



Amir Tsarfati

The Anchor Podcast: Guest Ohad Tal

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AMIR: Hey, Shalom everyone, I'm Amir Tsarfati here from CONNECT in the Jezreel Valley in Galilee. And this is yet one more episode of *Anchor Podcast*. Our faith gives us hope and that hope is the anchor of our souls. And we aim, we strive to

always give you not just information, but also give you hope, hope that will be the anchor for your souls. And together with me today in a very, very special manner, Knesset member—Knesset is the Israeli parliament—Mr. Ohad Tal, Shalom Ohad.

OHAD: Shalom Amir, thank you so much for having me.

AMIR: It's my pleasure, I've heard so much about you from a lot of people all around the world, people that attend the Jerusalem prayer breakfast, people such as Michele Bachmann, Pastor Steve Berger and others. And they sang praises when it comes to you and the special role that you actually have in bringing together, not just Israel and the Israelis, but also the heart of the Israeli leadership, the parliament of Israel together with the evangelical Christian world, [an] ever-growing relationship right now. And we'll talk about that later, but Ohad, you seem very young. And I just learned that you're married, you have four sons, and you live not far from Jerusalem in Efrat, near Bethlehem.



OHAD: Right, exactly. I actually live just a couple of hundred meters from Bethlehem.

AMIR: Exactly. And in Micah 5, it says, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,...” it talks about it. So Ohad lives right there and you’re not just a member of the Israeli parliament, but within the parliament, there are some committees, and you’re a member of probably the most prestigious committee in the Israeli parliament that is dealing with intelligence, it’s dealing with security.



OHAD: It’s called The Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. It’s basically the number one committee of the Knesset. We’re getting all the daily reports about different challenges Israel is facing on the different fronts. And of course, and

especially since the beginning of the war, we are 100% working to try and improve the reality for Israel and to work with the army, with the Shin Bet, with the Mossad, etc.

AMIR: Amazing because again, I think you told me, but others told me as well that members of that committee sometimes have more knowledge of what’s going on than an average minister in the government.

OHAD: You’re right. I mean, I think I would say that the hierarchy is like the prime minister and the defense minister, of course, they’re number one, then the war cabinet, then the security and foreign affairs committee and only then the rest of the ministers in the government and then the members of Knesset.

AMIR: So, you’re definitely high up there in what you know, and that of course affects your daily routine of where you go, what you hear, who you meet with. So thank you for taking time in your very, very tough schedule. And so just so people understand who you are, tell us a little bit about your journey from an Israeli-born to a member of the religious Zionism party, and then a member of the parliament in Israel, and of course of that special committee.

OHAD: Well, that's an interesting question. First of all, I've never planned to be a politician. It wasn't on my agenda at all.

AMIR: Which makes you the right person, by the way.

OHAD: No, I invested the last 20 years of my life before I became a member of Knesset in Jewish education. Ten years here in Israel and ten years in different positions in the Israel the Diaspora Jewry relations. So my last position, I was the head of what's called World Bnei Akiva. It's the largest Jewish youth movement in the world, operates in about 34 countries around the world. And the purpose was to strengthen Jewish identity. And this is what I've done 20 years until one day I got a phone call from the leader of my party, Minister Bezael Smotrich, who basically asked me to join him in politics before the last elections.

AMIR: So you just joined his party before the recent elections?

OHAD: Right. Yes.

AMIR: Two and a half years ago.

OHAD: Two and a half years ago. Yes. I'm only two and a half years in the Knesset, only two and a half years in this crazy adventure of being a politician, a politician in Israel, you know that...

AMIR: ...Out of the two and a half years, a year and a half is war, that's unparalleled.

OHAD: Right. The first year was the whole judicial reform with all the craziness around it and the past year and a half around the war. So I think that was the hardest term, maybe, I don't know, maybe since the 1948 War, I would even say.

AMIR: And yet for such a time as this, you became a parliament member. You could have been there way earlier, or you could have been out of there. And yet you were just elected. You got into the Knesset, into the biggest turmoil in Israel's history since it was born. We're almost 77 years

old. And yet here you are. You joined the Israeli politics and a lot of people around the world cannot figure out the Israeli politics. I mean, they really think that we're crazy here.

OHAD: Well, they're right. They're right.

AMIR: But tell us a little bit about the difference, for example, between the way Israeli politics are and let's say, for example, American. What's the difference between how it works here and how it works there?

OHAD: You know, your question reminds me of a story. I think it was Golda Meir, the former prime minister of Israel, and I think she was asked by one of the presidents of the United States. He told her, "You know, we have 300 million people. You have, I think back then it was, I don't know, three, four million people. Why is such a big problem to be the prime minister of Israel?" And she told him, "You know, Mr. President, you are a president of 300 million Americans. I am the prime minister of three million prime ministers. That is the problem." [Laughter]

AMIR: Wow.

OHAD: Now, we have, you know, we have we're so passionate about everything. We are minded, we know what we want. Nobody can convince us otherwise. And it's part of the mentality that we have here in Israel, which makes, I think, politics here much harder. That's number one. Number two, you know, this country at the end of the day, we are, we used to sing in Hebrew "Villa in the jungle." Okay. We live in a very, very tough neighborhood. We are actually, I mean, in the past 2,000 years, we are trying to fight for our survival, but even since we came back to our homeland, to our ancestral homeland, we are still in a constant struggle to try and survive in this tough neighborhood. So, I think it also has a tremendous effect about politics, and the fact that we have so much differences, how to handle all these challenges, how to handle the situation. And at the end of that, we're also part of Western civilization. I think Western civilization in general, in the

last couple of decades, is going through a process of polarization. We're seeing it basically everywhere. We're seeing what is happening in America. I mean, I think America's politics today is not less crazy than the Israeli politics. And we are seeing the same struggle. We're seeing it in Europe. We're seeing it in so many other countries. We have the conservative camp. We have the radical, progressive, woke culture who try to disconnect us also from our values. And we are seeing a very, very strong, hard struggle between these two camps. And we are living the same, the same struggle as many other countries in the world, only with Middle Eastern spices.

AMIR: I see. So in Israel, it's supposed to be every four years, citizens, everyone that is above 18 can go and vote for the parliament. We don't vote for the prime minister.

OHAD: Right. We vote for a party. And the party appoints the prime minister. And also because we have a parliamentary system, we have many parties. Again, we are Jews. We all have our own opinions. So we have many parties also. But in a parliamentary system, you have to form a coalition. So it cannot be only the prime minister's party who gets...

AMIR: ...Unless he has more than 60 seats.

OHAD: Right. Which never happened in Israel's history. So we have to form a coalition. We have to work together with other parties, not necessarily always agreeing on everything with the other parties, but we are trying to form a coalition with common principles and values that bring us all together.

AMIR: Yes. And so, you know, Israel went through a crazy, crazy period since COVID, when we went to five different election cycles. And finally, the people have spoken after some crazy, crazy attempts to change this country, basically, that they even called the government that was there for a year and a half, the "government of change." And boy, oh boy, they tried to change things.

OHAD: Boy, oh boy. Yes. Unfortunately, the previous government, they formed their coalition with [a] party, which is effectively—they are the Muslim Brotherhood party.

AMIR: Which is banned in most Arab countries.

OHAD: Exactly.

AMIR: Even now by Jordan.

OHAD: Exactly. Which is crazy. I mean, it proves the fact that Israel is a very, very liberal democracy.

AMIR: Vibrant democracy.

OHAD: Vibrant democracy, also liberal democracy, because, you know, just the fact that we're always being accused of being an apartheid state. I mean, all these false [narratives] that [we are] being always being attacked and being accused of. But I mean, what other country—even people who are against the country, against the state, working against it—the Muslim Brotherhood who are, as you've said, are forbidden in many other countries in the Middle East even. Here, they can run for parliament, they can get elected, they can have members of parliament, they can be ministers in the government and that's the reality here in Israel. So, yes, I think they've made a horrible mistake joining forces with these radicals. But anyway, this is what happened. By the way, ...

AMIR: ...It's funny, it's somehow related to the former evolution of your party.

OHAD: You're right, because unfortunately, again, somebody which I supported in the past, former prime minister Naftali Bennett, he originally came from my camp. He was a right-wing Judea and Samaria person. As you've said, from the previous package of my party and called the HaBeit HaYehudi, the Jewish Home. And right. And he made a whole switch. He wanted to be

prime minister. He was willing to basically sell all of his principles and values. He joined forces with the left and with the Muslim Brotherhood. And they formed a coalition. It's very unfortunate.

AMIR: Yes, and from someone that was ridiculed day and night by the radical left, he became overnight the darling of the radical left, even until today.

OHAD: Exactly. Exactly.

AMIR: Yeah. And so here we are in a very complicated situation where, by the way, the majority of the Israelis, I believe, are not represented by any of the chaotic things that we see around. But they are the silent majority. I estimate, if you ask me, there's anything between one to 200,000 Israelis that may be represented by the radical left leaders, but nothing more than that.

OHAD: You know, you are so right. But again, this story of the minority who makes so much noise as if they are the majority, it's not unique only in Israel. I mean, we have only seen a couple of months ago, the unbelievable victory of President Trump in America. And, you know, I must tell you, my thoughts about this victory is that it's not just an unbelievable political victory, I believe it's a spiritual victory and I want to explain why. Because for so for too many years, the left in America tried to present the right-wing camp, the Republicans, the conservative camp as part of the past. You know, you are irrelevant, you're part of the past. And because they tried to incentivize the woke culture in America.

AMIR: And they're called progressive because they believe we have progressed.

OHAD: Right. Right. Exactly. "We have progressed, you're way back, you're part of the past." And the unbelievable thing that happened in this election is that 77 million Americans stood up and said, "No, we are here. We are not just rooted in the past. We are the present. We are the future. And we are here, and we are here to stay." And suddenly, I mean, I think it was overwhelming, because they expected, even if the Republicans would win, it will be like a very, very small win.

No, no, that was a big win. They got the popular votes. They got the House, the Senate, everything. Seventy-seven million Americans, as you said, the silent majority said, “No, no, no, we are here. We are here to stay.” And I think that sends an incredible message, not just to America, but to the entire world.

AMIR: That’s the thing. The silent majority is also a hardworking majority that is going to work. They don’t have time to protest. So they go to vote when there is a need to vote.

OHAD: Exactly.

AMIR: But they don’t have time for other things.

OHAD: Right. You know, I just came back from CPAC a couple of weeks ago in Washington [DC], and President Trump spoke there, and he said, “You know, that’s the nature of the Republicans, of the right-wing camp, because we are just normal people. That’s it. We are normal people. We go to work. We’re working hard, we care for our families. We want our kids to have decent jobs and decent life. And this is what we do, we teach values. And we go for elections every couple of —when we are asked.” And that’s it. We are not trying to destroy our country.

AMIR: That’s true.

OHAD: That’s the difference.

AMIR: So Israel is now in a very interesting situation. We can talk forever about the deep state here. We can talk forever about other things. But the bottom line is there’s a struggle of power between the parliament, the government and the Supreme Court and the judicial branch. And basically, the only branch that is [an] elected branch is, of course, the parliament. I mean, we vote for the parliament. And yet in Israel, it seems like thousands of those anarchists, they believe that the Supreme Court has more value and overrides the decisions and the legislations of the Israeli parliament, which is something that is illegal and irrational.

OHAD: Right. You're right. It doesn't make any sense. But on the other hand, we're seeing it as a fact. So I think the story is that this country was established 77 years ago by a very left-wing group. Okay. People who came, they were socialist. They came mostly from Russia. And they were the people to firstly initiate and establish the state. And they built the whole mechanism in a way that they will have the control. Now, since 1977, when [Prime Minister Menachem] Begin took over and the right-wing camp had the first victory in elections, which again, you have to look how crazy that is. I mean, since 1948 and 1977, ...

AMIR: ...almost 30 years of complete rule...

OHAD: ...complete control of the left, of the socialists, in this country. And when the first time when they realized that they've lost elections, which they haven't even thought in their worst dream that this is even possible, they made sure that they will have the control not through the elections with their democratic system, but through the institutions. So they've built an institution, they build it in the military, in the Shin Bet. We're now seeing also ...

AMIR: ...Shin Bet is the Israeli equivalent for the FBI.

OHAD: Right. Exactly. We're seeing there the revolution, what is happening there in the judicial system, of course, and they've built their fortress of power trying to hold this country. And many people think that Prime Minister Netanyahu is equivalent to the president of the United States. He can make the decisions according to his policies and apply them and that's it. That's the end of story. Right? Well, unfortunately, it doesn't work this way here in Israel, and at least not until today. We are now trying to fix that. Because as you've said, they made the system in a way that it doesn't matter what the prime minister decides. It doesn't matter who he wants to appoint or who he wants to fire. It doesn't even matter what legislation is being passed in the parliament, in

the Knesset, because the court is ultimately making the decisions what will stay and what will be canceled; what decision will be accepted and what decision will be overruled.

AMIR: Which is unparalleled. There's nowhere on planet Earth...

OHAD: Unparalleled.

AMIR: Yeah, it's crazy because in my eyes, we all understand there's something wrong...

OHAD: Right.

AMIR: ... but they don't let us change it. Because for them, if you try to move something, change something, they immediately apply to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court is ruling always systematically against us. [OHAD: Always. Always.] And therefore, if you are not complying with the Supreme Court, you're being perceived as not a law-abiding country and a law-abiding government.

OHAD: Right. Which again, this is absurd because the court himself, they are not abiding themselves to the law. I mean, they're canceling the laws or they're giving interpretations for the laws, which goes 180 degrees against what is written in all these laws. So they're shouting in all their demonstrations, "Democracy, de-mo-cra-cy!" This is what they're shouting. Democracy. As if they're fighting for democracy....

AMIR: But they're not.

OHAD: ... and they're saying that they want to have checks and balances. But everything they're doing actually goes exactly against all these things because they don't want democracy. They want to control through the Supreme Court, which doesn't have *any* checks and balances, any restrictions to its power. And that's the reality today.

AMIR: You know, I was thinking a lot about this, and I realized, and we're going to talk about it in a minute, but they truly believe—there are members of Parliament also that said, and I heard

that from the plenary; I heard that in my own ears—they said that at the end of the day, they much prefer to hear the decision of the justices of the Supreme Court over the members of the Parliament as if they are superior and the others are inferior.

OHAD: Which is by definition, not a democracy. Democracy is the will of the people through the representatives of the people. And this is... you know, it's okay to have different opinions. It's okay to have disagreements. But at the end of the day, how do you make a decision? And if it's not through the democratic system that the will of the people are going to vote and the people who represent them makes the decisions, then if that's not the case, then we really don't have a democracy.

AMIR: And that's why people, you know, whenever Trump is deporting some gang members, people say, "I voted for it."

OHAD: Right. Exactly.

AMIR: That's what they voted for! The lowest number of infiltration from the southern border in America *ever* probably is now. And that's what people voted for.

OHAD: And you know, I must tell you to show you a little bit of how absurd that is. You know, I can work hard in the Knesset as a parliamentary to try and pass a bill. I need to work hard for months and months to go in the committees, and to advocate for the bill and to form coalition, and agreements with the opposition, with the coalition, with other parties. I can bring 80 members of Knesset to support a bill. And at the room at the end of the day, there'll be a representative of the judicial system of the attorney general who would tell me, "You know, I don't think I agree with this bill." And that's not only because not because this bill is not good or anything, only because "It doesn't reflect the values that I think are the right values for this country."

AMIR: So, it's up to his...

OHAD: And he will make the decision. If he would say this is an this is illegal bill. And that's it. 80 members of Knesset cannot take the bill and pass it because a young 25-year-old representative of the attorney general who will make a decision if this bill is valid or not. And so this is how crazy that is.

AMIR: Are we heading towards a constitutional crisis?

OHAD: We might. Unfortunately, we might. I really hope and pray that we will not. I think that what we are seeing is part of the cleaning process that we are going through in our society. Because, you know, as you said, they are at the end of the day, they are a very small minority. They're making a lot of noise, but a very small minority. And this minority is getting smaller and smaller every year. And as much as they're getting smaller, they're getting more vocal. That's part of the part of the story.

AMIR: The media is in their pocket.

OHAD: Right. The media, the media, they control the academia, again, all the establishments. So they're trying to fight much, much harder than they used to do in previous years. But I think it's only because they're losing their strength. And I think more and more people are realizing that we have to go and fix the systems. Because if we really want to live in a democracy, we cannot just allow it to continue.

AMIR: So there is hope.

OHAD: Of course, there's always hope. And, you know, we believe in God, you know...

AMIR: ...Absolutely, which leads me now to our next topic, which is, as you said earlier, when we spoke privately, you said, "Amir, I believe that the biggest problem is not politics. The biggest problem is the identity. It's the fight over the identity of the people here." And I remember I quoted Ezekiel 36. And Ezekiel was told by God that He's going to bring the Jewish people back from

the four corners of the world, back to their land. And then He said, “I will do that, not for your name’s sake, but for My name’s sake.” And then He said, “Everywhere you went, you profaned My name. And how did you do that? By ways of the nations [who] saw you there. And they said, ‘Aren’t you God’s people? And what are you doing in those foreign lands and not in God’s land?’” [OHAD: Right.] We belong here. [OHAD: We belong here.] This is where we thrive. This is where the Jewish people belong. This is where we meet the land, the seed, and the blessing. That’s the promise to Abraham and the Israel Decree that I always talk about. So in a way, I think that there’s a lot of Israelis that totally forgot about their identity.

OHAD: You’re right. And I want to explain...

AMIR: ...Not a lot, but many.

OHAD: Right. I always say that the biggest challenge that we have in our generation is the challenge of identity. And I want to explain why I think that is the challenge. First of all, for 2,000 years, when we were in exile, that wasn’t the challenge. Our challenge was very different. We were mainly focusing on trying to survive. That was the main challenge for 2,000 years. Seventy-seven years ago, this challenge shifted a bit. It wasn’t only about surviving. It was about how are we forming our physical existence in this country. So we were very busy paving roads and planting trees and building institutions and army and economics and all these things. And about 30 or 40 years ago, something new happened. For the first time in 2,000 years, we woke up and we realized that pretty much, more or less, everything is okay. We have a strong army. We have a strong economy. Our country is good. You know, people are not—A Jewish kid for the first time in 2,000 years wakes up in the morning and the biggest question is not who’s going to kill me. He’s much more troubled with these devices [Gesture: lifts up his cell phone] and the next trip to the Maldives or whatever. And suddenly, for the first time in 2,000 years, we’ve started to ask ourselves, “Just

a second, who we are, why we are here?” I mean, you know, it’s much easier to be a Jew in exile when there’s a gun pointed to your head telling you you are a Jew. You don’t have a choice. You cannot choose whether you want to be a Jew. You don’t want to be a Jew. This is who you are. We are telling you this who you are, and you’ll be persecuted for who you are.

AMIR: Even if you want to be like the others, they’ll remind you that you’re a Jew. [OHAD: Exactly] And they find out now, by the way.

OHAD: Exactly. Now we have to discover who we are, not because somebody else is forcing us to realize it, but because we have to realize it. And that’s a challenge that we haven’t faced in 2,000 years. It’s a new challenge. It’s a new challenge. And I think this is what is happening to us in this generation. This is why I think that’s the main challenge. You know, again, I’m sitting in the security and foreign affairs committee of the Knesset. I’m getting the daily briefings about all the different challenges Israel is facing. And we are facing severe challenges. And yet I’m saying that’s the main challenge, because if we will not a give good answer to the question of who we are and why we are here, we will not be able to win the wars we are fighting. We will not be able.

AMIR: Yeah. And I believe that the struggle of identity is also something that Europe is dealing with. It’s something Americans are dealing with. It’s something that Canadians are dealing with right now. Especially when you see a Muslim invasion into all of those places, people are asking themselves, so who are we? And they sold them that “It doesn’t matter who you are. We’re all citizens of the big world...”

OHAD: Right, exactly.

AMIR: And now they find out that in the name of that fantasy, they brought in people who know exactly who they are. And they are going to kill you because of who they are.

OHAD: Right, right. Again, this is part of the sickness of Western civilization. Again, we are part of Western civilization, so we also have the same disease. And this progressive woke culture tried to take us away from our identities. And again, this goes back to Trump. This is what he tried to represent. They've tried to tell us, the woke culture tried to tell us, you know, there is no significance to family, family values, to religious values, to national identities, all these...

AMIR: ...Or even your sexual identity.

OHAD: Right. And again, this is what I'm saying, 77 million Americans say, "No, no, you will not brainwash our minds. And no, we care about who we are. They're significant to who we are and why we are." So, this is the struggle. This is the struggle all over the world, but for the Jewish people, even more so, because again, we are doing it for the first time in 2,000 years.

AMIR: Amazing, amazing. So since you're in such a prestigious committee of the Israeli parliament and you get to hear very, very classified reports, I'm sure that you can share with us the things that are not too classified in regards to where we are now when it comes to the war. And I'm not going to ask you to reveal secrets.

OHAD: No, no, I will not reveal secrets, but I'll be very...

AMIR: Where are we?

OHAD: Yeah, I'll tell you. First of all, you know, when this war started on October 7, 2023, we were literally fighting for our survival. Because what happened is that Iran built around Israel, what we call today a ring of fire. They built a massive, massive terror infrastructure. And that infrastructure had only one purpose, and that is to destroy Israel. That's it. And let's try to go over...

AMIR: ...I'm flattered. I'm flattered that they invest so much to destroy us.

OHAD: Billions of dollars.

AMIR: It's a country that is thousands of miles away from us. We don't even share a border. And look how much they invest in trying to destroy us.

OHAD: And you know that in Tehran, they have on the main square of Tehran, they have a clock, a huge clock, that counts down to the time that Israel will be eradicated. This is how this narrative in their mind, this is what they care about more than anything else.

AMIR: But that's the ayatollahs, I think the Iranian people are not like that.

OHAD: Of course, of course, you know, before the revolution in Iran, we were best friends with the Iranian people. The Persians, of course, you know, we are both ancient nations and we share a lot of common values.

AMIR: It's the Persian king that allowed us to come back and build this country.

OHAD: You're right. You're right. You're right.

AMIR: But so Ring of Fire.

OHAD: Yes. So let's go. Let's see. So Lebanon, what has happened since October 7th until today? So we've started the reality of this war with Lebanon, Hezbollah, with tens of thousands of soldiers, well trained, well-armed. You know, they had an arsenal of 150,000 ballistic missiles. In Syria besides the Assad regime, we had 40,000 militias, Shiite militias in Syria. Similar number in Iraq. The Houthis in Yemen, Egypt, of course, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza and in Judea and Samaria. So we were really surrounded from all angles by these forces, massive forces, well trained, well-armed, preparing for one purpose. And that is to destroy the one and only Jewish state.

And what happened since then? So let's go again. Lebanon: Hezbollah is almost gone. During this war, we took over 80% of the arsenal of Hezbollah. We took all of their leadership, most of their chain of command, their officers and their soldiers. They know today, even since the ceasefire with Lebanon, only in the last month and a half, we had over 100 strikes in Lebanon.

We've killed over 80 of their commanders. Every commander in Hezbollah understands today that if he goes out, or tries to rearm or do whatever, he's done. Hezbollah is in the weakest point ever that he had. And that's a huge change because they were the main force of Iran in the region. They were the main terror group in the world. They take the lives of so many Americans and Europeans, not only Jews; they're gone. It even got to a point.

AMIR: More Americans than Jews.

OHAD: Of course, it even got to a point that you're seeing members of parliament in Lebanon, today, they're saying out loud, on camera, maybe the time has come to get rid of Hezbollah. Now, this is not something they would even dare to do just a couple of months ago. In Syria, look what happened there. First of all, the militias, they ran away from Syria. Of course, the Assad regime has fallen. In less than a week, Israel took over 85% of the Assad army. And I'm talking about airplanes, tanks, and navy vessels all gone in less than a week. So it's true. We took down one devil and we have a new devil coming up there, which we are aware of.

AMIR: But at least the new devil is afraid of us.

OHAD: Exactly. And he's much more much weaker than the previous devil. So all this infrastructure that was built in billions of dollars in Syria and in decades of building it, all gone. The Houthis in Yemen are suffering like never before now from the hands of the Americans. And of course, look at what is happening in Gaza. I mean, you cannot even begin to compare what is the way Gaza and Hamas and Islamic Jihad looks like today with the way they were before the beginning of the war. So we are seeing a huge, massive, massive change. We are actually not just changing the reality for us; we are changing the reality in the entire Middle East. And it's true that we haven't completed the mission. We still have a long way to go. Unfortunately, it's not easy to

fight on seven fronts. This is what we're doing now. I mean, I don't think there's any other country...

AMIR: ...While you have hostages.

OHAD: While we have hostages.

AMIR: Which is a big thing, right? Otherwise, we would have destroyed them long ago.

OHAD: Of course, of course, because it's much, much harder because, you know, ...

AMIR: ...Hezbollah was taken so fast *because* they don't have hostages.

OHAD: Exactly. We care for our people. Unlike the savages of Hamas, we care for them. You know, it was mainly, you could see that on the day when they returned the bodies of the Bibas family. Right. I remember I would never forget this day. You know, I've seen on both sides of the border, you saw this unbelievable thing. You saw parents taking their children to be a part of a big event, only that in Gaza, they took them to cheer for the death of a mother and her two babies.

AMIR: Strangled in bare hands...

OHAD: Yes.

AMIR: ...by savages.

OHAD: But it's even more than it's not just the cruelty of the murder. It's the fact that, you know, random. I'm not just talking about Hamas activists. I'm talking about random people, families, parents who are taking their children to be a part of a celebration of death, of murder. While on the other side of the border, parents were also taking their children with Israeli flags to walk with the bodies who are returning to mourn the loss of our loved ones. And that's the whole story. One culture is good. One culture is evil. One culture glorifies death. One culture sanctifies life. And that's the whole difference between these two people.

AMIR: And you know, if there is one thing we need to learn from how the world dealt with the Nazis is that you have to finish the job. You cannot... You know, once Berlin was already literally surrounded and almost taken completely, there were still tens of thousands of casualties among the Russians and among the Allied forces in the effort to eventually completely, completely level the place and finish with the Nazis. They did not even think about leaving them in power, but restraining their power.

OHAD: Right. Exactly. Exactly. And you know, for that, I think part of what we need is the support of our friends in the world who understand what you just said and who understand that again, it's not just to serve our interests. It's to serve the interests of the entire Western civilization because we are not just fighting our war. We are fighting the war of the free world. You know, just a couple of months ago, I saw a video of the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Israel. His name is Sheikh Raed Salah. And he was meeting with a group of his people, and he was asked, "What would be the reality in the day after in Gaza?" And he said to these people, "That's the wrong question. The real question should be "What's going to be in America on the day after?" Because what we really want to do is take down America. Israel is just the first stage. And they call us the Little Satan. They call America the Big Satan. In Tehran, they're burning American flags each and every day. They see us only as the forefront of Western civilization in the Middle East. And this is what they're trying to do. And I think here we need the support of our friends in the world to wake up, to realize the threat, and to support us in eradicating this evil of Hamas.

AMIR: And thankfully, the Trump administration is completely different than the Biden.

OHAD: Oh my God. Yes.

AMIR: But I have a question for you. I mean, America is now engaged in nuclear talks with Iran, which is a point of concern for Israel.

OHAD: Of course.

AMIR: Do you see a possibility that they're going to strike a deal that will keep their nuclear facility still intact?

OHAD: The answer is 100% no. There is no way. There is no way.

AMIR: I'm not talking about your opinion. I'm talking about your knowledge of...

OHAD: ...I'll tell you. The Iranian ayatollahs have one goal, one goal only, to destroy Israel, to destroy America. That's their goal. Okay? The whole existence of this radical regime is to take down the Western civilization, again, mainly Israel and America. This is their goal. That's the essence of their existence.

AMIR: So why are you talking to them?

OHAD: It's a good question. I think that's the question for President Trump.

AMIR: But obviously, he consulted with Israel, and I'm sure that he...

OHAD: ...Well, Israel is against the talks. We believe that the time for talking with the Iranians is over. They've tried it for so many years. I mean, you know, previous administrations in America have constantly tried to engage and to have these talks with the Iranians. It never led to anything besides promoting any way their nuclear deal. Maybe it took them longer time than what they hoped, but the Iranians, they have plenty of time.

AMIR: It's the dictatorship. I mean, they have time.

OHAD: Exactly. They have time. They have patience. No problem. It's also part of the mentality in the Middle East. They have patience. If they'll get to you in 100 years, they'll wait 100 years.

AMIR: And they know Trump has three years to go. Three and a half years.

OHAD: Exactly. So what they'll try to do is to take as much time from President Trump as possible to try and wait for the next administration.

AMIR: But you know that. We know that. I'm sure they know that to, the Americans. We told them.

OHAD: Well, you know, I think in terms of the Middle East, history proves that in the last decades, America had some core problem of really realizing what is the mentality of the Middle East. You know, we've seen also, of course, in the previous administration. I mean, why, for example, why do we see the strong connection that was formed between Iran and the Saudis? I mean, the Saudis and the Iranians, they hate each other. They're bigger enemies than even Israel and Iran. Why have they become so close? They've become so close because America, under the previous administration, basically abandoned the Saudis. So they basically pushed them into the hands of the alliance of China, North Korea, Iran and Russia. And I think this is part of what President Trump is trying to do is to take Russia out of this evil alliance and try to get back to have the control over what is happening in the Middle East. So I hope it will succeed. Again, we don't think that talking with the Iranians is part of the right mechanism. That was his decision for now. I believe that one day it will change, and we will not have a choice but to really take down the Iranian regime because that's the only way to really bring stability to the Middle East.

AMIR: So, some challenging days are ahead of us [OHAD: Of course, of course.] when it comes to a possible strike, because eventually we don't have time.

OHAD: We don't have time. And I believe that the coming year will be a historic year on all fronts for us here in Judea and Samaria and in Gaza, but also in other fronts.

AMIR: So Ambassador Huckabee, a great ally of Israel and a great supporter of, I guess, enforcing Israeli sovereignty over Judea and Samaria. Do you think it's going to happen?

OHAD: I don't think there's any other choice. Realistically, you know, about six months ago I introduced a summit here in Jerusalem together with former Ambassador David Friedman to

launch the idea of applying sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. Because I believe that's the only solution. You know, people tend to think that terror is coming because the lack of hope for the Palestinians.

AMIR: Which is baloney. We've learned that with Gaza, that that's not the real thing.

OHAD: I think it's not only that it's baloney, it's the opposite; okay? They have too much hope to destroy us, to kill us, to send us away from here. The hope that they have that using terror will promote their goal of establishing a Palestinian state, which basically it's only a nice way to say that we want to destroy the Jewish state. The hope is what keeps them going and push them to use terror. If we will take away the hope that using terror promotes their goal, if we will show that after what happened on October 7th, after the horrible massacre, not only that they didn't bring them closer to their goals, but it took them further away, because Israel only has increased its sovereignty over the land. I think that will really help promote what we were promised on the Oslo Accords to have peace and stability and prosperity, which we haven't gotten any of these things. We haven't got any peace, any stability, any prosperity. And today, in today's reality, everybody is suffering, the Arabs, the Jews, everybody is suffering. And the world that has to be dragged into this endless cycle of violence every year or so. I think the time has come to apply God's policies to really solve the problem once and for all. And the only way to do that is by applying Jewish sovereignty over the land.

AMIR: Over our ancestral homeland, this is the heart of Israel in the Bible.

OHAD: Exactly. Exactly. I mean, if the Jews, which again, they call Judea and Samaria, some people are trying to call Judea and Samaria the West Bank. Okay, they're using this language in order to disconnect the Jews from Judea. And by the way, I'm telling you, the people here don't ever use the term the West Bank because that's a false term to try to disconnect us from our identity,

from our land. Judea and Samaria, that's the biblical heartland of the Jewish people. And if we don't belong there, where else do we belong?

AMIR: This is the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were, and that's where they're buried. And so you are an amazing instrument in bringing together the Jewish-Israeli side with the evangelical-Christian side. I think it's something that is burning within you. You see the value of it, but you also see the importance thereof.

OHAD: Right.

AMIR: And I know that you're part of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. And I know—that are you part of the caucus in the Knesset?

OHAD: Of course, of course.

AMIR: And so you see the value, you have a lot of Christian friends around the world. However, I get a lot of emails and a lot of forwarded messages on social media, people that are sending me videos, trying to say that Israel is actually not just an apartheid state, but also specifically a country that hates Christians. And that's why I want you to give your remarks about it, because I know it's false, but obviously a lot of people, they don't get it. And I want an authority and a member of the Israeli parliament who happens to be an Orthodox Jew—I'll give you three examples, and then you can tell me what you think. So the first example is there's a lot of little, short videos circulating of young or ultra-orthodox Israeli kids that are spitting at Christians in Jerusalem. And then, of course, people take that as if look at how the Jews really treat Christians. But of course, it's like taking one incident of an if I may say, uneducated, careless person and reflecting it on millions of Israelis as if this is it. But then, so you can dismiss that, but then comes Tucker Carlson, for example. In the middle of the war, right at the eve of our entrance into Rafah, when we were under so much pressure, on April 9, 2024, he hosted in his show Pastor Munther Isaac from Bethlehem.

That pastor, by the way, which I know him, and I can tell you one thing, not only that he knows he lied, but also he's not representing anyone. He has a little parish of a few dozens of people. But there he said that Israel is accused of destroying churches and killing Christians in Gaza and the West Bank. He also said that Israel is committing genocide and ethnic cleansing, and Palestinian Christians are disproportionately impacted and are leaving the region. And it's interesting because it fits the narrative of Tucker Carlson, who is an anti-Semite. You know that; I know that.

OHAD: Right, 100%

AMIR: I think that he's what's wrong in the right. He's what's wrong in the conservative camp. [OHAD: You're right.] But he echoed that. He gave him a stage; he gave him a platform to spew all this nonsense. And by the way, I know Arab-Israeli Christians, whom I even hosted here, who said, "It's baloney." It's not true. If there is one safe place on planet Earth for Christians, at least in the Middle East, it is Israel. You as an Israeli member of Parliament, what is your response to such bogus accusations? Because you know the facts.

OHAD: I'll tell you. I'll tell you. First of all, I as an Orthodox Jew, as a member of the Israeli Knesset. I invest, I think I would say, about 50 percent, at least 50 percent of my time—it's the most precious resource—in trying to build bridges between Jews and Christians. I believe that's one of the most important missions for us, again, in this generation. And you know why? First of all, because I believe in God. And I believe that all those who believe in God, in the one and only true God, should work together. We don't have a choice. We must work together. And we are fighting the same fight, the same struggle.

AMIR: We're on the same team.

OHAD: We are on the same team. We are on the same team. Again, as we've said before, we are trying to fight against this radical, progressive, woke culture who try to disconnect us from our

identity and from our God. So we are in the same struggle. We have to work together. That's number one. Number two, I believe working together, it's part of God's will. Because in the prophecies, God's telling us that this is what He wants. You know, there's a big question of why the Jewish people came back, after 2,000 years of exile, back to their homeland. Why? We didn't come back just to be a great startup nation or to be citizens of the world, as you've said before, or to invent the Disk-on-Key or the cherry tomato. That wasn't the purpose. We came to fulfill God's purposes for us. And what is God's purpose for us? As Isaiah says, that at the end of the days, the temple will be firmly established in the peak of the mountains and all nations shall stream to it, for My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations. That is the purpose we are here to serve. We are not here to serve ourselves. We are here to serve God and to serve humanity and connect humanity with God. So we are not hating Christians. It's the opposite of that.

Now, we also, again, I want to be very honest here. We have to remember that the Jewish people, after 2,000 years of exile, of persecutions, also by Christians, we have to say that; we are afraid. Most people here in Israel, [Gesture: finger pointing to brain/head area] they don't know who are the Christians. For many people here in Israel, Christians are those who try to kill us for 2,000 years. It reminds them of the Inquisition. It reminds them of all kinds of things. The Crusaders. They don't hate the Christians, but they are afraid of them. So they don't understand it. They don't understand it. So, you would meet from time to time—very rarely, by the way—you'll meet these kinds of incidents of young, uneducated kids who, seeing a group of Christians, and spit on them. It will happen only rarely, only by very, very small, small groups of crazy people, radicals. It definitely doesn't represent the vast, vast, vast, the absolute majority of the people here who maybe, again, don't understand the Christians, but definitely doesn't have any hatred for them or anything like that. And again, I'm telling you, we are in a process. This is why I'm working so

hard in order to build these bridges. I think it's important. It's important for you. It's important for us. It's important for God. And this is what I'm trying to do. I'm committed again as an Orthodox, religious, Zionist, Jew, as a member of parliament, I'm committed to improve that and to work together with Christians. I believe this is what God wants from us.

AMIR: Yeah, it's like if I see a Christian in America that says, "Heil, Hitler." I don't think that all Christians are Nazis. Obviously, he is the problem, that guy, not everyone. Another video that is being forwarded to me almost on a daily basis is a *Newsmax* interview with their news correspondent in Israel from March 20, 2023. And in that article or in that report, he's speaking about two ultra-orthodox Israeli lawmakers, Moshe Gafni and Yaakov Asher, of the United Torah Judaism Party that proposed a bill to criminalize sharing the gospel of Jesus in Israel. But basically saying if you share the name of Jesus in front of an adult, you're going to be in prison for one year, if it's a minor, two years. Now, of course, the common Christian that hears that, he doesn't understand that there's no such law in Israel.

OHAD: There is no such law in Israel. I want here 100% to say that. There is no such law. They're not even discussing any possibility for such a law. And there will never be such a law in Israel; 100% with all the guarantee, it's not going to happen. It's not even being discussed.

AMIR: We are not Saudi Arabia.

OHAD: We are not Saudi Arabia. I mean, again, I think I don't even know this specific report. But even if what they were trying, I think, to promote is maybe against missionaries trying to convert Jews to Christianity. I mean, maybe this is what they were discussing. And even then, it's not on the table. It's not going to be promoted. I don't think it's ever going to be promoted.

AMIR: I mean, if a Muslim comes to me and says, Muhammad is Allah's prophet, I'm not going to throw him to jail because of that.

OHAD: No, of course not. We are a democracy. Israel is a democracy. People have to remember. I mean, we're trying to be a democracy. Again, as I said before, we still have some leftovers from the socialists, but we are trying to be an open democracy. Everybody can just say whatever they want. You have the absolute, absolute freedom of speech.

AMIR: So you can propose any bill you want.

OHAD: You can propose whatever crazy idea you want. It doesn't necessarily mean it will be promoted. I'm telling you; this bill is not going to be promoted ever.

AMIR: Yeah. And again, if that report is from 2023 and we're already in 2025, and of course it's not a law, obviously, it's not going to happen. And this is what I'm trying to tell people. Look, not everything that people forward to you is something that is truly a fact. It can be speculations. It can be some of their thinking and some of their ideas, but it's not a fact. And it was important to me that you as a Knesset member is saying that with the clearest voice.

OHAD: I would even say that many of these attempts to try and spread these kinds of news are done deliberately in order to build tension between Jews and Christians.

AMIR: Yeah, in this case, I'm sure the reporter didn't try to do that because we know him. But at the same time, I think that it backfired. And I think that a lot of anti-Semites were using it as a fuel for their already existing hatred.

OHAD: Exactly. We can always trust these kind of people to try and disconnect us, but we should not allow that to happen. Again, as I've said, we are committed to that. I am committed to that. Jews and Christians should work together. We are in the same struggle; we have to win together. And this is what I believe.

AMIR: Yeah, well, and again, I want to thank you for that because I can say as much as I want, but I'm not a parliament member, I'm not a member of the government, nor do I want to be. But I

am an advocate of Israel. And I will always be a champion for the truth and fight the lies and the deceptions. And many times, Christians around the world are very naive. They want to love Israel, but they're being fed with so much lies and deception that they think, "Oh, I need to make up my mind." No, you don't need to make up your mind. The Word of God says that you need to stand with Israel, bless Israel, not because they are perfect. It's because God is perfect, and He's the one that says and commands you to do that. And by the way, make sure always to be on the side of God in anything you do.

OHAD: Exactly.

AMIR: And you know what? Show me one group of people, one country, one society that is perfect. You won't find it. But it's always when it comes to Israel, they judge us in completely different set of rules and scales. And we're not perfect, but I think the Israelis overall, they really appreciate the evangelical Christian world and the support that we have.

OHAD: Very much so.

AMIR: And we love them, and I don't think any of this nonsense that we just mentioned is something you need to hold on to as if that will justify any hatred towards Israel. Trust me, God had allowed Nebuchadnezzar to do what He did, but then He punished Him because the hatred that Nebuchadnezzar had was not from God. Although He allowed him to some degree to do things, originally the hatred was not from God. And for that he was punished. So remember, there is a built-in hatred for Israel among so many, and they will use anything they can find in order to justify it.

OHAD: I believe that this hatred towards Israel is basically a hatred for God.

AMIR: Absolutely. Psalm 83 says that the enemies of God, they don't know how to come against Him. So they go against His people.

OHAD: Exactly.

AMIR: That's it.

OHAD: Exactly. At the end of the day, we are not here for ourselves. We are here for God, and we are trying to serve His purposes. And there's a whole process that God wants for the world, for humanity. And it all goes towards the redemption. Now, the people of Israel have a unique role in this process. And all these people who hate Israel so much are actually trying to stop this process from moving forward. I mean, I don't know if they're aware of that, if they really even understand it or can even say that. But this is what, I mean, because otherwise you can't really explain this anti-Semitism in the past 3,000 years against the Jews. I mean, how can you really—I mean, you know, I always say that if an alien would come out from outer space and just open CNN and whatever news channel he wants, he would open the television, and we hear about Israel. He would imagine that Israel is like the greatest empire of the world who control all over the world.

AMIR: But we're nothing but a tiny dot on the map.

OHAD: Tiny, the tiniest country in the world. And yet all the world is so obsessed with what is happening here. I mean, it doesn't make any sense. And the only logical explanation is because this country is a spiritual thing.

AMIR: Absolutely.

OHAD: Exactly.

AMIR: Well, on that note, I will say it was just—I mean, I truly enjoyed our conversation. I think the content that you shared will open the eyes of so many people. And I'm glad that there's an authority of someone who is a member of the Israeli parliament, one of 120 members, but yet someone in a very prestigious committee, someone who grew up in an Orthodox home, and saw

his life mission to connect the Jewish people with their identity. And now you want also the rest of the world to understand our identity here. I think you've done a great job.

OHAD: Thank you so much. Thank you for having me.

AMIR: Thank you for being here and I want to thank everyone for watching this *Anchor Podcast*. Again, the aim of this podcast is to bring hope. That faith that we have brings hope that is the anchor to our souls. I think a member of parliament, Knesset member Ohad Tal, supplied so much hope with what we've heard not only about the Israeli politics and about the war, but also about the relationship between Israel and the evangelical Christian world. Do not believe the lies and the deception that the world is trying to sell you. They hate us no matter what. And we need to stick to the Word of God, and we need to be on His side when it comes to the nation of Israel. So I want to thank you for watching. God bless you from CONNECT in Galilee. Shalom.

* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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