after mistakes, and I've found these friends, and I found this group and I understand this way, but now I'm going this way. I made aliyah to Israel and I left my old friends because I wanted something new. I wanted to continue on my journey and everyone here is just fumbling. But through the mistakes, we get a deeper understanding. There's an understanding that we can only get after we crash and burn and fail.

Then we can rise up with a true da'at, a true embodied knowledge where God becomes a part of our being. It's not just instruction, it's not just insight. It's not just a philosophy, it's not just a theology, it's not just a declaration of faith. It's a living reality that lives within us.



And so, I think now, that when I read the last parsha, it always puzzled me that the Cohen Gadol, the High Priest, has a crown of gold on his head. And if you look at the crown of gold, it's called hatzitz. That's the crown, that's what it looks like. And I said, "Yeah, but in the Temple, the Cohen Gadol is wearing something gold. But we have a tradition that they shouldn't wear too much gold. That really shouldn't be a part of our attire to not remind God of the golden calf. Why would that be right there on the crown of the Cohen?"

I thought to myself, tzitz is the word in Hebrew. And I was like, there's another verse in the Tanakh that Ari pointed out to me that reminds us of that word, tzitz. And it's from the Song of Songs. And here it says:

Behold, he stands behind our wall, he looks in through the windows, he **peaks (Metzitz)** through the cracks.
-Song of Songs 9:2

So metzitz actually means to peak. And if you look at the Hebrew word tzitz and you look at the Hebrew root, a bunch of words come up.

Tzitz - Crown of the High Priest Gadol
Tzatz- Appears
Notzetz - Sparkles
Tzitzit - Tassels
Metzitz - Peaks

One means something that appears and then sort of disappears. Notzetz, means something that's sparkling. A sparkle doesn't last very long. It's kind of like a flash, like firework and then it disappears. And you know like your diamond ring, it will sparkle for a second, and then it goes away. Then you think about tzit-tzit. You're supposed to kind of look down at your

garment. That's the same word.

But tzitz on the crown of the Cohen. We are meant to look at it, we're meant to peer through, we're meant to look at the tzitz, that's the purpose of it. And why? Sometimes, we need to be reminded of the golden calf. Even when we're in the depths of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. That tzitz, the golden tzitz is a reminder that in that time, God sparkles to us in the dark. God's actually peering through the cracks, it's looking at us, even in the darkest times.

I read this beautiful quote that I saw someone sent me. I don't know who quoted it, but I read it on Chabad website. And it says:

Sometimes you're in a dark place. You think you've been buried and there's no way out. Then you realize with emunah, you weren't buried, you were planted. In that dark place, that's where you actually start to grow.

And you think about, that's what the tzitz of the Cohen Gadol was reminding us. That's what the golden calf was really all about. When Rashi says, "Yeah, it happened afterwards, but is it ideal? Is it not ideal?" In some ways, Rashi's telling us it's the ultimate ideal. The ultimate existence is to fall and to crash and to rebuild that God would dwell among us. And that's what the Mishkan is all about.

And in fact, that's what the State of Israel in our times is all about. Fumbling and mistake after mistake and war after war, slowly but surely, we're finally getting aware. We're finally waking up, we're finally seeing God starting to sparkle around us, that we can actually walk toward Jerusalem. And then we can know that everything that happens to us is happening for us. Even the sins of the golden calf. Even getting kicked out of the Garden of Eden. All of this is a part of the ultimate plan that one day the knowledge of God will cover the world like water covers the sea. But it's the knowledge of God, it's the *dei et HaShem*, it's the full embodied knowledge where all of us don't just believe. We don't just think about goodness, but we become goodness manifest. And then the world will absolutely transform. That's what we're waiting for. For the Bet HaMikdash, for Mashiach, for us to finally receive and participate in the final transformation of this stage of world history.

And so, I believe that our Fellowship is a big part of that. We are the living example that everyone will always be able to look to. They were the pioneers, they were the ones that spearheading that move. And what an awesome thing to be a part of.

And so my friends, with that, I want to bless us. That we continue to draw strength from each other, continue to inspire each other, continue to learn together, continue to pray together. I just love the idea that we learn His ways to live and we live to learn His ways. And if we continue on that path together, I believe we will all end up in Jerusalem. Alright...

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Shalom my friends, we'll see you again soon.