

Session 220

Vayakhel – One More Step Toward Redemption

23 March 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcYPZF16w0o>

Jeremy

Shalom everybody, welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship, can you hear me? Everything is ok? Yes? Excellent. Ok, very good. It is awesome to be here with you all today. You know, I'm just watching the chats, and I'm trying to just put a heart on everyone that just says hello and everyone that's talking. And I can't help but see the Fellowship from the United Kingdom and Montana, Nebraska, and California, and Holland and South Africa and Germany and Israel. It's just so beautiful that all of us have somehow been pieced together. We've all been brought together in these days for such a time. And we are living through historic days.

You know, right now we find ourselves living in between two holidays – Purim and Passover. Purim represents the chaotic potential, hidden beneath the mask of nature. And Passover is the new light revealed by God's outstretched arm with overt miracles. And it's a time of transition during the year, but it's also a time of transition for the world. I mean, right now in Israel, we just saw the first elite Chareidi Ultra-Orthodox combat unit has been formed in Israel. This is such big news, I want to take just a moment and give you guys an insight and just a glimpse into the future of the IDF. Check this out:



Jeremy

Well you see I can't tell you how monumental that is for Israel. This would never have happened without October 7th and this war. Israel is slowly kind of being molded into, being forced into becoming the nation we were chosen to be. And here we are on the sidelines, watching it manifest. I mean, once the Ultra-Orthodox in Israel become fully integrated into the Israeli army, I believe the Israeli army will be undefeatable. I mean these young men that are fully committed to the Torah, living for God in holiness, and now expressing a connection on a national level, the people of Israel by serving in the Israel Defense Force, once Israel as a nation lives united in the Land, our enemies don't stand a chance against us. Not only united because of an enemy, but united with God as our unifying force...that's just never happened before in 2,000 years, maybe more.

And so, Fellowship, we're watching history unfold right now in Israel. And what a beautiful thing it is for all of us to come together from around the world and watch it unfold. While the Israel haters are going to call Israel criminals for fighting a war that we didn't start, we have to keep our eyes on the prize. That there is a process unfolding here. And we also need to stay aligned and speak the truth. Just in the last 48 hours Hezbollah in Lebanon fired six rockets into Israel. The Houthis in Yemen fired three missiles onto Israel. The Hamas in Gaza fired five rockets onto Israel. And so Israel is not committing a war crime. It's not a massacre when three terrorist organizations – north, south, west, east, are surrounding a country, pummeling them with rockets. It's just unbelievable.

And the truth is, sometimes I get overwhelmed with fear. I mean, what will be in this crazy world? Israel is surrounded by enemies and rockets are falling all across our country. They are doing whatever they can to kill us. Kill our families. It's really unlike any place in the world. And I remember Jordan Peterson giving a talk somewhere. And he asked a question. Why are people anxious nowadays, he says, is the wrong question. The right question is, "How are all people not paralyzed with fear and anxious all of the time?" That's the real question.

And with Israel surrounded by enemies who are openly trying to snuff us out and destroy us, in everything that we represent...I mean they want to destroy our families, our friends with our own people serving in the army up against these forces of evil. Like being a little bit afraid, being anxious is such a part of the course.

And last week, we had Fellowship Church from Orlando come and spend two days on the Farm. And the fact that there are tourists from outside the Land who choose to come to Israel during these times will be remembered for all times. And what I realized is that the medicine to cure fear, and I learned it from these tourists that were there, is just to trust in God. Trust that everything is going to work out. It will work out on a personal level and on a national level. The world is moving toward redemption and everything is for the good.

Bitachon, trust, is the ability to rely and rest in the fact that HaShem runs the world. And the more we have trust, the less there is to fear. And that happens in Yemen. The Houthis are being pounded by America. The protests around Turkey are almost out of hand right now. Syrian terrorists are attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon. And Israel is now reengaged in a war in Gaza. With Iran things are heating up and it seems like everything around us right now is destabilized.

And in life that happens too. Everything around us sometimes feels unstable and it starts to fall apart. And what's the natural instinct when we feel that way? Like, hold on, brace yourself, get

ready for a rocky ride. And the posture of bracing yourself, tensing up, protecting yourself...you hold that posture a little bit too long and you'll get exhausted. Trying instead to be like Superman, a man of steel, think a little bit more like water and flow. Try to let go and surrender and rest. Take your hands off the reins and flow where the wave takes you. Trust that everything will be ok and for the good.

And with that, prayer for bitachon, I want to kick off this Fellowship with a prayer, uniting the four corners of the earth that have gathered here today and with one Land and with one God and with one hope for Israel, let's all pray together.

HaShem, Master of the World, please give us the gift of emunah and bitachon, of faith and trust in You. Give us the strength and courage not to fear. With the whole world coming apart, help us and guide us on calm waters. Here we are, Your Fellowship, we gather here every week to learn together and seek Your will in our lives. Help us be a blessing to Israel, help us be a blessing to everyone around us. Shine Your light into our lives and shine Your light and show us the path forward. Bless everyone here today. Bless everyone who will be tuning in soon. Bless them and bless their families, guide them and protect them on this journey. And may we all see a new leader in Israel rise up. A new Jerusalem be rebuilt and may this Fellowship be another step closer to Your House of Prayer for all Nations. Amen.

All right my friends. I know that Ari had a tough day training today. From the morning until just moments ago, but I know that he has what to share with us on the front lines from the training field in Israel. And so, Ari, are you with us?

Ari

I am with you, Jeremy. Good to see you and good to see all of you. I've been just looking at your faces and just gleaning strength from your faces. Just to let you know, I'm on very little sleep, very, very little sleep and super exhausted. Intensive training. So my ADD is very inflamed right now, it's just going where it's going. And I was just thinking as I'm looking at you guys, I ordered these stones that sort of absorb sunlight during the day and then they glow at night. Because on the paths on the Farm, it gets really, really dark. And I don't want to put motion-detector lights there because on the Sabbath it is problematic because when you walk by, the motion detectors, it turns on the lights. And you're not supposed to turn on lights on the Sabbath. So I got these beautiful glowing stones.

And my little boy, Shiloh, said, "What is this, Abba? What is this?" I said, "Kryptonite." He said, "It's kryptonite?" Now for those of you old enough to know, kryptonite is the stones, the glowing stones that made Superman weak. And I don't know why I thought of it while I'm

looking at you guys, but you guys are like the opposite of my kryptonite. You're like that which gives me strength. It's really, really true.

Because these past number of days have been very army intensive. Which makes sense because I was called up to Reserves, and I've been in the army for over two months. But we're doing pretty intensive training right now. Like more intensive than I thought that they were prepared to do for husbands and fathers who have let themselves get a little bit out of shape. Not horribly out of shape, but I'm 45 years old. I'm 45. In America it's like these 18 year old guys, 20, 21, 22. Anyways, but it's good, it's good and it's healthy, but it's very exhausting. I spent the entire day today running, crawling, shooting, carrying, it was a lot. And I've been saying to myself the whole day, "I'm going to get in really good shape." I need to, I need to. It's not like for aesthetic reasons, it's because I'm defending my family and I'm defending Jews in Judea. I need to.

Anyways, and you know, keep in mind that my fellow soldiers for the most part, they're all husbands and fathers also. These are all guys my age, crawling through the sand, over the rocks, carrying things, shooting, rolling, the whole day. But I'll tell you that when we're training, there're a lot of different emotions that just flow through me. You know, at least I'll speak for myself. One is a little bit of resentment toward JEREMY who just stepped out of the picture, because who has to ride a horse without a helmet? Who?! Who rides a horse without a helmet? I'm Jeremy! Mr. cavalier Jeremy without a helmet. And now he can't serve in the army and I'm stuck defending my nation on my own. And he was always my commander in the army, he always gave me a lot of strength and leadership and now I don't have him there with me. It's ok, Jeremy, I forgive you, I love you.

But there's part of me that is begrudging. Like, I'm angry that I HAVE to be doing this. I wish that I didn't NEED to be doing this. This isn't saying that there's not a part of me that's grateful, that doesn't see this Tzahal (צהל), Israel Defense Forces. Yes, I don't like the hey. I don't think it should say Israel Defense Forces, it should say, Israel Forces. But this green army uniform is to me, like I said, it's always had a certain level of sanctity to it. It's the first Jewish army since the times of King David. We had yellow Jewish stars on our sleeves in Berlin and in Poland and in Hungary. And now I have a yellow Jewish army on my uniform. I'm grateful for it. I don't want to seem ungrateful.

Ok, but at the same time, I wish I didn't need to be doing this. I wish I could be home with my wife and children. I'm not the kind of guy that goes out with my friends to the bar EVER! Ever, ever, ever! I don't go out with my friends, ever! My friends are my family. Not only because I really can't leave them on the mountain alone, just for security reasons. But also, just every

moment to me, I don't take any day for granted. Not one day. Every day that goes by, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude, and I'm not going to waste it, not investing and being with my wife and my children. And so, I want to be able to teach them and to watch them grow.

And of course, we know that we're patrolling and we're fighting and we're training here for our survival. In order to be able to raise our children and to watch them grow as we're surrounded by throngs of Jihadists who all they want in their lives is to murder us. From birth to death, all they want to do, it's so overwhelming, their pathological hatred for us that you have to see the Divine signature there. It's so irrational to have entire nations of people that care nothing about anything else.

As Rav Shlomo Carlbach, he said it, he was in Skokie, Illinois where there was a march of neo-Nazis. And he said, if you know the stories of Rav Shlomo Carlbach, he was like, "There's something so holy about these people." Like there's something so holy about these neo-Nazi's? He's like, "The whole day, every day, all they're doing all day, they're thinking about the Jewish people. There's something holy about that. I wish it was good things! I wish it was good things."

And so, I wish that these Jihadists thought good things about us all day, from morning till night and we could learn together and love God together and serve Him together. I wish that! But anyways, that's not the situation. And so, part of me just like, there's that part of me that is not fully integrated, that's begrudging. That just sort of begrudges that we need to be still fighting to this degree, to this level, at this age, defending our children and our families from a very real...I mean the scenarios that we have to train for. We're training for every scenario you could possibly imagine. And some of them, when you realize what you're training for, it's hard like Jeremy says, not to be a little bit terrified at the realization of the numbers we're facing, how overwhelmingly outnumbered we are. And the reality of the situation when I think about it, my little Dvash, if she hurts her toe, I'm like incapacitated. And so, it's really difficult.

And then this Shabbat, we spent the entire Torah portion learning about the journey of the Israelites building the Tabernacle, which was the foreshadowing of the Temple, itself. And what is so shocking is that when you think about it, the Israelites really didn't know what they were building. Right? They knew that it was the Tabernacle, they knew that they had to donate certain things and they donated so much that it had to be like...everybody stop! You're giving too much. It's over. Whoever gave has given and no body else can give, which by the way is a lesson. You know sometimes we're like, "Oh, I really want to give charity, but now is not a great time, I'll give later. You don't know. You don't know that there's going to be a later. You don't know. Like now is the time to do it, if you have tithes to give, and you haven't given, and you

know of that person in your community that needs. You know someone in Israel that needs, you have that place in your heart that you know needs it and you have it to give and you owe it. You owe the money because when you tithe, the word is tzedakah, from tzedek, which is justice. That first ten percent of your money that you give, if you don't give it, it's really stealing from God. Beyond ten percent, ok, maybe that's above and beyond righteousness, right? But, up to that ten percent, and so anyways, I may be beating a little bit, but the point is, they didn't know what they were doing.

And they didn't know what it would be like to have the Shekinah, to have God's Presence dwelling within them, dwelling amongst them. They didn't know what it would be like and they didn't know what they were missing beforehand. I mean you can't really parallel that to us nowadays because they did have certain levels of daily perfunctory miraculousness from pancakes falling out of the sky to being led by pillars of fire at night and clouds during the day. There were miracles that happened. But they didn't know what they were missing.

And I feel like there is a real analogy as Jeremy started this Fellowship so beautifully to what's happening today to the story that I was telling. And I've been looking for this story that I'm about to share with you right now for such a long time and I haven't been able to find it. And I sort of put it together again. I'm still sort of crafting it myself because it's more of like a metaphor, you'll see where I'm going with this. But I want to share this story with you because I think it conveys sort of where we're at right now in history. So the story is like this –

Once there was a small Jewish village in eastern Europe, there lived a man named Eliyahu. He was a gifted pianist. He played so beautifully, people came from around to hear his music. His music was his soul's connection to God. It was a bridge between the mundane and the Divine. And the synagogue was often filled with echoes of his melodies. He blended traditional tunes and niggunim with classic compositions. But as you know, as happens throughout all of Jewish history the tides of history turned cruel, as they often did for the Jewish people. And a Pogrom swept through the village and Eliyahu along with his family was expelled and forced into exile far from his home, lost everything.

They fled with little more than the clothes on their backs. And the piano, you can imagine a heavy and cherished possession was left behind. And it was silenced by the chaos of the displacement. And in the foreign land where they settled, a place of unfamiliar language and there was cold indifference, and Eliyahu longed for the music that had defined his life, that expressed his soul. But pianos there were luxuries that he could not afford. They barely even had them there. And the exile stripped him of his tools to express his fears.

And then one day, in a fit of desperation and creativity, Eliyahu took a piece of weathered wood that he found near his home in the forest. And with a steady hand and with a heart of clear vision and memory of where he came from, he painted black and white keys onto it, mimicking the layout of his lost piano. And he sat before this makeshift piece of wood and he pressed his fingers against that silent wood, imaging the notes that once flowed so freely. And it was a private ritual that he did, a way to hold onto his identity and his faith and really the way he expressed his Judaism, his service and his worship of God.

And years passed and his children grew up watching their father play his wooden piano. They saw the way his face lit up and the way his fingers danced as if like coaxing sounds from the air itself. And to them, this was normal, it was beautiful, it was his expression. And they pressed their own little small hands against the painted keys believing that this is how one played music, by touching wood and sort of willing the notes into existence. They didn't know the richness of a real piano's sound, that had once filled their father's world. For them, the Judaism of the exile was all they knew. A Judaism of painted keys, of silent songs, and just making do with the very little that they had.

And then when the family eventually returned to Israel after the hardships of the exile had lifted, they encountered a real piano for the first time and they stared at it and they were confused. And their father sat down and played, filling the room with melodies. And one of them said, "Abba, Abba, why does this piano make noise? Ours was so quiet, but ours was so beautiful. This isn't how a piano is supposed to sound. This isn't how it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be the wood."

And Eliyahu smiled and tears were in his eyes and he said, "In exile, we learn to play with our hearts because we have no strings. Here in Israel we can hear the music again." And I feel like that's what's happening. And it's hard to express like, "What? This is the music? Me? I'm like 45, with a wife and children. There's grandparents that are there. We're taking our weapons and crawling through the dirt with bloody arms and elbows and shooting and defending and patrolling and fighting in the wars, and this is the way of the music?"

It's as if our ears are starting to be in tuned to who we are and what we're about and what we're expressing. It's hard sometimes when you're in the midst of it all to be able to zoom out and see the whole picture. See what it's really about. But if we zoom out on what's happening in the return of the nation of Israel to the Land of Israel, we can see that this is leading us to a redemptive Temple consciousness. Right now I do not even feel like I can tell you why. I'm too in it right now to be able to really connect the dots. Sometimes I see it and I feel it and

sometimes I don't. Right now I don't, but I know it. I know it's true, even though I don't know why. I just know it in my heart.

And what we're doing here in this Fellowship is a big part of it. It's a big part of it, and you're all a big part of it. And I feel like there's a reason why we're here all together still right now. And maybe you don't know exactly why either, but you know it's true, at least I think. I think, that's one of the things that brings us together. Anyways, I love you, my friends. Thank you for putting up with me and letting me share that with you. Back to you, Jeremy.

Jeremy

Thank you very much, Ari. I love that story, absolutely beautiful. And what I want to do with that story, I want to bring it to the next most beautiful thing. And that is, Tehila Gimpel. She's here with us as a leader in the Fellowship. And she of course has now her own women's community, but she has not left our Fellowship just left. She delivers insights into the Torah that we're all studying that connects us all. And so, with that, I want to introduce Tehila Gimpel.

Tehila

Hey guys! Was that me, or did Jeremy just say that I was almost as beautiful as Ari's story? That's pretty romantic, Jeremy. Very nice. All right, we'll have a talk about that later. It's so nice to see you guys and I have no plan on leaving the Fellowship, our beloved Fellowship ever, God forbid.

You know it's so amazing, Ari, that was a great section and what's funny is that we didn't coordinate, but what I want to teach is really going to connect with what you just said. Ok, so nice to see everybody. How you guys doing? Ok, amazing.

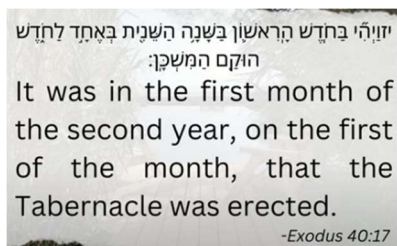
So, this coming week, we're going to be studying the Torah portion of Pekudei, which discusses the completion of the Tabernacle. So in Exodus, chapter 40, verse 2, it says:

On the first day of Nisan, the first month, you must erect the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting.

-Exodus 40:2

And then Moshe does what HaShem says and goes through all of the processes of everything that happens.

And it says in verse 17 that:



It was in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, that the Tabernacle was erected.

-Exodus 40:17

Now, you guys are like yawning, “Ok, great, thanks for the calendar report, Tehila.” No, but this is really cool. What is very marvelous is that every year this portion comes out right as we are starting the month of Nisan, meaning the commandment to Moshe and the actual fulfillment of the commandment to

complete the building of the Tabernacle on the first day of Nisan always comes out right after we read this very Torah portion. So like this coming Shabbat, we’re going to read this portion of Pekudei, we’re going to read these verses and then Saturday night, check this out, we’re going to actually celebrate the first day of that month. So we’re actually reading the portion of something that happened like right then.

Now why is that interesting? It’s interesting for a lot of reasons. But there’s this Torah teaching that’s brought down by the sages in all different ways, and it appears in a whole bunch of places and it always has kind of the same message in different wordings. In one place, in Yalkut Shimoni the idea of this midrashic tradition, is that the Tabernacle seems to have already been ready to rock and roll, ready to be set up, and yet there was some kind of delay.

So I’m going to read to you guys from one of the Midrashic sources called Yalkut Shimoni. It says, “On the 25th of Kislev, the preparation of the Tabernacle was completed and it remained folded up until the first day of Nissan. And the Israelites were grumbling about Moses saying, ‘Why hasn’t it been established immediately? Maybe there’s something wrong with it.’ And the Holy One thought to combine the joyous occasion of the establishment of the Tabernacle with the time that Isaac was born.”

I thought maybe this was a weird Midrash, like some esoteric source, and then I saw it again in the Takuma, in another Midrash where it says:

“For three months, Tishrei, Cheshbon, and Kislev, the Tabernacle was completed and it was just laying there in shambles for the month of Tevet, for the month of Shevat, for the month of Adar, and on the first day of Nissan, it was established. And why wasn’t it established immediately? Because HaShem wanted to combine the joyous occasion with the birth of Isaac.”

Again this idea appears. And it says:

“And the crass people of the generation (like the class clowns of the generation) were mocking Moses and saying, ‘Why isn’t this being established immediately?’ Because they didn’t know

God's plan which was to create, which was to establish the Tabernacle on the day that Isaac was born."

And this appears in a whole bunch of other places, also. Now, even in Rashi, for example, it says that the people weren't able to actually establish the Tabernacle because it was just too heavy. So that's why Moshe had to come and actually like lift up the weight of the beams. There are so many strange things in this tradition.

Now, I've been trying to unpack this and something that's important to know when you're studying the words of the sages, is sometimes they seem very cryptic. But the sages are masters of noticing the finest details in the biblical texts. Sometimes you'll see something in the sages and it will seem so odd and then you'll go back to the text and you'll suddenly be like, "Wait, how could I not see that?" What is bothering the sages that in so many different sources, they keep telling us that the Tabernacle wasn't immediately set into action and even though it was already ready, even though it was already completed.

So, let's try to think about this for a second. We talk a lot about time and this sort of stamp that HaShem put spiritually in different times. We know that Moshe came down to bring the 2nd Tablets after the golden calf. He brought down the 2nd Tablets when? Do you guys remember? On Yom Kippur, we've talked about this a couple of times. This like element of forgiveness that's stamped into that time. So at the very least, we know that they're starting to build all the parts of the Tabernacle around Yom Kippur.

Now, if you guys think about it, I'm not a professional or anything, but if anyone else had anything to do in the desert, it's not like they had a day job. Everyone was dedicated to this one task of getting the Tabernacle ready. It's not a very big Tabernacle. It's pretty small. And the whole nation has been working on it nonstop with not anything else to do. And yet in our portion it says that only on the first day of Nissan was it established. And so, it seems a little bit long, like this was going on a little bit too long.

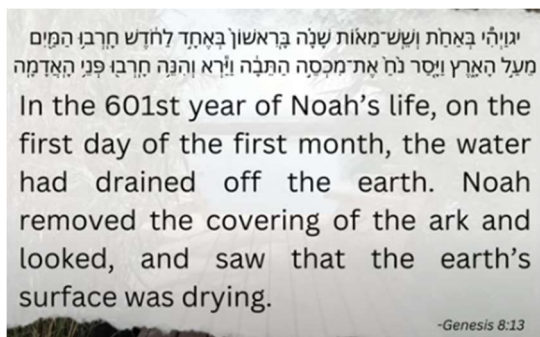
And then, when you look at the actual verse in chapter 40, verse 2, it says that HaShem had to command Moshe to get the Tabernacle up. Meaning that it does seem, even from the simple meaning of the verse, it seemed to have already been ready. And it just didn't seem like it should have taken that long. So, the sages are paying attention to this fine strangeness in the text and saying, "You need to understand something. The Tabernacle was already ready. And it was waiting for HaShem to come and say, "Now, now is the time." It's like these sort of like Lego pieces, they're all like waiting there to be put into motion. So it's not an unreasonable assumption that there's this sort of waiting period. But why is that so important to talk about?

Another thing that's strange here...ok, let's say that HaShem is waiting for a momentous time. Ok, let's say, "Sages we're going with you here. We'll accept that the Tabernacle was probably prepared." It makes perfect sense that HaShem would want it to be established in Nisan. Think about it, we're exactly one year after all of the miracles that happened last Nisan in the Exodus. This is like an obviously good time to be doing something.

The Midrash could have said that HaShem was waiting for the anniversary of the exodus, last year. That would be like a special energy, a special quality in the time. We know that Nisan is the month of salvation. Wouldn't it be befitting to like complete the physical salvation of Israel from Egypt with like a spiritual salvation? Why do they tell us that HaShem was waiting for Isaac's birthday? That seems like an oddly, I don't want to say unimportant, because obviously Isaac's birthday's important. But compared to like the miracles that they just had a year ago, specifically choosing to focus on Isaac's birthday as the day of making the Tabernacle seems a little bit strange.

Furthermore, there were other things that happened on the first day of Nisan, too. Like the sages teach us that there's a big conflict, like a big argument between the sages. If one of them was created on Rosh HaShanah, on the first day of Tishrei, or on the first day of Nisan. And they kind of go back and forth. And then they settle on that Adam was actually made on the first day of Tishrei, but the idea of creating man happened on the first day of Nisan.

And then if you follow in Genesis 8:13, when Noah was in the flood it says, "On the first day of the first month the waters dried off of the earth."



So it was a really special time in history. But furthermore, we know that the sages tell us that all of the patriarchs were born in the month of Nisan.

So if there are so many things that happened in the month of Nisan, why are the sages so focused on telling us that the Tabernacle had to be made on the birthday of Isaac? Couldn't it just be like...ok, maybe

there was a lot of great stuff that happened in Nisan. Great timing. It's a great day, we should just make it on that great day. All of those other things, with all due respect to Isaac, seem a lot more dramatic than Isaac's birthday.

So...what you might be thinking? You might be thinking, "Well there's the sacrifice of Isaac, and we make sacrifices in the Tabernacle, maybe we should do it on Isaac's birthday." But when you

really think about it, the binding of Isaac was really at least if not like more of a test for Avraham. If Avraham was also born in Nisan, why not connect it to his birthday?

So, on the one hand, we can really understand why the sages are drawing us to see that HaShem would want the Tabernacle to be established on such a wonderful month like the month of Nisan. But I was like hacking away at this Midrash, trying to understand, why is this so focused on Isaac? I think that the Midrash...when there's something surprising, it's trying to catch your attention. And I think that the sages are trying to draw us to understand and say, "You want to understand the Tabernacle? You want to understand the power of the month of Nisan? There's something that you need to understand that you're going to see if you look closely at what Isaac symbolized in the world."

To understand what Isaac symbolized in the world, let's imagine a world without Isaac. What would have happened if Isaac wasn't born? Avraham wasn't the first righteous person in the world. Like in Genesis 5:22, we have Chanoch, I think in English it's pronounced Enoch that walked with HaShem and HaShem took him. We know that there was Shem, the son of Noach, and Melchizedek, who was a priest to the God Almighty in Jerusalem. But none of them created something real lasting that brought HaShem's Presence into the world. They were like firecrackers. They make like this beautiful light, but then sort of fizzles out.

Avraham could have so easily been that too. He had no children. Time is passing. But at some point, it seems so ridiculously long that his son's name, Yitzchak, actually like embodies the laughter at the ridiculousness, of the preposterousness of the very prospect of his birth even happening. Because Isaac's birth more than any other event really, was the guarantee that Avraham wouldn't be just like a one-time firecracker phenomenon, but rather an ongoing process of drawing HaShem's revelation into the world.

Why did it have to take so long? Why did it have to take so long? If you were Avraham, it must have seemed like an unbearably long time to wait to have a son from Sara. If you were Sara, this must have seemed like eternity. But as we are reading the stories, do you really wonder why it had to take so long? Like, when you look at what Sara and Avraham had to go through, they wouldn't have been Avraham and Sara, had they not been tested in so many ways, had they not been forged in so many ways. And as the readers, as the students of the Torah, we can see that HaShem had a plan for everything to be done in its perfect time.

There's a story about the author Leo Tolstoy, that as he was writing his famous work, Anna Karenina, he said that he was crying and writing, crying her tragic end and he's imaging her saying to him, "Why do I have to have all these bad things happen to me?" And he's crying in

writing this. Why is he crying and writing? He could have just written her character to be a happy character. And I think the answer is because he knew that if he just wrote her the way that he wanted to, just a happy character, she wouldn't have been who she became.

It's like HaShem is writing the story of humanity, of every person exactly how it needs to be in exactly the right time. And so, for us, when we're reading Avraham, we understand that he wouldn't have been Avraham had Yitzchak been born at any other time. Everything happens in its perfect time.

And now, we come back to our sort of story. Not only is there a revelation at Sinai to an entire nation, it seems like this culmination of Avraham's tradition through the generations and through the exodus, and it leads to the golden calf. It seems for a moment like all is going to be lost, like maybe HaShem is going to destroy him. Maybe HaShem is going to destroy Israel and that will be it, like we lost our chance. Then He forgives us. What about HaShem's Presence? He's not annihilating us, but will He still dwell among us? It's a question. It's not clear.

On Yom Kippur, Moshe brings out the 2nd Tablets and people start building the Tabernacle, and they're like working away and working away every day to make this vessel for HaShem's eternal Presence in the world. They've given everything that they have, every bit of gold, every bit of silver, like Ari said, like they had to say, "Stop bringing things," because people were giving as much as they could.

And they put everything they had, but they were waiting for something to happen. Nothing happened. Just waiting, it's almost like Avraham awaiting Isaac. And you know, it reminds me so much of our situation now in Israel. It's like on October 7th, we had this disaster. Now it's like everyone rises up and everyone is giving everything that they have, everything that they can. So much sacrifice, so much faith, and miracles that we're seeing. And just the most incredible sacrifices and at the same time, the most incredible revelation of HaShem's Providence. And lately, there is this feeling of like is something happening? Is something not going to happen? Just sort of like this feeling of stuckness. And just like in the Midrash when people start saying, "Well maybe nothing is going to happen." Like you start hearing those voices of people who are not necessarily believing in the destiny of Israel saying, "Oh, things are just going to go back to how they were. And nothing is ever going to change."

And I'll tell you something even worse. On Purim, we had friends over. Like even friends that are the most encouraging and the most positive and the most always seeing how everything is going towards redemption. They were a little bit downtrodden and a little bit confused and a little bit like, "When is everything going to be ok? Like what's happening? Are we stuck? What

is this holding pattern that we're in? Is there going to be a resolution? Are we going to come to a victory and a sanctification of HaShem's Name?"

It's just sort of like this pause. And I think that's the message of the month of Nisan and that is the message of the Tabernacle and that is the message of Isaac. Of holding onto this understanding that even when you've given everything and you've put in all that you have and you're just waiting for HaShem's redemption, HaShem has His perfect time for doing everything and HaShem has a plan. And sometimes the waiting itself or whatever it is that we're waiting for, for whatever salvation we're waiting for, sometimes the waiting itself is the process, is the forging and the testing of our faith.

And I think that that is the message of what we pray for as we go into Nisan. Because we know that Nisan is a month of redemption. So I think together is a great time to just pray that as we go into the month of Nisan, we see HaShem bring His Presence, just like He brought His Presence into the Tabernacle, bring His Presence back to Israel. And may this be truly the perfect time, that just like we were redeemed in the month of Nissan many times in the past, may we be redeemed again in the month of Nissan. And so, with that, I send you guys love and prayers and I wish you a wonderful week. Back to Jeremy.

Jeremy

All right. Hey everybody, can everyone hear me? Is everything all right? There we go. Thank you, Tehila, that was absolutely insightful and brilliant. I never even knew that it was Isaac's birthday and that was what we're all waiting for. And to me, it's really about making something not just a fireworks, but making it continuous. Without Isaac, Abraham just would have been a fiery light that would have been extinguished and moved on to another person that would have come into the world and been righteous. And the Tabernacle is eternal. Once God chose to dwell among us, He said that He'll dwell among us. And we are His resting place, not only with the Tabernacle and the Temple, but with the people of Israel. And now that we're back in the Land of Israel, please God, He's coming back soon.

The Torah portion Vayakhel is what we've just read, moving into Pekudei. And the last two Torah portions, they really end the book of Exodus. And they end with Israel's unity and purpose. The unity to build a dwelling place for God in the world. And like Tehila said, it took about a year to build the Tabernacle. And they were asked by Moses to bring a terumah, an offering to start the construction. And the Israelites of course gave way beyond any measure.

And I read this beautiful idea that was pointed out by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory. And he said:

“Until making the Tabernacle, everything that occurred to the children of Israel happened to them. HaShem acted on their behalf, He liberated them from slavery, He split the sea, He gave them water from the rocks, He gave them food from heaven. And when they were passive, they were aimless walking through the desert, they squabbled and they complained. But during the year of building, there were no fights. There was no complaining. They were united by a common mission, building together brought them together.

And a society that’s living with a purpose, beyond satisfying its own needs, a society that’s working together to build something bigger than them is a society that will flourish. And the process of coming together to bring the Mishkan, transformed a fractured group of complaining slaves into a society that was worthy of receiving the Divine Presence among them.

Now Israel was transformed. That’s what’s happening in Israel today. Before October 7th, Israel was a fractured society. Infighting, we were divided. And now, we’ve been tasked with a mission – with confronting evil. And removing the evil from the Land of Israel. And that battle has united us and it’s made us better and we are far more perfected, closer to perfection, a far more perfected society now.

And in that way the Mishkan wasn’t only for God, but clearly dedicating themselves to the ultimate good brought out the best in them. Praying for God to change us is not what’s being taught. But rather what we do, not what’s done for us is what changes us. And so really, that call to action of building in order to be built.

That’s really what it’s about. And maybe, that’s one of the reasons that Israel, when we first came back to the Land, we had no real natural resources. When we first came here, there was no oil, there was no gold, there was barely any water, and people were like...what’s so promising about this Promised Land? Israel had to build this country together. It had to farm the Land, it had to drain the swamps, it had to pray for rain, and working and building together, united by a mission centered around higher values. With God in their heart of the camp, built Israel into the nation that it is.

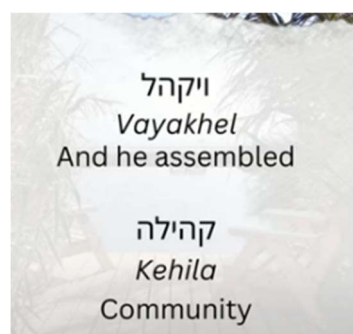
And Vayakhel begins with Moses assembling the entire Israelite community to share God’s instruction about the construction of the Tabernacle. And you see the Hebrew word Vayakhel means “and he assembled.” This is what it says in the verse:

Moses **assembled** the entire community of the Israelites and said to them, “These are the things that God has commanded to do.

-Exodus 35:1

And in this command to build the Tabernacle, He transformed the nation not just into a place with tribes that came together, but we really became a community. And it’s a nation that should see itself as a community, as an extended, large family. And what do people in the family do? They’re all a part of the family business.

That’s what building the Mishkan was. It was the family built business of building a dwelling place for God in the world. And in that way, Moses wasn’t just assembling the nation, he was assembling them into a unified community. Vayakhel literally can be translated as:



So he was assembling them into a community. He was building a community as he was building the Mishkan.

And you see this Fellowship is a kehilah. It is a global community. Just like Israel became more like a family than a nation by uniting under the task of building the Mishkan, the Land of Israel Fellowship is more like a family than anything else because we’re united through our love of the Land of Israel. With a purpose of

living God’s purpose and vision for our lives and aligning ourselves with biblical prophecy and biblical destiny. This gathering is our virtual Mishkan.

And that’s why before the construction, Moshe gives over one more command about guarding the Sabbath. It’s unique, it’s seemingly out of place, like why is God talking about Shabbat again right now? But first He wanted to know, even if you’re engaged in a holy work like building the Mishkan, Shabbat is Shabbat and Shabbat takes precedence and you have to rest, even if you’re building.

In Exodus 35, verse 2, here’s what it says:

These are the things that God has commanded us to do – Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day must be holy for you—a complete rest from work—unto God.

-Exodus 35:2

And as you’re building an outer sanctuary for God, first you have to know that you need to build an inner sanctuary first. And that’s why everyone participated in it. Participation wasn’t holiness. Unlike a lot of the ancient temples of the past built by slaves, or professionals, the Tabernacle was a community endeavor where everyone – men, women, rich, poor, everyone contributed and everyone participated in its building.

And holiness isn't reserved for an elite, but it's accessible for anyone who participates and ultimately has fulfilled our purpose as a nation to become holy.

So Genesis and Exodus, even though they're two books, they're really two halves of the same whole. What started in the Garden of Eden was completed with the Tabernacle. And there are only two stories that detail the progress of creation in the Torah. God's creation of the universe and the Israelite's creation of the Tabernacle. The story of creation is the transformation of *tohu v'vohu*, of total chaos into order. And then we go from the total chaos, darkness of slavery, into the light of freedom. And just as God split the waters on the 2nd day, creating the heavens above and the waters below, God split the waters at the Red Sea and rebirthed the nation of Israel.

And the process the Torah has taken us through, is that what we lost in Eden by Adam and Eve's fall, was fixed by the Tabernacle. After the sin of Eden, the harmony between God and man, including man and nature was lost. And now, once again, God is able to dwell in our midst. In the beginning of Genesis, God created the world and made a place for man to dwell in. Here, at the end of Exodus, now man in his world created a place for God to dwell in. And it's like Genesis is the story of these great men and women, individuals who created an individual path, a model for us how to live with God in our lives and how to walk in the light of His guidance.

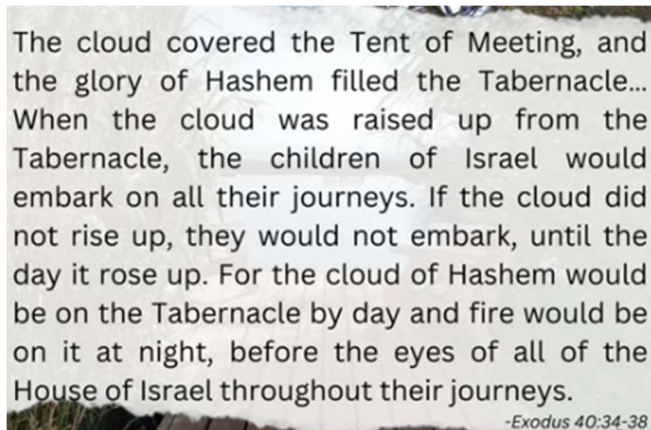
Now in Exodus, we're taking it up a level. From individuals and families, we transition now into a nation. And that nation is tasked with bringing the light to all nations of the world. I mean, think about it, the life of one person dedicated to God is complicated enough. To raise a godly family, all of us know, that is even more complicated. To raise a godly nation, to build an entire society, a society that will endure and be powerful enough, to shift the course of world history and bring a new ethos, and ethics and morality and Ten commandments to the world? That's incredible. That's exactly what happened.

And it all culminates here at the end of the exodus. And I think that Tehila spoke about this and I think it's a perspective that not many people think about. When you think about the year of building the Tabernacle after the golden calf, it had to have been psychologically very hard on people. The people of Israel, at the height of revelation, turned, built a golden calf, betrayed God, broke the Ten Commandments, and then for one year God doesn't appear to them. They're commanded by Moses to start building, they generously give, they dedicate themselves to the task with all their hearts, day after day, week after week, month after month, but there's no feedback from above. Nothing. So has God abandoned them? Is He ever going to return? Was the sin so great that not even Moses could help to repent? There are so many doubts and

so many fears and the people of Israel just keep on working. They kept on following the exact advice and guidance given to them just as HaShem had commanded Moses.

And now, at the end of Exodus, we complete the Tabernacle. We arrive at the destination, we have brought God into our lives and live with His Presence at the center of our camp and that is huge. Because up until now, God comes and God goes. He gives Abraham a calling and then He leaves Abraham on his own. He leaves Israel in Egypt and left them to be slaves. He appears again and then redeems them through miracles. Miracles come and miracles go. God is sometimes seeable and sometimes not.

Here at the end of Exodus, people created the Tabernacle and the people transformed their reality from a life of miracles where God appears ever so often and saves them, into a life where God's Presence is a constant. A constant reality in the center of their camp, guiding them on their journey through the desert, toward the Land of Israel. God becomes the guiding principle and a constant reality in the heart of their lives. And symbolized by the Tabernacle in the center of the camp. These are the last words in the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 40, verses 34 through 38:



The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Hashem filled the Tabernacle... When the cloud was raised up from the Tabernacle, the children of Israel would embark on all their journeys. If the cloud did not rise up, they would not embark, until the day it rose up. For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Tabernacle by day and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all of the House of Israel throughout their journeys.

-Exodus 40:34-38

And it's as if the light of God became present for everyone to see and for everyone to recognize.

And really, that's the transition that we're going into right now. The battleground between good and evil is the Land of Israel. The battle ground is what's happening now between the Chamas and Israel and the Chezbollah in Lebanon and Iran. There's a

battle and when evil is finally defeated by the good, God's Presence will be restored. Order will be restored in the world.

And as we celebrate the beginning of the month of Nisan at the end of this week, and we're commanded to build the Tabernacle on the first of Nisan, we can just only hope that our stars are aligning and that HaShem is on the move. But to me, it's become beyond evident. I don't exactly know when, but it's just a matter of time until the Temple is built in Jerusalem and evil is removed from this Land and we're expediting the process. But what's going to happen is soon God will sometimes be seen, is going to become a constant Presence in our reality.

With that, I want to bless this Fellowship. That HaShem continuously be a guiding light in your life, that He light up your nights with fire, and He brings the cloud of glory for your day, to be present whenever you want to meet at the Ohel Moed, the Tent of Meeting that you can meet with Him and fellowship, not only with the people in this Fellowship, but fellowship with HaShem, Himself. Open your hearts and open your ears, for He'll guide you. And so may we see HaShem's Presence return to Zion, soon and in our days. And with that, I would love to bless you. The blessing that they gave at the Tabernacle, the blessing that they gave in the holy Temple in Jerusalem, and so I would love to bless you from this place and from this Land.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Shalom my friends, have a beautiful week, we'll see you again soon next week. Shalom!