

Session 189
Shlach – The Eyes of Courage
30 June 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRVhEDP0Rsw>

Ari

Shalom my friends, it is so good to see all of you. Shalom, Shalom. Let's see, hopefully this light is better. Ok, just give me a thumbs up if you can see me. Ok, fantastic. It is very, very great to see all of you. I'm going to dive right in because this is a big one. And I always feel a certain trepidation when it comes to getting a Fellowship for the portion of Shlach because it feels like so much is riding on this. You know, I said in my message before Shabbat that understanding this portion, truly studying this portion and reflecting on this portion, praying about this portion, internalizing this portion – the wisdom and the lessons of this portion into our very essence, I really believe it's the key to truly rising to the greatest calling of our generation. And so those of you who know me well, who have been with us for years, you know that's how I feel about this portion. Because ours is not just any generation. Ours is the final generation before redemption. And so, in my mind, this portion is the key to redemption, itself, right? No pressure! Just a thing! Anyway, let me start with a prayer for this Fellowship.

HaShem, we're gathered here in this Fellowship, right now, today, we come together every week with a deep desire in our hearts to learn Your Torah together, to seek Your wisdom, and Your will and Your guidance in our lives and in our hearts and in the lives of our families, and in our communities. Lives of all of mankind. Please protect us, HaShem from folly and mistakes, protect us from ego and arrogance and guide us to have hearts of simplicity and humility. To have hearts that are open and welcome to receive Your Words into our hearts. Thank You, HaShem for bringing us together for this holy purpose and thank You for the bonds of love and friendship and brotherhood and support that You're forging in this Fellowship. And thank You for bringing us this far considering where we have all come from. Please, HaShem, may the light from this Fellowship shine forth and illuminate the great darkness that we find ourselves in during these confusing times because it's your light that we're seeking. It's Your light alone, HaShem, that can banish this darkness and bring true light to all of mankind. Please, please shine Your light, HaShem. Amen, amen.

Ari

Ok, so before I dive into this portion, I'm going to introduce Jeremy, Jeremy, good to see you. It was great to spend Shabbat with you. How are you?

Jeremy

Good to see you, too. That was a beautiful prayer. What struck me was that you were just being grateful for the bonds that are formed through this Fellowship. Some of the bonds we

know, but some of the bonds just exist because this Fellowship exists. Like we are interconnected throughout the world.



And I was sent several messages from several different Fellowship members about a member of this Fellowship who was...I mean, a part of the Fellowship connections, part of our prayer team, just an absolute die-harder. She loved this Fellowship. Her name was Sharonah and she recently passed away. And she actually left the world on Shavuot, in the middle of dancing and worshipping in Colorado. Like what a beautiful way for her soul to transcend to the next level, next stage of existence.

And some people in the Fellowship actually made a gift, a donation to the Fellowship in order to spread this Torah in her honor and in her memory, and that her soul should have a delight, her soul should have an aliyah, her soul should have some celestial experience. And this Fellowship, the Torah that we're going to learn should be in her memory and it's just another expression of how the bonds of this Fellowship, they're not only connecting us geographically across continents, but even across worlds.

And so, it's a big parsha, I think what Ari said is absolutely right and we're talking about Parashat Shlach. And I couldn't help but feel that the top story probably of the week that really just sort of shocked me, shocked the world is in Peko Robertson neighborhood in the Adas Torah Synagogue. They were hosting a "Buy home in Israel" event, encouraging Jews in L.A. to move to Israel or at least to set the stage for moving to Israel. And a riot broke out with a 150 people violently blocking the synagogue. It came to blows, it came to blood. The L.A.P.D. got involved. I mean, watch this:



So that was a combination of WOKE, Code Pink, and pro-Chamas Jihadist-supporting protestors physically fighting and the Jews eventually had a counter-protest. Bear-spray was used. I mean items were being thrown, the synagogue was blocked. And on social media the congregants were complaining saying, "Yeah, the Los Angeles police department, they did not respond in time at all. And when they did respond, it wasn't really a response." And they definitely did not properly intervene.

And imagine what that must have felt like. Being a Jew in L.A., that's going to a synagogue saying, "Hmmm, I wonder if I should move to Israel on the Shabbat of the sin of the spies." And

then, as they're in the synagogue, violent protesters come and start trying to attack them while, I know, I heard, that 50 people just signed up on the spot saying, "That's it." I mean there are spice carts in life, but then there are spice carts that fall out of the sky and land on your head. Like how much more loudly could HaShem speak to these people. And the reality is that God is speaking right now to all of America.

This protest just happened, hours ago, literally in New York, in Manhattan. Watch this:



I think, if America doesn't realize that America has a problem now, those people right there, they're terrorists. They're not protesters. They are supporting genocide, they're supporting the Chamas, it's like supporting ISIS, they're cheering for ISIS, they're cheering for Jihad, they're cheering for genocide. They're crying to kill the infidel. And that's all over the United States now. It's primarily right now in blue states apparently. It's like the coasts, it's like the country is being split into two right now. But it's kind of like what else needs to happen to encourage the Jews in America to wake up and for Americans at large to wake up.

And you look at the sin of the spies and you just have to wonder. Like, why is the sin of the spies the worst of all sins? It was like the beginning of the 9th of Av. That was the moment where it was like, "You are all going to die in the desert." Seemingly, there were much greater sins. The sin of the golden calf, right after the Ten Commandments, the revelation at Sinai. To worship a golden calf? That should have been the end for Israel. No. It was the sin of the spies.

And I heard a beautiful idea, saying that the Torah needs to be read, not as the history that's unfolding, but it is a Torah, it is a guide, it is a teaching. And because God saw that that sin of the spies, the Jewish people's inability to just pick up and get into Israel and overcome the fear, overcome the challenges. That is a much deeper sin inside the collective soul of the people of Israel that they're going to be struggling with through generation to generation. So they're going to emphasize that. That's why it's recorded as the greatest of all sins because it was the greatest of all sins.

The golden calf, there are very few Jews right now that are bowing to golden statutes. But the sin of the spies? Until today, there are Jews that do not want to come to the Land of Israel. And you think about what happened to the people in the desert. In some ways, there's a deep lesson there. Not only for our generation today, but there was a lesson also for the people in that generation. They kept on giving more and more laws. They were given more and more laws. They were given laws about sacrifices that are going to be given in the Temple, about the laws of Sh'mita, the laws that are very much connected and that really can only be performed in the Land of Israel. They are continuously learning those laws, they're given those laws, and you

wonder like, “Well, those laws are not exactly relevant for a generation that’s been destined to die in the desert and not entering the Land of Israel.”

But really what’s happening there is that God is saying, “Don’t worry. There’s a much bigger plan that’s unfolding here. Your children will go into the Land of Israel. You, the big you, the greater you, Israel, will go into the Land of Israel. You, individually, you’re not ready. You’re not punished, you’re just not ready. It’s just not mat’im. It’s not a right fit.” God was looking at a much larger picture and that’s really important for all of us to know. That our purpose is beyond us, always. Everyone needs to find themselves within a much larger picture, a much larger story.

And so that generation in the desert, it really wasn’t about them. Are they going to make it in the desert? No, they’re just a part of the nation of Israel. Because the nation of Israel has a destiny. All believers have a destiny. The children of God, we have a destiny and it’s larger than every single one of us individually. And that’s important because that’s not a popular thing to say nowadays. Because everyone’s like, “iPhone, I this, I that.” It’s like no, no, no. The Torah is teaching like, “Listen. There is a much larger story here. This is about God’s plan, this is about the entire world, this is about biblical destiny.” And just like an entire generation. They didn’t make it. They were just another link in the chain, so too all of us are links in a much bigger chain. And then we have to find our part within the story.

I believe that we are the last link. This is the generation that everything has come to a culmination for. But remember, it’s not just about, “I fell off a horse and I have my own issues that I’m personally dealing with.” No, no, no. I have 4,000 years behind me that I’m a part of. And I have the next generation of my children that I’m raising that they’re a part of. I’m just one part in a story. We happen to have been born in the most exciting time to be alive. Because everything is coming to a head. Everything is culminating, we finally have the opportunity to fix the greatest sin, the sin of the spies.

And so, with that, I believe that the only way we will be able to rectify the sin, to fix this collective problem that we’ve had for so many generations, is to find ourselves within the larger story of Israel. All of us are a part of the story of Israel, and all of us are connected to that larger story.

And with that, I bless us all to transcend ourselves, to transcend ourselves from this world to the next world. But not only that, but to transcend our own individual lives. To really feel as though we are a part of the collective destiny of Israel. Because that’s exactly our true identity. Alright, Ari. You’re on.

Ari

Thank you, Jeremy. That was chazak, you know it's like, you look around the world and you can see the supernatural fulfillment of God's will happening. You know what he just shared is just the beginning of it. I just got sent today a video from Chicago where people were gathering outside the Jewish community and saying at 2:30 in the morning, screaming on horns, "Jews will not sleep, Jews will not..." I mean it's not even like, "The occupiers, the Zionists," they're not even playing the game. It's like it's happening right before us.

Jeremy

Also, to note, Ari. I don't ever remember a time, at least in the United States, where Jews were being targeted across the country. It's like the genie is out of the bottle. October 7th, it was like a moment, that was like all the Jew-hatred came out and they're out of the woodwork now. It's like these demonic forces are running around the streets exposing themselves. But I don't ever remember a time where people were saying, "The Jews will not sleep," in Chicago and in L.A., and in New York, all at the same time. The Jews are being targeted and the Jews need to leave, period.

Ari

Yeah, yeah, it's not in my lifetime, that's for sure. You know, and then I've been thinking about this debate between Trump and Biden. And just seeing the senility and stumblingness of Biden and saying it's in his hands that the state of Israel is throwing our fate, about how we're going to proceed in this war? It's just so crazy it's so obvious that God is leading us, navigating us, channeling us to put our hearts and our faith in Him. Which is a big part of what I want to talk about right now.

So I want to start this Fellowship...I don't know, by winding 95 years, to the year 1929 in the holy city of Chevron. Because in this portion we encounter, the holy, sacred city, one of the most contested cities in the entire Land of Israel, obviously because of its holiness, Chevron. We don't only encounter Chevron as a city, but we also see it as a spiritual power.

Now this is a teaching shared by Rav Moshe Weinberger, which I wanted to share with you because it's a piece of Jewish history which not even many people even know about. But it's an important piece of history because it connects the biblical past, to the more recent past, all the way to today. And it connects each and every one of us to the city of Chevron in a deeper way. And for those of you who really don't know Chevron, it's a city that's not just a geographical location. It's an energy. It's a special type of strength and faith. It's an idea, you know, it's an idea. That's the reason that Abraham stopped here in the city of Chevron and said, "This is the place. This is the place that all of the patriarchs and matriarchs shall be buried, other than Rachel." This is the place, there's a power to it. And it's more than just a geographical spot.

Anyways, the verse from our portion is verse 22 from chapter 13 in the book of Numbers. It sparks the initial dive into Chevron. So it says:

“They ascended to the Negev and he came until Chevron...”

-Numbers 13:22

It says, Chevron, but there should be an “r” in there, Chevron, forgive me. Now to really understand this point, you need the Hebrew which starts off in the plural and then shifts to the singular. Vaya’alu, plural v’negev. Vayavo, singular, ad Chevron. (וַיַּעֲלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חֶבְרוֹן)

(וַיַּעֲלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חֶבְרוֹן) They ascended to the Negev and he came to Chevron.

So the obvious question is why the shift from plural to singular? And the answer that many of the sages give is that Caleb broke off and went to Chevron to beseech the forefathers for strength in resisting the great pressures that already he could tell would be exerted on him. But Rabbi Shimshon Rephael Hirsh actually reads it slightly differently. It’s not even so critical that I share this, but I just found it really interesting. He says that it wasn’t only Caleb who broke off and went to Chevron. But it was all the spies together. Which to me makes a little bit more intuitive sense because from a military experience, the last thing you do on a mission is to split up.

But anyways, here’s what Rabbi Hirsh says:

We would therefore actually believe that “Vayavo” (in the singular) refers to the whole company. It is put in the singular to indicate that up to Hebron they came “as one man” in complete unison in feelings and unanimity of mind and purpose. They went up from the south and came in unison to Hebron. But there they saw the descendants of giants . . . and this brought about the wavering alteration in their courage and resolutions.

-Rabbi Samson Rephael Hirsh commentary on Numbers 210-202

Meaning they went there in one heart. It actually reminds me of the singular, if any of you were thinking of this, the singular used in describing the nation of Israel on Mt. Sinai – when the Torah tells us, vayikan, in singular. We camped there together as one, meaning the nation is described. It’s rare enough in world history that the nation of Israel is as one, that it’s noteworthy.

And so there we were on Mt. Sinai as one heart and one mind. But Caleb, Calev was the one who broke off and prostrated himself on the burial places of the forefathers, thereby connecting to their energy and their faith and their merit as he laid there, prostrated there upon their graves, upon their burial spots that he prayed. And the sages even tell us the nature of his prayer, the words of his prayer. They teach that he laid himself down over their burial places and prayed, “My fathers, please, plead with HaShem to be merciful to me and save me from the plans of the spies.” And indeed HaShem did give him strength because as we all know, all of our strength is ultimately from HaShem. And in the end we see that HaShem blessed Caleb with tremendous strength as he was the first to take on the spies head to head and declare words that would prove to give people, the Jewish people and nations around the world strength throughout history:

Let us surely ascend and inherit the Land because we can surely succeed!

-Numbers 13:30

We can do it! We can do it.

Now let's fast forward to August 24th, 1929. There's a beautiful Jewish community in Chevron as there had been uninterrupted for at least 3,000 years, which by the way, is both an undisputed fact and a small little truth that you're guaranteed to never hear on CNN or anywhere else. But it's undisputed, it's true, it's a historical fact. Anyways, after rumors had reportedly been spreading that the Jews were planning to rebuild the Temple, at about 8:30 A.M. on Shabbat morning, if this sounds familiar it is, the local jihadi Arabs launched a horribly vicious and well-organized terror attack on Chevron. It was gruesome.



The 1929 massacre of Chevron. Who here has heard of it? Raise your hands if you have heard of it. Here are the, wow...wow, it's very impressive. Here are the headlines from the next day.

Massacre of women, children at Hebron told by the refugees. It was a blood bath. The British were warned by the Jewish community of the threat. They were even warned by Rav Kook who implored

them to get involved, but they refused and supposedly the British chief of police said that he wouldn't get involved because quote, the Jews deserve it. You are the cause of all the troubles. That's what he said. And according to testimony though, it was actually that officer, Raymond Cafferata, who was the only one to actually come to the aid of the Jews, one officer. And here is his...so it's confusing a little bit, so here is his testimony, which unfortunately sounds all too familiar as well:

On hearing screams in a room, I went up a sort of tunnel passage and saw an Arab in the act of cutting off a child's head with a sword. He had already hit him and was having another cut, but on seeing me he tried to aim the stroke at me, but missed; he was practically on the muzzle of my rifle. I shot him low in the groin. Behind him was a Jewish woman smothered in blood with a man I recognized as a(n Arab) police constable named Issa Sheriff from Jaffa. He was standing over the woman with a dagger in his hand. He saw me and bolted into a room close by and tried to shut me out-shouting in Arabic, "Your Honor, I am a policeman." ... I got into the room and shot him.

-British Chief of Police Raymond Cafferata

That's British Chief of Police, Raymond Cafferata. Anyways, you know, regardless of any individual testimony, the facts and the brutality and the viciousness of that massacre still lives in Chevron. There's a sign up in Chevron commemorating this terrible massacre. And I remember being horrified when learning the details of it from both Rabbi Simcha Hochbaum who was an incredible rabbi and tour guide

in Chevron and Chevron spokesman, Rabbi Yishai Fleisher, who were both excellent guides and educators about Chevron. And if you go there, I highly encourage you to contact one of them and have one of them take you around.

Anyways, unbelievably, the 1929 Massacre, it pales in comparison to what we've just endured in the south this past October 7th. But only for circumstantial reasons. If the Arabs in 1929 could have, they would have done exactly the same thing. There's no doubt about that. And so, there were 67 murdered Jews and 28 injured. And as we've seen this past year, injured doesn't mean a sprained ankle. Right? Well there aren't many pictures, because it was 1929 obviously.



Here is a student in the Chevron Yeshiva named Alchanan Roth who had his hand brutally sliced off in the attack.



Here's a picture of a severely wounded Jewish child.

Again, the Chevron jihadists in 1929, they didn't have the option of recording their rape and murder on GoPro's then, but if they could have they would have.



And here's a picture of the once glorious synagogue of Chevron that was ransacked and desecrated and destroyed. It was a horrible trauma for the Jews of the holy Land. Anyways, Rav Weinberger shares a story that happened on Simchat Torah in 1929, just months after the massacre. That's right, Simchat Torah, the same day which 94 years later we would experience the unimaginable horrors of October 7th. And it was, as we know, Simchat Torah is supposed to be a day of unbridled joy and dancing and celebration as we complete the reading of the Torah. But the students, much of Israel, but the students in Rav Kook's yeshiva couldn't summon the will to dance and to celebrate at all, which I truly do get. I get it, we feel it right now.

But Rav Kook, in what I believe was a wave of Divine inspiration, grabbed the students' hands and started dancing with all of his might while singing out the verse from Parashat Ha'azinu, Deuteronomy 32:

Rejoice nations over God's people!
For He will avenge the blood of His
servants, Wreak vengeance on His
adversaries, And will forgive His land
and His people.

-Deuteronomy 32:43

These are like verses of hope that there will be justice for the horrific brutality that we've experienced and we're experiencing and that part of what we're going through is part of the forgiveness that, for our sins of God forgiving us and forgiving the Land.

And you have to understand, it's widely believed that the Chevron massacre of 29 marked the beginning of Rav Kook's decline to his eventual death, six years later. It was from the heartbreak and devastation of that massacre that those close to him testify, he never fully recovered from that.

But anyways, at that moment of hope, when Rav Kook grabbed their hands, the students' hearts were pierced by his strength. And they began to sing and dance while singing that verse like never before. And it was from that reservoir of strength, from the holy city of Chevron, that I believe that he was able to summon that faith and that hope that transformed his students on that painful day and very much their lives.

Anyways, the story goes on that sometime later Rav Kook found himself at a major reception by the British government in which he was publicly standing next to the high ranking government secretary named Charles Lott who Rav Kook had personally appealed to to stop the attack that was happening. And at the event, Charles Lott extended his hand to Rav Kook to shake his hand and Rav Kook with ferocity, publicly declared in front of all the dignitaries at the reception, "I do not shake hands with someone whose hands are soaked in Jewish blood." He wasn't afraid to alienate the British overlords. He wasn't afraid to declare words of moral clarity and truth to a morally bankrupt, spineless, cowardly people. Anyways, you know it was as if the courage and the defiance of Chevron was embodied within him at that very moment.

And what was the outcome of the 1929 Massacres in Chevron? The British did the same thing to the Jews of Chevron that the U.S. and most of the world are seeking to do to the Jews of Judea. They rewarded the massacre of fulfilling its purpose, to make the Land of Israel Judenrein, free of Jews. That's right. The British forcefully evacuated the remainder of the Jews of Chevron, ending 3,000 years of uninterrupted Jewish presence in the city of our forefathers that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite in the eyes of the entire city.

But I want you to pay attention to one very critical difference. This is lost on a lot of people, but it's a big point. The year was 1929. 1929? Isn't all the terror that we're experiencing, due to the occupation of the West Bank? Of Judea and Samaria. That's what the Biden administration is telling us, that's what the United Nations is telling us, that's what the European Union...the whole world is echoing this silly nonsense that all of this is about the settlements, and that's all that needs to happen.

I actually want to play a video for you of Rabbi Meir Kahane who I've talked about before. I won't give the introduction. But here is his answer to the question:



“How could a religious man of your stature continue to oppress Palestinians in the same way the Nazis oppressed the Jewish people during World War 2? You know, I just love that kind of question. You people tried to kill us in the 1920's. In one day in 1929, you murdered 67 Jews in Hebron. What was bothering you then? The Jewish state, it didn't exist. The Israeli army? It didn't exist. Kahane? He wasn't born. You murdered 510 Jewish men, women and children between 1936 and 38. What was bothering you then? The occupied territories of 67? You started three wars with us and you lost and now, now you cry. If you hadn't started the wars with us, you would have had a Palestine a long, long time ago. We would have been living together, side by side. You didn't want that. You wanted everything. You started, you lost, you lose.”

It just gets so nostalgic, how badly do we need a leader like him today? That's really, in a lot of ways, that's what we're really waiting for, that's what we're praying for. But you know, he was assassinated for being him, for speaking the truth. He was assassinated in New York in the...they actually acquitted the assassin who went on to bring down the World Trade Center. But that's an entire nother story, you could Wikipedia that.

But what is this all about then, if it's not about 29 or 36 or 48, the State of Israel, the 67 borders. What is it all about? Cause despite all the clear and obvious blessings the Jewish presence brings to the entire region. And you could ask the Arab workers that we had working at our Farm. I was always conflicted about it, but really it was just very almost impossible not to. But now, they're not able to come and work here. We don't bring them in anymore. And they're calling us, and they feel the lack of that blessing for the entire region. Why does the entire Jihadist world not waver in their complete dedication to murdering and wiping out every single Jew from the Land of Israel? Because they aren't hiding the ball. Those that are aware enough shout it from the rooftops.

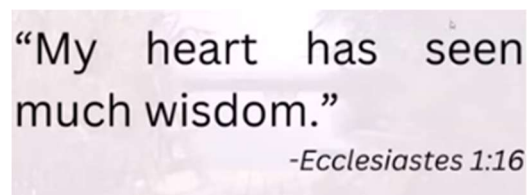
It's about redemption, it's about the Temple. It's not only a war against the nation of Israel, but it's a war against the God of Israel. This is the ancient biblical war of Amalek, rearing its ugly, evil head against God's children, against the children of Israel again and again and again. Let's not get lost in the details. Let's not get lost with the imaginary distinctions between Palestinians and Chamas and Chezbollah and the Islamic Jihad and ISIS and all the rest. This is a war of Amalek against the Jewish people as it has been waging war against us from the very

beginning when they attacked us just moments after we were forged into a nation, just after our miraculous liberation from Egypt when the entire world cowered in fear of Israel.

Not Amalek. Not Amalek. Their hatred of God and their fear of His revelation transcended their desire to even continue living. Their hatred for God was and is the most pure manifestation of hatred that ever was and ever will be. And we know, more so than all other wars, the war against Amalek is first and foremost, it's a spiritual war. It's a war of the soul. And the real battlefield of this war is, and it always has been in our hearts.

And so, how do we fight this spiritual war? I think that the key to fighting this spiritual war is in this week's portion. The key is in the heart of the spies. But even more than in their hearts, it was in their eyes. Or perhaps even more than their eyes, it was in their hearts. Meaning, the sages teach us that it wasn't necessarily what the spies said about the Land of Israel that was the root of the problem. It was the way they saw the Land of Israel that was their problem. But how did they see...what did they see it with? Was it with their eyes?

You know I was studying in an anonymously written book called, "In My Heart," which teaches from the words of the sages that there are essentially two sources of sight. One source of sight is through the eyes, which sees through the brain, which would have us conclude that according to how you think, is how you see. And that's a little bit more of the conventional understanding of things. But the second source of sight is through the heart. Is through the heart. As King Solomon said when describing the wisdom he was blessed with in chapter one of the book Kohelet, Ecclesiastes. He described it like this, he said:

A quote from Ecclesiastes 1:16: "My heart has seen much wisdom." -Ecclesiastes 1:16. The text is displayed in a serif font, with the quote in a larger size and the reference in a smaller size below it. The background is a light, textured purple.

His heart has SEEN, as if his heart had eyes. So the physical eyes are not the only source of sight. The deepest source of sight begins not only with the mind, but in the heart. And I really believe that the two are interconnected in a symbiotic relationship. They build upon each other, beyond what even modern psychiatry may grasp. And the truth is that I was conflicted about going into this with you. It's a little bit, I don't know, I don't know why I was conflicted about it. But I just was.

But ultimately I decided that I wanted to venture into these waters because I think it explains how it is that so many people, even intelligent, articulate, insightful people can find themselves falling out on the side of such evil, sick, twisted, even insane positions. Whether it's Chamas, or the mutilation of children for transgenderism, or whatever else it is. I mean we look at this and we say, "How could all of these people be falling down on the side of Chamas?" Is anyone else thinking that? When they look at the world, just from a basic question. It's so clear and obvious. Good and bad, light and darkness, how is it?

Anyways, so the understanding here is that the heart contains certain desires. Desires that can be hidden from the conscious mind. Hidden in the deep recesses of the heart. Way beyond the grasp of anything that we can get to here. And so therefore, a person's honest perception of reality depends very much on the purity of their heart. The purer the heart, the purer the perception of reality. And so, what happens with most people, I think most everybody at one point or another to different degrees, to different levels, is that there are these deep desires, hidden in the recesses of the heart. And a person's intellect is essentially bribed by their heart, which corrupts the normal, logical thinking patterns, allowing for the final decision and the final course of action to be driven by the self-interests and desires of the heart, with all of its impurities and all of its corruptions. And the more impure and corrupt the heart is, the more reality will be perceived through the prism of one's own interests and egos and animalistic desires. Are you guys with me up until now? And does this make sense?

So conversely, by the way, the more true and pure the heart is, the less the eyes and the mind are subservient to that selfish egotism of the heart. And the more one can see the world truly as it is, as the world truly is. Not how they're twisting and distorting and perverting it to be, but how it really is, without the lusts and the ego and the position and the titles and the acceptance. Without all of that. And that's how I believe we are finding ourselves in this reality in which people can be standing right next to each other, physically, but yet we could be living in two totally different worlds. Two totally different worlds.

And so, the spies saw what they wanted to see. They saw the corrupt interests in their hearts, where those interests led them. Which honestly, they may not, and I believe probably not, almost definitely not, were not conscious of it at all. They weren't aware of what was happening. Which by the way, that awareness that they were lacking, is something that does happen to us through prayer, through taking that time out of just being and doing to reflecting and connecting with God. We have an awareness that transcends anything else that we can accomplish.

Anyways, there are different explanations about what motivations may have been lurking deep in the unconscious hearts of the spies. Whether it was their fear that they would lose their power and their status in the Land, or their fear that the nation would suffer spiritually from needing to immerse themselves in the physical world and working the Land and all of that, without the clouds and the pillar of fire and the manna and all the other spiritual guidance that they had in the desert. Like Moses, himself. For more details about that, you can look in past Fellowships. I don't want to get too lost in that right now.

But, for whatever reasons their rational, logical mind provided, the bottom line is that they did not WANT to enter the Land. And their minds created whatever rationalization and justifications, whatever sort of house of cards they needed to create in order to bring in line with the self-serving desires of their heart. And by the way, before we make that classic mistake

of judging the spies too harshly, let's remember that the spies were anashim, they were great men of towering spiritual stature. And that the powers, the impulses that they were facing was beyond what any of us could probably imagine. But they were men of great stature. And that this condition of the impurity of the heart leading us astray is very much the default condition of all men, of all of us. All of us, to one degree or another, I think we have it, or I'll just speak for myself when I say that I definitely do. Because due to the sin in the garden, we were all born with the self-interests and egos, you know hard wired into our hearts and infused into our essence.

The Torah tells us this. You know we see it in Genesis, chapter 8, verse 21:

"For the inclination of the heart of man is evil from his youth."
-Genesis 8:21

I would actually like to get more deep into the details of why that's the case. And I think the best time would be in the actual chapter of Genesis in understanding why and how that reality came to be from the eating of the fruit from the forbidden tree.

But this inclination towards evil and self-interests in our hearts is part of the human condition. So how was it that Caleb was different and how was it that Joshua was different? How was it that they had succeeded in purifying their hearts? What did they do? So, well we see that Caleb, we'll start with him, there is so much more to it, but he at least, he recognized his inability to purify his heart on his own. And he just had the utmost humility. He went to the ma'arot, the burial places of the patriarchs and he just cast himself down on them, upon their merits and pleaded with HaShem to save him and to protect him. Not only from the influence of the spies, but even more so from the influence of his own heart. And that is essentially what prayer is, the very act of prayer is an admission that one lacks the ability to accomplish on their own what they are turning to God for in prayer. And I believe that is what Caleb's humble prayer, that was the key, or at least a key to the purity of his heart and his courage to be true to that truth, which that purity of his heart revealed to him.

And Joshua, well who was Joshua? Who was Yehoshua? Yehoshua was first and foremost the talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu, the student that cleaved to his master, Moses, that never left his side, he never ceased his Torah learning. He was a life-long student, constantly learning Torah. And what's the Torah called? It's called the Tree of Life. Because really the more you think about it, seeing the world through the eyes of animalistic desires and selfish interests really isn't true life at all. It's definitely some form of life, I mean you may be breathing in and out and have a beating heart. But you're not really altogether that different from an animal pursuing its own base interests. But by immersing ourselves in Torah, we are given the eyes to see the world as it truly is through God's eyes, through Mashiach eyes, through redemption eyes, through God's eyes. And the application and infusion of that truth day in and day out, that too

is what purifies the heart. That's what we've been talking about in this Fellowship for years. You know, some of these Fellowships are going by and I'm starting to see that there are just some very basic truths that are themes throughout all of these years. And that is one of the truths. The day in and day out application and infusion of the truth of God's oneness into our essence. It's the wisdom of the Torah and the living of the Torah that internalizes into our essence that there is nothing other than HaShem.

We quote it all the time in Deuteronomy, what are the words? The three words? Ain ode milvado. There is nothing other than Him. That there is nothing other than Him and that He loves us unconditionally. And so, if everything is from Him and His love for us is unconditional, therefore everything that happens, everything that happens to us, happens for the good. Which brings us to my second precious mantra – gam zu la'tovah. Right? Again and again we return to it. This too is for the good.

Because as Rav Biederman points out, a mistake of both the spies, as well as the rest of the nation is that they thought that after the sins of the desert – like the golden calf and all of their complaining, was that they feared that HaShem didn't love them anymore. And that they had forfeited whatever divine favor that they may have had when HaShem took them out of Egypt and performed all of these miracles for them, they lost that Divine favor. We see them in chapter 1, verse 27:

“And you murmured in your tents and said, “Because the Lord hated us he has brought us out of the Land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites to wipe us out.”
-Deuteronomy 1:27

the return of the spies and the report...how did HaShem respond to that report?

You know, we know that the dark day of the spies, that the report, what was that day? The 9th of Av, a day in which many, most of the greatest disasters in Jewish history have taken place. From the destruction of the 1st Temple to the 2nd Temple, so much else, we know that these disasters all happened on the 9th of Av because of the baseless tears that the nation of Israel shed upon

HaShem said, this is from the sages, from the Talmud –

Hashem said “You cried for no reason this night, I will establish for you a reason to cry (on this night) in all generations.”
-Talmud Sotah

For no reason! That's what HaShem said. It simply wasn't true. HaShem did not hate them. I could only just think of my daughter Dvash, who I've been having to give more and more disciplinary with. And at the moment where I've been punishing her, she says, “You hate me!” When in reality, I love her more than any words could possibly describe ever in the history of mankind and in the creation of words. And it's

because of that love that I'm punishing her that way. And so, the greatest of my love is exactly the opposite of what she's experiencing and projecting on me.

They just projected their own human constraints on HaShem. And they just couldn't imagine that after it all, after all the sins and the rebellions and the complaining, that HaShem could actually love them, truly love them. They simply couldn't...they simply didn't believe in HaShem's unconditional love.

And we've spoken about this before, that's not a simple error. You know, this lack of belief of HaShem's unconditional love and truly understanding what it means, is the underlying error in everything from the sin of the spies, to replacement theology, we could go into that more. We went into that during the last Fellowship. You know in the last Fellowship that I led two weeks ago, when I took that deep dive into the Priestly blessing, I pulled out a highlight. You know we're supposed to pull out highlights after the Fellowship that we broadcast out as highlight. I pulled out a highlight called, "Is there such a thing as unconditional love?" And I want you to read a comment that was left under that video. Someone wrote:

A screenshot of a YouTube comment. The comment is from user @mirelac8507, posted 12 days ago. The text of the comment is: "ABSOLUTE NONSENSE! God loves those who love Him and obey Him! HE hates the wicked and those who practice unrighteousness! There is NO SUCH THING AS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE! This is a LIE from the DEVIL!" The comment is displayed in white text on a dark background.

To the content of the video they responded. Now you know, it would be easy to summarily dismiss this comment as someone who doesn't get it, but that wouldn't

be fair. And there's a reason, you know I read these comments and a lot of them stick with me. They stay in my mind because the truth is, that looking at the rapid deterioration of Western culture, the whole idea of God's love has been so warped and twisted.

You know I recently saw this debate type interaction – it wasn't a debate, I forgot what it's called between this Christian conservative personality and adult movie star. And I wouldn't go into it, but it just stayed in my mind. And the general gist of it is that she said that doing pornography made her happy. And God loves her. And wants her to be happy. So God wants her to do pornography and therefore admitted that she said that it would be satan that would want her to stop pornography.

And that's just an extreme example of the idea of Divine love going so awry that it is totally twisted and warped in an entirely pagan, different thing. This idea of unconditional love has been so twisted, you can understand this YouTube's commentator's reaction when he sees an entire culture and world view justifying immorality and evil and perversion under the guise of God's love. But what this commenter on YouTube is missing here is not only the difference between hating the sin and hating the sinner, which is a very big difference, but also that one of

God's expressions of His love is His punishment. Right? I can see this already, as I said, as a parent. I see more and more the truth of chapter 13 in Proverbs.

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.
-Proverbs 13:24

I know they say spoils the child, but it actually says whoever spares the rod hates his son. But he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. A parent that doesn't love their children is a parent that doesn't punish them. That's why they say that the sin of

the snake was so great. God said to the snake, "I want to have nothing to do with you. You're eating the dust of the earth, there's dust everywhere. You have everything that you need. I will have nothing to do with you anymore."

It's the opposite. It's the opposite. Real love is that very close, you know HaShem's punishment for the Jewish people, it often seemed so severe when you look at it throughout history. But it is not a testimony as many say, and that the Jews of the desert may have thought that God doesn't love us. On the contrary, it's the greatest sign that He does indeed love us and He hasn't given up on us. And it's the greatest sign that He's keeping us close.

Really this whole portion, it feels to me when I look at it, that it's just this tragic series of mistakes and misunderstandings. But it's not just mistakes and misunderstandings, but it seems that way for a second, right. Let's look at it. The spies looked at the giants and they felt like grasshoppers. Ok, fair enough. We feel like grasshoppers. But their fatal mistake was concluding that the giants and the residents of the Land also viewed them as grasshoppers. Ok, not only were they grasshoppers in their own mind, they were seen as grasshoppers. Let's look inside, right.

There we saw the Nephilim - the sons of the giant from among the Nephilim; we were like grasshoppers in our eyes and so were we in their eyes!"
-Numbers 13:33

They thought that they were views as grasshoppers, but the reality is that no, the people of the Land were terrified of them. It was the opposite. They were terrified of them.

We see just a few portions down the road in Parashat Balak:

And Moab was very afraid of the people, because they were many; and Moab was distressed because of the people of Israel. And Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all who are around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.

-Numbers 22: 3-4

As an ox licks up the grass of the field. They thought they looked like little bugs, like little grasshoppers when really they were seen in the eyes of the enemies as oxen, devouring everything in their path.

And then of course, there's the misunderstanding at hand. In which the people thought that HaShem hated them. They THOUGHT they were hated. But no! Right? When Balak the king of Moab in an act of terrified desperation seeks to have the sorcerer Bilam curse them, Bilam consults God, who said to him:

"You shall not go with them! You shall not invoke curse upon the people for it is blessed."

-Deuteronomy 22:12

For the people is blessed. I mean every time the sorcerer Bilam opens his mouth to curse Israel, God's love pours out with greater and greater poetic beauty to the degree that every morning when I drive my son to school, we sing the same words together every single day that came from the mouth of the prophet, Bilam, but from the heart of

the loving God of Israel. Ma tovu, o halecha Ya'acov...how beautiful are your tents O Jacob and your dwellings O Israel.

It just seems like there are so many tragic mistakes and misunderstandings which is bound to happen when we arrive in a place where we need to understand everything. And when it comes to intellectually understanding the will of HaShem, particularly when you're in the midst of a test of that faith, well that is quite definitely a losing undertaking. Because if you can understand HaShem's will, if you reveal the depth of the truth of His will to you, then it wouldn't be much of a test, would it? Because ultimately the spies didn't follow the will of God with simplicity. They allowed their own desires to blind them from HaShem's desires. In the simplest terms, they lost sight of the nature of their mission. They lost track of their why.

I often, I quote the famous Rav Dessler who says that the greatest service of HaShem lies in the refinement of motivation. Why we do what we do. The spies were sent on a "how" mission. And they returned as if they were sent on an "if" mission. They were supposed to determine the best way to conquer the Land. How they were going to do it, not if they were going to do it.

And notice, that when Caleb spoke up against the spies, he said, chapter 13, verse 30:

Caleb hushed the people towards Moses and said "We shall surely ascend and conquer it, for we can surely do it."

-Deuteronomy 13:30

Notice he doesn't even mention the how at all, because even that isn't necessary. The only thing that's truly necessary is knowing that we can. And that we should. And why should we? Because HaShem loves the Land of Israel. It's a Land close to His heart, a Land that the eyes of HaShem are on from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. It's the only Land on earth in which the nation of Israel can truly thrive as a nation and come close to HaShem. It's the only place in which the hearts of stones within the nation of Israel can be replaced with hearts of flesh. It's the only place where the hearts of the nation of Israel can be circumcised. It's the only place where we can be truly purified, where we can refine out fears and the doubts. We can only do it in the Land of Israel. That's why.

Ok, so I'm running out of time here. So how do we develop the eyes of Caleb and Joshua? I'm going to share with you my heart, but I also want to hear from all of you. And I think that the answer is by...how do we develop their eyes? By developing their hearts. We develop the eyes of Caleb and Joshua by developing the hearts of Caleb and Joshua. By immersing ourselves in his Word, and His will. And thereby aligning our hearts with His heart. For just as His heart loves the Land of Israel, our heart shall love the Land of Israel. We will never share a negative Word about the Land of Israel, we will never utter a fearful thought about the Land of Israel, we will yearn for the Land of Israel and cleave to it. And our desire for it will be so great that there will simply be no place left within us for fear or doubt.

That is how we defeat Amalek. Only in the Land of Israel can the nation of Israel defeat Amalek. We shall constantly, day in and day out, infuse from our heads to our hearts that He alone is all that there is. That He is the King of the world, and that He loves us unconditionally in ways that we cannot understand. And that is part of believing in Him in truth. Part of believing in HaShem, in God in truth, is believing in His unconditional love for us.

So HaShem, please, help us to banish our intellectual gymnastics and sophistications from our minds and from our hearts. And let us replace our arrogance and our need to understand everything with pure, simple faith in You. Please HaShem, fill us with faith in Your word and trust in Your promises. And use us as vessels to shine Your light to illuminate the darkness of the world around us. And not necessarily through our words, HaShem, not all of us have the words to speak, but simply allow our very essence to be a living testimony to Your truth through the energy and through the words and through the life for who we are. Not necessarily through what we say. Please, HaShem, let us rectify the fear and the doubt of the spies. Let us conquer and defeat Amalek once and for all. Let us fix this slander that the spies spoke about the Land by filling our hearts with trust and faith and our mouths with praises and love for the holy Land. Because it is only You, HaShem, it is only with You that we know that the Land is very, very good. That it's a Land of milk and honey. And that if we just follow Your heart and replace our fear of

them with our fear of You, that we can surely go up and conquer the Land for they are our bread, they are our bread. Amen.

Thank you, my friends. I didn't ask Tabitha this ahead of time, but I would love to stay on and to hear from you, hear your thoughts if Tabitha can. But before we go to that, if Tabitha's able to, you know, we've prayed together and now it is my great joy as you know, to bless all of you. Because you know, you know by now that I am not a Cohen, I am not a priest descended from Aaron. But I am an Israelite and as the Torah tells us, we are a nation of priests and a holy nation. So it's my greatest honor to bless all of you. The Jews in this Fellowship, the non-Jews in this Fellowship. Whoever is here in this Fellowship, my heart blesses you and please allow me to channel HaShem's blessing to all of you.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

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