

Session 235
Matot and Masei – Living on the Edge of Israel's Promise
27 July 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34JVk70g1w>

Jeremy

Shalom everybody, welcome to the Land of Israel Fellowship. Getting this Fellowship off the ground today was more difficult than usual. Ari and I were thinking of driving to Efrat, maybe going to Jerusalem, there was a lot of infrastructure work, electrical work that was being done in the village next to us, around the Farm, lights were going on, lights were going off, there was just no electrical stability. And then right around the time they put out a notice saying, "Everything should be ok," and we said, "Ok, we'll broadcast from the Farm, here's the blessing." And so, here we are and it's so good. I can't tell you how happy I am that we've gathered here together today, seeing your beautiful faces, reading your chats, it's more than a highlight of my week. From Switzerland to Germany, from Cape Town in the bottom of Africa, to Florida, the bottom of the United States, from Canada, California, Nebraska, Delaware, it's just so amazing to have sparks from around the world all come together every week. And our time together shapes the rest of my week in this Fellowship. And in that way, it literally changes my life.

And now we're honoring the three weeks before the destruction of the Temple, and we just started the 9 Days of Av, taking us to the next level, preparing for the 9th of Av. And Tehila just took the kids to the Kotel. And I told my children, I call the Western Wall the Kotel, not the Western Wall, the Waiting Wall. We're just waiting for the Temple. That wall is just a waiting wall. And I haven't shaved in a couple of weeks so I'm really looking kind of straggly, but I really feel it. I feel the time that we're in and we've been through a lot in this Fellowship. We've journeyed together through ups and downs, wars and victories, the losses and tragedies. And the Song of Accents teaches that those who sow with tears, will reap with joy. And as a Fellowship, every week we've sowed together. And soon, please HaShem, we're going to reap together as well.

Oh, by the way. Special announcement. Tonight, for all of the Women of Valor in the Fellowship, Tehila will be hosting a very special gathering just for the Women of Valor. She'll be interviewing a woman of valor in her own right. A local Israeli who is an emergency foster mother that takes in the most urgent, serious foster babies in Israel, the children with whatever needs, she is the address, and it's the perfect, real-live Israel piece to go alongside your learning together, that's tonight after the Fellowship at 8:00 Israel time.

And so, now, it's really a unique time. It's the most spiritually intense and emotionally charged time on the Jewish calendar, the nine days leading to Tisha b'Av, the 9th of Av. You can feel it, it's like weight in the air, the weight on my face. It's like the heaviness of memory, of mourning, of longing, and these are days where our hearts remember what we lost. The Temples in Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Israel, the glory of our people living fully connected to God in the Land of Israel.

And now, it's a light for me because together as we gather as a Fellowship, I feel a new hope that we're able to see the first rays of sunlight, of a new day, that we are a model of what the world COULD be, of what the world will be like. And this 9th of Av, I'm really hoping that...October 7th was a turning point and you just never know when we turn another corner. This 9th of Av, please let it be, but that's why this next Sunday, our next live Fellowship, at the peak of the fast of the 9th of Av, we're going to be hosting a special event in honor of the 9th of Av. We'll have special guests from Israel, representations from the nations, what the 9th of Av means for them. It will be a Fellowship that is open to the world. So feel free to send invitations to your friends and family, anyone that you think will be blessed by joining us, to take time to recognize the 9th of Av with us here in Israel. I think it will be an incredibly special event. We already have about 100 people that are outside of the Fellowship that have already asked to sign up, a few people actually joined the Fellowship just by hearing about this event. So that's really exciting.

And, we expect a lot of people to be introduced to our community, to introduce to our Fellowship family, and most importantly, as we remember and mourn the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, our Fellowship will shine a light that only our Fellowship can. Our Fellowship represents a House of Prayer for All Nations in the Land of Israel for our generation. And so, mark the day on your calendar, next Sunday, this Sunday, the 9th of Av as everyone in Israel will be fasting. May it be a turning point for all of us. May it be the turning point that we've all been waiting for.

And I'm telling you, the headlines across Israel, as if inspired by the Hebrew calendar itself, in perfect timing for the 9th of Av – France is calling to convene the United Nations, gather all the nations together and declare a Palestinian state in the Land of Israel. I mean, it's been 1,955 years since the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. And to any thinking person, creating another Arab/Islamic country inside the Land of Israel, will be the next step in an attempt to destroy all of Israel again. And the chutzpah of France – Israel is still in the middle of a war with Gaza, and they're gathering the United Nations together to pressure Israel from the outside.

I mean, Gaza, in truth, was the first failed attempt at creating an independent, Jew-free Palestinian pilot state. Israel retreated from Gaza, gave over control to the local Arab population. Israel and the world invested billions of dollars to build a Gaza/Palestinian-like country that would flourish, right on the coast, beach front property. And all the Gazans did was elect the Chamas, invest in terror tunnels, invest in missiles, in warfare, and plan their attack to destroy the rest of Israel. And now France is calling for another state inside of the borders of Israel. And so France is trying to reward the Chamas and all of the jihad for their war against non-Muslims and turning Gaza into a warfare. I don't know how to explain it other than it must be a consequence of the nine days. Why exactly now, of all times, is France gathering the United Nations together to pressure Israel, leveraging all of the pressure from the nations for us to surrender more Land to the Chamas and to the jihad?

So, here's what the U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee had to say about France's outrageous move today:

Ambassador Mike Huckabee



When I heard that the French were trying to spearhead this effort to get a meeting together with the United Nations, the purpose of which is supposedly is to recognize a Palestinian State. First of all, it's incredibly inappropriate in the midst of a war that Israel is dealing with. To go out and present something that increasingly

Israelis are steadfast against. October 7th changed a lot of things. If France is really so determined to see a Palestinian state, I got a suggestion for them. Carve out a piece of the French Riviera and create a Palestinian state. They're welcome to do that. But they're not welcome to impose that kind of pressure on a sovereign nation. And I find it revolting that they think that they have the right to do such a thing. I hope they'll reconsider. But the United States will not participate, simply will not be a part of such a ruse.

Jeremy

I literally love that man. He is, by far, the best American ambassador to Israel in Israel's history. And later on he said that France, just carve out a piece of the Riviera and make a Palestinian state in France. And so much of France already looks like Chamas-run cities, and instead of Palestine, we can call it Frankenstine. I just love that, and there's more than enough room in France and around the Arab world to create another Arab state. But they don't want to create another Arab state. All they want is to shrink Israel and make it that our borders will be indefensible. It will make it just a one more step toward destroying Israel forever.

And all of this is of course, happening right in the nine days, right before the 9th of Av. So everyone's antennas are obviously just shooting like, "All right, I guess the nations are preparing to come against us." And the truth is, I think in the heart of the hearts of almost everyone in the world, they want real peace. And the only path to lasting peace is to align with the vision of the Bible. There can never be another independent state in the Land of Israel. The Land of Israel was given to the people of Israel by the God of Israel. Anything else will only lead to more war.

And as all of this is happening, the deepest truth in Judaism, is that in the depths of our pain and the depths of our decent lies the spark for our ascent. And Israel is once again being taught an ancient lesson from the days of the prophets. Don't lean on Egypt, don't lean on Assyria, it's a lesson we need to internalize before we can move on to the next phase of history. Israel needs to learn that it doesn't matter what the nations of the world declare. It matters what Israel does. And there should only be one consideration that should guide Israel's actions. And that is, what is right in the eyes of HaShem. The question should not be about, what's the world pressuring us to do? What's world opinion? But what's true? What's moral? And if the whole world decides to worship sticks and stones, or bend their knees to the terror of Chamas, Israel needs to proudly say that we bend our knees only to God. That is ultimately our destiny, to stand alone as we stand with God.

And I've always been wondering like, how is that ever going to happen that Israel is really going to stand alone? We know so many people, like the members of this Fellowship, that they're never going to leave Israel. There's so many Bible-believing people in America, the Republican party is so deeply pro-Israel, I believe, because theologically, the conservative Americans have a love and a respect for the Holy Land and know that God gave the Land of Israel to the people of Israel.

But that reality is changing before our very eyes. It's like funded by Qatar and other foreign powers and people realize that Israel's force, Israel's real staunch supporters were on the conservative right and now so much money and effort is being invested to fracture that support. And funded by Qatar, other foreign powers, real conservative influences are shifting public opinion against Israel. And the first American pope condemned Israel multiple times for damaging a church in Gaza, but was totally silent when the Druze and the Christians were brutally murdered by jihadists under the new Syrian leadership, under Jolani.

And it's a coordinated effort. It has nothing to do with Christians or the Bible. It's an attempt to defame Israel and to sway public opinion against Israel. In fact, I've never seen the conservative movement in America so divided. I've never seen it. Its support of Israel so unclear. And when

Trump first got elected, I was like, “Ohhhh! Finally, I can breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that finally Israel’s going to have four years of peace and quiet because the Republican party is unequivocally supporting Israel.” But it seems like Israel can never put its trust in other countries, in other leaders. And this breakdown of support, it’s truly an opportunity for Israel, and it’s an opportunity for the American people who truly support Israel. Like this breakdown of support is the next step in Israel’s final redemption. It will force Israel to stand on its own two feet. Israel can’t look to Washington forever for our salvation. It’s being forced to recognize that our salvation comes from HaShem. And no one else can be relied upon other than Israel.

And we’re destined to be a nation that dwells alone, and it’s time that we just step into that role. But this breakdown, it’s also opening a window for the righteous among the nations to really cast their lot with Israel. And not just align themselves with the popular party line. It’s like the choice to stand with Israel is not going to be based upon politics or trends, it will specifically be unpopular. And it will be based on people’s faith, it will be based on people’s belief in good and evil, it will be based on people’s trust and belief in the Bible.

The Midrash in Eikhah Rabbah teaches what’s really become now a part now of a Jewish tradition. Mashiach is born on the 9th of Av. He’ll be revealed to the world on the 9th of Av. Now what does that really mean? It’s not talking about a birthday. It’s talking about an idea. That the very moment the Temple was burning, the seed of redemption was already being planted in the world. And right now, it feels like the world is unraveling. War and confusion and wars within wars and this endless war in Gaza, hostages that are never going to be released by the Chamas’s own free will. But it’s like hatred is on every side. HaShem, right now is sowing the seeds of our redemption.

And so, as we walk through these nine days together, we don’t just cry for what we’ve lost. We are preparing to become the generation that rebuilds. We’re not just remembering tragedy, we’re really answering the calling of this generation. To be a people chosen to align our lives with the destiny of Israel and to live our lives with God’s dream as our aim.

And with that, I want to start this Fellowship with a prayer. If hatred and a lack of unity is what brought destruction onto Jerusalem, perhaps our Fellowship’s united prayer from around the world, from different nations, different languages, will be a force that will help rebuild. And so, let’s take this moment, with one heart, with one Land, with one God, raise our prayers up together.

HaShem, Master of the Universe, it’s the beginning of the nine days of Av and we’ve gathered here together, Your Fellowship. As we gather here, every Sunday, You’ve brought us together

from around the world, united with one purpose. United by a yearning for Your Presence to return to Zion. This Fellowship is a House of Prayer for all Nations, paving the path for a new Jerusalem and Your dwelling place on earth. We feel the weight of these days. We remember the loss, we feel the brokenness, but we also hear the sounds of the footsteps of Mashiach as Jerusalem is being rebuilt, bigger than Jerusalem has ever been build before. Lift us now into our role in this unfolding story. Let these nine days not pull us down, but call us higher, strengthen our faith, sharpen our vision, awaken in us the courage to be the people we need to be in our generation. That don't just mourn the Temple, but prepare the foundation stones for its rebuilding.

Bless every member of the Land of Israel Fellowship. Bless them, bless their families, shine Your light into their lives and guide us all toward our destiny. May everyone of us reflect Your light into the lives of our loved ones around us. And as Jerusalem is being rebuilt, may we be rebuilt as well, and may we help rebuild the lives of everyone around us. May this Fellowship be a spark of the great fire to come, the light of redemption for all of the world. Amen.

All right, friends. As we experience every week, the Torah portion is speaking directly to the times that we're living in. And this week we completed the book of Numbers, the book of Bemidbar, the book of the desert, the book of uncertainty, the book of wandering. And the nine days of Av, the 9th of Av marks the beginning of our wandering throughout the exile. When you think about it, the book of Numbers actually marks the end of the Torah itself. The book of Devarim, of Deuteronomy is the final words Moses taught to the people of Israel before entering into the Land. His final, epic speech. But as far as HaShem's message and the story of Israel recorded in the Torah, the book of Numbers is the end.

And I just think it's so profound the Torah would end by recording the journeys of Israel in the parasha of Masei. It doesn't end with the climactic victory or a giant manifest miracle. The parasha is called Masei which literally means "Journeys." And we live in a world that is entirely outcome oriented. It's like, "What's the bottom line?" The Torah's message over and over again is to push back on that world view. The outcomes are entirely out of our hands. The bottom line isn't even recorded in the life of almost any leader in Tanakh. Abraham, he would become a nation as numerous as the stars in the sky. He would be the father of many nations. None of that happened in his life time. Moses at the burning bush was tasked with the mission of bringing the Israelites out of slavery and to bring them into the Holy Land. He never accomplished his mission. Joshua was ordered to conquer the Land and settle the entire Land of Israel. That never happened in his lifetime. David's dream, the King of Israel was to build God's Temple in Jerusalem. But David was ultimately just unable to finish the job. The Temple was built by his son, Solomon.

And now, as we complete the book of Numbers, the book of wandering through the desert, the Israelites who the entire Torah story is to get us into the Land. They never make it to their destination. The Torah signs off by just calling their journeys through the desert. Because the journeys through life, it's really all that matters. And so, how you walk through this world is all that's ever asked of us. You have to aim right, you have to walk toward your Promised Land. But if you ever cross the border, cross the finish line, it's just not up to you. The only thing we have control over is how we journey through this world.

And with that, I want to introduce you to Ari Abramowitz, a man whose journey through this world inspires me all of the time. He is just a light and an example of how of us should journey through this world. So Ari, please take it away.

Ari

Thank you, Jeremy, it's very beautiful what you just said. You know, I was just thinking about even the word for eretz, it's like ratz, go, it's like towards a destination. But you're never actually getting there, it's only shamayim, heaven, sham, then that's the only time you actually get to a destination that is worth talking about. Otherwise this whole world is just the journey to it which is why we're talking about...that's what I wanted to talk about as well. That journey that we talk about in this Torah portion. It's really something extraordinary.

It's a list of 42 journeys as part of the great overall journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. And every stop, we've spoken about this before, but you really can't talk about this idea enough. Every time I talk about it or think about it, for some reason, it strengthens me in my own journey. Because every stop and every detour and every camp is recorded in detail. Now the question is why the Torah would preserve this travel log. Every name, every detail, why is it important enough to warrant that? And the answer, as we've alluded to before is because each stop mattered. Even the painful ones, even the mistakes, even the places that we wanted to forget. HaShem was guiding every step forward to the Land of Israel. Every step in their journey of growth from being a nation of slaves to being a nation redeemed. Every step mattered.

Now isn't that our story, too? It is our story. Not only as a nation, but as individuals as well. As a nation, we've walked through Auschwitz and Treblinka. We've trudged through the exile, Pogroms, displacement, and somehow against all odds, we are returning home. In our generation, we've seen Israel reborn, we've seen miracles of survival and yet we've also faced tragedies, culminating in October 7th and everything before that. And still, somehow, we rise. Our modern journey is just as miraculous, just as guided, just as destined as the one recorded in this week's Torah portion.

Now on a personal and individual level, we don't always have clarity on what the 42 stops in our lives exactly are. We don't always know where one begins and where one ends. We don't always know exactly what the stops even are. And how we're even supposed to even learn from them. Now if you're like me and you've reflected on your life journey and you've prayed on it, you may have an idea, some sort of intuition about some of the stops and the lessons you learned on them. But even if that is the case, I'm not sure we're really even supposed to know all of them with clarity, at least not in this world. I think the journeys in our lives are supposed to happen TO us and while they're happening to us, HaShem is shaping us and molding us as He sees fit. And I'm not sure that process would be as effective or even possible if we knew what the stops were and what was happening to us. It's only that we don't know that allows it to happen. You know what I mean? We can gain inspiration and insight, I believe, by looking back at the stops that the Israelites took on their journey, the spiritual growth that they experienced on their stops. And then we can reflect on our journey and see how ours parallels theirs. There's something to that and I think it's really worth it.

I'll give a few examples that our sages share and I hope I'm not taking too deep a dive here and stealing your Fellowship, Jeremy. It's just so good. The first stop on Israel's journey was Ramases as we see inside:

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

-Numbers 33:3

Now Ramases literally means ra – evil, and mas, which means melt. Evil melts. This stop represents breaking free of Egypt, of mitzrayim, which symbolizes spiritual constriction and inner slavery. And it's the very first step in redemption because in order to truly be redeemed, we need to let the old self dissolve. We need to experience the melting of those deeply ingrained fears and those false identities that we may even have really started believing, truly define us. All that needs to melt away and it can be scary and it can be painful and it can even be a very disorienting process. I've experienced a lot of this personally in my life and I can tell you it's not easy when that identity just melts away.

But the Ramban says that leaving Ramses was done b'yad ramah, with an uplifted hand. Boldness born of faith. It's only through cleaving to our faith in HaShem that we can really let all that stuff go and melt away. So there's that. I think you may already see that...we could do a whole Fellowship on each of these stops. We really could. Maybe we should, come to think of it, it would really be a great book. Plotting the deeper inner meaning of spiritual growth that the nation experienced, and by extension we experience on our life journeys. It really would be

interesting to know if a book like that even exists. I feel like two Jews, three books, sometimes I feel like that. I would really be interested to know, but that's not for now.

For now, let's just take a second and take a cursory glance at the fundamental principles that we're talking about here. The principle, to get an idea of what this all really means. So there's Ramses, that's the first stop. Then we arrive at Sukkot, which we know is the same word as the holiday of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, the succah is a tabernacle. Immediately after leaving slavery, HaShem surrounds the Israelites with clouds of glory, a hug of Divine protection. A tabernacle of His love and His shelter. Like a father's embrace of his fragile new, infant child. That's what we were, we were infants. And it's at this early state of our growth that we learn experientially that true security is not walls or weapons, but only in HaShem's Presence and in His loving embrace. The Ba'al HaTurim notes that this first time Israel experiences emunah-based living is right then at this stop of Sukkot. Faith-based living, stepping into the unknown, yet sheltered by HaShem. It's that shelter that gives us the strength and confidence to move forward.

Then there's the stop called Marah, which means bitter. One moment we're warm and secured in HaShem's Presence and then we get to bitter waters. And all of a sudden, we face painful challenges and we feel alone and unable to contend with the pain. We lack the understanding and we feel like we lack the tools. We feel abandoned. Then we learn that if we apply the tree, meaning the Tree of Life, the Torah as our sages teach us, we can transform this bitterness to sweetness. We just need to take the Torah and immerse it into all that bitterness. The waters will become sweetened when we put the Torah in it. This stop is our first confrontation with disappointment after miracles. Where we learned that leaving Egypt doesn't remove life's hardships. But it does give us the opportunity to transform them. And it also symbolizes the soul's first inner battle. Can we remain faithful when the sweetness is hidden? That's a big question, something that we return to again and again.

Then we arrive to, for example, Rephidim, one of the most well-known, and famous of all the stops. We've discussed this stop so many times in the course of this Fellowship because it's here, what happens here on this stop? It's here that Amalek attacks. The word Rephidim comes from the word refu yadeihem – which means that their hands became weakened. It's here that they may have started becoming lax and complacent. Perhaps they started putting too much of the heavy lifting on HaShem and not understanding that we're here in this world in order for us to do the heavy lifting. Perhaps not only in the physical realm, that's not just heavy lifting that we're supposed to be doing there. But more importantly, heavy lifting in the realm of faith and trust, which results in action. It was here that they may have started becoming, like I said, spiritually lax and weakened in Torah. Perhaps it's here that they first started taking their

relationship with HaShem for granted, which caused them to become vulnerable, to doubt, and confusion. In other words, it was here that they first became vulnerable to Amalek. This stop represented the first lesson of complacency. That after the initial zeal, maintaining consistency and Divine service is the real challenge. Amalek is the voice of cynicism, and it's only overcome by raising Moshe's hands in prayer, by placing faith over logic.

I'm not going to go through all of the stops. But there was Har Sinai, the stop of Mount Sinai where the Torah was given, right? The ultimate ascent. Yet the sages teach us that the nation's hatred of Israel was born here, when we got the Torah. Accepting Torah makes Israel distinct. Sinai, Sin a, hatred, that's where the word comes from. It's the message of the one true God that the nations truly hate. And it manifests in hatred for His people because we're the bearers of that message. But it is the light of the one true God which they truly hate and we are humbled at this stop. Because just as Sinai was the lowest mountain, we're the lowest and smallest of people and we realize that our strength does not and could not come from the might of our hands. We realize that every moment we continue to exist is a miracle and this realization is both healthy and it's also humbling.

Then we go to the next stop...this isn't the next stop, I'm not going one at a time, that would be more than a Fellowship, but we get to Kivrot HaTa'avah, which literally means "graves of craving," in which the Israelites had this lustful craving for meat, a lust which was given to them to satisfy and when it was, it led many of them to perish in that desire. And in my mind, I experienced this realization, I think it was in my late teens and early 20's. As many of us probably did when we were just discovering our lusts and desires and we don't yet realize that if they are not channeled and harnessed through holiness, giving into these impulses will lead to sadness, misery, and eventually death. This stage we're taught to elevate our desires towards holiness rather than suppress them altogether which never seems to work. Now in order to not hijack the Fellowship, because I want to go into each one of them, I'm going to skip. But, each has its lesson.

Then there's the 33rd stop, the beginning of the final push, it was called Kadesh, which means holy and it represents the threshold of holiness, the edge of entering the Land. Yet here, Moshe strikes the rock instead of speaking to it. A failure to sanctify HaShem's Name in front of the entire nation. Over the last three Fellowships, we took a deeper dive into this pivotal event, but at the core, it teaches that closeness to holiness demands greater precision in Divine service. We learn that the higher spiritual levels we get to demand higher degrees of accountability and responsibility.

And let's go to the final stop, the final stop before redemption, which I believe that we as a nation are embarking upon right now as we are on the cusp of redemption. Now the first word of this stop – Arvot, which comes from the word, aravut, which means guarantor or mutual guarantee. Arvot Moav, that was the stop. Our sages teach that entering the Land requires collective unity and covenant. It requires taking responsibility, not only for each other, but really for the entire world. The journey through the desert was not random wanderings, but it was an ascent through holy names and holy missions, purifying the national soul step by step. Not only the national soul, but the individual souls at the same time. Each station corresponds to a stage in personal growth. From breaking free, Ramses, to receiving guidance at Sinai, to refining desire at Kivrot HaTa'avah, and finally to sanctification and unity in taking responsibility in Arvot Moav before entering the Land for final redemption.

Now I believe that the Torah bookends the 42 journeys with Ramses and Arvot Moav and the later commentators really seek profound symmetry between them. The journey begins in constriction and ends in expansiveness. The first step is breaking free and the last step is stepping into covenantal responsibility. And here, we're at what I believe is the final stop right now, at Arvot Moav, the plains of Moav. After 42 journeys, the nation stood at the banks of the Jordan River and the Torah says:

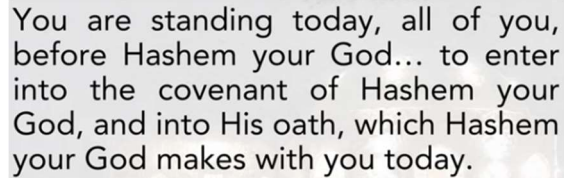
These are the journeys of the children of Israel... and they encamped by the Jordan, from Beit HaYeshimot to Avel Shittim, in the plains of Moav.

-Numbers 33:48-49

From there they could see the Promised Land. I always look right out this window where I am right now and I see the mountains that they were looking at, and they could see the Promised Land. The wandering seemed to be just over, but the true

mission sanctifying the Land was about to begin.

And our generation, I think our generation really does mirror that moment. After 2,000 years of exile, the Jewish people have returned. We've rebuilt our language, our community, our sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Like our ancestors at Arvot Moav, we stood on the threshold, the full redemption, the Temple, the revealed Presence of HaShem, true peace in the Land, true peace felt just beyond reach. At Arvot Moav, Moshe gathered the nation into a new covenant, saying:



You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem your God... to enter into the covenant of Hashem your God, and into His oath, which Hashem your God makes with you today.

-Deuteronomy 29:9-11

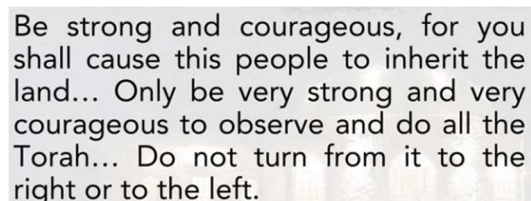
That same calling echoes now, through war and Aliyah, and challenge, HaShem is reminding us that all of Yisrael is bound together. Only unity will allow us to cross into our destiny and it will be only when we can truly experience the truth of unity

with each other that we will be able to experience and take responsibility in leading the unity of all of mankind, as crazy as that it is to imagine, we're really on the cusp of it. We can see it start to happen, even now.

And it's at this point that the Torah shares the borders of the Land of Israel. HaShem, Himself draws the lines. These aren't arbitrary, political boundaries. They're Divine coordinates. They sanctify specific mountains, valleys and cities, including Judea and Samaria. The world debates our borders, but the Torah reminds us that these borders are heaven's map. And the question is not whether the world will recognize them, but rather whether we will have the faith and courage to stand where HaShem has placed us.

Which brings us to right now at the very end of the portion. Where Israel stands on the banks of the Jordan River, one more step and they're in the Promised Land. Can you feel...can you feel that moment? Centuries of wandering and exile, miracles, and failures and we are finally home. That is where we are right now. We've returned to the Land, but we're still on the journey. We have not yet reached redemption, but we are closer than any generation since the times of Joshua.

What does that mean for us? It means that we must know that every challenge we face, from rockets to fears to political divisions, every challenge is another step in the 42 journeys. It means that every stop that feels like set-backs or part of HaShem's plan. And it means that we have a calling to fight with moral clarity and to stand firmly on the Holy Land that HaShem gave us, to take responsibility for each other, and for the entire world. As HaShem said to Yehoshua when He prepared to lead the people into the Land:



Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land... Only be very strong and very courageous to observe and do all the Torah... Do not turn from it to the right or to the left.

-Joshua 1:6-7

The question before us today is the same as it was then. Will we rise to the holiness? Embrace unity? And trust HaShem enough to step forward? We're no longer wandering, we're at the doorway. The Land and the redemption are waiting. We stand where our ancestors once stood. The journey of 42 stops isn't

just history, it's prophecy living out in our days. We've crossed oceans of exiles, and deserts of despair. We've returned to the Land, yet the final step, the crossing into full redemption

remains before us. In this moment, as we face so much right now – wars, divisions, fears, uncertainty, HaShem is calling us to the same covenant that He offered at Arvot Moav. Unity, responsibility, and holiness.

So HaShem, Abba, just as You've guided every step of our fathers' journey, guide us now. Melt the remnants of our fear as you did in Ramses, shelter us in Your embrace as You did in Sukkot. Sweeten our bitterness as you did in Marah, strengthen our hands when we falter as You did in Rephidim, and HaShem bring us together to the place of covenant and peace to cross the Jordan of our days, to sanctify our Holy Land. May we merit to see the redemption speedily in our lifetimes and through our very own hands. Amen.

Ari

Amen. Thank you, Ari. That was excellent. I just loved what Ari taught because I think it's the right way to learn the Torah. In these 42 journeys, they're not just history. They're your life. The Torah story for the nation of Israel is the story and blueprint for each and every one of us in our own lives, in our own personal growth. Every one of us is walking through these spiritual landscapes. Some sweet, some bitter, Egypt, the wilderness, the unknown. Some people call the times in their life, seasons. Oh, I'm in a season now where I have children in the home. I'm in a season now where my children are not in the home. Now I'm taking care of my...different seasons in life. And I really identify with that. Seasons come and seasons go.

But in truth, in the eyes of the Torah, those seasons can be seen as journeys and encampments. And everyone will have 42 encampments and journeys in their life. That's why the Torah spends over 40 verses listing every one of the stops the Israelites made. Some of them were just for a few days. Some of them were filled with complaints and rebellions and failures. Rashi explains the reason the Torah lists every stop the Israelites made, even if it were just for a day or two is because God cherishes every step. Not just the victories, not just the miracles, even the failures. Even the hardships. Every station was a part of our growth, every station was a part of the process of becoming Israel. Even the painful stops. Especially the painful stops. The tragedies, it's all a part of the path.

And people fall into a trap, that whatever's happening now, that's just what it is in my life now. I'm just always going to be this way. And it's important to know, gam ze l'avur, this too shall pass. And the good times, the hard times, they're 42 seasons in life, some long, some short, but nothing in life is stagnant. Every season is a journey and all we can do is do our best to enjoy the ride of life, and appreciate every encampment, the good and the hard. So thank you, Ari, that was absolutely beautiful.

I'm going to share something now that I discovered this week that I'd never discovered before. While I was learning and when it dawned on me, I felt a sense of destiny like I had never felt in a long time. You know the Torah goes out of its way, beyond time, before the history as we know it, to make it clear that the nine days that we're in right now are a part of a destined journey of Israel. Check this out.

The Torah lists 42 journeys that the Israelites made from Egypt to the plains of Moav, in a really minimalistic style. Generally, just naming the places where they encamped and then they traveled to the next. Here's a couple of examples.

The Children of Israel journeyed from Rameses and encamped at Sukkot.

-Numbers 33:8

They journeyed from Rephidim and encamped in the Sinai Desert.

-Numbers 33:10

It's like a simply formula. It repeats itself over and over again. They journeyed from X and they encamped at Y, with almost no commentary or elaboration on what events took place in those locations. I mean, Rephidim, that was the battle with evil itself, that was the battle with Amalek.

They encamped at Sinai, there's no mention of the Ten Commandments, the revelation of the Torah, no mention of the golden calf, it's just recounting the places we were.

But there's one example that sort of stands out. Numbers 33, verses 37 and 39, we suddenly get extra detail about the death of Aaron:

They journeyed from Kadesh and encamped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom. Aharon the kohen ascended Mount Hor at the word of Hashem and died there, in the fortieth year after the Children of Israel had left the land of Egypt, in the fifth month on the first of the month. Aharon was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

-Numbers 33:37-39

I mean, these verses stand out, pretty starkly in the Torah portion. It interrupts the entire rhythm. It's like, what's going on here? It doesn't talk about giving the Torah at Sinai, or the sin of the golden calf or any of the great events or the terrible events that happened. But we go into detail all of a

sudden about Aaron's death. How old he was, the date that he died, like what is that all about?

And so, there's a lot of interpretations and a lot of commentaries about why Aaron was singled out and his death was mentioned. But in my mind, the verse itself gives it away. It's the only verse that mentions a date. Aaron died in the fifth month, on the first of the month. Aaron died on the first of Av, exactly when we were reading those verses over Shabbat, exactly where we are today, Aaron died at the beginning of the nine days. Together as a nation, we started mourning on the first of Av, at the beginning of the nine days. The first of the nine days, more

than 3,000 years ago, before either Temple was ever built, the first High Priest of the Tabernacle left this world.

And then the same time, we remember then thousands of years later, the destruction of the Temples and the end of the priestly service in Jerusalem. I mean, Aaron's death in the Torah is the first time the Israelites are recording, gathering together, having a national, organized mourning period in the desert. Thirty days, the entire month of Av, involving an entire people. Number 20, verse 29:

When the entire congregation saw that Aharon had died, the entire house of Israel mourned for Aharon for thirty days.

-Numbers 20:29

The entire house of Israel mourned, that's the only time that's mentioned in the Torah. Already in the desert, the month of Av became a month of national mourning. The first High Priest dedicated to Temple service.

There's just no way around it. In some ways, that was the beginning of the nine days that we're literally right now commemorating. We're not shaving, it's like laid out as a blueprint in the Torah. It's just another hidden prophecy of our destiny, another spice cart, another sign that the Torah is not just a book, but a living word, speaking to us in our time right now. And it's a word that HaShem gave us that's a guide throughout all of history.

And we're learning about the death of Aaron, on the day that he passed, and it just so happens that the day that he died was the first of the nine days that we commemorate until this very day. It's just remarkable.

And so, as we step into these nine days and we remember the destruction, the question we need to ask ourselves is, "Why was the Temple fundamentally destroyed?" And the sages of Israel say the 2nd Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred. And in perfect timing, the Torah as we enter this time, tells us the story of the tribes who finally fix, who finally act out of the opposite of baseless hatred. Out of baseless hatred, it was like love without reason.

At the beginning of Parashat Matot, which we read over Shabbat, the tribes of Reuven and Gad come to Moses with a relatively unexpected request. They're like, "Hey Moses, we don't really want to cross over the Jordan. We want to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan. It's good grazing land, it really works out well for our flocks, it works well for our families." And Moses responds harsher to their request than any other opposition up until now in the desert. Even to Korach, Moses just falls on his face. But here he says, "Shall your brothers go out to war and you just sit here?" He compares them to the spies. He accuses them of weakening Israel's spirit, of disunity of betrayal.

And then what happens? Gad and Reuven, they don't get defensive. They don't fight back. They lean in, they clarify and they say something beautiful. They say, "We're here with you. Not only that, we'll go first, we'll be the tip of the spear of our nation, we'll fight on the front lines until our brothers, all of the tribes inherit their Lands. We're not leaving anyone behind."

And right then, national unity between tribes was born. What could have divided us actually made us stronger. And it's interesting because right now Israel's government is really on shaky grounds. The Ultra-Orthodox in Israel are simply refusing to serve in the army. And after now, 650 plus days of war, the nation is just about to crack. And it needs all of the help it can get. And I was wondering, all of the Ultra-Orthodox are thinking, what is going to be with this nation? As they're reading these verses on Shabbat, "Shall your brothers go out to war while you sit here?"

And there's no doubt that the Torah is speaking to all of us, exactly at the place where we're all at. Encouraging us to become more, to do more, to be more than we thought we could be. And it feels like this story, one of the last stories, is given to us as we enter into the Land. It's the secret, it's given to us right as we start the nine days. If baseless hatred destroyed the Temple, only baseless, reasonless love will rebuild it.

And so, you think about it, the book of Genesis is just filled with infighting, sibling rivalry, hatred between brothers, Cain kills Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and Esau. It's just, Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, it's like endless sibling rivalry. And all of the Patriarchs and all of the Matriarchs of Israel, they just worked as parents to build families that would lead the next generation. And all of them faltered, all of them had a dark time just raising their families. And what a lesson that is to all of us. All of know how hard it is to just raise a family upright.

But finally, after years and generations upon generations, right as we're about to enter into the Land of Israel, right as we enter into the nine days, we read about the mature tribes of Israel, who are now not functioning as a family, but literally as a nation. And they fix the family tree. The tribes of Israel, before they enter into the Land, accomplish what the Patriarchs and Matriarchs of Israel spent their whole life trying to accomplish. And they live out an example, a life of true unity and brotherhood. Not just with sweet feelings, not just with words, but showing up for each other like a family, like a nation. Being willing to say, "I'll fight for you, I'll walk with you. Even if your battle isn't my battle, I've got your back." And that's what heals the fractures, that's how we will become the generation that rebuilds Jerusalem.

And so, now, we literally stand at a crossroads. An intersection of time. We started the new month of Av, which begins the nine days of mourning, leading to the 9th of Av. We've completed

the book of Numbers, which we explain in some ways is really completing the first section of the Torah.

And now, we're entering into what's called the Mishneh Torah, the second part of the Torah, the book of Devarim, the book of Deuteronomy. We're at the shift from Numbers to Deuteronomy, from wandering to purpose. And next week, we begin Devarim, the book of words, the book of mission, and Moses stops performing miracles and he starts giving over his teachings. And arguably, the most profound speech in human history. He's preparing Israel not for survival, but for leadership and responsibility. Up until now, Moses and Aaron and God were responsible for the people of Israel. Everything was provided for the people. In the book of Devarim, Moses is charging the people to fundamentally change from being acted upon to acting.

In the desert, water came from rocks. In the Land, water will come from prayer, from heaven, from a partnership with God. It's a transformation from external power to internal strength, from wandering to building. It's a new stage, the transition of the book of Devarim, of entering into the Land of Israel, it's like transitioning from being like a child of God to being a partner with God.

And so what does that mean, to be partners with God in this generation? It's to finally internalize the lessons of the Torah, the lessons of the prophets, and the wisdom of the people of Israel, passed down from generation to generation and to live the life that we've been called to live from the very beginning. If you ever wondered what it looks like, to walk with HaShem today, just look around. We are at war now. The pressure, the pain, the uncertainty. It's not a punishment, it's a process. The world is watching the nation awakening to its calling, a people moving from defense to destiny. Israel is rising.

And when you look around the Middle East, Israel is literally becoming the super power of this region, becoming a leader in our region. Israel that was just trying to survive for so many years, is turning out to becoming the most powerful, most enlightened, the most shining light of any nation around us. That's a leader. And that comes with a lot of responsibility. And right now, Israel is being molded into the leader it has to be, to be partners with God on earth, to represent His ways. It's like to establish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Because our sovereignty in the Land of Israel represents His sovereignty in the entire world.

And so now, it's time for our nation to become the generation that rebuilds. And so, may we be the generation that turns the 9th of Av from a fast day into a feast day. That's destined to be, that is the prophecy in the book of Zechariah. And we are right at the cusp of entering into that new time.

And so, next week, we're going to host a special event open to the world, a special 9th of Av gathering during the fast. Please mark the date in your calendar. This will be one of the most meaningful gatherings of the year, it will be a chance to heal this fractured world and shine our light into the darkness.

And so, with that, I want to bless everyone in this Fellowship from the Land of Israel, a blessed with Aaron who left this world beginning with the 9th of Av, the Aaronic blessing, that Israel received every day in the Temple. And that every Friday night my father blesses me with and every Friday night I bless my children with. And may we be the older brothers of this world as we bring this world into a new brotherhood. To be a priestly nation and be a representative of Aaron, who left the world in these days. And let his legacy live on through us. Someone who pursued peace, who chased after peace, who brought peace between the people of Israel. May we bring peace to all nations of the world by establishing sovereignty in this Land and represent God's ways of love and justice and truth on earth. Fellowship, may you be blessed from Zion.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

Fellowship, may HaShem bless you and guard you. May HaShem shine His light upon you and be gracious to you. May HaShem lift His countenance upon you and bless you with shalom.

Shalom, my friends. Don't forget tonight, Women of Valor. Tehila has a special gathering, all of you Women of Valor are invited. May you be blessed and we will see you again next Sunday, in arguably what will be the happiest day of the year. Shalom, my friends.