

Session 193  
Re'eh – For the Love of God  
1 September 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1h7TgEcGJ0>

Ari

Tabitha, thank you so much for making these slide shows. I think it actually makes me even more emotional when I do my weekly practice of going through and looking at all of your faces. It just makes me more emotional seeing all of you, especially with what we're going through right now. Cause it is really very, very good to see all of you, really. And I've said this before, but this Fellowship, at least for me, is an anchor. Particularly during these very stormy waters that we find ourselves in right now. And they're painful waters. You know, Jeremy often talks about preparing your ark for the flood? You don't know when the flood is going to come. On a personal level, on a national level, on a global level. Well over the past week, it's felt like the rains have really been falling and the flood waters are rising, for reasons I am about to share with you and for reasons that I can't even go into. There's just so much that's happening. And so right now, I'm just very grateful that we have each other and that together we have HaShem sheltering us and protecting us and guiding us in this Fellowship together. And so let's start with a tefillah, with a prayer.

HaShem, please hold us strong right now. Hold us tight, strengthen us during these times of pain and disorientation and confusion. Please HaShem, infuse us with a deep and abiding faith in Your word and in Your promises and in Your love for us. Strengthen US so that we can be pillars of strength for those around us. Shower upon us and our families and our communities. Shower upon us health – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual. Shower us with health and give us the eyes to see even a trace of the light that we know You're shining into the world through Your people, Israel during these dark times. Just give us a glimpse because we know HaShem that this is all from You. And so we know that this is all for the good. This is all from You, then it's all for the good. But we're just flesh and blood, HaShem, and right now it's hard to see.

So please, HaShem, initiate the moment of salvation and redemption. Your nation is in pain, Your creations, all of Your creations are in pain and disorientation and confusion. Please, HaShem, reveal Mashiach in our world. We need Mashiach now more than ever. We love You, HaShem with all of our hearts. Please don't hide anymore. Please, HaShem, reveal Your love and Your light in the world and dry up our tears and heal our broken hearts. We need You, HaShem, we have no other hope than You. Please, HaShem, we love You, please HaShem, save us, please HaShem, save us. Amen.

You know, I don't know how articulate that prayer was. It actually felt ok, coming from my mouth, but I can tell you that it is from a very deep place in my heart, a broken place, and in some ways a desperate place, at least as desperate as I get sometimes. You know what?

Perhaps that's part of the purpose of everything that's happening right now. To bring us to this place of ultimate surrender...ultimate surrender to HaShem, to a place of just brokenness, absolute brokenness. Because we know from the 34<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

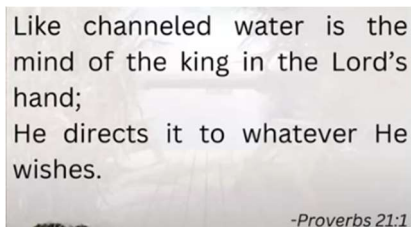
HaShem is close to the brokenhearted.

And from Psalm 145, HaShem is close to those who call out to Him in truth.

So HaShem is close to the brokenhearted, and He's close to those who call out to Him in truth. I think those two things are very connected. Because I really believe that... those of you who have been here and who've experienced true broken-heartedness can testify that it can take you to the deepest place of truth. Of calling out to HaShem in truth, in real emet. And that's why I've been finding these Torah portion that we're in right now so healing. Because for me, during these times in which I often feel like...there are times when I feel like I'm hopelessly lost in a dark forest, being battered with rain and lightening and wind. My greatest flashes of Divine light illuminating, for a moment, just a flash of moment, the holy Temple, shining with regal magnificence on the peak of Mt. Moriah...it shines and then it just disappears. It's gone forever, or it seems like. Those flashes, which are just so fleeting, they give me my footing and they give me my bearings. And I receive most of those moments during prayer, but even more so from the words of the holy Torah that are speaking so loud to my heart and so loud to the nation of Israel if only we would hear them.

And so when I look at the world and come to terms with how little I can really do about what's happening, and by do about it, I mean do about it in this worldly sense. In secular, rational terms. I do realize and know and believe in my heart that our real work here is our "inside game." It is the inside game, it's the work in our hearts. And I say that in quotation marks because I know that in the world of truth, that inside game, the service of God in our hearts, that has a greater effect on the machinations, a greater effect than the machinations of Joe Biden and Anthony Blinken and Ayatollah Khomeini and even Benjamin Netanyahu, or any of the other cast of characters that appear to be calling the shots. That it only appears that way. Because we know that while they may feel like they are calling the shots and they seem to us that sometimes they are, the Torah tells us otherwise.

The book of Mishlei, Proverbs tells us:



Like channeled water is the mind of the king in the Lord's hand; He directs it to whatever He wishes.

-Proverbs 21:1

And so, it is our fear of HaShem that is directing history. It is OUR love of HaShem that will bring salvation. But what does it really mean to love HaShem? And I'm not looking for a self-contained, circuitous answer. Like to love HaShem means to fulfill the commandments lovingly. You know, that's not enough for me, not now. I know on one level that's true, but

it's not good enough for me right now. Because I'll just speak for myself when I say that there's certain basic questions that 4-year-old Ari asked about HaShem, that 44-year-old Ari still finds himself asking from time to time. Questions whose fifth-grade answers no longer suffice. Questions I still don't fully understand. Or I shouldn't say that I don't understand, I would say that I have fleeting moments in which my defenses are down and I come back to the basics.

And this is one of those questions – what does it really mean to love HaShem? I think I've spoken about this before, but one of the first songs that I ever learned as a little toddler, that a lot of little toddlers, particularly in North America, the first song that they learn – Up, up, down, down, right, left, all around, here there, everywhere, that's where He can be found.

And so, HaShem has no form, no shape, we learn it at such a young age. He is everything that there is, but He's not limited to that. He's a God far beyond what our mortal minds could ever fathom. So the question stands, how do you love such a God? And that is what I want to start talking about on this Fellowship. And by the way, I'm recording from my mother's house in Yerushalyim so the internet is unstable. I'm not really always looking at the chats. So please, if I start cutting out, try to flag me down. I'm looking at your faces. I'll see you, just try to flag me down.

Anyways, I want to talk about this question, that's why we entitled it "For the Love of God." Because that is the golden question. And while I'm posing it, I'm not sure I have the answer. Not sure there is AN answer, but now is the time to reflect on this question. There is no better time to reflect on this question. Not only because these Torah portions that we're in right now are full of this exact directive, but also because of what's taking place this coming Tuesday night through Thursday night. Who knows what I'm referring to? What's happening this week? I'm looking at the chats. Who knows what's happening this Tuesday night till Thursday night? Elul! Penny got it first, that's correct. Elul, we're entering the month of Elul, Wes and Lisa, Hailey. Yes, we're entering the month of Elul. We're emerging from the painful, painful month of Av and entering into the month of love, the month of Elul. Which of course you know, the letters of the month itself...every year we talk about this exact issue because it's so fundamental. Elul, is aleph, lamed, vav, lamed. It spells Elul, and they are acronyms from the Song of Songs – Ani la'dodi, v'dodi li. I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me.

It's a time of Divine favor, a time of Divine love, a time of great opportunity to connect with HaShem in a way that we simply don't have the rest of the year. And we could talk about that later. I know some of you have questions when it comes to this theme. Like, how could we have times when we connect more and connect less? Isn't HaShem always everywhere? We could talk about that, these are all great questions and I want to hear them and I love hearing them.

But you know, our sages teach us “HaMelech ba’sadeh.” Elul is the time the King is in the field. This is the time. A time in which the prophet Isaiah speaks when he proclaims in chapter 55:

“Seek Hashem when He can be found. Call to Him as He is near.”

-Isaiah 55:6

That’s the month of Elul, that’s the month we’re entering right now, it’s the time of great Divine favor. And I’m so hopeful, and I’m so optimistic and grateful, that Av, which feels like a month of judgment, is ending. And anyways, we’ll talk about that in the future, God-willing, but for

right now, we’re going back to the basics, asking ourselves a foundational question (lost audio) There’s different dimensions to it, but very often I find myself reflecting that perhaps our journey through this world IS the discovery of that deepest, beautiful mystery. That we only find the answer to that question by taking the journey of life with the eyes that are seeking that truth and that answer.

Because as a little boy, I looked up to my father and I felt his love for me. And I never once doubted it. And that love became the template for my understanding of loving HaShem. And I would project the deep love that I felt for my father and project that on HaShem. And the love I felt from my father, the way I would imagine the way HaShem loved me, which is one of the things to which I credit the depth and the beauty of my relationship with HaShem that I hold dearer than anything else in the world, is because of that relationship with my father and the love that he showed me. That is indeed a great gift that my father gave me, the greatest gift, perhaps. A gift that I endeavor to pass onto my children as well.

But only since having children can I really begin the unimaginable depth of HaShem’s love for us. I could have never understood it before having my own children. And my love for Shaena, that’s added such a beautiful and powerful dimension to my understanding of HaShem’s love for His bride, Israel. And experiencing Shaena’s love for me has helped me understand our love for HaShem and yearning for His revelation. You know, every single one of our relationships can give us a personal, an experiential understanding of a different unique facet of our relationship with God. And perhaps, perhaps that is part of the greater, deeper purpose of our journey through this tumultuous and fragile world. To build and expand the vessels, to be able to give and receive love with our Creator. In other words, perhaps the purpose of life is both to fall in deeper and deeper love with our Creator, and to be able to receive even a glimmer of His infinite love for us.

Anyways, so before I dive deeper into this Fellowship, allow me to introduce Tehila. She has such a beautiful teaching to share. Jeremy’s not feeling well right now and we’re praying for him – Yermiyahu Benyamin ben Liora, may he have a complete recovery, a refuat ha’nefesh, a refu’at ha’guf, Amen! Amen. And so, here is Tehila, shalom Tehila!

Tehila

Hi everybody. It is so nice to see all of your beautiful faces after this long summer. Can everybody hear me? Yeah. Ok, so first of all, Jeremy sends his love. He was so looking forward to being here after our trip through Europe. We were so lucky to get to meet some truly beloved Fellowship members on the trip. And Jeremy had so much he wanted to share, he's just feeling horrible, so hopefully he'll be back soon on his feet. And so, your trusty servant is here in his place to send his love and I hope that we even have some new-comers, perhaps that we collected along our incredible journey through Europe, just meeting wonderful lovers of Israel and lovers of HaShem. It's just been an absolute blessing and it's wonderful to be back in the Land.

When we got back, it was incredible to see Jeremy get off the plane and I've seen him get down and kiss the Land when we've come back. This time he was hugging the Land, he missed Israel so much. So much so that security came. Indeed, true story, Ari. I don't think I mentioned that to you. Security had to come because they thought he had fainted from love for the Land of Israel. All the kissing of the Land, he might have picked up a virus somewhere along the way. But that is how much he loves the Land.

So, Ari you made a great opening for me. Ari and I did not coordinate this. You mentioned that as we're going into Elul, the fundamental parable that lights our way is this idea of the King being in the field. I just want to kind of unpack that a little bit. It's this Chasidic idea that was first coined by the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, the first Chabad rabbi, and he said that when we go into Elul, the King is in the field. Now that sounds strange, right? What does that mean, the King is in the field? He says, usually the King is in the castle, and when you need something, you go to the King and you have to get dressed up and you bow down and you know, you knock on the door and you come and you have to come to the King.

But in Elul, the King goes down into the field. And I've been really thinking, "What does that mean?" And it struck me, like what is happening in the field? What is happening in the field? The field is the place where we're not dressed up. What do we look like when we're in the field? We're in the field covered in the mud, we're sweating, we're in the sun, we're toiling and looking like specific, endless labors, season in and season out. Is anything even changing? Is our work even meaningful? Does the King even know what we're doing? He's up there in his castle. Is he even caring about us?

And the idea of the month of Elul is that we get this glimmer of how much the King cares about us. He comes out of the castle and he says, "I'm with you in the field, you're not alone in your toil, in your struggle, in your sweating in the sun, and your feeling of just...where am I? Am I all alone? The King comes down and he says, "I'm with you."

Now what's interesting is that the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, he says, "When the King comes down to the field, you don't ask for anything." Isn't that interesting?

The month of Elul is not about praying FOR something. It's about BEING with HaShem. HaShem comes down to the field and you just feel Him there with you. And you're working and you're in your toil and He's there with you. In your toil! He doesn't mind getting His shoes dirty, as it were, so to speak in this parable. He doesn't mind being down there, in your struggle with you. And I have this vision of you're pushing a plow and you're just...you're not even asking for anything. You're not asking, "HaShem, could the weather be a little bit better, could my field grow a little faster?" You're just saying, "Here we are, together."

And then what happens in Tishrei? Comes Rosh Hashanah. You put on our fancy clothes, and we elevate ourself to a level that we're allowed to go to the castle. Meaning HaShem is so humble that He comes to be with us in Elul, in the field, and in the month of Tishrei, we work on ourselves to become better and then we're all dressed up, we go to the castle, we go to whatever house of Prayer we're praying in. And we work on ourselves to get to the level that we can come and say, "HaShem, could You please give me forgiveness, could You please bless my family to have a good year, could You please give me all the things that you give me?" And that's really important, too. But Elul has something about it that's just a different quality. Where we just are here with HaShem, without asking for anything.

And while we were in Europe, I heard an incredible story of a couple...we met so many people who are doing so much in Europe for Israel. And one of the wonderful people that we met along the way told us about a couple in his congregation. I hope he won't be upset for me sharing his story, but it was so magnificent, I won't give any of their personal details. But he said, there was a couple that was childless. And after many years of childlessness and praying for children, they came to Israel for the first time. And they went to the Kotel, to the Western Wall, not to pray for children. I said, "Not to pray for children?" They didn't pray for children.

They went to the Kotel and they said, "HaShem, our whole lives we've been praying for children because we thought that by raising a family, that was the way You wanted us to serve You. But we see that that's not Your will for us and we accept that. We accept it." And that's what they prayed at the Kotel. And you know what they asked for? They said, "HaShem, could You just show us how to serve You without children? Can You show us how to be vessels to do good in the world, not through raising a family? Because if that's not what You want for us, we don't want to serve You any less."

And he said, nine months to that day, they were blessed with a child and have had, thank God, many children since then. And on that day, every year, they come back to Israel to serve and to volunteer with farmers and terror-victims and to try to do good.

And when I heard that story, it really, it kind of embarrassed me because we were in a very nice meeting with people, but it brought me to tears because I thought, that exactly encapsulates the idea, I think of prayer in general, certainly of prayer in the month of Elul where the

challenge is not just to believe that HaShem has a reason for what He is doing, or to accept. We have such a higher challenge than that. The challenge is to actually say, "Thank you, ok, ok." Like, "Good, You must have a different plan for me. It's not the plan that I thought, but there's another plan. And I'm ok." Like I'm not going to just say, "Ok, fine, I'm accepting it."

There's a Talmudic passage that says, "A person must bless God for the bad as He blesses God for the good." And I found that to be so incredible, like the bar that's set for us as believers. If the Talmud would have said, "You must bless God, even when bad things happen." You would say like, "Ok, fine," but the Talmud sets such a higher bar because you must bless God for the bad just as you bless Him for the good. Meaning with the same gusto. We have to muster it, it's almost an impossible bar, but just living under that bar. Just living under that bar knowing that that's what's asked of us, helps us get closer to that bar, even if we could never achieve it.

And like you have to be able to say, "HaShem, thank You for the bad, as much as thank You for the good because I don't know why this is happening to me, but I want to know HOW I can turn it into an engine for me to be better."

I remember there was one Rosh Hashana a few years ago, I'm sure I've shared this in the past, but I remember I sat and I was just talking, I was praying, and there was like a break in the synagogue, and I was praying to HaShem and I said, "HaShem, I'm afraid to say what I'm about to say. And I'm mustering all of my courage to say it." I said, "If I go wrong, please correct me." And then I was scared just from having said it. Because I know what corrections look like. And corrections are really, really hard. I said, "Did I just asked for corrections?" I said, "HaShem, I'm putting it out there. I'm willing to be corrected."

And I look back at that and a moment that...I don't know where I got that courage, because it didn't come from inside me, it only comes from HaShem. You know, like it was a moment of courage and I think that...and I try to get back there because I don't think I'm really there now. I don't feel that courage in me right now, because the corrections that we're experiencing in Israel are so painful. But I try to hold onto that moment. You know we have those moments of clarity and moments of faith. I try to hold onto that moment and say, "Please bring me back to that moment where I say, 'I'm ready for whatever You send me. I'm ready to be corrected no matter how hard it is because I know that will be an engine for me to get better. And most of all, I know that You will be with me. I know You will be in the field with me, no matter how hard my toil is, how painful my toil is. I know You're going to be with me because You come down to the field to be with us where we are.'"

And our prayer is just to have the strength to lovingly accept what HaShem gives us. Plant that in the ground and let it grow into ever greater strength, goodness, relationship with HaShem and just to plant seeds inside of ourselves to become who HaShem knows that we could be. And to eventually, please God, to be worthy, become people that can actually rise up and go to

the palace and really be on the level that we could leave the field, because we planted what we needed to plant, we toiled what we needed to toil and now we can go to the palace and be with HaShem, in the most elevated place.

So with that, I'm giving it back to Ari and I wish you guys the absolute most wonderful month of Elul wherever you are, whatever field you're in...if it's in Nebraska, Oklahoma, Germany or Indonesia, wherever everyone is, wherever your field is, that you feel HaShem coming down to the field to be with you. Bye guys.

Ari

Amen. Amen, thank you so much, Tehila, thank you. I couldn't ask for a better introduction. You know when Tehila's talking, Jeremy's talking, I'm looking through the chats and I see that our good friend, Tar just wrote, "It's a lot more about the journey than the destination. Our work to grow closer to HaShem is much more rewarding." And that's so true. It really is true, because HaShem is infinite. And so there is no such thing as arriving. Like I want to grow closer to...oh, got it, I'm there! There's no such thing. There's always room to grow closer and closer. And that is a taste from the Garden of Eden. It is only in this world, post that sin, that we got lost in the outcomes of everything. Whereas really when you're able to deeply enjoy and immerse yourself in the journey, that's a taste of the world to come. So thank you for that, Tar, and thank you, Tehila.

Like I said, I couldn't have a better introduction because the Torah portion begins with the words, "Re'eh," see. I place before you a blessing and a curse.

A blessing, what is a blessing, right, if not aligning yourself with HaShem in a way that we can receive HaShem's love? And what is a curse, other than being totally out of alignment and not being able to receive God's love. Because God's love, both those who receive the blessing and the curse, it's just up to us to decide, to figure out, to seek out the path ... the love manifested in our lives in darkness and pain. But as we know, everything is for the good. Everything is an expression of HaShem's love.

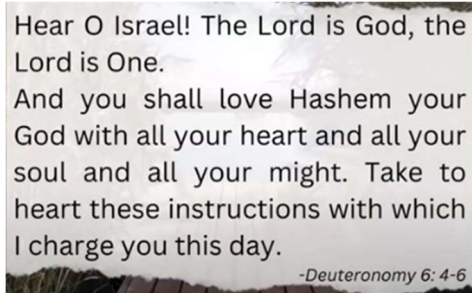
And you know, that's why Mt. Gerizim, you know I wanted to put the slide in here, I didn't have time, but Mt. Gerizim, the mountain of blessing, was filled with greenery and lush life. And Mt. Eval, where the tribes that were declaring the curses stood, that was desolate and barren. Because when we align ourselves with HaShem's light and love on the mountain of blessing, it flows through us, to the earth itself. And when we don't connect with the source of our life and our blessing and our love, the result is dissonance and hiddenness in which we can't thrive. And our land cannot thrive.

And so, back to the question again. What does it mean to love HaShem? Well, I think that Tehila touched on the facets of loving HaShem, but I really want to zoom in a little bit, I want to



focus on that. Because the words that a faithful Jew say every morning and every night. The first thing in the morning, first and last thing at night, what is whispered into our ears by our parents when we first enter the world and what we whisper into the ears of our children right as we are departing from the world, what are those words, we can say them together. We encountered them in last week's Torah portion in chapter 6 in Deuteronomy –

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad. Va'ahavta et HaShem Elohecha



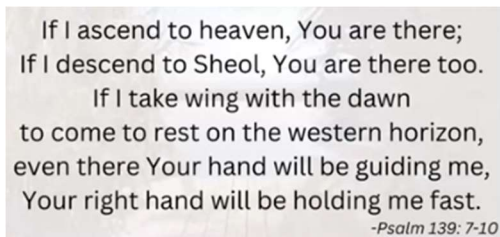
Hear O Israel! The Lord is God, the Lord is One.  
And you shall love Hashem your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.  
-Deuteronomy 6: 4-6

So there we are, you shall love HaShem with all that you have and with all your heart. What does that mean again, what does that mean? Well, our great sage, Rashi explains that it means that your heart should not be at variance with HaShem.

You know Rav Shlomo Katz actually pointed this out. That the Name that is used here for God, when it says we should not be at variance with HaShem, it literally says, "You should not be at variance with HaShem," that is the words, but it say, "Al ha'makom." Makom. You should not be at variance with the Omnipresent God, but the word makom is rarely used, but it literally means "the place." The place. Literally meaning that your heart should not be at variance. Your heart should not be in dispute with the place. The place meaning of course, both HaShem, Ha'Makom, the ultimate place within which everything that is in existence is. That's why it's called Ha'Makom.

But by practical extension, you should not be in dispute with the place that you find yourself in at any given moment. Just like the story that Tehila said. They said, "Here we are, how can we serve You from here?" Right? We're not to be in dispute with where we find ourselves at any given moment. The place where Hashem has put us right now! Don't fight it, don't fight it. Accept it, do your best to embrace it, do your best to love it, however difficult and impossible that may seem. Because that is an expression of loving HaShem. That is a real tangible way to love HaShem. To lovingly accept wherever HaShem puts you at any given moment, however painful or terrifying it could be. Not to be at variance with it, not to debate it, not to dispute it, because no matter how dark and hopeless it may seem, HE is there with us.

As we read in Psalm 139:



If I ascend to heaven, You are there;  
If I descend to Sheol, You are there too.  
If I take wing with the dawn  
to come to rest on the western horizon,  
even there Your hand will be guiding me,  
Your right hand will be holding me fast.  
-Psalm 139: 7-10

Your right hand, meaning God's hand of compassion, of mercy, whether we feel it or not, it's always His right hand that is holding us. His hand of compassion. And when we realize that HaShem loves us, even when we can't understand why, and that's part of the story. It's that there are times when we're not supposed to

understand why. Then we accept His will with a full heart, or at least with a heart as much faith and trust as we can muster. And my friends, as we all have, I've experienced true pain and heartbreak in my life. Maybe not the greatest amount of pain imaginable, but I've experienced pain and I've experienced heartbreak like we all have. And I've seen that while my faith doesn't totally erase my pain, remove my pain, or neutralize my grief, it does give me the strength to get through it without being scarred and jaded, which is one of those things I give credit to the fact that I still very much have that young, child, Ari alive within me.

You know, those who know me well can testify, often to my wife's chagrin, she's not always happy with that part of me, but I think she appreciates it in the end, that I have a very strong, silly, goofy, childish, light alive within me. And I'm so grateful to HaShem that I do. Rabbi Nachman says never to allow yourself to get old and I believe that's what he means. But we can only hold onto that, or even rekindle that childish joy when we can love HaShem by seeking Him out in the pain and the darkness of wherever we may find ourselves. You know again, it's not going to remove the pain, but it will prevent us from being destroyed by it. At least that's my personal experience.

Because as you know, I just came back from a family vacation in Netanya on Thursday. And I was like, "I gotta show them pictures!" And I was like, "No, I'm not going to do it." I didn't have time to search through and show you guys pictures. But on the most personal level, it was exactly what I needed and what my family needed. Just to be together and to hunt for shells on the beach and to build the Beit HaMikdash out of sand every single day with my children. Their initiative...build the Beit HaMikdash, build the Beit HaMikdash. Every day we built the Beit HaMikdash out of sand on the beach.

You know, and so on a personal level, it was just so beautiful. But on a national level, it was a challenging period of time. Were Jeremy and Tehila going to make it back? What was going to be? The country stood bracing ourselves for an all-out attack from Iran. You know, and then, one night last week, I think it was Wednesday night, I didn't even have time to look up when it was, in the middle of the night, while we slept soundly in our beds, the attack came in all of its fury. And just as Moses declared to the nation of Israel when they were crossing the sea –

The Lord will fight your battles for you and you will remain silent.

-Exodus 14:14

That is what happened, at least for everyone in the nation who is not a fighter pilot. As we slept soundly in our beds, Chezbollah prepared to unleash 6,000 laser guided precision missiles upon Israel. Missiles and drones and yes, while the very reliable news media didn't make it clear, what preceded to take place was nothing short of a miracle. Because we have been, we in Israel, definitely in Israel, we've been disabused of any illusions of the invincibility of the Israeli army on October 7<sup>th</sup>. We've become all too aware of how vulnerable and human we are. And despite, or I think because of our awareness of our vulnerability,

HaShem performed a miracle. Because the Israeli army and Air Force had no less than 30 minutes, no more than 30 minutes to synchronize at least 100 fighter jets with 100 fighter pilots into the air in perfect formation to decimate over 200 targets at nearly the exact same moment. It needed to be the exact same moment in order to maintain the element of surprise without which Hezbollah would have either pre-emptively launched their missiles, or just shot them at Israel, or retracted their launchers so that they wouldn't be destroyed. But the Israeli Air Force destroyed nearly all of them, if not all of them. I don't know the exact number, but nearly all of them, at the very least.

And from all the intelligence that we have, it was between 4:30 and 5:00 A.M., that fateful morning while most of the nation of Israel slept, unawares in their bed that HaShem performed yet another miracle for us. And of the 320 missiles that were successfully launched, very few of their targets were hit.



There was one precious soldier, Chaim Sabach, picture of him here, he was killed from falling shrapnel from the Iron Dome, from what I understand. He was at sea. And that's very, very painful. All of Hezbollah is (lost audio) this one life in my mind. But that's very painful, may his family be consoled and may his memory be a blessing. And I think perhaps it's not right to say this, but part of me believes that there needs to be during moments of great miracles like that, that single individual, soldier sometimes that die and maintain some semblance of free will so that all the doubters and deniers have something to hold onto. Look, he died, God is running the show? You know, to give them that to hold onto. I don't know.

But meanwhile, Chamas, Hezbollah, Iran, whatever, it's all the same, the global jihad is increasing their war on the nation of Israel by mobilizing their forces in Judea and Samaria. And they are seeking to maximize terror and carnage in Judea and Samaria. And indeed, here to HaShem is protecting us with miracles. You know I always think of the prophecy that the tents of Judah will dwell secure. I feel like there's even another layer of protection.

So there were two car bombs, cars loaded up with explosives, which is a pretty high level weapon. Meaning this isn't just some guy in his basement. This is governments, this is the Palestinian Authority, this is Chamas, this is Iran attacking our villages in Judea. And so there were two car bombs, supposedly there's a third, I don't know the details. All of this is maybe subject to change, but what I'm sharing with you is pretty solid. Cars loaded up with explosives, just want to maximize death. So one barreled into the Judean village of Carmei Zur and miraculously, the readiness squad made it there in time to intercept the terrorist, shoot him dead as his car detonated, blowing him up and lightly injuring one soldier.

I mean I've done my share of patrols. Just imagine you're in a truck patrolling around the entire settlement and there's a lot of territory to cover, not many patrols, but you're in exactly the right place at the right time and reacted as perfectly enough to successfully intercept that terrorist, to shoot the terrorist, the car blows up. Well only if you know what I have done patrols like that, you know the amount of Divine orchestration that has to be involved in such a thing.

And then there was the detonation of another car bomb by the security squad. My partner Yossi told me this on Shabbat. I couldn't believe him. It was in the gas station in Gush Et Zion. In the same sort of complex that Ari Fuld, my beloved friend was stabbed in the back and killed. And it was in the gas station right there, there was a huge explosion causing serious damage to the gas station which could have taken tens of innocent lives, if not more. And it's another miracle. Here is the video. I think maybe there's better ones out there, but it was clearly prematurely detonated.

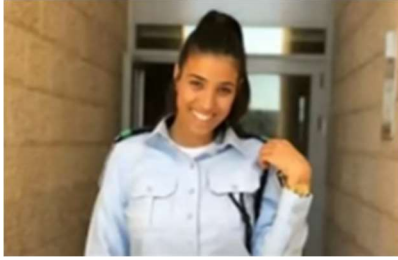


And I know some of you are sensitive, so I didn't play the video of the terrorist running at the soldiers to kill them and getting shot, and so the terrorist was neutralized right there. But like, these massive car bomb explosions, those are carnage weapons to maximize death. And it was just another miracle.

Ok, but then, this very morning, today, three police officers, seeking to do nothing more than to protect the innocent people of Israel were gunned down during a terrorist shooting attack on the road spanning from the Farm to Chevron. Here is the names, we can at least do that.



Arik Ben Eliyahu, husband and father of three. Three more orphans, another widow. There's Hadas Branch, wife and mother of three. Three more orphans, one more widower. And Major Roni Shakuri, who was the father of the late Major Mor Shakuri, who was killed in battle in Sderot police station on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Think about what that family is experiencing right now.



Here's a picture of More. So beautiful, so sweet. And by the way, just to let you know, reports are coming in that one of the terrorists in that attack, that perpetrated that attack was a member of the Presidential Guard of Abu Mazen, the head of the Palestinian Authority, our partners for peace. In his Presidential Guard. But is there one sanction on them? Not one! It's actually insane. You really can't make this stuff up.

How much of this can we take, HaShem? How can You allow Your people's blood to flow so freely through the streets of the Holy Land? How can You allow Your Name to be desecrated by allowing the blood of Your nation to become so cheap that we don't even have time to commemorate them.

And as we're being relentlessly attacked from without and from within, before Shabbat, we see this heart-breaking video of the families of the hostages shouting messages and blessings to their family members kept in Gaza. Here is the message of parents of the famous sweet, kind Hersh Goldberg:



Mother of Hirsch:

HEERRRSCH! It's Mama. Hersh, I love you, stay strong, survive.

Father of Hersh

Hersh, it's Dada. What you need to know, and all 107 of you need to know, is not only are the families here today and 9 million people of this country, but people all over the world are fighting for you. We will not stop until all of you are home soon. Hersh, (Hebrew Aaronic blessing).

Ari

I mean it's just so heart-breaking. I mean, you heard that in her voice. That is the voice of a mother, whose entire life has been totally and completely consumed with prayers, with doing everything she can. If she goes to America, Republicans, Democrats, she doesn't care, whatever she needs to do. She doesn't care, she wants her son back, her boy back. You can hear that in her voice. It's so devastating. It's devastating beyond comprehension.

You know, there's so many suffering, so many dying, that we nearly don't even have the time to mention them. To truly remember them and commemorate them as they deserve. Things are just happening so fast, there's so many untold stories.

You know, and then, and then as we emerged from Shabbat on the Holy Land, to find the devastating news that six hostages' bodies have been retrieved from Gaza. I mean so



devastating because we all had opened our hearts that perhaps they were still alive. That they would be reunited with their families and their people. We've seen miracles like that so far. Here are their names –



The body of Hersh Goldberg, arm severed, body tattered, starved and torn was found. It's like devastation, heart-break. People are walking around the streets and just done. You know, you can feel the grief and the brokenness in the air. While unbelievably, I don't know if I should say pathetically, at the same time, there is a real tangible sense of relief, and even gratitude that at least we got their bodies back. You know, we brought them home, we can bury them in the Land that they loved in a respective way, and their families can have some sense of closure and finality. And that's something we're grateful for. We've descended to such degradation

that we're grateful that we're getting back the battered, tortured, abused bodies of our fellow innocent holy Jews. These beautiful daughters of Israel, these beautiful princes of Israel.

Meanwhile, today is the first day of school. When we are seeing our beautiful, innocent treasures off to school, all of them wearing blue and white in solidarity and commemoration of our beautiful Land and those who are fighting for it and dying for it. My children don't understand why they're wearing blue and white. And I don't want them to understand. But the older children do. Here's a video of a full battalion of Givati infantry soldiers escorting the orphaned daughters of their General, Yochai Glam, who was killed just a few days ago in combat in Gaza:



You know, imagine these sweet little girls, still in shock, and reeling from the death of their father, just days ago, being escorted to school by a battalion of Givati soldiers in a last gesture to their fearless commander who led them into battle in Gaza.



Here's a picture of our, me and Sheana, our little treasures heading out to their first day of school as Shaena and I put on brave faces holding back tears.

You know meanwhile, just a couple of hours ago, reports are coming in that Hezbollah has attacked the Jewish village of Yuval in northern Israel with anti-tank guided missiles. And there are a number of casualties reported. This is all happening right now. This is happening right now. And there's so much more that I'm not even privy to share as much as I want to. And so you can see how natural it would be for us to shake our fists up at the heavens and scream, "Why?! Why? This is what it means to be Your chosen people? Choose someone else!"

But every single one of these bereaved families, I will tell you now, without even knowing, I will tell you now, that every single one of these families that are burying their loved ones, are proclaiming, by the burial plots, while the dirt is still fresh, "May God's holy Name be magnified and sanctified in the world." They are literally sanctifying HaShem's Name from within the deepest depths of their unimaginable and unbearable grief. The religious and secular, right wing and left, it doesn't matter. All of them are sanctifying God's Name as they bury those who they loved, as much as we love those who we love the most. And with voices broken and quivering with tears, I'm telling you, every single one of them is pronouncing, "May God's holy Name be magnified and sanctified in the world." They sanctify HaShem's Name.

You know, that's why it's so important not to use this worldly eyes to judge the nation of Israel negatively because they may not fit into your definition of what it means to be religious, or what it means to be obedient, or what it means to be this. We see the whole Torah is filled with the disobedience and the rebellions of the nation of Israel against God. And nonetheless, we see just a few weeks ago, God says to the (lost audio) of using this worldly eyes at the burial of their children, of their husbands, of their fathers.

So you want to know why we deserve redemption? Or maybe we don't deserve redemption, but God will give it to us? You know I think we deserve redemption. Because we are believers, the children of believers. Even those that claim they don't believe at all, they are believers. And as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "Atem edi," you are my witnesses, says HaShem. And the day will come, may it be soon, may it be literally today that HaShem will reveal Himself to the world through His beloved people, Israel. And at that great moment, and at that appointed time of which none of us know, the world will see beyond a shadow of doubt, that the nation of Israel lives, that the God of Israel lives. And that King David lives and is alive. When I say King David, I mean the progeny of King David, Mashiach that we're praying for. And in that day, HaShem will be one and His Name will be one as the prophets tell us.

Any nation that can endure what we've endured and still love HaShem with all of our hearts, without even understanding how or why, that is a nation worth choosing, if you ask me. Or at least worth saving. Maybe at least worth loving. A nation with enough faith, not to be in variance with the place, the ultimate makom, the God of Israel and to accept the decisions of the King.

My friends, I have to go now. But I love you guys, and this has been a difficult time for me, a difficult Fellowship for me, but it's also been a healing Fellowship for me, thanks to all of you. And like so many of you that still have a broken heart, even right now, well with that broken heart, allow me to bless you with the blessing of Aaron the High Priest. Because as we know, the blessings of a broken heart are particularly powerful.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless you and keep you. May HaShem shine His face upon you and be gracious to you. May HaShem lift up His face upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Love you all so very much. Thank you for everything, for your love and your support and your encouragement and your blessings and your prayers. Ardelle, thank you for the prayer booklet that you send out. It's become like a secondary siddur, like a prayer book for me. So grateful for that. And I love all of you very much. Shalom, shalom.