

Session 242

Preparing for Teshuva – Rosh Hashanah Special

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

Jeremy

Shalom everybody, welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship. It's great to see you. I'm here with Ari, Ari come on in. Ari's here, Tehila is coming soon. We have a very special Fellowship for you today. Welcome to all of the newcomers. Welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship, we are thrilled that you've come to join us today and meet our global community.

This is my favorite time of the year, it's ELUL, it's the month before Rosh Hashanah, before Yom Kippur, before Sukkot. It's a time that is auspicious for transformation, for renewal. And most of our life, we're reacting, we're tired because we didn't sleep well the night before. Then we're still stressed because something we were working on is still being delayed. And the path is usually like dominos that fell and sort of pushed the next domino in our life down. And we're usually running on auto-pilot. And although we can't stop the cause and effect always, really at any point we can do teshuva.

But this time of year is dedicated to exactly that. There is a certain power that we have now – stopping our old habits, trying to cultivate new good habits, making a new vision for the future. Rosh Hashanah comes and it's like a hard stop and reset. And we take judgment for what was and we look forward to the New Year. But really in order to make a real change in our life, it's not like, "Ok, I'll make a New Year's resolution." It's like, no, we capitalize on the opportunity of teshuva we have this month, the month of ELUL. And just like Shabbat, the 7<sup>th</sup> day was made holy and blessed, already at the outset of creation, each season, every month has a spiritual power encoded in time. And living with the Hebrew calendar allows us to harness that energy and bring that blessing into our lives.

Last week Charlie Kirk was tragically murdered as you just saw on our slide show. And I live in Judea on the other side of the world, and his murder has hit me and Ari harder than I ever thought it would. It's just shocking how it's still with me. And his death is a real loss for America, a true loss for the world, and as far as young leaders go, I don't think you could have found a better, more righteous, patriotic, political activist in America. I don't think America could produce someone better than him.

And it would be remiss if we didn't mention him the week that we're gathering together. He was a real lover of Israel, a lover of the Bible, to the point that he actually kept Shabbat. He

would turn off his phone from Friday night until Saturday night and just spent quality time with his family. And in some ways, that was his last message to the world. You know in his newest book, it's not even released yet, it's on Amazon, you can preorder it. It says, "Stop in the Name of God," which is just like his last message and it was a book about why the whole world, Jews and non-Jews, should keep Shabbat and adopt that Hebrew calendar as laid out in the Torah and in the Ten Commandments, and actually make Saturday a Sabbath and actually keep and guard Shabbat and make it holy.

And so, this Fellowship, we're taking that message to the next level. We say, "Don't just keep the Ten Commandments, we're inviting you to join us in Israel and celebrate even more with us." Because really the entire Torah is a blueprint of time and living in the biblical calendar is a blessing that you can only experience when you live it. And once you live it and you learn it, you'll see the blessing just comes into your life because you're literally living with the rhythm of biblical times.

And so, obviously, when Mashiach comes, there's a Temple in Jerusalem, everyone will be turning to the biblical calendar, the biblical feasts, everyone will be honoring Shabbat because those are HaShem's appointed times. Any other holiday is a manmade offshoot of the original holy days in the Torah at best or totally pagan at worst. And in some ways, this Fellowship is on the forefront of opening its doors from the Land of Israel and inviting the world to align their destiny with Israel by aligning their lives with the times in the calendar that Israel lives on.

And so, we are one of the first in the Land to do so and welcoming all of you newcomers today. It's more than a thrill, it's prophecy and destiny and a privilege that we get to host you. And so now, I want to take this opportunity, as our ultimate dream is to set an example for the world of people coming together from different religions, different backgrounds, languages and different understandings. A vision of what Jerusalem will be in the future – a House of Prayer for all Nations. And in our own way, we've made a spiritual, virtual House of Prayer for all Nations right here. And so, I just want to take this opportunity and bring us all together from all the nations of the world together in prayer and we'll sort of kick off the Fellowship with that.

So, HaShem, Avinu Melcheinu, our Father, our King, thank You for gathering us together today from every corner of the world. Bless everyone you've called to join us here today. Every week we start off our week learning together, turning our hearts to the Land of Israel, tuning in to what's flowing from Zion, Your message alive in our day. We dedicate this time to You. We learn Your Torah to live life and we live life to learn Your Torah. Open our hearts to teshuva. Help us prepare, bless us to return and draw closer to You. Awaken within us the courage to change, the humility to listen, and the joy of aligning our life with You. Bless every member of

this Fellowship, bless all who have joined us here today, bless their homes, bless their families, bless the work of their hands. May we take the learning today and bring it with us into the rest of our week and into our New Year that's coming. May we continue spreading Your light from Zion and washing the world with waves of purity, truth, and goodness. May the light of Your Torah guide us and may Your Presence rest upon us and carry us all to a new rebuilt Jerusalem. Amen.

All right my friends, so now I want to invite the guy that everyone loves to love. He's been my friend since we were 18. We've been study partners together for rabbinical ordination, we served together in the IDF, we have built the Arugot Farm in Judea together, and our greatest work of all – we founded the Land of Israel Fellowship together. In my life, he is the example of what it is to be a believer in this world. So please, welcome...what's your rank now? Sargeant?

Ari  
Sargeant First Class

Jeremy  
Sargeant First Class Ari Abramowitz.

Ari  
Shalom everybody, it is so good to see you. It's fun, we're trying to broadcast together in the same place, we're going to be doing a really great and exciting interview, so we wanted to be together, next to each other so we can sort of interact in that way. So we'll see how this goes, how it plays out. But it really gives me a lot of joy to see all of you, our Fellowship family. And there are visitors that are joining us today from Israel, from around the entire world. And if there's ever a Fellowship that's right and true to open up to the entire world, it's this Fellowship. Why? Because this is the gathering in which we are preparing ourselves spiritually, intellectually, even physically. We're going to touch on that for Rosh Hashanah.

And you know, before we begin all of that, I want to pause for a second. Especially for those joining us for the first time. Please know that this Fellowship is not just a broadcast, it's a family. And every week, our beloved Ardelle, she gathers our prayer requests into a booklet, and together we lift them before God. For me, this has like become a secondary siddur, like a prayer book of our own. And I truly believe that when God sees His children praying for one another in love and in faith, those prayers rise before Him with no less favor than the words of traditional liturgy. Because what moves His heart most is not only our prayers, but the love we show to one another when we bring them before Him, when we're praying for each other. Just think about your own children. If they were to come and intercede on behalf of each other, the joy

that that would give you, that's the joy that it gives, particularly when your children have been at odds and separated for so long. And now they're coming together, not from a place of shared alliances, but real love.

So how fitting this is, as we approach Rosh Hashanah, the day we stand before the King of the Universe. We don't stand as scattered individuals, but as a family bound together in faith and in love. And so, Jeremy started with a prayer for the Fellowship as a whole, but I want to Zoom in a little bit to some of the struggles that we are each going through. Our joys, our struggles, I tried to really make it tight. You know during a normal Fellowship, I'm able to really bring it out more and zoom in more, but...

HaShem, HaShem, please, we come before You as one family, lifting up the sick. So many of us are struggling with our health, lifting up the weary and the anxious, asking for healing and peace and strength. We ask Your comfort for the grieving. There are those among us who are truly grieving. We ask for Your blessing upon marriages and families and Your Presence in every home. Protect those who dwell in the Land, the soldiers, leaders and families alike. And as we draw near to Rosh Hashanah, may our prayers rise before You as a testimony of faith and love. Write us and all of Israel in the Book of Life, for health and peace and above all, for closeness to You. Amen.

And that's what it's really about. It's really about, ultimately, closeness to HaShem. I've come to realize that. That to pray for things one way or another, that's not what this is about. We really want to be close to Him in whatever He deems right and true for us. And that's not just about Jews, that's all of mankind. You know, Rosh Hashanah is often mistranslated as the Jewish New Year. But in truth, it should be called the New Year for all of mankind. For it's on this day that Adam Ha'rishon was created. Unlike Pesach, Passover, which was about Israel's redemption, or Shavuot, which celebrates the giving of the Torah. Rosh Hashanah marks the creation of humanity itself. And this means it is not only the beginning of the Jewish people story, it's the birthday of all of humanity. On this day, Adam stood before his Creator and declared as Psalms says:

Hashem has reigned,  
He has robed Himself  
in majesty.  
• Psalms 93:1

Adam was able to look around and see the natural world and how it was so clearly a robe of majesty that HaShem was putting upon Himself. Our sages teach that this was the very first coronation of God as King. And every year, all of humanity is called upon once

again to renew that coronation together.

Now those of you who join us week after week know how much heart we pour into this Fellowship. How grateful we are for the gift of this community, really truly, seekers of truth, men and women of love and compassion and humility who come together not despite our differences, but as I've come to realize, because of them. That is what makes this gathering even more beautiful. We seek truth together and we seek HaShem together.

And you know I usually wake early on Sundays and dedicate my heart and mind fully to this Fellowship, drawing from Shabbat, my learning, my prayers, and all that HaShem has placed on my heart to share. But last night, of course, the night before this very important...every Fellowship is important, but this one felt very important. I was assigned to an all-night patrol here in Judea. Now for those of you who may not know, months ago I was called into Reserves to defend our mountains and the communities in southeastern Judea. And not every night requires me personally to go on the all-night patrol. But of course, chok milfi, Murphy's Law, as it says in Hebrew, last night it did.

So this morning, only after a few hours of sleep, I rolled out of bed and just looked at the clock...11:00, oey, what am I going to do? I need to figure out what to say! Our Fellowship is looking to ME for guidance. We have holy guests from around the world and they're expecting ME to explain what this is all about. And me and me and me and then it just struck me. That's exactly the point. This is not about me. It's about HaShem. I don't need to have all of the weight on my shoulders. It's not about me.

We stand in the final week of ELUL, just eight days before Rosh Hashana. And the sages teach that ELUL, HaShem leaves His heavenly palace and meets us hamelek ba'sedeh, He meets us in the field. He comes to us with love, making Himself accessible and waiting for us to pour out our hearts before Him. And so often, I really feel, you guys know me, I feel unworthy to approach Him. I know He loves me unconditionally, but I just look at the blessings in my life and I don't feel that I am nearly reciprocating in the way that I possibly could and that He really expects of me. And I just feel unworthy. And I know He loves me unconditionally, and yet, I just have this emptiness in my heart like how can I possibly stand before Him?

And yet, in ELUL, HaShem reassures us. He says, "If you don't feel worthy to enter My palace, you are worthy, you are. But if you don't feel it, if you can't convince yourself, then I'll come to you. I'll meet you where you are. I'll meet you in the field." He humbles Himself so to speak, and He meets us in the field. You know it's what my father used to say to me and what I say to my children all the time. So much that when I start the sentence, they say it with me together. "I don't care where we are, as long as we're together." My father said that to me, I say it to my children and I nearly cry every single time. Because that's really what HaShem is saying to us,

particularly in ELUL. That's His message to us in ELUL. So in these final eight days, we have the opportunity to walk into the fields, in the fields of our lives and our hearts, literal fields and meet Him there. The prophet Malachi said:

From the days of your forefathers you have strayed from My laws and have not observed them. Return to Me, and I will return to you — says Hashem

• Malachi 3:7

It's not just Malachi, it's Zechariah, it's Yirmiyahu, it's the prophets of Israel, that is one of the primary, foundational messages. God is saying, "Return to Me and I'll return to you." Each day in ELUL we blow the shofar. It's a personal wake-up call, but it's also much

more. It's a proclamation that God is King over heaven and earth. Zecharia foresaw that day of universal recognition when the whole world will see. He says:

And Hashem will be King over all the earth; on that day Hashem will be One and His Name One.

• Zechariah 14:9

Rosh Hashanah is not only a Jewish holiday. I think perhaps the Jewish people, one of the things that we need to do repentance and teshuva for is treating it and interacting it like it's just our holiday. It's not. It's a rehearsal for the fulfillment of this prophecy when all the nations will

acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel. That the God of Israel is their God, too. And He loves them, too. And yes, that mission is meant to be led by Israel. But I don't believe it's meant to be carried out by us all alone. Maybe that's controversial, but to me it's so obvious and clear that there will be righteous among the nations who stand with us in courage and truth.

And that is why the loss of Charlie Kirk has weighed so heavily on my heart. I've wept for him, numerous times. I just saw that little clip on NBC with his kids running, hugging him, and he said, "Is there anything better than that?" I just cried, Shaena and I both cried. I've always admired him, but like I said on the Israel Guys, only since his murder did I realize that I don't just like him, but I love him. And it may seem unlikely, right? A rabbi in Judea feeling such love for a Christian in America who I've never personally met. After all, we didn't share identical understandings of God by any means, right? And yet, as I often say, when I look back at my own faith from ten years ago, I can see that half of it was wrong. And so, ten years from now, I pray, that I'll see that half of today's understanding is wrong, too. God doesn't ask us to fully grasp Him. Such a thing is impossible.

So what does He require? The prophet, Mica, Micah tells us:

What does Hashem require of you? Only to do justice, love goodness, and walk modestly with your God.

• Micah 6:8

And that really is, I think the reason I loved him, I love him and so many others around the world. There's such an outpouring of love because that was his essence. He walked humbly before God, proclaiming God's kingship to the whole world as he understood it. Yes, God is great, He is beyond what any of us can understand. He understood God in the way that he did, and he with his whole heart and all of his essence, with humility, proclaimed God's Kingship, giving glory to God in all things. I remember Ben Shapiro was just interviewing him. And he said, "You've built up this massive company, this massive..." "All the glory to God," he would always say.

And one of the most moving examples was, as Jeremy mentioned here, his decision to keep Shabbat. Even when it risked alienating his allies and different denominations of Christianity, they may not like it. He didn't care about it. He did it out of love for God, which is really, with such humility, and courage. I want you to just watch the last minute, but try to watch the whole clip. It was hard for me to cut any of it out. Here it is:

Charlie Kirk



I believe that honoring the Sabbath is the commandment that allows you to honor the other nine commandments, and that the enemy has gone after the honoring the Sabbath because then it is easier to weaken the other nine. And I'll prove it to you. If you're honoring the Sabbath, it's definitionally easier to honor your mother and your father because you're not working that day and you're with family. If you're honoring the Sabbath, it's easier not to covet your neighbor's wife because you're not around your neighbor's wife, you're with your family. And you're filled with gratitude that day. When you're honoring the Sabbath, it's easier to have no other gods before God because that day is built in time as a Temple, as a sanctuary to put God first, to not have idols, to not take the Lord's Name in vain. The other nine commandments are made easier, are made more accessible for our broken, fleshly, depraved nature if we prioritize the Shabbat.

Ari

And the essence of what he was saying was that all of the different commandments, that when you keep the Sabbath, it facilitates all of the different commandments. When he keeps that Sabbath in his heart and in his experience, it brings his ability to really coronate and inaugurate

and relate to God as King. That's what it was always about. Charlie's life and witness calls us to do the same, to walk humbly, to give God glory and to seek His truth above.

As we enter these final days of ELUL, let us take inspiration from his example. Not because we agree on every theological detail, but because we are called to coronate HaShem together. This Fellowship is about that mission. Jews and Christians, Israel and the nations, preparing not just for individual teshuva, but for the crowning of the King of Kings. And when the shofar sounds on Rosh Hashanah, may it awaken us, my friends, and may its echo resound across the earth, proclaiming as Zecharia said in chapter 14:

And HaShem will be King over all of the earth. On that day, HaShem will be one and His Name will be one.

Shanah tova, my friends. May this year be a sweet year for you, your families and all of humanity. And now, let me give it back to Jeremy.

Jeremy

All right, my friends, thank you, Ari, that was really beautiful. And it's in perfect timing. Right before the Fellowship, just a couple of hours, just an update, kind of what's happening. The Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, the Ambassador of America, Mike Huckabee, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, went to the Western Wall and prayed together. Check out this picture, it's just so touching and so beautiful.



It's remarkable. I've never seen a political gathering in America, or between America and Israel, or between any country, anything for that matter that looked like that. I mean, we are living in Messianic times because it's becoming more and more clear that this is not a battle between right and left. The battle today is between good and evil. That's why it transcends religions, it transcends theologies, it transcends denominations. Those that believe in God, honor the Bible and those that want to destroy the free world. Because it was founded on the fundamental ideas and beliefs of the Bible. Having the Secretary of State praying at the Western Wall with the Prime Minister of Israel, it's historic.

And Israel used to take the foreign diplomats to the Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, as if Israel's history started with the Holocaust. And if the people of Israel are in the Land of Israel because of the Holocaust, like now, taking the Secretary of State to the Old City of Jerusalem,

near the city of King David, to the Western Wall, that was built in order to create a Temple Mount where the Jewish Temple once stood...that's where we need to be taking diplomats, that's teshuva, that's return, that's really what we have to do. To go back to the foundations and aim our hearts toward Jerusalem.

And when I saw that picture, I really felt simcha, like true happiness. Biblical happiness has the same letters as the root word for Mashiach. That's the happiness I'm talking about. It means real fulfillment, true happiness. And in that way, this week's Torah portion that we always read every ELUL before Rosh Hashanah, gives us the keys of how we should be approaching this time. Chapter 26, verses 46 and 47:

And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything.

• Deuteronomy 28:46-47

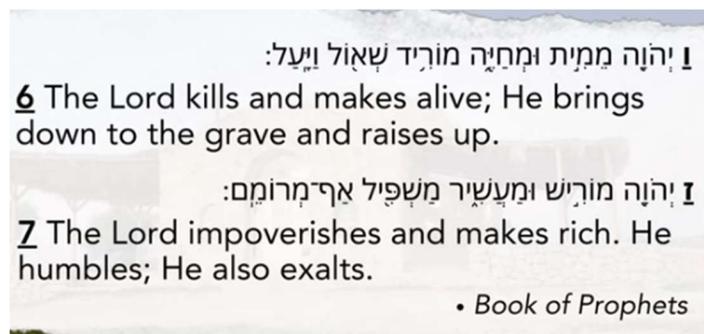
There it is, the path of blessings and the reason for our curses. This time of year is not just about mending our ways or being hard on ourselves. We have an emotional guidance system, an internal GPS, simcha, real happiness. When we're feeling true happiness, we feel alive, we feel good, we feel fulfilled. We know that we're on the path of teshuva. That's when you know you've made God King in your life. With all of the challenges, and all of the hardships, you can still feel a deep happiness because your emunah, your faith keeps you aligned in your life. And you know that HaShem has a plan, is watching over you and has a destiny for your life.

And our sages teach that sadness closes the gates of heaven, but simcha, biblical happiness, breaks through them. And so, if you're doing teshuva out of fear or guilt, there's just no happiness. That will not lead to blessing, the foundation of all Torah life is to live that simcha, to live that true happiness. And for me, there's almost nothing that makes me happier than what I'm about to tell you. We have a very special treat for you. Tehila Gimpel. She's not only one of the most brilliant Torah teachers in Israel, she's also a pillar of the Land of Israel Fellowship, and she now has a special Women's Fellowship called Women of Valor. Over 150 women from all over the world are members, and aside from joining Tehila live every month, and learning together, she has beautiful relationships with all of these people that are reaching out to her now. And she's here with us today to share her insights on this time of year, help us find some wisdom within Scripture, and prepare for Rosh Hashanah, so please welcome the lovely Tehila Gimpel.

Tehila

Hey, so wonderful to be here with old friends, new friends, so great to see everybody. So guys, welcome. I want to talk about the Haftarah that we are going to read on Rosh Hashanah, the portion of the books of the prophets and see where it's sending us to direct our thoughts and our prayers on Rosh Hashana.

So on the first day of Rosh Hashana, I'm sure some people know, some people might not know, we read the Torah portion of Sarah remembered, lifted up and given a child. And then we read from the books of the prophets, we read chapter 1 of the first book of Samuel, about Chana, Hannah being remembered and the story of the birth of Shmuel, Samuel. So, why do we read these stories? The classical, sort of obvious answer is because Rosh Hashanah in the Bible is a day of remembrance. It's this day, we all know Rosh Hashanah as this day of judgment, deciding who will live and who will die. So, it's fitting to read about God remembering righteous, barren mothers, giving them children, bringing new life in the world. And you can see it in Chana's second prayer, after she's been blessed with a child. Her prayer sounds very much like what we pray on Rosh Hashana. She says in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, chapter 2, verse 6:



It sounds exactly like the mood that we're in on Rosh Hashanah, kind of understanding that this is our Judgment Day, standing before HaShem. So there's this thematic fit.

But on the other hand, there's a lot of stories about HaShem, hearing someone's prayer, or giving them what they ask for, or being remembered. And this is like the story out of all the stories in the books of the prophets, the story of Hannah as a person, one person being remembered. And of course, her son was very important, he was Samuel, but in the books of prophets there are huge miracles of God judging the entire nation favorably and saving all of us from different enemies with this huge scale of salvation. And when we're standing together on Judgment Day, we feel the whole world is being judged. Wouldn't it be more awe-inspiring to talk about a massive salvation? Why is this one personal story of Hannah the story that we need to be studying right now from all the stories of the prophets? Why is it fundamental to our Rosh Hashanah experience and our relationship that we're trying to cultivate with HaShem at the beginning of the year?

So in Women of Valor, this is a big announcement, we are going to be spending the month of Tishrei really diving into the character of Chana. And so, all the ladies here who are already here in Women of Valor and who are not yet in Women of Valor are invited to join us for that.

But right now, I just want to take a little look into her story to see why she's so integral, specifically to our Rosh Hashanah experience. I want to look at her story for a second. We know the story. There's a man named Elkana, two wives, Chana and Penina. Penina has children, Chana doesn't, she's so sad. I want to look for a second at her relationship. What happens when she shares her pain with her husband? You could really see that Elkana is trying to be a good husband. What does he bring her? He brings her a double portion. Does that cheer her up? It doesn't only not cheer her up, she doesn't even have an appetite. Finally her husband says to her, "Why are you so upset?" Now I imagine, all the wives out here are going to be with me, "What is she expecting at this point?" I imagine that she's expecting him to be like Isaac and pray alongside her. Maybe she's looking for advice, for empathy. Unfortunately, Elkana is so not in the right direction of what she's looking for. He says to her:

**8** And Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

Like a big palm to the forehead. Because I think, "Oh my gosh, he's so far off the mark. Imagine how alone she feels. He already has his own children with Penina, and he says to her basically like, 'Hey, us is great, us two

together. This is like a non-stop honeymoon. Who needs kids? Kids are just going to infringe on our relationship. I'm as good as ten kids.'"

It's sort of reminiscent of Jacob when he says, "Why are you coming to me? Turn to God who's not giving you children." But at least Jacob is giving her advice, at least he understands that she wants children. Elkana seems to be like not even that interested in her having children. And something about, what do you expect him to say? I would expect him to say, "Am I not better than ten sons?" If he was my husband, I would expect him to say, "You are better to me than ten sons. You're worth ten sons in my eyes. Like I'm lacking nothing with you because of your barrenness. I love you so much, you're so complete." Instead, he says, "Hey, look at me. I'm as good as ten sons for you."

He's just trying to make her feel better, but he's not getting her. He's saying, "Hey, you have me," and I could just feel her crumbling inside, "You don't understand what I'm missing." She's wanting children and he's offering her food and a romantic date. It's like telling someone who's thirsty, "Look over there. There're some pretzels, if you're hungry." It's not comparable. He's not understanding.

Ok, so maybe now, who could empathize with her? Surely the other woman in her life could understand the pain of wanting to be a mother. And then Penina...

**6** And her rival would frequently anger her, in order to make her complain, for the Lord had shut up her womb.

The classical interpretations interpret this as Penina trying to tease her, to upset her so that she would be stimulated to pray more. But even in the most charitable interpretations, surely Chana didn't know that that was the point of this. She thinks she's just being mocked and teased by her husband's other wife.

And imagine how lonely she's feeling.

Ok, so now she's so lonely. Who would she turn to? Maybe her rabbi? Her religious leader. Well, we already know from the verses that the sons of Eli were running the Tabernacle, with massive corruption particularly towards the women coming to pray. So she has no understanding to look for in the Tabernacle either, not from her potential friend, not from her husband, not from her potential spiritual leaders.

And it's that moment where we read the portion of the Haftarah on Rosh Hashanah where we meet her in prayer in the Tabernacle when she's in this depth of aloneness. And her prayer at that point looks so ridiculous so as to be confused as drunkenness. But then it actually in our tradition becomes the ultimate prayer, it becomes the model of all prayer, that all other prayers are compared to and based on. What makes her prayer so special?

So, if we look at her prayer, she's not the first person to pray. A lot of people in the Bible prayed. And she's not the first person to make an oath. We've seen oaths before. What she is the first person to do though, she's the first person to combine the idea of prayer, begging for mercy, and making an oath, which is more like bargaining with God. Because what is to pray? Prayer is like falling on your knees, "Oh God, give me mercy." An oath is like, "Listen God. I have something I want from You, but You might have something You want from me. Maybe we can get like a win-win situation going here." It's not a super humble posture. It's like, "Ok, let's make this worth both of our wiles." It seems to be two different spiritual postures.

And what is happening here? I think she's going through this process of realizing that in the end, even though she's surrounded by all these people, some people are good, some people are bad, some people are going to understand you, your community might get you, you might not have support in your community. In the end, we come to this world alone and we leave this world alone. We are on a journey together with HaShem. And on Rosh Hashanah, we stand alone in that judgment before God. It's only me. I can't point to anyone else. "Oh, well, it's because someone wronged me or maybe somebody else should be praying for me." That's all good and well. On the Judgment Day, every year on Rosh Hashanah and on the ultimate

Judgment Day when we stand in the heavenly court at the end of our life, we are a soul that has come here by HaShem and we return to HaShem. And that's what she realizes at that point.

And then her prayer becomes a paradigm of all prayer. Because she says, "Look," she says something very strange in her prayer. Look what happens in her prayer. She wants a child so badly. What does she do? She says, "If you give me a child, HaShem, I will give my child back to You." Isn't that a strange oath? Like imagine, it's not like any other oath that we've seen in the Torah. She's saying, "If you give me a child, I'll give you back the child." Imagine like saying, "Dear HaShem, I really want a new car. If You give me a car, I'm going to donate it to my local charity." Well, then why are you going to all the trouble of praying for a car if you're planning on giving it away?

Chana is teaching us something incredibly profound about the highest level of prayer. To pray, to call out and beg, that's beautiful. You know what you want, you know HaShem is the source of everything. You're like a child begging from their parent. To make an oath, that's also really profound. Saying, "HaShem, I don't deserve Your kindness. I'm going to make an oath to do something in return. I'm going to sacrifice something to try to balance the scales a little bit. I'm going to reciprocate something back to You. We're going to have a covenantal relationship of giving and taking."

What Chana does is she takes prayer to a whole new level. What does it mean to give back the very child she's asking for? It doesn't make any sense. Ok, so try to get into her mind. Think about it. There are a lot of reasons to want what she wants. She wants a child. There's a lot of reasons we want anything we want. She wants a child, the child is someone to cuddle, a child is someone who gives you status in your community, your spouse will love you, the ladies in the neighborhood will talk to you. And it will also continue the generations of the Jewish people to make a new generation of god-fearing people that will teach Torah and raise up those around them and rectify the world.

In anything we want, there's this mixture of motivations. Why do I want a promotion? I can make money, I can give charity, but I'll also have honor and comfort and wealth, and it's all mixed up together. And that moment of realizing that nothing is real except for her relationship with HaShem, she does that deep and difficult work that is actually the most profound work of Rosh Hashanah. She clarifies those mixed-up motivations and she says, "I'm going to give my child completely to the service of God." She's looking at the corruption in the Tabernacle, she knows what's most needed. She knows that sending a child that will renew the honor of the Tabernacle will be the most important thing that can be done right now. So she says, "You know what, HaShem? My status doesn't matter, my enjoyment of this child doesn't matter, all that

matters is giving HaShem this child, giving You this child in Your service. Because I realize that all my other motivations are temporary, they're earthly, they're transient."

What a profound work of prayer she's doing. She's checking herself and working inwards to see why do I want what I want? Why do I feel lacking in the places that I feel lacking. Is it from selfishness or am I trying to identify with what God, Himself wants? She's willing to give up everything that's not in unity and in alignment with what she understands to be HaShem's Divine purpose. And then what happens to her? In the end of verse 18 says:

יְהוָה וַתֹּאמֶר תִּמְצָא שְׂפָחֶתְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ וַתֵּלֶךְ הָאִשָּׁה  
לְדֶרֶכָהּ וַתֹּאכַל וּפְנֵיהָ לֹא הָיוּ לָהּ עוֹד:

**18** And she said: May your bondswoman find favor in your eyes; and the woman went on her way and ate, and her face was not (sad) anymore.

She let it go. On Rosh Hashanah, our work is to let it go. To say, "What will be this year? I'm going to work on myself like Chana. And say, "This is what I want because I think this is what You want, HaShem. I'm going to try so hard to make it be only for its

highest purpose. To parse out the parts that are real and pure and raise that up for HaShem. The things that I want for the wrong reasons, I'm going to let them go and focus all of my prayers on the things that I think are really going to be in the service of what HaShem teaches us is really important in this world."

And in that way, her prayer effected change and she became pregnant and gave us Samuel who is really the most perfect and faultless leader possibly that we ever had and who anointed the two kings, anointed David who would eventually lead to the birth of Mashiach. So from that incredible prayer, she just teaches us how to do that inner work in our hearts. It's the center of the work that I think we do on Rosh Hashanah. So with that, I wish everybody a beautiful ELUL, a beautiful Rosh Hashanah prayer and just all my love. Hope to see you guys soon again.

Jeremy

All right, was that amazing? She is the best, thank you so much, Tehila, that was a brilliant analysis, insights into the prophets. Sometimes we trust our intuition, sometimes we trust religion, sometimes we have institutions, sometimes we just...Rosh Hashanah comes and tells us that the most important thing is just to stand alone before God. Only He really knows on the deepest level who we are, and connecting to Him that way is so powerful. And for everyone, that wants to join our women's community, Women of Valor, go to [thelandofisrael.com](http://thelandofisrael.com) and sign up today. If you want more of Tehila, want more information, you can always email us, also. [tehila@thelandofisrael.com](mailto:tehila@thelandofisrael.com) [jeremy@thelandofisrael.com](mailto:jeremy@thelandofisrael.com) [ari@thelandofisrael.com](mailto:ari@thelandofisrael.com).

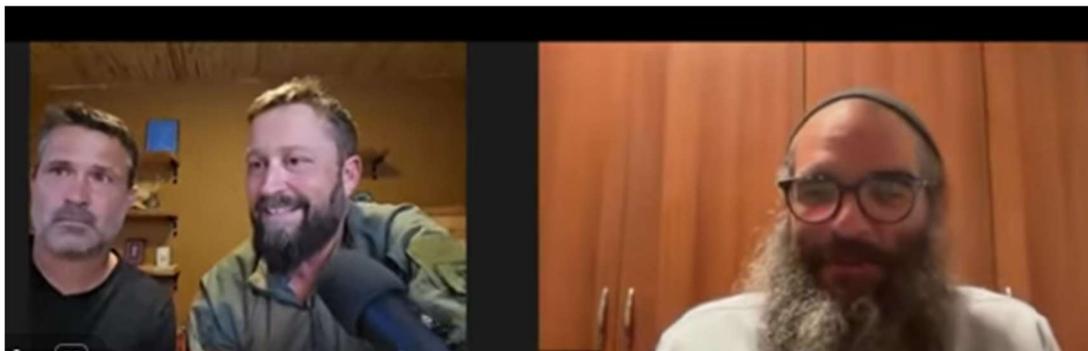
And now, I want to introduce our special guest, a real powerhouse of the spirit in the Land of Israel. I'm thrilled that we have a chance to share him with all of you and I just want Ari to do the honors.

Ari

Ok. This is really a long time coming. It's an honor for me, a joy. Rabbi Judah Mischel is one of the greatest influences in my life. I have so much to thank him for personally, so much of the happiness of my life. I mean it was largely because of him that Shaena and I came together. People don't know that, but it's true. And in a thousand lifetimes, I couldn't thank him enough for that. And you wouldn't know it because of his humility, but whether it's in his capacity of the director of Camp HASC, for people with intellectual or physical disabilities, a place of absolute light and love like you've never seen, to youth mentorship, writings on the journey of teshuva, he really embodies what is deeply human and process oriented and soul nourishing. And I don't want to go too much into his introduction. I want to just launch in.

But we decided to have him on the Fellowship today because of the unique moment that we're in right now, the days leading into Rosh Hashanah from ELUL. And Rav Judah has a special way of peeling back the layers and helping us see that teshuva isn't about perfection, but it's about direction. He wrote the book called Baderek. Tabitha, please share the link in the chats and with everybody about how they can get this book Baderek. I buy it in bulk. And this year I was actually without the book because when you have things in bulk, you just give them all away. I gave away my last one. But it's really about returning to who we are and reconnecting to the source of life with joy and honesty and courage. So I can think of no one better to guide us in this way than Rav Judah. Shalom Rav Judah, are you with us?

Rav Judah Mischel



Ahh, how are you? Shalom to you.

Ari

Good to have you here, shalom, welcome.

Rav Judah

Jeremy, Tehila, and Ari, it is an honor to be here with you. Wow, this is really something.

Ari

Thank you, thank you.

Rav Judah

Thank you for having me.

Ari

Thank you, so before we get into the Torah of everything, I want to ask something a little bit personal to start with. You know, you've been such an influence in my life and in the life of so many, there's nobody in Judea that doesn't know Rav Judah. Just on a personal level, can you share a little bit about your own journey of teshuva and what drew you to dedicate your life to teaching and guiding others, largely in teshuva. I mean, you teach about so much, but teshuva is a little bit your thing.

Rav Judah

Yeah, I appreciate that question very, very much. There was once a wise scholar who said that the gangst of life, I didn't choose the gangst of life but the gangst of life chose me. Often times we don't deliberately choose what we're interested in, but the way our life unfolds kind of forms our interest. I'm a person who has a lot to work on and I often fall short of my hopes for myself, my expectations for myself. So I became, I guess a little bit of an expert in realizing how imperfect I am. And then, as you get older and you start to tap into some of the more ancient sources of wisdom, in Torah recognize that really that's the way that God designed the world.

And the sages tell us that before God created the world, He created the opportunity to fix the world. And then the world was necessarily created in an imperfect way so that there could be a partnership between human beings and the Creator. To make and build and cultivate and sustain this world. And each of us are our own microcosm of that. It's only because of my own struggles and failings and I guess frailties that I realized how much I needed to tap into the world of Jewish inspiration and wisdom, that really supports the thesis that we're not meant to be perfect, there's no Divine intention for us to do this right all the time, but just encourage us, to try to help us tease out our best. And to depend on God and to depend on a Fellowship. We're not meant to do this alone.

So, if that question, I don't know...there was no moment that said, "Study teshuva, write a book about teshuva, there was just an entire tapestry in existence that, all the threads, all the

moments of life kind of led to this realization of how badly we as individuals, and we as nations and we as human beings, and we as an earth and as a cosmic system need to restore our healthy balance and starting point with HaShem. So, I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be able to be here and to be able to think about this together.

Ari

Thank you. The name of your book is Baderek. You almost branded, there's already a Baderek Haggadah for Passover, which is awesome. But the idea of Baderek, and you've spoken about teshuva that it's not really an event, but it's a process, it's a journey. And that concept, I'm constantly massaging that into my soul, but for people out there that don't know what that means, for people that feel overwhelmed at this time of year, how can reframing teshuva in this way as a journey, as a process, really open up hope and possibility?

Rav Judah

It's a beautiful question and I'm thinking about it all day. It's true that teshuva is not a moment. It's not a specific moment in time. But Rosh Hashanah, the recreation of the world, the recreation of the cosmos, the reaffirmation of the relationship between God and mankind at the center of creation is a moment that's taking place in another week and another day. What we are doing to prepare for that and what happens in its wake is really a process. There's no other way to describe it. It's not just like some type of formula, some type of checklist that we can kind of go through and technically like we're going to get our car inspected and there's fifteen different things that have to happen in order for us to get our license renewed. It's not just about going through a to-do list, but it's about reevaluation about what our purpose is in the world. And what the purpose of the world is. It's so much more broad than what we've perhaps been accustomed and trained to think about ourselves and about each other.

There's a gravitational pull and that gravitational pull is away from the expanse of the infinite. It's away from the universe, it's away from the infinite expanse of the soul and the potential of mankind. When we talk about, often I know on your Fellowship, you address sweeping ideas and prophecies and it's a platform for thinking big.

Teshuva, which means, literally means return. What are we looking to return to? We could focus on...you know, I used to weigh 160 and be able to bench 410. I want to return to that point when I was 19 years old and I played college football. I want to return to when it was back in the day when I was able to dance the night away, or I was able to read a novel a week, or I want to go back to the time where the market was up and I had lots of extra money laying around so that I could not just give a tithe, but I can give 20 or 30% of my income to those who need it more. There's that technical, personal, narrow, kind of specific way of looking at return.

But then there's what we're invited to see teshuva as, which as a return to the intention of creation. Return to the infinite potential for who we can be and what we can be as opposed to the gravitational pull downward and narrow sense of self. There's something redemptive in teshuva. It's returning the world to God's plan. It's kind of trying to realign ourselves with HaShem's will, realign our actions and our choices, the way that we speak and the way that we conduct ourselves, the way that we eat, and the way that we treat others, the way that we spend our time and spend our money, to kind of realign that with baseline of the holy potential that we were created with – as individuals, as couples, as families, as communities, and as a globe, as a human family. So the more we're able to zoom out, the more light we're able to allow in, the less kind of desperate and frantic and worried and fearful we become of falling short of potential because we've just expanded the vessel.

Ari

Wow, thank you so much. Let me tell you, Fellowship, is he incredible or what? It's so exciting for me to share him with you guys. You know, one of the incredible things I've told you, Rav Judah, over the past time, is when I had like a really rabbinical question, you're one of the main people that I call. What's so unique about our Fellowship, it's a uniqueness of our times. It's that it's really the nations of the world have come together and they're seeking HaShem, they have their eyes to Judea, to Jerusalem, to eretz Yisrael, to the Jewish people. So there's new questions that are arising. How does the journey of teshuva, of returning, apply to the nations of the world? Is it different than it applies to Israel? Could you share a little bit about that?

Rav Judah

A wonderful question. Teshuva is a universal gift. The Jewish sages explain this and the Talmud that before God created the world, He created teshuva. That means, well before the Abrahamic covenant and well before the revelation at Sinai, well before the first Temple and the Temple era and the revelation of prophecy, there was this notion that the world will be able to be restored to its baseline. We'll be able to hit that button and restore factory settings. There're universal elements to all of this. There's of course, there's a personal, covenantal, specific relationship between every individual and God. And then there's HaShem's way and expectations for the Jewish nations and there's HaShem's expectations for the nations of the world. And those all work in tandem, they're not in conflict, they're absolutely complementary.

There is an element of all of us returning to our obligations, all of us returning to our mitzvot, that which we are commanded to do. Women in their way, men in their way, adults in their way, children in their way, Jews and Gentiles and everyone with their own template and with their own level of obligation. That's specific.

But there is an insistence of God saying, “Live your potential, reveal and uncover the potential of the world. The world is a beautiful place.” Teshuva means restoring, it means returning the world. The world was created and it was this Paradise where things were in rhythm, in balance. And they fall from grace, and the original sin of Adam and Eve brought us out of that experience or that environment of Eden, of Paradise, and to a fallen state which since that moment, we’ve been yearning to return to Gan Eden, to that Paradise that was.

Now that existent side of every single woman and child and man in the human race, every single one of us, in every religion on every continent has a little bit of that exile from Paradise that we are yearning to restore. That’s called teshuva. It begins from there. It’s our yearning to go back to the way it was before we lost faith in ourselves and in each other, before we turned our back on God’s instructions. So everyone of us in our own way, and everyone of us in or own home and in our own community, when we recommit ourselves to our obligations, to our responsibilities, to our covenant, to our community, to our values, when we recommit ourselves to our chores at home, or to our exercise regimen. When we commit ourselves to keeping our front yard clean and tidy, and when we commit ourselves to calling our parents and grandparents and tithing our income for those who are needy and being in service of others so that we’ve done teshuva, then we’ve done teshuva. We are restoring God’s plan to the world and that’s universal and that’s for every single child and woman and man on planet earth. That’s for every single one of us. It’s different for Jews and it’s different for Gentiles, and it’s different for adults and for the elderly and for the young.

But it’s universal, the algorithm, the backend is all the same. It’s not just about restoring and returning. It’s about uncovering. That a light which is already there, it’s present in our lives, the godliness and the baseline is there and it’s good and the more we’re able to believe in that and the more we’re able to activate that with our choices, with our speech, with our actions, then the more that we are fulfilling the invitation, kind of like arriving and fulfilling the opportunity, the promise, the invitation of teshuva.

Jeremy

Wow, I love that idea of just bringing it all the way back to Gan Eden, bringing it back to the Garden of Eden. It’s like a cosmic restoration that all of us have a chance to participate in. Rav Judah, thank you so much. I want to ask you a question that makes it a little bit more personal, a little bit more like individual. Someone feels far away, feels distant from HaShem, doubting how infinitely He’s involved or cares about their life. They just don’t feel His closeness, they don’t feel His Presence like they used to, for whatever reason. And in that way, teshuva is an attempt to return to the closeness to HaShem that they once felt. Because for whatever reason

this year, they just feel like they slipped away. What would you say to people that feel distant, that want to return and do teshuva to draw closer to HaShem, to feel His Presence in their life?

Rav Judah

That's a wonderful question, it's a painful question, but that's it, that's what we're all trying to figure out over here. I guess the question is, where is God and where am I? What is this distant that's perceived? If God's Presence fills the world and all worlds and our every breath is His Spirit, the beating of our heart is the data point, is the proof of God's existence flowing through me and through you and through all of us. Our conversations create Presence and create God's awareness then. Where is HaShem? If I'm an expression and you're an expression of God and everyone of us is in God's image and every time we open our mouths and we breathe through our nostrils we are being recreated as God created Adam and Eve, then God is not distant. It's only a matter of our consciousness. It's a matter of our thoughts.

God is present wherever we allow Him in. So returning to a closeness with God is really just a question of consciousness. Say that it's a feeling that we all have. And ebb and flow of closeness and distance and that sense of alienation is the reality of our yearning to kind of restore Gan Eden. Gan Eden, Paradise, is not a physical place. You won't find it on Google Maps, you find it on Waze if you put it in. No matter how much you search, you can search, it's not there. Paradise exists within every single one of us, it exists in our hearts, it exists within our consciousness. I believe that a piece of advice that I heard from a very wise teacher of mine once said was just that the distance between someone who is far as east to west, meaning, east to west. Now here I'm facing eastward. But now I'm facing westward. Like all it requires is just a simple turn. It can seem like it's on opposite ends of the world. I'm here and God's there, there's this sense of like this chasm. But it's not, it's just a question of turning that way. Now I'm far away but now I'm close. It doesn't have to be complicated. It's an awareness and it's a belief in our ability to repair, to fix.

Anything that we perceive as having blemished and to recognize that God's love is something that is constant for us. Now in our different traditions, there's different emphasis on what the baseline of that relationship, whether it's God's love and forgiveness, God's kindness, or if there's a sense of obligation or responsibility that we have and God demanding of us. Both of those have in common a sense of need. That God needs us and depends on us as His partners in creation, as His representatives here on planet earth. To be beacons of light and love, to fulfill the needs of others is kind of being God's extension in the world.

So, if I feel far from HaShem, often it helps to stop ruminating. Somebody once asked the great sage in Jerusalem, Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, one of the great academies of Torah study in

Jerusalem. Asked him, like, during these great days of awe, there's so much to think about. There's hunger and there's poverty and there's terrorism and there's tension in between religion and races, there's politics, and there's a need for money. There's so much for us to be thinking about in our prayers. And then, there's all the mistakes, there's lists and lists and lists of ways that I've fallen short that I want to repent for and change and better myself for.

We start to ruminate, like Ari said, that dreadful feeling. Oh my God, we have eight days, I have a new chance, at a new start, and put God back in the center of my life. What should I be thinking about? And Rabbi Finkel just said, "Think about someone else. Think about others. Be there for another person. Do for others, just get out of our heads and like bring it out of our heads and our hearts and into our hands. Be action-oriented people, be charitable, be kind, stand at the door, open it for people, then smile and wish them good morning. Help somebody with their packages out of the trunk of their car. Wipe down somebody else's windshield. Pay it forward, be charitable, be kind, be generous."

And that gives us the modality of thinking about something, someone other than ourselves. It gets us out of our smallness and our rumination and spinning wheels. Because when we're stuck in the mud and we spin wheels, we just get dirtier. But when we help lift up someone else, we lift up ourselves as well. So when we're thinking about teshuva, restore someone else to the center of the universe, to the center of God's universe and that in a way will also elevate us and bring us out of our smallness. That's one way to declare God as King, by elevating the sons and daughters of the King which is every human being.

Ari

Ok, so we're running a little bit short on time, but we're going to go over because we have you right now and that's not an opportunity that we can squander. So I'm going to try to make my question quick to give you as much time to answer. But you know this about me, my Fellowship knows this about me, but I'm obsessively consumed with geulah, with redemption. I'm constantly prophesying, "This is about to happen, this is going to happen," and it doesn't and I'm wrong. Then I'm like, "I'm not going to fall into it again." But the fact is, we all can sense, I think, that we are on the cusp of redemption. We're within redemption right now, these are times of redemption. Things are changing. We're finally opening our eyes to the fact that really Rosh Hashanah is about all of humanity. How do you think that universality should inspire us as Jews in our mission? Is there something that am Yisrael needs to do teshuva for, let's say regarding our relationship with the world, on a national level.

Rabbi Judah

Absolutely, absolutely, Ari. And this is why I am so grateful to be a part of your Fellowship today. You, Ari and Shaena, and Tehila and Jeremy, are literally creating a beacon of light on your hill in Judea and are sharing this message with the world. The Jewish nation needs to do teshuva for the last 2,000 years of being in an exilic, narrow, reactionary shadow of ourselves. We've begun that process by returning to the Land of Israel, restoring Jewish presence and God's Presence in the Land of Israel. There's so much that we need to do to turn outward. We have a plan for humanity. We have a plan for the world. Prophecy that addresses all of mankind.

We've been so focused on survival in such a reactionary way, what's called in Aramaic, in the language of the Talmud and in that ancient language. The four cubits of Jewish Law, only, specifically, every individual focused on their own personal practice at the expense of thinking about the big picture. The words of Isaiah, and Zecharia, and of Mica, we've traded that in for a very narrow and specific particular personal experience of Rabbinic Judaism. Now that's what kept us going for so long, but now that we've been restored to our Land, sovereignty is the first step. Making Aliyah, ascending to the Land of Israel is the first step. And now we've continued to make Aliyah and to amplify the light. From Zion will come forth Torah. It's not just for the institutions and for the homes and the communities that exist within the Jewish tradition. It's a light which belongs to the entire world.

Teshuva means uncovering that light which already is there and allowing that light to shine forth and guide all of humanity in a respectful and humble way because that's God's intention for the world. A Fellowship like this is itself an act of teshuva, preparing us for the day which God created the world and said, "I want all of humanity to sing together, to be a chorus, to sing My praise together." If that hasn't happened, it's because of 2,000 years of suspicion and challenge and pain and suffering and trauma, which takes a lot of turns on a very long truck to kind of turn the corner. But with you and everyone who is gathered here together today on the hega, as we call it in Israel. Turning that big wheel together, that big wheel, turning down here and then the upper world, we are really preparing ourselves, each other, and all of humanity for redemption. It just means opening ourselves up to being a part of the big picture, but also, not just being a part but being participants, by being those that are leading. And that itself is an act of teshuva. I'm so grateful that you invited me here today, to enjoy, to bask in the light that you've created and to share a little bit together. Thank you.

Jeremy

Rav Judah, I have one last question. Is that ok?

Rav Judah

Guys, I'm here. I'm not going anywhere.

Jeremy

We just have one more question.

Rav Judah

It's not getting better after this. After we get off this call, my day is not getting better. I mean, I'm going to be with my family, it's going to be wonderful, but I'm not... This is amazing.

Jeremy

All right, so I wanted to talk to you now. This is a deep question and it's the last one, so it counts. You know we talk about Rosh Hashanah being Judgment Day. So in that spirit, if you had to come to terms that all of the Torah that you've taught, all of your teachings, all of your books, all of your posts, everything would be deleted, but you had one Torah, one idea, you had one teaching that you would leave this world. What would the one Torah idea you would want to leave the world, be?

Ari

No pressure.

Rabbi Yehuda

I mean, no pressure at all. There is a wonderful statement, the most empowering statement by King Solomon, the wisest of all men, that God created us with purity of heart. Our starting point, our baseline is purity of heart. Lev tahor...that God created us with a pure heart. I feel like everything I think about and write about and speak to my family about, speak to friends about, and everything I'm reading is all kind of working toward and directing me toward believing in that more and living with that reality more. To know that I've got it in me. We have it in us. There's no where that we have to go, and there's nothing that we have to achieve and acquire and kind of adapt and tailor make to us that we don't already have. All those treasures, the infinite treasures of the Divine, all that potential, the Divine breath, the potential to be great, to accomplish, to be resilient, to be fair, to be just, to be generous. We were created with that purity of heart, with that good intention.

Teshuva means uncovering that, it means digging. Sometimes we have to go through lots of layers and peel away lots of layers and go through lots of debris and lots of rubble and lots of pain or lots of mistakes or lots of confusion and distraction or lots of layers that we've kind of layered on to protect ourselves, to defend ourselves perhaps because we feel we're unworthy. Perhaps because we feel that we are not going to be able to live up to the great challenge and

promise that God has empowered us with. But Ruach nachon...there is a spirit which is right, which is true, which is just, which is fair, which is honest, and real, authentic, that will be renewed within me. That's a promise from the prophet that's a Divine promise. Now all that's required of us is to do the work. We have the tools. We just have to follow the instructions and kind of open it up within us. So I feel like if there's one message in Jewish wisdom and consciousness and Torah that I pray that I and the people that I love and all the good people of the world are able to live with and manifest, it's that we are good and that have within us the Divine promise and potential to be partners with HaShem in creating the most beautiful world, a world where everyone belongs and everyone is respected and where there is goodness, where there's the amplification of righteousness and positivity and goodness. We have to fight evil along the way, we have to drive away darkness with light. But to believe in that light, to believe that ultimately, we've brought children into the world and that we're passing on values to the next generation to fulfill this promise and that we're worthy and deserving of it.

Ari

Amen. Rav Judah, thank you so, so much. So powerful. I really recommend everybody, please, please, buy his book. The link is there, we'll send it out in the email, so there's a reason I buy it in bulk because...

Rav Judah

You mind if I just share a blessing here from the Land of Israel? All of us together for a happy and healthy, sweet New Year, it should be happy and healthy and good and redemptive. It should be the year of redemption and it should be sweet. We've had the sting. And may we taste the sweetness of the redemption this year, all together.

Jeremy

Amen

Ari

Amen, Amen. You know, it just reminds me, Rav Judah, we always wish for a shanah tovah u'metukah, a good and a sweet year. Why do we say good and sweet? Because everything is good. We know everything is good. But not everything is sweet. And so that's the blessing that we have for each other. That it should be good and sweet, it should be revealed goodness.

Yes, thank you, Rav Judah, thank you so much.

Rav Judah

Hope to see you soon.

Ari

Amen, Amen. Ok, so my friends, as we're closing today's Fellowship down, I just want to take a moment and pause and really reflect on what has happened here in this short hour. Together we've prayed, we've studied, we heard from Jeremy, we heard from Tehila, we shared with each other, we lifted one another up in preparation for this sacred mission of return to HaShem and coronating Him as our King. That's the heartbeat of really this whole Fellowship. We're a family across the world that have always been and always will be seeking HaShem in love and in humility and in joy.

And to our guests that have joined us here today, thank you! Thank you, I hope we have been Abrahamic in our hospitality. If only we could, we would have washed your feet and slaughtered you a sheep. We are so filled with joy to have had you. It was really a tremendous blessing. If something in this Fellowship has touched your heart, I want to warmly invite you to join our Fellowship in an ongoing way. Not only will it, I believe, please God, enrich your journey, but know that your participation on any of the tiers really is a real blessing to us. It strengthens us in our mission here in Judea. It allows us to continue building and teaching and sharing light with the world.

And I have some very exciting news for our beloved Fellowship members. As part of your membership, you now have access to the Judean Diet. Really truly, all the courses. We're shifting things around a little bit. We'll tell you more about it, I'm really excited about the whole thing. But I'm saying the Judean Diet because I am launching back in, too. As you know, it's not about nutrition...how many of you in the Fellowship right now have done the diet? You can raise your hands if you know how to do that. There's some sort of emoji. It's such a unique diet because people are like, what is it? It's not about the what, it's about the why. It's really a nutrition and the way we treat our bodies is a form of teshuva. And when we bring our bodies into balance, when we honor them as vessels for the soul, as the Temples that they are, that itself is a return to HaShem and furthering the actual building of the Temple in the world through redemption. We could do from within.

And that's why we're launching this 90-Day Judean Diet program. I'm shameless about it now because I've experienced it, I've seen what it does, and I cannot take any ownership of it. It's something we've really built together. And we're going into ELUL and the High holidays, a journey of renewal in body and spirit. And the first round was extraordinary. People found not only weight loss and improved health, but clarity and joy and deeper prayer. It was like their physical renewal became a gateway to a spiritual return. Every Fellowship member now has the opportunity to step into that journey.

And for those who wish to go even deeper, I want to invite you to join the Judean Academy. It's a different tier. It's really like our intimate private circle where we walk together more. We're able to connect on a very personal level here. Questions, and answers, and there you'll find support sessions for the Judean diet, the Women of Valor, gatherings and other personal lifegiving community spaces that we'll be developing even more soon coming up.

So if the Fellowship, is the wide embrace of the family, the Academy is sort of where we share the details and journey on it side by side. We really connect on a very personal way and we speak with each other. It's what happens at the end of our Fellowship, the Fellowship Connection that's what it is. We're able to connect with each other in that way. And I really wanted to do a Fellowship Connection now, but I don't know that we're going to have time. But anyways, my blessing is this.

My we return to HaShem this year with our souls, with our prayers, our tefillot, with our very bodies. And may this Fellowship and all its circles of light be a source of strength for all of us. And may we be inscribed in the Book of Life and Health and Blessing and Peace. And so, as we crown HaShem on Rosh Hashanah, let us remember, our very service is joy. And our joy is the deepest testimony of our faith. And so, if we're standing before the King with trembling, yet also with joy, as Jeremy explained, we declare, "HaShem, we trust You, we love You, and it is our greatest privilege to serve You."

So may this Rosh Hashanah open a year filled with joy in our avodah, our service of HaShem, strengthen our emunah, in our faith in HaShem, our bitachon, our trust in HaShem, and sweetness in our lives. And with that, I want to bless all of you. I am not a cohen as you know, I'm not a priest, a descendant of Aaron, but we are mamleket Cohanim, v'goy kadosh, we are a nation of priests, a holy nation. And with that, it is my greatest joy to bless all of you.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless you and protect you. May HaShem shine His Face upon you and be gracious to you. May Hashem lift His Face to you and grant you peace. Amen.

Shanah tovah, my friends.

