

Session 55
Mattot/Massei – The Power of Words
11 July 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0iTjSp5gO1w>

Ari

Shalom my friends. Shalom, shalom. Good to see you. I would normally be starting with much more of a smile because I'm so happy to see all of your faces. But these are the Nine Days. These are the Nine Days we spoke about it last week. These are days of darkness. We'll talk more about why and the reasons and what it's all about, but as we know, times are auspicious. And there's times on the calendar that are imbued with certain energies and this is a time of sadness and destruction, and so I simply cannot start without us all please friends, praying together in response to very traumatic news that Jeremy just sent me now. And it's coming in from every direction.

I have a very dear friend, an incredible Jew, Rudy Rochman, have any of you heard of him? I'm looking at your faces. I'm sure you've heard of him, you've seen him. He's an out-of-the-box Israeli activist who's really known for going deep into the trenches of leftist, liberal campuses throughout America. And he brings the truth of Israel in such a loving way, in a different way. Not the usual talking points, but deeper ideas about justice and truth and HaShem and that Jews are indigenous to Judea. He speaks to them in their language and as really valid and true. He's very brave and he's holy. And that's not all he does. He also seeks to find and help the tribes of Israel that have been scattered to the four corners of the world. And he just took a delegation of holy activists like himself to Nigeria to bring a sefer Torah, to bring a Torah scroll to the Jews of Nigeria, to strengthen them, to stand with them and to help bring them home. And he was just kidnapped along with his crew of incredible Jews and his entire delegation, many of which are dear friends.



So this is the tweet, the original tweet that I got. Now, it's getting out more and more. I don't know if you can read that, I can't exactly read that, but it talks about they're held in these terrible dehumanizing conditions and it's not even really clear at this point who has them and what it's about. Do you have that other picture, Ben? Anyway, you could go to Google and see what he looks like and see what he's doing. He's with the IGBO and these are Jews that are of the lost tribes of Israel. There's no question about it. So, I want us to pray, please, because I feel flustered and knowing what I'm going to be talking about in this fellowship, I'm almost embarrassed.



Yeah, that's him right there, can you see that? This is one of the articles that I found. The news is only starting to get out.

But, HaShem, please, please protect these holy Jews. Protect our brother, Rudy Rochman. They put themselves in harms way for Your great Name. They flew to Nigeria to bring Your holy Torah to their brethren, to our brethren. And to try to bring them home. You scattered us to the four corners of the world and they are there to be vessels, vehicles, to fulfill Your will to sanctify Your Name. And to bring home our Jewish brothers and sisters around the world. Please, during this difficult time, give them strength and give them faith. Allow them to find favor in the eyes of whoever has kidnapped them. Whatever is happening with them, protect them physically and spiritually from all harm. Spread Your Wings of salvation and protection over them. And bring them back home to the Land of Israel. For their sake and for Your sake. For the sake of Your great Name. Thank You, HaShem. Amen.

Ohhh...this is the Nine Days. This is the Nine Days. I'm telling you friends, something feels different about this. Like this is coming at a different time and a different place and this may be the start of a very big international incident. I don't know, we'll keep you updated. But please keep them in your prayers. Oey, friends, with all the darkness, it's good to see all of you. Truly. Truly. It's been another little bit of a rough week for me, but now everything is getting into perspective. But you know this fellowship, is in so many ways, it's a refuge from the confusing storms of our times and of our lives. And one of my favorite things to do that I'm doing right now is scroll through all of your faces in the minutes that lead up to the fellowship. I'm seeing Ramona right now and Robin and Brett, good to see you, Brett. Nancy, it's just so good to see all of you and your faces are just shining and it's good because these have been probably the roughest times I can remember in my adult life.

And you know, every week that goes by here, we become more of a community. And not only do our communications, our messages that you send us, at least from my experience, they're increasing. But it seems that the communications among each other as well, which I'm so happy to hear about, are increasing too. The closer we are, the tighter knit we are, the stronger we are. And these are times that we really need strength. It doesn't even matter, sometimes it doesn't even matter what we say, just the fact that we're here together and praying together, that's what really matters.

So before we begin, I want to thank all of you for your messages that you sent me since the last fellowship. And while I didn't count them, it felt like more than ever before and I appreciate them all. And by the way, while I remember, just a little pause, let me request here that if for some reason you send me a message or a question or a prayer request and you don't get a response from me within a day or two, do me a kindness. Forgive me in your heart and send it again. Often, I need to look something up or reflect, or ask someone and then the communication just gets lost and swallowed, you know how these things are. So, please send it again and I'll try my best to prevent that sort of thing from happening.

So there's been so much feedback. So many people have been saying, me too! Me too, I'm struggling with this or with that. Real life challenges. A lot of you are sending me video messages where you're actually speaking to me, like eye to eye and it's so powerful, the challenges that you're facing, it's inspiring to me. I've come to believe at this point that if you don't struggle with some point of emotional or spiritual challenge in these times we're in right now, you're a lot more of the exception than the rule. And while you'd think that so many of you opening up to me about what you're going through would depress or bum me out, the truth is just the opposite. Exactly the opposite. Seeing the inner strength and faith and the unreasonable defiance with which the people in this fellowship face adversity and pain, it just strengthens me. You're like spiritual warriors. Really. I mean that. Every single one of you. There's a reason we've all been brought here together.

And I'm starting to believe this fellowship may mean as much to all of you as it does to me. It would simply just confirm that God is blessing is upon us and with us on this journey. Anyways, I want to talk about the Torah portion and the things that have happened this week and I'm eager to dive in and share the word, but before I do, I want to introduce my beloved friend, Jeremy Gimpel. He's literally on his way to the start of his journey with his family throughout America, bringing the light of Judea to thousands throughout the United States. And after what happened to Rudy, let's pray for him. Pray for HaShem to protect him and his family. This world is getting increasingly crazy and he is there. He is not going as a tourist to go to theme parks. He's there on shlicut, as a messenger, as a divine messenger. So, Jeremy, please.

Jeremy

Alright everybody, here we are in the mountains of Judea at the edge of the Judean frontier. This is the outpost farm that we established in the middle of corona. And as you can see behind me here is the community, Bnei Kedem, all the way behind me here at the top of the mountain, right up there, that is the Arugot Farm and that's our House of Prayer. Below me down here, is two big valleys that go up and down. It's really for me to walk from here to there, if I was to go through these valleys, it would take me about a day to get back to the Arugot Farm. But I just wanted to show you what we've done up until now.



Because as you can see behind me here, that's really where our outpost is and it's pretty far beyond this road that we've paved from Bnei Kedem.



But as you see right here, this is the water line, and it's a pipe that you know, that's how big it is, my hand doesn't really even go around it. That's how thick it is. And it goes from here, really all the way up to Bnei Kedem and then what is the water line for? Obviously, it's to bring down water to our new little farm here, but also what we've done, in-between our farm and Bnei Kedem, is over the last year, we've planted vines.

And that was done by the Chevron winery because obviously we don't have the resources to plant vineyards upon vineyards, but they do. And now that we've taken this land and we've made it productive, and as you can see behind me here with this waterline, the vineyards are blossoming. Now it will take three years until they can really produce according to the Torah law because the first three years, we just let them grow. And then in the third year, we'll be able to start making wine in Chevron, and so thank you to the Chevron winery for this Zionist endeavor. And so here is the road that we've paved, these are the vineyards that have really connected from our outpost there, now to Bnei Kedem, slowly but surely all the land in between, which is about I would say, two to three kilometers, is now being cultivated and brought back to life. The mountains of Judea are soon going to be dripping with grape juice.



Alright, I just wanted to show you what these one-year-old grapevines look like. They're just now getting out of the ground. Like this is the season where they really start to blossom and of course by Sukkot, that's when the harvest comes. But these grapevines are about a year old, and as you can see right here on the other side of the street, those are the grapevines to

be. So we are reclaiming this land, making the desert blossom. I'm going to lift up a drone here

and you can see all the way from Bnei Kedem, how we are slowly but surely restoring pride to the Judean Mountains.



So I've just gone a little bit closer now to our farm. I just wanted to show you, this is the newest crop, just right here behind me.



So these are literally just months old now, these little grapevines here. They're so cute. Look at them. So these were just now planted, and then hopefully in three years from now.

But as you can see now, this little new vineyard really goes all the way up to our outpost here behind me. It's like all a part of the same project. And that's how it's done. That's how we come to a barren reality in Israel, because as you can see behind us here, it's just desert, nothing is here and nothing would be here had we not come back and restored this land.



Alright, hey guys, here we are now, our pride and joy. Here is our tanker for diesel, right here is the battery. It's a pretty big battery because we now have solar panels over here that were once again provided by a fellowship member from California and her friends that are just lovers of the land of Israel. And if you could imagine that just a few people gathering together are making such an impact of all of the land around us here. That we have this ancient command, an ancient guidance to inherit the land, to cultivate the land, to make her blossom, to make her flourish. And here we are, right behind me, two solar panel systems that are now powering our makeshift farm here in the Judean mountains. And we have the frontier ahead of us. And I think that the more that we return to our land, the more we return to ourselves, the more we

return toward who we are meant to be in the world. And that's not just a Jewish thing. That's a world thing. The world is going through a process now. The world is sick. And the land of Israel is the medicine. It's the healing. And so, here's our panels, and let's go check out what else is going on over here.



So, we had some problems here with the authorities here in the beginning. But now, we came here and this is brand new. This, what looks like an ancient ruin, is really just a modern-day place to catch some shade in the sun. Alon, ma koreh? So here, now look, one of the volunteers is here. And this is an area to just sit and relax, let people find the shade. Here we

have behind us, our flock of sheep, as you would expect, is growing. And every day they're taken out and roaming throughout the land here. Guarding and protecting the land of Israel.

Our newest addition, we've of course brought two caravans here. One, two, and they're mobile caravans, we've already had to move them once. And then, our newest acquisition is this bus that we've now turned into a mobile home for the volunteers. And so, slowly but surely, this place is coming to be. We have electricity, we have water, we have sheep, we have vines, and now...let's check out our new bus. The magical Judean bus. So we're walking in right here and here we go.

So this now, has been turned into as you can see, beds here, beds here, beds below here. It's like a funky, amazing place, that if you're a young Zionist and you want to make it happen. There's a shower, a bathroom, a compost toilet, a sink, and another bedroom in the back. And so, if we have to move this one, well it's a good thing it's a bus! And of course, an air conditioner. Now that we have electricity. And so, our outpost is growing, the land is being developed and I would say that here – mission accomplished. The Rujum, we're still working on, we're having a lot of challenges there, but I guess life is filled with challenges and our job is to overcome them. So, thank you for everything.



(end of video, Jeremy continues)

Ok, guys, girls, ladies and gentlemen of this fellowship. This has been a crazy day. So we're packing up five kids, we're getting on a plane to go from Israel to L.A., from L.A., directly to Colorado. And we're going to do that with masks on all of our children for I don't know how long. There's been a little bit of confusion. I was supposed to talk first and introduce that beautiful movie that we're building together in Judea, but it sort of got flipped upside down, so now I'm talking. But, what I wanted to say was that our fellowship is just incredibly in-tune with something Divine. And I think one of the fundamental messages that Ari and I are always talking about was that there's a religion that's in place and every week this religious institution, we read the Torah portion. Now that's a religion. I don't know, there's something about it, the Jewish people accepted upon themselves that every Jew and now every believer around the world is reading from the same section of the Torah at the same time everywhere around the world. That is extremely powerful. That means that there's somehow through Divine orchestration, a message that's being broadcast to everyone, at the same time. Anyone who's tuning into that message.

And this week's parasha is called, Massei, journeys. And it's all about documenting the different journeys and stops along the way. Now, I always see myself as just boots on the ground here in Judea. And now I'll be boots on the ground on our journeys as we stop along the way. And our fellowship for the first time is going on a journey across the world. We're going to start in Colorado and then we're going to go to Texas and then Arkansas, and then to Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia. We're going to be crossing all across the country. Stops, literally like as if we're living out the Torah portion. Our fellowship will be journeying across the United States and members of our fellowship have organized events at all of these locations. And sometimes I have like a day after the event and we'll just be able to hang out and spend time with each other. And I feel it's such an opportunity, such a slichut, to merit, that I'll be able to bring the light of Judea all the way across the world. People love Israel so much and they've been removed from the Land now for well more than a year because of corona.

And my family, God bless Tehila, she's so brave. We're going to take all of our kids with masks on, I think it's a 22-hour trek right now from Israel to Tel Aviv to L.A., L.A. to Denver. And then we're going to cross the country. And so, I'm sure that there's going to be very hard times. I'm sure there's going to be marvelous times. But I'm just so excited to finally bring this fellowship on the road and meet you. Not on Zoom, in person. I'm so excited about that. I can't wait. And so, the little mini bus shuttle taxi is coming to pick me up in 42 minutes. And so, I have to go now, but I just wanted you to see that as people around the world who are tuned into the Torah portion, are reading the parsha of journeys, our fellowship is going on a journey and we're going to have stops along the way and so I can't wait to see you all. Hopefully, I'll be able

to take some videos and share it with the fellowship. It's the first time our fellowship is going to be transformed from something virtual into something real.

And I'm just, I wish that it would be here in the mountains at the Arugot Farm, that's the ultimate. But we're not there yet. That's ok. But there's a process that's going on here. So first, the Arugot Farm is going out to the world, and then the world is coming to us. And so, I can't wait to see you all. Ari, thank you very much for taking the leadership over the next couple of weeks and leading our fellowship. I will definitely be tuning in every Sunday. I can't live without it at this point. For me it is an absolute life-line. And thank you for your prayers and I can't wait to see you. So, shalom everybody. See you soon.

Ari

Alright, Jeremy, one second here, we are with you. We're with you in spirit, we're with you on every step of the way and we want you to keep us connected and keep in touch with us. Because you represent all of us. So really stay strong, and as you know, it's a crazy world right now, so stay protected. And I'll tell you, you just heard Jeremy's little message about Massei and the journeys. But, the fact is that the video that he just played right before that was such a special video because you know Jeremy and I came out to the Arugot Farm together. And for me it was such a grandiose, overwhelming undertaking. And you know, we planted the vineyards, and the trees, and we started building, and to me it was just so all encompassing. It was so larger than life.

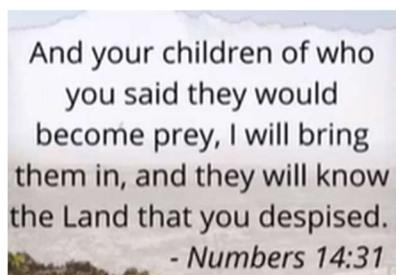
And only Jeremy is then looking beyond. He's looking on the other mountains in Judea. He's looking on the other side of the valley of Arugot. And he sometimes drags me along with him and that's sort of what's been happening here with this. I said, what are we doing? We're building up the Arugot Farm, and we're making the Arugot a destination for spirituality. And no, it's not about the Arugot Farm, it's about Judea. It's about making Judea into a global destination. Bringing the life and the spirit back to Judea. Making these, I mean there were just rocks and tumbleweeds, and He's brought this beautiful life to it and there couldn't be a better time, a more perfect time than right now for that video that he just sent about what we're doing on the other side of the Arugot Valley.

Because we've entered this period of time called the Three Weeks. And bad things tend to happen during the Three Weeks as we just saw about Rudy Rochman. And when I say bad things, I mean it in the simplest sense of the word. We know that in the world of truth, everything is for the good and everything is good. But in our world, the good can often be masked and concealed with pain and tragedy. And those tragic, painful things often fall out during the Three Weeks. And even more so, during the last nine days of the Three Weeks, which we call the Nine Days. That's what we call them. And those Nine Days just started yesterday. Yesterday was Rosh Chodesh Av, the new month of Av and it just started.

So just a brief review, to highlight how seriously this is taken. How far this is from, it's on Jewish superstition. During the Three Weeks, we don't conduct weddings, we don't listen to music, we don't enjoy new things, we don't have haircuts, or shave, and then during the Nine Days, it's even more stringent. During the Nine Days, we don't eat meat or drink wine. Of course, the Temple was destroyed and that's when the wine libations and the sacrifices ended. And I think you're seeing D'vash right now in a picture of Jeremy, which just raises my soul so much. Jeremy, I'm talking about the Nine Days. There could not be a greater contrast with the deliciousness in that video right now. You're going to have to shut off your screen. It's too big a distraction. Anyways, I love you D'vash, I can't wait to squeeze you and eat you and hug you! I feel like I'm not allowed to. I should probably stay away from her during the Nine Days. She's just too decadent, too delicious. I can't wait for all of you to come in person to the Arugot Farm and literally squeeze her thighs. They are so plentiful. I mean it would have to be relatively soon, like ten or fifteen years from now, that would be weird, but she's just so delicious.

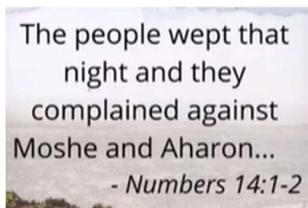
Anyway, we're talking about the Nine Days. So, we don't eat meat or drink wine of course because the Temple was destroyed and that's when the sacrifices and the wine libation stopped. We don't swim, definitely not for fun. We don't do laundry, if possible, other than for babies. And of course, all of this is to sensitize us to the grief of the tragedies that have befallen us in the past during these painful and difficult times. Just over Shabbat here in Israel, a three-year-old girl climbed into her parents parked car when they weren't looking. They looked for her, they searched for her, police were looking for her, and they only found her in the back seat too late and she died. And it was devastating. And it's unimaginable, a three-year-old girl died.

This is what the Jewish people brace ourselves for during the Nine Days. That's what it's about. And why was Jeremy's message so perfect? I'm talking about the first video message where he showed all that we're doing on these hills of Judea because the deepest root foundation sin of the 9th of Av and these Nine Days is despising the Land of Israel. The Land, that if our forefathers just had the courage and the faith to see it clearly, they would have loved it with all of their hearts. But they didn't love it. They didn't have the eyes to see it. They brought an evil report about the Land and they despised it. It says in Numbers, chapter 14:



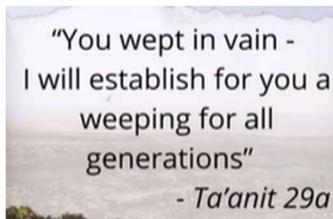
HaShem knows the hearts and He saw that rather than yearning for the Land, that generation feared it and despised it. And that's why it was only Caleb and Joshua, right, that were able to

actually able to enter the land to inherit it because they came with a positive report of faith and love. Anyways, Numbers, chapter 14:



As a nation, we were up that night as a nation. That night, we should have been celebrating and offering thanksgiving sacrifices, and we wept.

And on that night, in these days, HaShem tells us, this is from the Talmud –



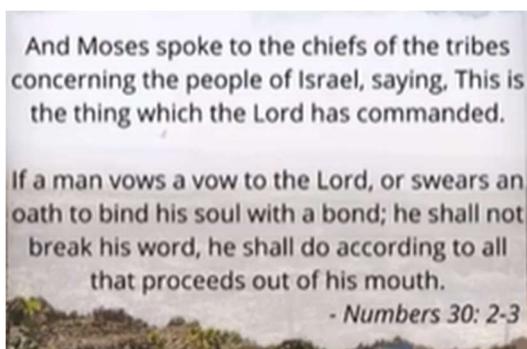
And now, as Jeremy showed you, we are continuing to settle the Land of Israel. We continue to bring life to the hills of Judea. And we are unwavering and it's not just us. We are the least of our brethren. You would not believe the people that we encounter. The self-sacrifice, the fearlessness, the love that we encounter of these Judean Jews. The amount of national and international pressure against us is overwhelming. Just all the time on my calendar, the Supreme Court ruling, returning to see about this or that thing or this thing or that thing. We're trying to do so much and we also have to pay these legal bills against all these international organizations whose entire purpose is to destroy us.

And we have suffered losses and setbacks and destructions, but we keep moving forward. And please God, the day will soon come when the exiles are ingathered. The hills of Judea return to life, the Temple is built. Tears are dried up and converted to joy and there is nothing but happiness. Where the knowledge of God will cover the earth as water covers the sea. And what does that mean? It's not just knowledge in your head. Internalized knowledge, from your head to your heart. Where it's just a part of who you are and you look around and you see that everything has been perfect. But we're not there yet and until then, we're still mourning.

My friend, Yishai Fleisher, he compares our mourning to the situation of two women being in a room and they have the same status. They're still single. One, her husband just died, and she's bereaved. And the other one, well she's single as well, but she's just about to be married. So they have two completely different feelings. There's an entirely different perspective on it. And for the majority of the history of the exile, we have been that first woman that has been mourning and bereaved. We were that widow. But now, we're being ingathered. The

prophecies are being fulfilled and I think we all feel the sense of hope and optimism that we're literally on the cusp of redemption.

And I ask you my friends to consider, what was the difference between entering the Land with celebration and divine blessing or being sentenced to die in the desert and wandering for 40 years? It wasn't just our perspective. But it was our words. What words did we express? And that's what this fellowship is called. The Power of Words. Because this week's Torah portion, it talks about the unparalleled power of words and as Rebbe Nachman says, the Mashiach will come and conquer the whole world without firing a single bullet. It will be in the holiness and the power of His Words. And so regarding the power of words, in chapter 30, verses 2 through 3 –



It may seem obvious, right? You make a vow, you make a promise, you fulfill it, you keep it. But in the world we live in today, a world so filled with lies, it is far from obvious. And I think it was Immanuel Kant, I don't remember the philosopher, he was asserting that you can't even trust an atheist. The testimony of an atheist in the courtroom. Because if they don't have a god, then their word does not stand.

Anyways, we've shared this before. The words, abracadabra, you remember this? They come from Hebrew words, I will create as I speak. Because just as God created the world with words, we were created in His image and words have unimaginable power from our mouths as well. That's why the laws of lashon hara and motzie shemron, and gossip and slander, they're so grave. Remember, Miriam just said a word against her brother, Moses, and she was struck with leprosy, outside of the camp for a full week. Just words and that's why we take our words so seriously.

That's why we open up Yom Kippur, our most solemn day of atonement with Kol Nidre, addressing our vows of the past year, seeking to nullify our vows from the past year because we should not really make vows to begin with because in the eyes of God, our word is our bond. And just as He is a God who fulfills His promises to us. And Isaiah tells us in chapter 55, His words never return unfilled, they do not return unfulfilled. And so our word should never return unfulfilled either. We should regard them with the utmost respect. And so now, I want to something that I want to do more of in the future, assuming you all like it, I would love to hear your feedback. It actually didn't come out exactly as I had hoped it would, but I want to introduce you to a very precious Jew. As I used to do this podcast, a segment on my podcast, called, Better Know a Jew. Because I always loved, you know, show and tell. There's so many unbelievable people in Judea. So I wanted to introduce you to one of them and I can only play a small part of the interview due to time constraints and we really don't get to the beauty of

this interview, so it's really more of a little preview and if you want, I'll send you the link later and you can watch the entire interview, it's about a half hour long. (entire video found here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0dko2uB4-k>)

Here's a Jew and he made a vow. And he truly recognized the power of his words. He's a dear friend of mine, his name is Liad and he was a Judean Nazarite. Here you go.

(Video)

Ari

And the best kept secret of Judea is the Jews of Judea. And you are one of those incredible diamonds. You're a diamond of a Jew. Every time I'm around you I feel closer to HaShem. I leave inspired and I thought that this was a perfect week to introduce you to our friends and brothers in the fellowship, I was just telling you about the fellowship. You know, hundreds of people in 40 countries around the world that are just so thirsty to connect with Israel, the Torah of Israel, the nation of Israel, the God of Israel. And that's what it's about. So I wanted to introduce them to you. And I was thinking of course, there was another Torah portion I thought that you would tie into very well into, but this one is beautiful as well because this, the minute I started reading through it. And it was about vows and annulling vows and just in general, the power of a vow, of a neder, in Hebrew. I thought to invite you. Now why would I invite you?

Liad

Well, first of all I've got to say, it's a privilege to be here and I feel the same way. I mean anytime I'm around you, I feel closer to HaShem. So, we're very blessed. I know the portion you're probably talking about is probably Parshas Nasso. And, most of the time I get text messages, like, oh, it's your parsha. And the reason is because I was a Nazarite, a Nazir in Hebrew, for over 7 years. I concluded recently on Lag b'Omer. So, yeah, even to this day, even though I'm no longer in that status, people still know me as a nazir because of that, because people have only known me as that.

Ari

I've known you for years and only recently have you returned to the fold of the rest of humanity.

Liad

Whatever that means, right. I'm trying to become a human again.

Ari

So what was that like? Why did you take on that vow? What was that like? Give us your thought process. Just briefly, you were born in South Africa.

Liad

Correct. Born in South Africa, lived there until I was about 11. And then the next 11 years in California. And then, I went off, spent a year in Asia. It was a wild time. And it was actually in Asia that I became a Nazarite. It was right after Pesach time, at the conclusion of Pesach.

Ari

Seventh day of Passover.

Liad

Passover, right. And there's a little bit of a celebration, a feast, at the conclusion of Passover. Some call it namunah, others call it the Feast of Messiah. And it was actually on that day that I ended up taking on the vow. I think one of the simple reasons I took it on is like you, and I think it is why we connect so much is that we're a bit extremist in a certain sense. I mean if you look at where Ari is right now, where we are right now, you understand there's a positive which we just saw in Parasha Pinchas, to be zealous for HaShem, to be zealous for holiness, there's nothing wrong with that. And I think that's why me and you connect in our friend circle, we connect.

Ari

It manifests itself in different ways.



Liad

Right. Absolutely. Absolutely. And I strongly felt that it's an injustice. It's a sadness in the world that the Creator of the world, where there is nothing outside of Him, doesn't have a home in His own world. And how can I allow myself to be comfortable, to be too comfortable, so long as He doesn't have a home, I don't want to so to speak have a home.

Ari

Isn't that what we're trying to do with our prayers and our national aspirations for the Beit HaMikdash, for the Temple, to create a dwelling place, a home for God in the world? Isn't that what our aspirations should be? Why did you decide to make it on such a personal, Biblical, Nazarite, out of the box way? I mean most people don't know any other Nazarites. I didn't other than you.

Liad

Right. I think another element is you can't really maybe give a good reason behind these things. I know I'm married to a woman who's a convert, although it's a story for another time that she does have family lineage that connected to Judaism, so when you ask most converts, at least when I've asked them why they did it, it's something deep and innate inside of them that they can't really describe. They just know that this is who they are and they could give reasons, but the reasons are never good enough. I can give you reasons, but even to myself, the reasons aren't good enough. The most deep and innate reason is I just felt this is what I need to do. This is one of the...what we would call with regard to kabbalah, a tikkun, this is a rectification that we as a kallal, as a general all encompassing soul of Israel needs. And sometimes, a certain individual might do something for the collective and even after now I've concluded, I've had rabbis come up to me and say, thank you for your service. Like we would say to a soldier. Because they understand that the Torah is eternal. That means that the portions of the Torah that describe the Nazarite and speak about the commandments relating to the Nazarite, they haven't gone out of effect just because we don't have a Temple anymore. There's still a belief and there's still an idea of it and this is something that I can't describe, I just knew this was something I needed to do. (end of video)

Ari

So first of all, give me thumbs up if I should do more introducing you to the Jews of Judea. Ok, I also want to introduce my parents to the Jews of Judea because it always helps me to introduce them to people who make me look normal. Cause they have always thought that I was just unhinged, moving to a hilltop, so you can count on one hand the people in the world that have taken on the Nazarite vow. Definitely in our times and he is one of them and he is a very well known for that. And I encourage you to watch the whole thing because you simply won't believe what HaShem brought into the world which caused him to finally annul his Nazarite vow after all those years. He's going to talk about the practical level of what it meant to be a Nazarite, the extreme. We don't cut our hair. But the lengths that he went to not even pull out one hair from his head was overwhelming. And he said that until the Messiah comes, until the Temple, he will not remove that vow.

But then something happened in which he felt, which I clearly agree, led him to believe that HaShem wants him to annul that vow. Anyway, I encourage you to hear it more. But he's an example of understanding the power of a vow and the power of words. And the difference between truth and lies.

Which brings me to a part of the story that I want to share with you from this past week which I was conflicted about sharing. And I have a feeling that these types of stories, they're winding down, but you've been on this journey with me from the beginning and it's such a tumult in my head. Because last week was a beautiful fellowship, but it was also heavy. And I'm grateful to say that I feel like I'm well on my way out of the darkness because although at times it still feels

like I'm walking through the valley of the shadow of death, HaShem's rod and His staff...and what are His rod and His staff? His punishments towards us. They're comforting to me. They have started comforting me. They're helping me to know that in the craziness of what is happening I can't even tell you all of it. A lot of it is so personal, it's not even my place to share. It's about my inner family.

But it's so clearly from God, these challenges that are being thrown our way and the fact that it's happening during the Three Weeks, that I feel like that has comforted me and that is in truth all that really matters. All that matters is our perception of what's happening. And if we perceive and feel that God is with us fully, then we could be locked up in a prison in Nigeria and we're safe and we're free. We're free as a bird because God is with us. Or we could be totally free somewhere in Manhattan, New York and we feel alone in the darkest cell in the Nigerian prison wouldn't do justice to how we feel.

So despite all this light entering the world, that Jeremy showed you that we all see, we're still mourning. And we're still pained and we're still struggling and that's why after receiving all of this feedback that you were sharing with me about how difficult these times are for so many of you, I was conflicted about whether to share things yet again, and really conflicted because on one hand, after last week's bearing of my soul, I felt like it was enough for now. Of course, I'll always share my heart with you, even if it gets personal, but there's a certain balance. And we've been meeting for over a year now and you know me and I think I'm pretty happy and grateful. I don't do much complaining. I've always believed when we complain, what does HaShem say to us? He says, you think that's bad, I'll show you bad. And when we express gratitude and focus on the blessings that HaShem has sent us? He says, you think that's good? I'll show you good.

And so, when I discussed the idea with Shaena about sharing the events of this last week, we cut a few of them out because we have to have some God-like border to the transparency. But she was afraid it would sound like complaining and that we're way too blessed to be complaining. And she felt like however helpful and transparent last week may have been, we should take a little break from that sort of thing. But on the other hand, it was almost like the events of this past week were almost too perfectly bad not to share. At least on the surface level. Because one thing HaShem has blessed me with that I'm extraordinarily grateful for, is that during this whole ordeal where there were significant glimmers of this internalized knowledge of faith, that the goodness and blessing will come from everything that we are going through. Everything I'm about to share with you. And that I've been sharing with you. And He's been blessing me to start really giving me my emunah back. That's what I feel like. HaShem has been giving me my emunah back.

And although, effectively the challenges are growing and growing, the experience of it is very different. Because I don't feel alone on the deepest spiritual level. But I know it's a gift. I now

know it's a gift and that I haven't earned it. And I'm so grateful for it. But it also hasn't taken away from the pain of what's happened and what's happening. And it hasn't taken away from the fear. And I'm not proud to say that those emotions of pain and fear, they're still alive with me at times. But they're tempered with this faith that I'm telling you about. It just takes the edge off at the very least, it takes the edge off. But it gives me another real thing to be thankful for. I don't think our faith is supposed to take away the pain. After all, these are the Nine Days. They're made for pain. They just make it bearable. They make it where we can come out the other side, unscathed. Not jaded and hurt in the long-term way. We're able to just come through.

So you're probably thinking, alright, Ari. What is it? Let's see and hear if you're exaggerating or not. So, I'll tell you, but definitely after this Rudy Rochman thing, I want to tell you I'm embarrassed by the whole thing that I'm even telling you this. That's just what it is. And it's also not going to be blasted out as a highlight to share anywhere. Because those of you who have been with us from the beginning, will see that what I'm really sharing with you right now is a montage of the highlights of the stupidest things I've done over the last five years. Coming together in this beautifully designed reunion of pain and tragedy. At least that's what it felt like. Now it doesn't feel like such a big deal, but anyways, I think you'll see that it was beautifully designed in a way that I couldn't not share with you. That I couldn't not see God's Hand with it. And by the way, if you laugh, I'll still love you, I'll be happy that you're laughing. We need to laugh as much as we can. And I think next week, I'm going to go back to making a little bit of laughter in the world. Laughter is a holy thing, cause there's humor to it.

Ok, so you remember the story when I signed to be a guarantor for that skinny, bald, ex-French militia man, with just a few teeth named Mishel, who lived on the farm alone with me for the first couple years. He helped me with the sheep and with patrol, we became friends, or so I thought. Just a quick review. A few years ago, he told me that he found out that the French government owes him over a million shekels and if he can get to France to get the money and pay his child support which he hasn't paid for years, then he would be able to pay that and buy himself a new set of teeth. And those who know me, know that I'd rather die than betray a friend and I couldn't imagine him being willing to take a bullet for this guy and he's the one pulling the trigger. So he asked me to sign a guarantor that if he doesn't come back, it's on me. And I just didn't imagine that would ever happen. So I signed, and in a few weeks later, a local Bedouin shows up at my house and plays a message from Mishel saying that he's never coming back. He said it himself, he's never coming back. There're certain sentences, just in that story that I told that I really think have never been said before in the world. But either way, so the sense of betrayal, unlike anything I've ever experienced, but I made peace with it and I still felt like the blessings God bestowed upon me far outweighed the darkness. Even with this whole chapter, I just still felt overwhelmingly blessed. And nobody wants to feel like a sucker, especially in Israel. There's a word for sucker, it's called a frier. So, nobody wants to be a frier. And often in your desire, not to be a sucker, not to be a frier, you make other people a sucker.

And I came to the conclusion that I'd rather be a sucker many, many times than ever have someone else be one because of my dishonesty.

And many people said I shouldn't ever trust anyone to sign or be a guarantor for and I still refuse that lesson. And I refuse to live in a world where friends won't stick out their necks for each other. Anyways, I'm going way to in-depth and I'm sorry about that. In the future, I'm going to be more discriminating for who I trust and stick out my neck out for. For example, I'd sign for Jeremy, but maybe not for the guy who vaccinated his goats. That's maybe a good line there. But anyways, I'm trying to keep it short, so legally as far as the State is concerned, I'm him. I owe the money for his children's child support. I'm not allowed to leave the country, which I'm actually pretty ok with. You know there were Jews stuck in Austria and Germany before the Holocaust, they couldn't leave the country. I'm stuck in the hills of Judea in the Land of Israel. I'll take it. Anyways, so a couple of years ago, Shaena who is very good with all of this stuff, she helped me work out with the State that we'd be paying every month for about seven years, child-support for his kids. And it would hurt us, but it wasn't going to kill us. And then, if you remember, because we're on this crazy journey together, I got in this crazy car accident, you remember this story? Where my Subaru of the most valuable possession we own, plummeted into a ditch because I, with my hawk-like vigilance, forgot to put it in park. Anyways, the car was what we call in Israel, a totalloss. That's one word. Totalloss. It's funny, I actually was thinking about sharing with you all of the Israeli words that have sort of been adopted from English. Like, the axel in a car, the back axel, that's called, bakaxon. Bakaxon and then the front axel is called, bakaxon kidmi. The front, back-axel. That's actually a true thing in Israel. There's a lot of that stuff.

Anyways, so fine. I got in the accident and that's what you have insurance for, right? I've been driving for nearly twenty years, no accidents. There's a reason you have insurance. But here's where it all comes together so beautifully. We just found out this week that because of the whole guarantor thing with Mishel, they put a lien on all of our accounts and all of our possessions. And that there's this law that if there's a lien on a vehicle and that vehicle is a "totalloss", you cannot collect insurance on it. Can you imagine? The whole car? New car, no insurance, we can't collect insurance on it. Now, just a quick note, please do not judge Israel because of this. We're a young country and we have our flaws and we're not the only country with bureaucratic insanity. It can happen anywhere. And also, I know many of you in the fellowship. And I know many of you are probably going to turn to us and say, please can we help you financially? And my answer is going to be no. This is something that I'm going to have to own. This is something that I'm going to have to deal with. So I appreciate your thoughts, but please don't make that offer. And you're so kind for even thinking it, and I know many of you were.

Anyways, we've been so immersed in this struggle all week, that I see now, with what's happened to Rudy that it really doesn't matter and it's just money and if you had to make a list

of things that you would be attacked by that would plague you and your family, money is the best thing out of all things. But, nonetheless, it's a huge hit for us and we don't know the outcome and we're in the Nine Days. And we spent the whole day, that's why I feel this fellowship is a little sporadic and disjointed. I spent the whole day in all these offices, dealing with this. And we're going to find out within the next few days what the deal is. So, I'm not very optimistic, because we're in the Nine Days and you're supposed to try to not have things like this happen during the Nine Days.

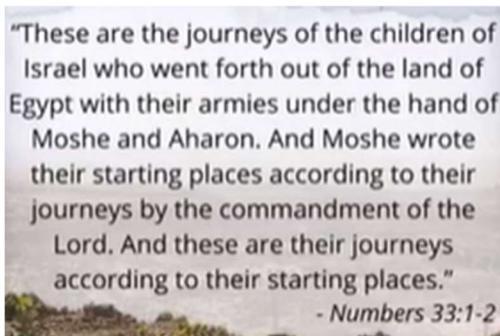
So, it was a pretty devastating blow for us, at least on the financial level. And if the story ended there, I wouldn't even share it. But that's where this sort of glimmer of light comes in and I wanted to share this with you because so many turned to me and said you're going through all this darkness. So I just wanted to share my darkness with you and maybe it would help in some way, please God. Because there's a part of this Torah portion and it spoke to me so deeply and touched my heart so much that I knew no matter what, I just needed to share it with you. And I'll get to the Torah portion part in a second.

But after we found out that we stand to take a financial hit unlike anything that we've ever experienced, one of my greatest fears was how Shaena was going to take it because out of the two of us, she has her feet firmer on the ground. Surprise, surprise. And while she is super frugal and she's nonmaterialistic, but she wants a modicum of financial stability. I think it's built in. I mean who doesn't? Particularly wives, I think. And now, 100% because of my mistakes, the highlight of my mistakes over the past five years, we stood on the brink of the financial abyss. And I just didn't know how she would respond and what type of anxiety this would cause her and yesterday she turned to me and she was just calm and she was collected and she had this beautiful comforting smile and she said, we're going to get through this. We don't need another car. We don't even need the money. We'll figure it out. We'll pay back the people we owe in installments. D'vash is healthy. We're healthy. And even if the worst happens, we're going to be fine. We have so much to be grateful for. And there wasn't a drop in resentment in her voice. And there was just nothing but love in her eyes. And when I saw that she was ok, that she was truly ok, I was able to be ok as well. And definitely for that moment. But in general, there is a just general sense of relief that came to me.

And for a fleeting moment, what I believe to be a moment of truth, a moment illuminated by Divine Light, the whole thing seemed worth it, just for that. Because when we first got married, Shaena and I we moved out to my little shack on the Judean frontier. There was really nothing like it. Our closest neighbor was two kilometers away. It was a hard transition for her, becoming a wife, and moving out to the Judean frontier. And truth is that I really was a source of strength and stability for her. And I assumed that that was going to be the dynamic for us moving forward. And without us being thrust into this difficult situation, I would simply never have known that reservoir of inner faith and strength and loyalty that had been lying dormant within her. It would have never been called upon. And by necessity, the adversity to bring it

out. And now because of this unique circumstance, it was being manifested in the world and in all of its loving beauty. And I was just so filled with love and with gratitude and as Shaena reminded me, money comes and goes. It's in HaShem's Hands and God-willing we will be back on our feet.

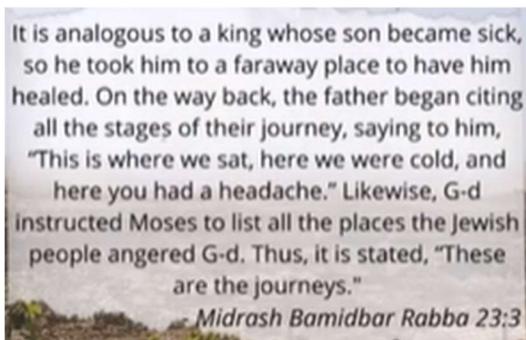
And I'll tell you that when we are, years from now or who knows, months from now, I don't know. I know in my heart that I'm going to look back at this situation and I really believe it will be among the sweetest and most beautiful moments in our marriage. And I really think that the Torah portion, when I started reading through it, it just highlighted that truth. Because we know the Torah portion, it speaks to us on every level. And as pointed out to us by Aharon Loschak, it just touched my soul and it comforted me, it such a weird thing to say this comforted me. This comforted you? But, it really was. It was the beginning of the Torah portion, the double Torah portion of Mattot and Massei. And the opening verse of Massei was HaShem recounting the Jewish journey through the desert. Here in Numbers 33, verses 1 through 2:



"These are the journeys of the children of Israel who went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moshe and Aharon. And Moshe wrote their starting places according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord. And these are their journeys according to their starting places."
- Numbers 33:1-2

So the question one could ask themselves is why is it important for the Torah to list the journeys at all? Why are the names of each stop important? Couldn't the Torah just say it took them 40 years and there were a lot of stops?

So open your hearts to this ancient midrash that answers the question. It says...



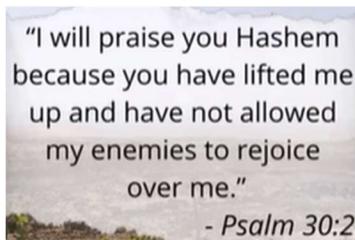
It is analogous to a king whose son became sick, so he took him to a faraway place to have him healed. On the way back, the father began citing all the stages of their journey, saying to him, "This is where we sat, here we were cold, and here you had a headache." Likewise, G-d instructed Moses to list all the places the Jewish people angered G-d. Thus, it is stated, "These are the journeys."
- Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 23:3

Now let's remember that these stops and these journeys were punctuated by traumas and rebellion and pain and failure. And so why are they recounted? Because when we are through them, when we're on the other side, when we're in the Promised Land, we will be able to look back at these events, at these stops with completely different eyes.

It's hard to see and imagine now when we're immersed in these anxieties and these fears and these emotions, but we'll be able to see them for what they really were. Moments of growth and refinement in which we became the nation that we needed to be in order to enter the Land of Israel. Without all of those failures and sins and mistakes, without all that, we would have

never been able to become the people we needed to be, to be worthy and ready to enter the Holy Land.

And so, King David says in Psalm 30, verse 2:



We've shared this before, but it just applies here so much that I needed to say it again. The word in Hebrew for "lifted me up" that is used here is *dilitani* (דִּלִּיתָנִי) which comes from the word, *d'li*, which means bucket. And our sages liken it to a bucket that is lowered into the dark depths and it may seem so dark and lonely and purposeless. Why is it going down into this darkness, so far down that when the bucket comes up, it's filled with water. There was a reason it had to go into that darkness. And so too, there is a reason that we need to go into the darkness, that we need to go into. And if we keep this truth in mind during these dark times, if we keep this faith alive in our hearts, then may we be blessed to see a brief glimpse of the redemptive light that will come from all of our pain. And even while we're deep within it, even when we're deep within it, those stops, the signing of the guarantor, the car accident, we're going to look back at that, me and Shaena, and we'll look at them as precious stops along the way, please God. Rudy Rochman will return to Israel and he'll be safe with the entire holy crew of Jews that he's with. And we'll look at this trauma as part of the journey that we needed to go through in order for Messiah to come.

And so, I'm going to wind down now my friends. And I want to give you a blessing because in this world that is so filled with deceit, God remains true to His Word. And God remains true to His covenant. And while there are forces of darkness in the world, it is clear that the sun is beginning to shine and rise and the redemption is beginning to sprout. And so, I want to bless us all my friends, that we go through these painful challenges of these times, as we experience the travails and the birth pangs of Mashiach, because that's what it is. It's the birth pangs of Messiah. We should be able to at the very same moment, view these painful and difficult stops on our journey as if we're already on the other side. As if we're already in the Promised Land. And be grateful for them. Even with all the pain. For without them, we just wouldn't be able to be the people we need to be to help bring the light of redemption to the world.

So, allow me to bless all of you, my friends, with the blessing that Aaron the High Priest blesses the nation of Israel.

Aaronic blessing in Hebrew

May God bless and protect you. May He shine His light and His countenance upon you. And may He give you peace. Amen.

I love you, my friends. Please reach out, stay in touch. We need to stay together and stay strong. Love you so much. Blessings from Jerusalem, from Judea and from Israel.