



## **AMBASSADOR DAVID M. FRIEDMAN**

### **NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINEE, NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL AND MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENT**

As the United States' Ambassador to Israel from March 2017 until January 2021, Ambassador David Friedman successfully guided unprecedented diplomatic advancements in the U.S.–Israel relationship, including moving the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, and recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. He also is among the small group of American officials responsible for the “Abraham Accords” – peace and normalization agreements between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco – for which he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021.

The Jerusalem Post has recognized Ambassador Friedman as the most influential Jew in the world. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency named him one of the 20 Most Impactful Persons of the Past Decade.

Ambassador Friedman received the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff's Meritorious Civilian Service Medal in April, 2019. In September, 2020, President Trump honored him with the National Security Medal. He has received numerous other honors, recognitions, and awards, including honorary doctorates from Yeshiva University in New York, and Ariel University in the Shomron.

Ambassador Friedman is the founder of The Friedman Center for Peace through Strength, which builds on the Ambassador's achievements in strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship.

On February 8, 2022, HarperCollins published Ambassador Friedman's memoir, *Sledgehammer: How Breaking with the Past Brought Peace to the Middle East*. In its first week, *Sledgehammer* broke sales records for a book about the State of Israel.

## **Listen to God**

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Prayer is the traditional means by which we speak to God. Whether reciting a traditional liturgy or offering a unique or customized plea for specific relief, many of us have sought refuge in prayer. We beseech God for things we need or want, and hope that God will respond favorably.

But we expect God to answer with actions not words. Few, if any, of us anticipate a verbal response from God, and those who claim to have heard God's voice are afforded little if any credibility. Indeed, in the Jewish religion, prophesy is said to have ended after the days of Ezra and Nehemia, more than 2,000 years ago.

But prophesy does exist in abundance in the Hebrew Bible. From Moses to Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and many others, prophets not only present the Word of God, but offer visions as to how God will cause future events to unfold. Reading those works gives us a special opportunity not just to speak to God but to listen as well.

The Jewish People are referred to as the "People of the Book" – that book being the Hebrew Bible. Its modern relevance to hundreds of millions of people is beyond dispute and it sells approximately 2,500 copies worldwide every hour. But what is most important about the Bible is not what it says about the past but what it informs with regard to God's plan for the future.

When I served as the United States Ambassador to Israel, I took advice from many living subject matter experts, but also from several long-gone Biblical prophets. Here's an example:

In determining whether to move the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, I consulted with every American and Israeli security agency, along with agents on the ground from Morocco to Pakistan. And I also read the Book of Isaiah. The latter was an essential component of the due diligence.

Isaiah prophesizes that a day will come when the nations of the world all come to Jerusalem, the wellspring of God's laws and values, whereupon God will resolve their differences and "nation will no longer lift up sword against nation nor study war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4) – the paradigmatic end-state of peace that is carved into the wall across from the United Nations in New York City.

Isaiah predicts that the road to peace runs through Jerusalem, very fitting insofar as Jerusalem literally means "City of Peace." And peace is achieved when "nations come to Jerusalem" – something that occurs in practical terms when an embassy is opened in that holy city.

Many pundits predicted in 2018 that opening our embassy in Jerusalem would lead to endless wars and irreconcilable conflicts. Isaiah predicted 2,800 years ago that it would lead to peace. With the Abraham Accords coming on the heels of the move, Isaiah was proven right.

Much can be gained by speaking to God. Even more can be achieved by listening.