

Session 49
Beha'alotcha – Rescue from the Flames
30 May 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Gv9GKgOm0>

Ari

So good to see your faces. So good to see you, it's so good to be with you again. I hope you're doing well, and I hope Hashem has been blessing and protecting all of you. And there's just so much to discuss right now, so much is happening in the world that we need to try and make sense of. There's so many beautiful insights to help us connect those dots from this week's Torah portion that I want to discuss, but I first want to open up with a tefilla, with a prayer. But before we even start with our prayer, I want to spend a moment talking about prayer because as usual, when seeking Divine guidance and wisdom to make sense of things, one of the first places we turn to is the Torah portion of the week, which this week has very beautiful insights into prayer itself. Because ultimately, the only thing that can truly stop the world's spiraling out of control with this hatred and war and violence is prayer. The only thing that can bring light from all this darkness, turning to Hashem is prayer. Even the other night, I was on the mountaintop, looking to Hashem and I was just thinking and thinking and thinking and intellectualizing and I just said to myself, you know what? There's only so much my brain can do. I just need to talk to Hashem and pray.

And the Orach Chayim, a great sage of Israel, Orach Chayim means the light of life, he discussed the root of this sin. The sin of the mitonanim. The mitonanim are the complainers, the group of complainers in this week's Torah portion that had the unbelievablechutzpah to complain to Moshe, to Moses, about not having meat. They had this unimaginable audacity to sing the praises of the free food in Egypt, which of course was free for the same reason an animal gets its food for free because animals are property that exists to fulfill their master's desires, just like those Jews were. They spoke positively about this genocidal nightmare that was life in Egypt while speaking negatively about the manna, the food that God created for them, Himself. I don't know about you, but since I'm a little kid I imagined what it's like eating manna, God's own food that He prepared Himself and they demeaned it.

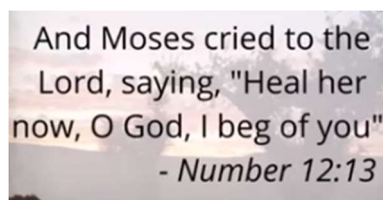
Now there's so much more to say about this, but the Chatam Sofer, he explains that we can understand the roots of one of these great sins by looking in chapter 11, verse 1. Are we there? Do you have the slide? Ok, I'll just read it to you. Apparently, the slides may not be working right now, but that's okay.

And the nation complained in Hashem's ears. Hashem heard and became angry. A fire burned them and consumed the people at the perimeters of the camp.

Could you just shake your head? Was there a slide up or not? There was no slide, ok, so Ben, Tabitha, if you're there now, we want to get the slides up because some of them I'm actually reading from right there. Anyways, so their sin was, b'ozneh Hashem. Ok? That the nation didn't believe that Hashem really hears their words or their prayers. You see people can believe that Hashem runs the world and that He sees everything. But it's harder to believe that Hashem hears everything. That He turns His ears towards us when we speak to Him. It's often hard to believe that our words make a difference to Him at all. That our words can change His decrees. It's something that I've struggled with a lot. It's a lot higher of level of faith then the nation had at the time. They doubted that Hashem was really listening to them. And that doubt and the power of prayer was the true root of their sin, of all their complaints.

And later in the portion we see actually, indeed, a living manifestation of the power of prayer. Of the truth of prayer. Miriam and Aaron sinned in that they spoke in a judgmental way about their brother, Moshe, as we know. Again, perhaps another example of the challenge in believing that God hears everything that we say. And as a result of this lashon hara, this gossip, Miriam was struck with leprosy and both Moshe and Aaron were distraught to see their sister in this way. She looked like she was dead. And Aaron turns to his brother Moshe and begs him to pray for their sister.

And here we see the power of prayer. Moshe turns to Hashem in the shortest and most concise prayer in the Torah. He says –



El na, raphe na la. In my family, when someone's feeling not well, we actually sing that. We go...El na, raphe na la. It's a famous song in Israel and we just pray for health. It's five words, just five words and God hears Moshe's prayer and he says, yes, she'll be healed. But first, she must sit outside the camp and consider and reflect on what she's done. Now what struck me about that prayer was just its simplicity, its brevity. It was just so short and simple and it worked. Miriam was healed. Now I'm guilty of this, too. Sometimes I feel like my prayers need to be lengthy and eloquent and ornate and poetic. I've set up at times such a high standard that I actually don't get around to praying at all. I just feel like I'm unworthy and my simple words wouldn't even matter.

But here Moshe teaches us that it isn't about all that. The question is, whether it's from the deepest place in our hearts. Just this week I had a revelation that really drove this home. And of course, it was from one of my greatest rebbis, my sweet daughter, D'vash. She's 15 months old

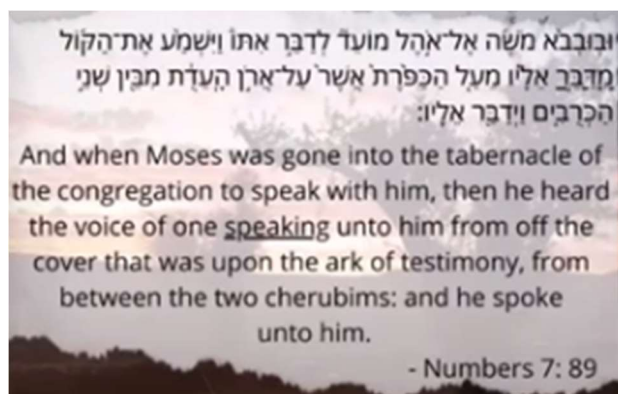
now and for some reason, her favorite word is Abba. Abba. She just walks around all day saying, Abba, Abba. Meaning, what does Abba mean? Father or daddy. It doesn't matter how many times she says it, every time she says, Abba, maybe it's because I waited so long, but every time she says it, my heart explodes in my chest. So last night in the middle of the night she started crying and I was given the opportunity to be the one to get up and to take her out of the crib and hold her. And in the dark, she leaned her head on my shoulder for a while and then she pulled away, she grabbed my ears, she focused in and she recognized my face in the dark and she gave this big smile and she said, Abba. And the joy I felt at that moment was indescribable. At that moment, I realized that it must be the same with Hashem. We can mumble through prayers half-heartedly and it probably means very little, but to turn our eyes and our heart to God with a full heart of love and yearning and we just say, Abba, well that's a level of prayer that the prophets have.

Let's pray together before diving into this fellowship. Hashem, Abba, the world is so dark right now. There's so much hatred and war and pain and tears. Please, Hashem, shine Your light of love and healing into the world and let us be a part of it. Use us as vessels to bring Your love into the world. Open our eyes to Your truth and help us walk in Your path. Hashem, please bless us and our families with health and happiness. Fill our hearts with love for You and with faith in You. And please continue, Hashem, to bless this fellowship with Your light and Your truth that we can strengthen each other, encourage each other, and hold each other up in the challenging times ahead. Bless us that we should merit to become sources of light in the darkness and sources of love in all the hate. And thank You for bringing us together here in this fellowship. May our words be a savory aroma that will hasten the redemption that we've all been praying for. Amen.

Now before we launch in, a student is not supposed to speak before his rebbi, so let me introduce or try to introduce, Jeremy. Jeremy, please go ahead.

Jeremy

There we are. Thank you, Ari, that was really a beautiful tefilla. I really, really, that really touched my heart and I just, just so happy. In my wildest dreams, I never thought that we would somehow be able to lead a tefilla with people from Germany and South Africa and all across the United States and Canada. And it's just one moment where we're all sort of together. It's just so beautiful. In the last two weeks now, I've been just obsessively thinking, it's out of my control, just the thoughts about prayer and what we should be doing, and what we should be praying for, and where our prayers are leading us. And what got to me was the last verse right before this Torah portion. The last verse of last week's Torah portion. And if we could just get it up on the screen. What I'm going to do now, is this English translation is not a perfect translation. It's from the King James translation. But they do something interesting here which is actually a reflection of something in the Hebrew. And here's what it says.



Now keep the slide up there please. If you look at the Hebrew now, I underlined the word medaber. But it doesn't say, medaber. Medaber means to speak. Moses went there to go speak and then God spoke to him. But the word there is midaber. And there's a special point in the dalet and the word is just not the regular word for speaking. And the King James noted this and that's why he said, he heard the Voice of One speaking unto him. They wanted to recognize that that words was a little bit off. In the English they added the word, the Voice of One. Because the word midaber is peculiar. It doesn't really make grammatical sense. It's pointing to something.

And so, there are two schools of thought that explained to us what this is. And it's so important for these times. So one is brought by Rashi which is in the Midrash. And Rashi says midaber actually means mitdaber. And the reason why, it's like the one letter was removed and that's why there's a point in that dalet. And mitdaber means speaking unto Himself. And so there's two ways to understand what's happening here. The first is what Rashi says. And he says that actually, Moses didn't go in and have a conversation with God. Hashem is constantly mitdaber. He's constantly speaking to Himself, He's constantly transmitting and broadcasting a message.

You know, we had the same idea when Abraham heard the calling. Lech Lecha, go towards yourself. That was broadcast all across the world, but only Abraham was really listening. And the same happens, you can see it even in the book of the prophets. You can see it in the second chapter of Isaiah and in the fourth chapter of the book of Micah, they have the same language, almost verbatim. It's like, and the Torah shall go forth from Zion and the Word of God from Jerusalem. Nation shall not lift up sword against another nation. And it's almost an identical prophecy, because there was a message that was coming out at the same time. Micah and Isaiah lived in the same time. There was a message that was being broadcast and both of them with their antennas picked it up and broadcast that message onto the nation.

And so, it was teaching us that really there's a constant message that's going out unto the world and that Moses when he walked into the Tent of Meeting, he was able to pick up the frequency and listen to that message.

But there's another way of understanding that verse. And the other way of understanding that verse is that who was speaking unto himself? What was this conversation that was happening here? It was actually that Moses went to speak. He went into a sacred space and what Moses did was, he engaged in the dialogue with himself. And in that dialogue with himself, he was able to emerge and understand and decipher what God was speaking to him. It was as if guidance for all of us in these times. How do we not only open our hearts to God and speak to God in just a very simple way, but how do we actually hear back? And so Moses had a sacred space, that's the Tent of Meeting. That's what that means for us. He went to a separate space. Now for a lot of people, maybe that's synagogue, maybe that's a place of study, maybe it's a library, a place of worship. Corona sort of knocked us all out of those places for a year. And so it's good to dedicate a place in your house, a room in your study, outside in the mountains. Find a place and then just begin to have a conversation.

And it's as if you're having a conversation with yourself because you're only one there and then thoughts emerge and arise in your head. And so, I don't talk about things that I'm doing unless I feel like I really own it now. But I've taken it upon myself now for probably well over a half of a year that I just sit in the study hall of silence. I just sit quietly and then I let my thoughts arise in my mind and when a thought really hits me, I just write it down. It's maybe something that's like, oh, I got to take care of that thing. Oh, don't forget about that. Write that down. Ooh, this thing is really bothering me. All of a sudden, a really interesting insight will just appear out of my mind, who knows where these thoughts are emerging from?

Now Moses was like the clearest of all prophets. Like it's as if you know that the window was totally clean. He could just see right through. The mirror was without any smudges on it. And so in his own internal voice, he was really able to decipher clearly who was speaking to him and what was being spoken. But really that last verse in last week's parsha is giving us an insight into, like those Jews that they feel like, ahhh, God's not really listening to me. Aghh...can he really hear me? Either they were complaining because they felt like, I'm calling out to God in this vast universe of the cosmos and the stars and God might be so busy out there and is He really listening to me? And the medicine for that is to listen. Because if you ask questions, answers arrive.

And so the second way of understanding that is a real, not only medicine for that question, is God listening to us? Because if someone's answering our question, if the answers are arriving, well something, some sort of communication is going on there. But more than that, I feel like right now more than ever, a message is going out to the world. A message is being broadcast now. The universe is speaking to us. And it is incumbent upon all of us to take time in the study hall of silence and just listen and learn. Learn what is being transmitted to us. It'll come from within in different types of thoughts and it could be that this fellowship, 500 some odd people, we're all listening, and the messages that are coming, some of them might be the same. It might

be to the Jewish people, get out, come to Israel fast. Time is running out. That might be a message that's going out to everyone right now. But it also could be that each and every individual has questions that they're asking and they need answers. Or they need answers to questions they're not even asking yet. And messages need to kind of emerge from within them. And that last verse has just stuck with me so much that Moses was either tapping into a broadcast that's being sent out, or he himself is going through an internal process and an internal dialogue. And then some thoughts are not necessarily that important. Most thoughts are even stupid. But every once in a while, there'll be an inspired thought that was made just for you.

And so, I would just give us all a blessing that with all the chaos around us and all the stress in everyone's life and the fast pace of this world and there's WhatsApp's and social medias and notifications and emails, and there's just...it's so quick to take a little bit of time. It's just quiet the mind to quiet yourself, to just sit down in the study hall of silence to really learn. Because in that place, there's an encounter. And that's really what I think the people of Israel were missing. And that's where that fire came from, it just consumes them. Because without...a relationship is a give and a take. It's a question and an answer. And without ever taking the time to get the answer, without ever feeling like, wow, I really am being guided in this world, I'm not just drifting through the universe, but I can tune into a message that's directly for me. That's just the biggest blessing that we can have. And the way to achieve it is right there encoded in the Torah. Find a sacred space, a Tent of Meeting. It could be out in nature, it could be in your home and then just to be in a moment of silence. And then the very last end of the verse, it ends...and He spoke to him. Just in case you're wondering, this wasn't Moses's own intellectual exercise, the verse sort of doubles down on it. And it says in the end, vayadaber elav, and just in case, know Hashem was truly speaking to him through this manner.

And so, I give us all a blessing that we have the time to be in silence, to listen to the answers of the questions that we have and the guidance that we need and please God, if all of us tune in together, who knows, maybe there's a message for all of us that would bring us all together, so thank you, Ari, for giving me the chance to share the Torah that's really been with me this last week. And it's just, it is what we need for this time, guidance from above.

Ari

Amen. Jeremy, that was really, really beautiful. I can't help but to think of the House of Prayer that we're building on the very top of our mountain. I know that the day will come when all of you are able to come. I believe with my heart that that day will come, that you're able to come and be there in the House of Prayer and experience what that's like. Because it's not just speaking from a Siddur. It's going to be ancient types of Jewish meditation, and we're going to just master the art of...or master ...there's no mastering the art of prayer. But, being able to, in the wisdom of the air of Judea, connect in a way that was just impossible for thousands of years.

Jeremy, you're still there right now. It's great to have you stay with us the whole time. I'd love for you to, but just want you to know, it's also good to see you on my mirpeset, on my balcony. It's good to know that the reception is good there. Maybe we'll just start doing it from there.

But anyways, I want all of you to know that Jeremy and I talk about you behind your back. I know, Jeremy does, I do, I'd even say that we brag about you. Because it's pretty obvious that the overall morale of the Jewish people in the world right now is pretty low. Not mine personally, I'm actually quite hopeful. I feel like Mashiach is coming. But I think I may be a little bit of an anomaly. Anyways, I feel like I'm pretty tapped in right now to the overall feeling and morale is really quite low. And I can list all the reasons, but you know what they are. But I'll list just a few.

We just emerged from a very unsuccessful war in which our genocidal enemies were victorious on numerous different fronts including unbelievable the court of public opinion. And by emerge from this war, I mean that there's been another ceasefire which could end literally at any moment. The Arabs that I'm talking to say it's going to end at any moment. And the minute Hamas feels like it's armed enough, to start murdering innocent Jewish civilians again. Jews are being physically assaulted and murderously attacked. Everywhere in the world, the United Nations just created a permanent Israel Condemnation Department. Have you guys heard this? I'm looking at all of you. And it's the first ever. And this is just the beginning of it. Jews are feeling increasingly isolated.

And even among evangelical Christians, a group that I know some of you identify with, or identify as, even among evangelicals, support for Israel and the Jewish people is going down in a free fall. Particularly and alarmingly among evangelical youth. In a recent poll, when asked who they support in the Israel-Palestinian dispute, 33.6 percent said they side with Israel while 24.3 percent said they side with the Palestinians, and 42 percent said they side with neither. Now just three years ago, three years ago in 2018, 75 percent of respondents supported Israel over the Palestinians while 22 percent preferred not to take a side. That means from 75 percent to 33 percent.

This is a huge shift and I think the reason in my opinion, it testifies to the power of the media and universities and the very human desire to be accepted by the masses. Not to be different and not to stand alone. It testifies to the fact that American evangelical Christian parents of today are failing in the same way that American modern Orthodox Jewish parents are failing as well in instilling authentic Biblical values. And then a true understanding of the Biblical and modern importance of Israel to their children.

And I don't think it's from a lack of trying. I think it's overwhelmingly challenging to really stand up to the leftist media, the universities and culture which is sweeping through America like

it's a tsunami. There's almost nowhere to hide, and the best of our youth are just getting swept away with the tide.

And that, my friends, is one of the reasons that the fellowship here is so important because this fellowship is a testimony to the word of the prophets that in the end of days, Israel will indeed stand alone. Yet as the world turns against us, and we have no one, increasingly we have no one to rely on, no one to turn to other than our father in heaven, there would be a small remnant from among the nations that stands with us. And I believe with my whole heart that you are among that remnant.

This fellowship has become a place where I can share my heart. And know that even if we don't agree on everything, we're here for each other, we're blessing each other, we're holding each other up, and we're seeking truth – each of us from our own place. And we're seeking to connect with Hashem. Which reminds me by the way, that tomorrow, we're going to be sending out a questionnaire as we really want to hear from you about how to make this fellowship stronger and better. We're in this together, we're building this fellowship together. So we really want to hear from you. Please respond to it. We want to hear your opinions and your thoughts and we want to take that all into account to make the connection between us even better and more powerful because you all know that the world out there right now is unforgiving, particularly in times that are as charged and tense as these. People simply don't want to say anything of real substance because they don't want to endure the backlash of hatred that always comes in the wake of saying anything true in our days. And that's what we're here for. We're here to seek truth together, to seek God together, for the sages tell us that the seal of Hashem, God's seal is truth. And hence we're here to pursue that truth with our entire hearts.

Now in our correspondences, many of you reach out to me on email and on WhatsApp, and you probably know, I'm much better at responding to WhatsApp than emails, I flag them because they're important to me and I never get back to them. It's a problem I have in my head, but anyways, many of you have asked me the best way to help Israel during these times. Because while the missiles have stopped for the moment, this new powerful wave of hatred for Israel and the Jewish people is only getting started. It's gaining strength every single day. And as a matter of fact, just this weekend, was the largest Palestine rally in U.S. history in Washington DC. Can you see this picture here?



I mean it was huge, huge. Thousands of people and they've set the bar so low that everyone is so proud of them that there were no mob attacks or lynchings as far as I know. And I'm not alone. My friend, Tully turned to me and asked me to speak at an online rally that he put together answering exactly that question of how Christians and other non-Jews can stand with Israel because so many people were asking him as well. And while it seemed like a simple question, I spent much of Shabbat really digging deep because there really isn't a simple answer because these aren't simple times.

So, I explained there that since 1937, and we spoke about this last week, but we need to review it again. I can't think of a time since then that there was such a global eruption of hatred against the Jewish people as today. And of course, I mean Jews, not Zionists or Israelis, but Jews. The masks are coming off and Jews are all around the world, are in very real physical danger. And just as in the times of the Holocaust when the Nazis sought to wipe out the Jews and the rest of the world was complicit in turning away and doing nothing, there was a small remnant of the righteous among the nations that stood with us and acted and acted often sacrificing their lives.

And so, what did they do? So this week's Haftarah portion, the Torah Haftarah from Zechariah from this week in Chapter 12, Zacharia envisioned these holy Gentiles. And he said of them, we've quoted this prophecy before, but it's among the most important. We'll even quote it again in this fellowship:

And the righteous of the nations shall attach themselves to the House of Israel on that day and be for me as a nation.

And what does it mean to attach yourself to the House of Israel? It means tying your fate in with the fate of the Jewish people. It means casting your lot in with the nation of Israel. Just like a Christian who hid a Jew in their homes in World War II. If they were caught, they ended up in the gas chamber in Auschwitz right next to that Jew, they shared the fate of the Jew. That's what it means. So, hopefully things won't come to that, but the underlying principle is the same. Truly standing with the Jewish people means suffering the same danger and feeling the same pain that the Jewish people are experiencing.

So, one way to help Israel is to find your local Jewish community. We can also help you with that if you should want to do such a thing. Your local synagogue and stand with them. Stand with them in their rallies if they have them and strengthen them and encourage them and comfort them. Contact their leaders, the head rabbis. And offer them, to protect them in whatever way they need. I want to share with you, here's a letter that was posted on social media that's making rounds by Rabbi Ephraim Goldberg of Boca Raton, Florida. You may remember that I had an exchange with him. Anyways, here's what the letter said:



To the leadership and congregation of the Boca Raton Synagogue.

My name is Stephen Gadry and I'm a pastor of a small church here in Boca Raton. Originally from England, I came to Boca Raton with my family 20 years ago in which time the Jewish community has been such a blessing to my life. The reason for this short letter is to let you all know that there are people all around you who love you very much and at a time when the nation of Israel is undergoing so much trial, it's important for people such as myself to affirm my support.

God bless you all.

Ok, it's like a pretty basic letter, but I can't tell you how many different people I got this from. And in response to the simple gesture of friendship you can see on the top what did the Rabbi write? He wrote this letter restores my faith in humanity. Reverend Gadry and I don't even know each other, but I'm deeply appreciative of his taking the time to write and for the sentiments he conveyed. It's like there's such a thirst for support to not feel alone and that letter, well that made a huge difference.

Yet in addition to these words of solidarity and love and support and brotherhood and protection, I believe there's another way that you can help. A way that's unique to the Christians here in this fellowship. I know we have a lot of Jews and a lot of Christians. But to the Christians here. It's unique to you that you can help in a way that we as Jews cannot. And while I imagine saying this would be controversial, because when I've said in the past it has been. I don't think we have the luxury to hold back anymore.

In Psalm 126, King David saw our days, the days of the coming of Mashiach, and he said that when we return to the Land, we will be like dreamers. And then the nations will say, look at the great things God has done with you and only then the Jewish people will say, look at the great

things God has done with us. I encourage you to read it inside, Psalm 126. Bottom line is that sometimes it takes someone from without to point out the miracles from within. So when you're standing with Jews, when you're talking to a Jew, you could perhaps consider. I'm not telling anyone what to say. But you can consider saying something to them like, we're with you, my friends. We will stand with you and we'll protect you with our very lives. But please open your eyes. God has done great miracles with you. It's time to return home. It's time to return to the Promised Land. I mean, it would have to be in your words, of course, from your heart, but I've seen that this message from non-Jews can have a profound impact. I have secular friends in America that only from the words of non-Jews proclaiming the miracles that God is doing with them as Jews are they able to open their eyes. There's nothing a rabbi can say, but these Christians have really touched their heart.

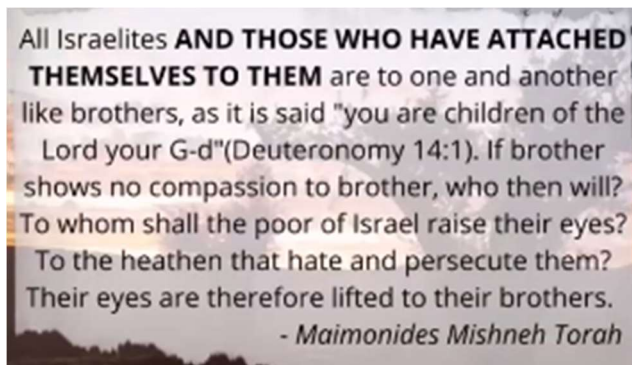
So, I picture my Jewish friends hearing this from a Christian and that's like there to provide support and love and encouragement and I imagine hearing such a thing would be confusing and disorienting to them. On the one hand, there's these precious words of friendship and solidarity, and on the other, a suggestion that it may be time to leave, to consider going home. But I think that shock may be a good thing. Because my beloved fellow Jews need to be woken from their slumber and their confusion because these are very difficult and confusing times for them in which they're feeling a mixture of shock and trauma and most commonly, denial. Just outright denial. And I'm not referring to any one group of them because from my perspective, it's nearly all of them. But in very different ways. Because I've spent a lot of time and effort reaching out to friends and family from all different beliefs and backgrounds, following social media and articles. And in my opinion, there's overwhelming denial and confusion spanning nearly the entire spectrum of American Jewry.

And it's been painful to see because for me, it feels like I'm watching a school bus filled with my family heading straight towards the end of a cliff and I'm trying to scream and nothing is coming out. I find myself up at night, tossing and turning and feeling this sense of helplessness. So, I'm feeling the sense of helplessness and I don't know whether it's that I don't know what to say or that I do know what to say, but I don't know how to say it in a way that it can be received. I'm afraid that nobody will listen or perhaps they will listen, but they resent me or they hate me for saying it.

And I think that has a lot to do with it because that's one of my weaknesses. I like people and I like being liked and I don't want people to hate me. And sometimes when you share a message that needs to be said, people are not going to like you for it. But either way, my soul won't let me rest because while I obviously fundamentally disagree with the Jews on the far left who have spent years identifying with every leftist cause, including J Street, I don't know if you guys have heard of J Street, but it's a well-funded Jewish organization that's just simply anti-Israel. They advocate for the destruction of Jewish cities in Judea and Samaria, what they call the West Bank.

They advocate for boycott, divestment, and sanction, the BDS against Israel. We can, we'll get into the psychology soon, but the fact is that this is not a time where Jews have the luxury of getting caught up on our differences no matter how fundamental and existential, they may be. This is a time for love and compassion and the recognition that 2,000 years of supernatural, irrational hatred against us is enough to drive any nation nuts. And all that pain would leave a certain portion of the population to arrive at the pathological, mistaken conclusion that if they hate us so much, it must really be our fault, which would lead them of course to believe that although it's being disproven countless times throughout our history, that if we simply surrender our entire identity and assimilate into theirs, that then they would love us and accept us.

But we can't focus on that because this is a time when we have to rise above and heed the words of Maimonides who explains in the Mishneh Torah:



Do you see a theme here? And while my assimilated Jewish brothers and sisters in America may not be financially poor, although many of them are. They are indeed poor with regards to their understanding of their Jewish identity, of their history, of their heritage, and most of all, of their destiny.

Now, just put your feet in their shoes for a moment. The vast majority of these Jews have fled horrible persecution within the last three or four generations. Whether from European countries where they suffered Cossacks and Pogroms and Holocaust, or from Arab countries where they suffered dhimmitude, to be second-class citizens, you could look that up, it's d-h-i-m-m-i-t-u-d-e, persecution, they were slaughtered and then they arrive in America and many of them see democracy and pluralism and liberty and they think finally we found a place that we can call home, that will accept us. And famously, many of them threw their tefillin, you know their phylacteries that we pray with in the morning, they threw it off the boat, even before landing on Ellis Island, where they often Westernized and Gentilized their names upon arrival. They believed that finally they would be accepted and loved. That they would be able to peacefully and quietly assimilate and disappear.

It wasn't overnight, but most often it was gradual. But generation after generation, families would shift from Orthodox to Conservative, to Reform. Their Judaism, being diluted to nothing more than a cultural bagel and lox Judaism with their real identity, unfortunately and painfully being their political affiliation with the Democratic party and their ideological affiliation with the left. We could get into the reasons for that another time, but other than an abstract knowledge that they're Jews and the distortion of the term tikkun olam, right? Fixing the world? Which actually is tikkun olam malchut Shaddai, to fix the world by bringing God into it. But no. They just say fix the world and they just appropriate that term to mean whatever leftist agenda they want it to mean.

And many of them identify on the most foundational level, just as leftist, liberal Democrats. And now, they are in shock. At least the honest ones are as their leftist friends are either outright supporting, or at least turning a blind eye to the Jew hatred. They're shocked that their beloved New York Times barely prints a word about the daily attacks on both synagogues and Jews in the streets. Not Israel embassies or pro-Israel rallies again. Just Jews. They're shocked that congressmen and senators are spouting Jew hatred and conspiracy theories from the Halls of Government. And they're shocked that when they try to identify themselves among the coalition of victims on the left, that they're being told that they don't qualify as victims. That they're the oppressors. Here's a meme I saw posted by a leftist Jew on their Facebook profile:



So this was last week. They think that memes like that will touch the hearts of their leftist friends. But none of their leftist friends "like" their posts. None of their leftist friends "sit with that." None of their leftist friends care at all. As a matter of fact, they openly side with those bombarding Israel with those 4,000 rockets.

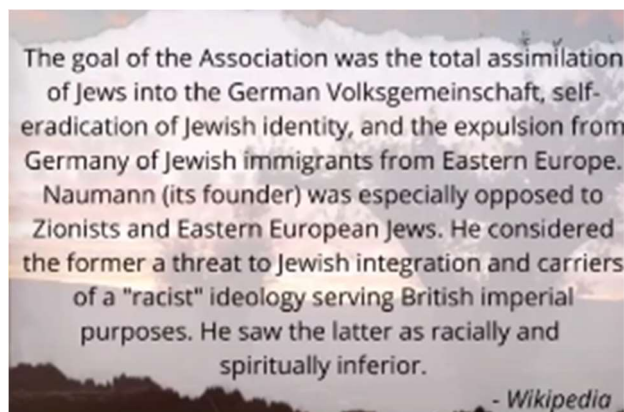
I saw it well articulated by an equally ignored meme from the other side:

Some German Jews in the 1930s: the Nazis don't mean us. When they say "Jews" they mean the "Ostjuden", the Eastern European Jews. We're Germans of the Mosaic persuasion, who contributed greatly to Germany. The Nazis: get in the cattle car, Jew.

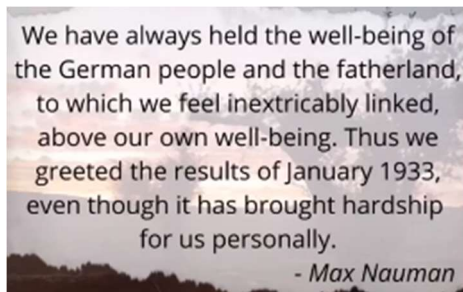
Some progressive Jews in 2021: They don't mean us. When they say "Jews" they mean the Netanyahu supporting Zionists. We're progressives who stand for BLM and reject Israeli policies against the Palestinians. The woke set: get in the cattle car, Jew.

These Jews are just, they're in shock. They refuse to believe that their leftist compatriots would turn against them with such speed and decisiveness. That such a thing could happen in America, too. I was conflicted about whether to share this with you, but I just had to. Because a student of history would know that taken to its logical extreme was the association of German National Jews. Which was a German Jewish organization during the early years of Nazi Germany that eventually came out in support of Adolf Hitler.

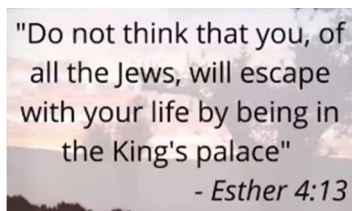
Now this is from Wikipedia:



You see, it wasn't really that different from the psychology of so many Jews on the far left in America who routinely vote against Israel. Religious freedoms, they vote against their own self-interests. Now Max Naumann, the founder of the Association of German National Jews issued a press release. I just had to share it. This is what he says:



Can you believe such a thing? We're a crazy nation, but also, we've just gone through so many crazy things. And by the way, those Jews were sent to the concentration camps as well. There's no such thing as successfully fleeing from your Jewish identity. There's no such thing as extracting yourself from the collective destiny of the Jewish people, no matter how entrenched you may think you are. For as Mordechai said to Esther in chapter four when she had the opportunity to endanger her life by going before the king to plead for the Jewish people. This is from Esther, chapter four:

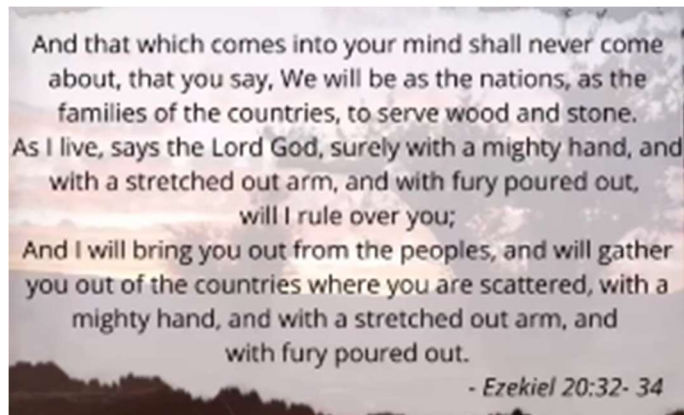


The king's palace could mean, in the ranks of the BLM, in the far left, or in the socialists, or the communists, or wherever it was throughout history. Whatever the zeitgeist was. There's no way to escape it and it's so painful to see this type of thinking playing out by the masses of assimilated Jews in America today. It's painful to see the idols being shattered, at least to hope that they're being shattered. Some people won't even allow that to happen. But so many of them, to see it, their illusions are going up in smoke. We remember the super leftist Jewish mayor from Minneapolis that confidently went to this BLM rally. He was sure that they were going to love him. He's as left as it gets. And what happened? He got there and he was heckled and shamefully thrown out. Do you remember this video? Watch this:

(video)



If only the Jews of America understood that they weren't just talking to him, but to the entire Jewish people, to the nation of Jacob, to the nation of Israel, that whether they were conscious of it or not, they were telling us the truth. That it's time to go home. And the roots of this type of thinking are very deep. They're actually very ancient. The prophet Yechezkel spoke of this type of thinking when he said in chapter 20:



We can try to assimilate as much as we want, but God simply won't have it. The more we try, the more we're hated, and I'm not saying that there will be a holocaust in America like in Germany. I'm not saying that. America is a different country and things never play out exactly the same way. Nonetheless, the winds of history are shifting and everybody is feeling it. In my humble opinion, it isn't just the leftist, assimilated Jews that are cleaving to these delusions, but in my opinion, so many of the religiously, identifying right wing Jews do as well.

Here's a little mini documentary. I tried to edit it down as much as I can, but it was aired on Israeli news this week. So I edited for you to give you an idea of some of the more religious and identifying Jews in America and how they're handling this. Watch this video:

Video (44:53)



Nobody can say that praying to Hashem three times a day in shul is not part of our way. But just as much as that's our way, having a gun is our way. And defending ourselves is our way. And killing our enemies when they come to kill us, that is our way....

I'm committed to the concept of never again, because this happened to us. Never again, will any Jew in America, or hopefully in the world have to go through this again.

My name is Jonathan Stern, from Kiryat Arba in Israel. I am a professional firearms instructor and I'm the director of Cherev Gideon, Israeli tactical training academy, right here in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. When I started this, that wasn't the question, that the answer was clear to all. It was clear to me, but it wasn't clear to everyone. But I think today, after all the anti-Semitic violent attacks that we've been seeing in America, the answer to that is clear why we need these skills.

America has changed profoundly in the last decade, but specifically in the last couple of years. It's come to epidemic levels that we haven't seen almost anywhere in the world since the end of World War II where people are marching in the streets of American cities with tortures, screaming the Jews will not replace us. Where you have women in Congress who are spreading anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and trying to promote anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish political agenda within our own governments.

(U.S. congresswomen) Denying millions of people freedom of movement or expression or self-determination is not consistent with being a democracy.

It's terrifying, but what's unique here in America, that we didn't have anywhere else, in any of the other countries we've ever lived in all of our long history in the diaspora, that here in America we have a right to bear arms.

We can stop that violent anti-Semitism through our own defensive preparations, making our communities hard targets. We must take responsibility for assisting our own security. And we must take great care in doing so responsibly and in consult with their effort.

They've been called dirty Jews and cursed out. Their children have been spit at or beaten up or their synagogue has been vandalized with swastikas. People are realizing that we live in a new reality. I'm not willing to give up being an American because there are people here who hate me. I'm going to stand up and fight and make sure that they're not going to win this one. I want to make sure our side wins this one.

(news program)

We begin tonight with the chilling new surveillance of what authorities are now calling a targeted and deadly attack just outside New York City.

A deadly shootout in New Jersey that left four innocent people dead.

Two attackers opened fire on a Jewish-owned grocery store.

The stabbing of an orthodox Jewish man on Wednesday. The Hasidic man was critically hurt when several men jumped out of a car and attacked him while he was on his way to synagogue in Muncie.

This crime sending a wave of fear through the Hasidic community.

The time is now. That we stand up. The time is now that we learn to defend ourselves. That we are no longer sitting ducks and that we put teeth in the saying, Jewish blood is not cheap. The next time an evil, anti-Semite comes into a synagogue with a machete or with an AR-15, or with an axe, or with a knife, or with a bomb or whatever it is. We're not going to run away, we're not going to scream, we're not going to call 9-1-1. We're going to draw our firearm and we're going to shoot him in the head.

A lot of Jews in America, unfortunately, have been brought up with the attitude that guns...guns, that's not us. Well guess what? It is the Jewish way, has always been the Jewish way. Bar Kochba fought the Romans. This is real Judaism. And if anyone says any Jewish leader says you shouldn't have guns, it's not the Jewish way...that is someone who has blood on his hands. Because anyone who listens to that and refuses to get a gun and then the next time an attacker goes into that shul, and kills people and you could have stopped him....who's responsible for that? Of course, the murderer is responsible. But just as much, that Rabbi who told you not to get a gun, because it's not the Jewish way, he's the murderer too.

Hitler targets. It's sort of like killing Hitler, which we should have done.



Absolutely, unequivocally, I believe that had the Jews been armed, Hitler would not have been able to accomplish anything near what he accomplished.

You know, if you don't want to be food, don't look like food. So, if the Jews are not easy targets, even if they know that one out of ten guys can defend themselves, we need not to be easy targets. (end of video)

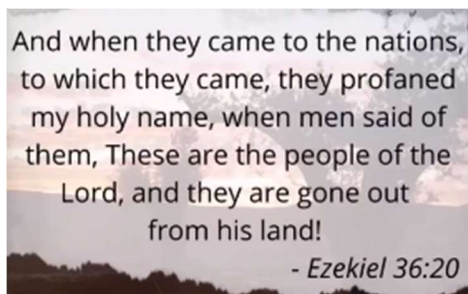
Ari

It's interesting that it took a Jew of Israel, next to Hebron to be able to bring strength and courage in a fight to the Jews of America, because I remember when I was there and this started happening, a lot of these synagogues were totally against having any sort of weapons, as if it's like a sin or a crime. It's refreshing to hear a Jew not making a virtue out of victimhood.

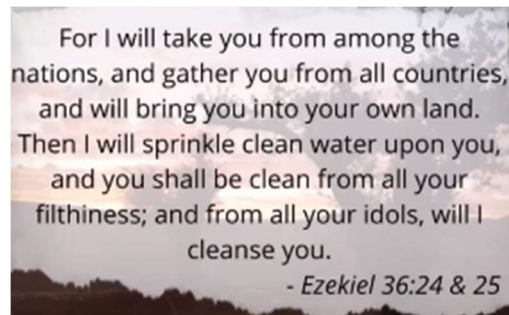
But I believe that while he's clearly a great guy, Jonathan Stern is dead wrong. I really don't think there's anything that can be done to extinguish the vicious hatred burning against the Jewish people because it's very clear that this spirit of hatred was kindled and sent by none other than God, Himself with one very clear message to the Jewish people. That the time of the exile has come to an end and it's time to go home.

The fighting that they're doing in that video that you saw reminds me of the Jews after the son of the spies. And they went to war and Moses said, no, God is not with you. They said, no, we're going to fight now and they suffered a terrible defeat. You see, that we're a stiff-necked people. And often we don't want to believe what we don't want to believe. But the fact is, that while a few Jews with guns may be able to protect their families or synagogues in a specific instance, the changes we're seeing are on a societal level. They're on a cultural level. A level that controlled the levers of power of government and the military. A level that a cute little Jewish militia will not be able to stand up to because they aren't meant to. In believing they can protect themselves with weapons and therefore continue living peacefully in the exile, these Jews are just as mistaken in my opinion, as their leftist brothers and sisters.

And I believe that just six chapter later, in the book of Yechezkel, the prophet explains why:

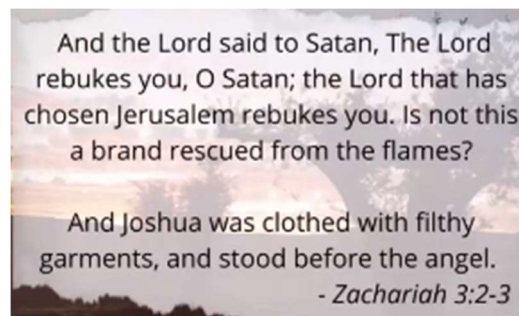


Meaning that the existence of Jews dispersed around the world is a desecration of God's Name in and of itself. The nations interpret it as a sign of God's weakness. That He is unable to collect, to have His chosen nation united in His chosen Land. And the sages of Israel explain, therefore, that just as the exile is a desecration of God's Name, the in-gathering of the exiles that we're seeing occur before our eyes, is a sanctification of God's Name. And that sanctification and desecration cannot simultaneously co-exist. When one rises, the other falls. And so, the prophet Yechezkel tells us just a few verses later where this is all going. This is chapter 36:24-25:



You see, at this point in history, that may be one of my favorite prophecies in the entire Tanakh. At this point in history, the Jews of the diaspora have been immersed in the exile for so long that they no longer even recognize the levels of lies and idols and distortions and confusion that they're so immersed in. And to a large degree, I'm including myself in that description as well. As every day, I'm trying to cleanse myself of the foreign thoughts and concepts that have integrated themselves into my psyche into my very essence. A process which I often fail at, but at least I'm aware of it.

But when I read the portion of the prophets from Zachariah, this Shabbat, this Shabbat, of course we know this Shabbat it speaks to us even more. It stood out to me and this was my bar mitzvah Haftara, the portion from Zachariah from my bar mitzvah. It stood out to me in a way that it never has in my decades of reading it. It discussed Joshua the High Priest who is described as standing before the angel of God in soiled, filthy garments:

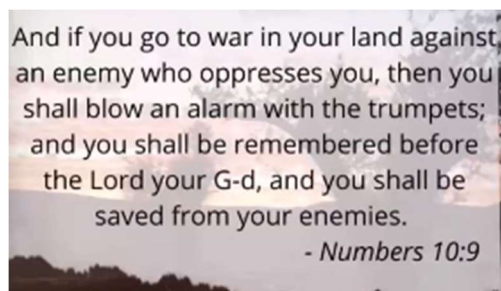


Now the sages explain that after the Babylonian exile, the Jews had become so assimilated, that even the High Priest, Joshua, his own sons intermarried and he didn't chastise them. He didn't get involved. And as Zacharia sees the satan, as we know is God's prosecutorial angel, that God is in charge of, he's not a force outside or different or other than God. He's one of God's angels with that purpose. He's condemning Joshua for not intervening and condemning this assimilation. For subscribing to this live and let live approach, for enabling and implicitly approving of this assimilation. And the satan condemns Joshua for these filthy garments. And then God Himself defends Joshua, saying that he was rescued from the flames. That Joshua Himself was immersed in the physical and spiritual flames of the exile, so much that he simply couldn't be judged or condemned for his past.

And as we see our assimilated brothers and sisters in the exile, even if they may claim to hate us and to love our enemies, we have to rise above that. We must remember that they are wearing soiled and filthy garments and they don't even know it. That under it all, they are children of the King, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Children of the King who the King has never stopped loving for one minute of the two millennia of wandering and persecution.

And so, we can't stop loving either. When it comes to family, you love each other whether that love is reciprocated at the moment or not. The one that sees things from a clearer vantage point needs to judge more charitably and lovingly and favorably regardless of reciprocity. Regardless of whether they return that love. And by God's grace, we are here in Israel and we have a uniquely lucid vantage point of clarity, at least compared to the Jews in America who are in the underbelly, being swept away in the currents of a country that is in the midst, in the throes of losing its collective mind.

I was actually, this last week, bearing my heart to my friend, Yossi, and telling him that I felt like a shofar needs to be blown. That this deep, visceral spiritual wake-up call, the kind of truth that man alone without God's help cannot provide. And then I opened up to this week's Torah portion and with this, I'm going to try to wind it down. It was as if God, Himself spoke to my heart directly. Numbers chapter 10:



This is not just about the Jews of America, this is also what we're facing here in Israel. And what does Maimonides say about this? There's a positive Biblical command to cry out and sound the trumpets with the shofar whenever the community is faced with trouble. This is one of the ways of repentance for when trouble arises and the Jews sound the truah. Everyone realizes that evil has occurred before because of their own deeds and this will cause the trouble to be removed from them.

My friends, I think by now, it's clear that we are in this together. Zachariah, himself, declared it in the same portion that we just read from in the righteous of the nations attaching themselves to the House of Israel. What does it say? And they will be to God like a nation, like one nation.

Hashem, please bless my brothers and sisters in this fellowship. Use this fellowship, not only to strengthen us, but to be a shofar to the entire world, calling the Jewish people back home and the

nations of the world to turn their eyes and their hearts to You, abandoning their hatred and abandoning their idols. Hear our hearts and listen to our prayers. For we come before You knowing that we're wearing soiled garments. Filthy garments. And we want more than anything for You to cleanse us. For only you can. Thank you, Hashem. We love you so much. Amen.

And thank you, my friends. Really. Thank you all so much. I'm looking at your faces. Thank you for providing a place for me where I can really dig deep. I've never had that before. Dig as deep as I can, knowing that I can pour my heart out before you, regardless of whether I may be mistaken, or even we disagree about things. This fellowship has become for me like a safe space. A sacred place. And for that, I'm so grateful. And for that, allow me to bless all of you.

Aaronic blessing

May God bless and protect you. May He shine His light and His countenance upon you. And may He give you peace. Amen.