

## Parashah #43

(Update for 7.30.11)

### Masaei ~ מסעי ~ Stages/Journeys

**Torah:** B'midbar/Numbers 33:1~36:13

**Haftarah:** Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

**B'rit Hadashah:** Ya'akov/James 4:1-12

Parashah (mah-say) Masaei marks the end of *B'midbar/Numbers*. The reading opens with Moshe recounting each significant encampment along the way. According to 33:5-49 there were 42 encampments during the 40 years *Bnei Yisrael/Children of Israel* were being led through the wilderness. Several commentaries I read indicated . . .

- fourteen of these camps were in the first year before the mission of the spies
- ten of the encampments were within the first 50 days prior to the giving of the Torah
- eight encampments were in the 40<sup>th</sup> year, after Aharon's death (verses 41-49)

Therefore, there were 18 camps in the remaining 38 years, an average of 2 years in each place. However, later on, we learn they were in one place, Kadesh for 19 years. Which means, they traveled to 19 places in 19 years; an average of one year in each place.

### ENCAMPMENTS IN THE WILDERNESS

These are the names of the encampments and their meanings . . .

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Sukkot ~ tabernacles                       | 17. Livnah ~ white-ish tree                     |
| 2. Etam ~ boundary of the sea                 | 18. Rissah ~ ruin; ripping to pieces            |
| 3. Pi-Hachiroth ~ mouth of caverns            | 19. K'helah ~ convocation                       |
| 4. Migdol ~ tower                             | 20. Mount Shefer ~ beauty or beautiful          |
| 5. Marah ~ bitterness                         | 21. Haradah ~ fear; anxiety                     |
| 6. Eilim ~ palm grove                         | 22. Mak'helot ~ assemblies                      |
| 7. Sea of Suf ~ sea of reeds                  | 23. Tachath ~ to depress; humble                |
| 8. Seen Desert ~ wilderness of sin            | 24. Terach ~ named after Avraham's father       |
| 9. Dofkah ~ a knock                           | 25. Mitkah ~ sweetness                          |
| 10. Alush ~ knead, as bread                   | 26. HaShamonah ~ fertile                        |
| 11. Rifidim ~ to spread (make a bed)          | 27. Moserot ~ correction                        |
| 12. Sinai Desert ~ mountain of Arabia         | 28. B'nei Ya'akan ~ sons of Ya'akan             |
| 13. Kivrot-HaTa'avah ~ graves of craving      | 29. Hor-HaGidgad ~ hole of the cleft            |
| 14. Hazerot ~ courtyards                      | 30. Yotvatah ~ pleasantness                     |
| 15. Ritmah ~ allusion to slander              | 31. Avronah ~ passage or alliance**             |
| 16. Rimmon-Peretz ~ pomegranate of the branch | 32. Etzyon-Geyer ~ backbone, like that of a man |

33. Kadesh, in Tzin Desert ~ sanctuary  
 34. Mount Hor ~ mountain of mountain  
 35. Tzalmonah ~ shadow of death  
 36. Punon ~ perplexity  
 37. Ovot ~ water skins  
 38. 'Iyei-Ha' Avarim ~ regions beyond

39. Divon-Gad ~ pining; sorrow  
 40. Almon-Divlatayim ~ press together towards  
 41. Avarim Range ~ range of regions beyond  
 42. Across from Yericho ~ fragrant

Previously, I had a two or three of these locations I was unable to find meanings for. An acquaintance in Iowa came to my rescue!!! Thanks, Jeanette, you d'woMAN!!!

\*\* Number 31 '*Avronah*, meaning *passage* or *alliance* is from the Hebrew word *eber/ever* which means *to pass over or cross over*.

But WHY was it necessary to name each and every place, not just once upon arrival but again upon leaving? Of course, we know Torah does not convey idle words. Every letter, every word, every verse in Torah has a message for all generations. So what then is the message of the forty two "way stations" of the wilderness?

I'm inclined to think/believe, just as the nation of Israel passed through these forty-two way stations in the wilderness, on their journey from *Mitzrayim/Egypt* to *HaAretz Isra'el/The Land of Israel*, so does each and every one of us, throughout the course of our lives pass through stations of spiritual growth, on our journey from the womb to the tomb. These spiritual stations/places are meant to nourish us and guide us along our way to (tick-koon) *tikkun* (תיקון) / *spiritual repair*, fulfilling the potential our Abba Father has given us. Just like some of the encampments, some of our spiritual challenges are no more than "overnight stays" while others may take years to accomplish before we can move on.

### CHAPTER 33

Commentaries point out the importance of the different encampments, primarily, so we shouldn't think they were always traveling with no time to rest. In addition, traditional Hebrew commentators indicate B'nei Israel acquired a greater spiritual awareness as they traveled through the desert. A couple of examples are:

- At (Keev-rote Hah-tah-eva) *Kivrot Hataiva/burial of desire* or *graves of craving*, many died there as a result of their craving for meat or they learned to confront their desires (verses 16 & 17).
- At (Khaht-zeh-rote) *Chatzerot/courtyards*, they understood the concept of this world becoming a courtyard to the next world. The entire desert experience is considered as a journey of growth.

**Verse 18** says “they . . . encamped in **Ritmah**”. The Sages teach this was actually **Kadesh**, the place the spies set out on their mission. The name Ritmah is an allusion to the sin of *lashon hara/evil tongue* or the slander which took place there.

**Verse 36** mentions Kadesh again and I’m confused because I thought we had already been there. A little deeper digging revealed the Kadesh of this verse occurred on **Rosh Chodesh / New Moon / First of the Month**, Nissan of the 40<sup>th</sup> year. It was here Miriam died and the decree was given that Moshe and Aharon would not enter the Promised Land.

The encampments mentioned in **verses 41-43** were along the detour around the land of Edom. Remember when the king refused to permit **B’nei Isra’el/Children of Israel** to travel through his country? Here they became frustrated and complained against HaShem and Moshe. As a consequence they encountered poisonous snakes until HaShem told Moshe to make a copper snake. (**B’midbar/Numbers 21:4-10**)

**Verses 50 – 53** tell us **Am Israel/People of Israel** are commanded to uproot idolatry from the land. No negotiation! No diplomacy!! No compromise!!! This is not something new!!!! These instructions were issued in **Sh’mot/Exodus 23:33-34** and **34:11-12**. The Almighty warned if the commandment to destroy idolaters was not carried out, the idolaters would be “pins in your eyes and thorns in your side and they will harass you” and you will learn from them. Then it will be you who will be evicted from the land (**verses 55-56**). Historically, **Am Israel** did not uproot them all and the remaining idolaters drew them into idol worship. This prophecy was fulfilled in its entirety. And, I might add, this is the root of the wars Israel fights to this very day. Even in the Holy City, **Yerushalayim/Jerusalem**, there are minarets and mosques for the Muslims whose goal is to destroy Israel. AND, they are doing so from within!!!

Yehovah gave Israel the inheritance of The Land He called His own. He gave Israel dominion over the land **IF** they would heed His word and do as He had instructed them to do in the Torah. Israel did not listen. They never drove out the nations as they were commanded.

Israel of Biblical days and Israel of today have both been plagued by the nations (or descendants of the nations) they did not destroy. They didn’t do as The Almighty had commanded them. He even told them what would happen if they did not do as He told them. Did they pay attention to the words of The Holy One? NO! So Israel has paid and is still paying the price for their refusal to listen and obey Him. By all accounts, the Palestinian problem plaguing Israel today has its origins in Egypt. What is occurring now stems from the failure of Israel of old to follow The Almighty’s commands. Now their descendants follow in their wake and look what is happening!!!

## **THE NUMBER 42**

Here is some interesting information on the number 42. It seems to be most often associated with . . .

- Persecution
- Judgment
- Death.

On the other hand, it also seems to signify . . .

- Redemption
- Salvation

. . . because we read in **Mattit'yahu/Matthew 1:17** there were . . .

- fourteen generations from Abraham to David
- fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon
- fourteen generations from the exile to Yeshua

. . . (3 X 14 = 42). Forty-two is 6 X 7. Here we see the contrast of the number 6 and 7.

- Six represents man and sin
- Seven represents divine perfection and completion

Just as 7 is greater than 6, so Yeshua is greater than persecution, death and sin!!! For those of us who have chosen to follow after Him, there is redemption! Halleluyah!!!

Remember what *Sha'ul/Paul* said in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:11**? “These things are written as an example for us.” There will be a Greater Exodus and just as *B'nei Isra'el/Children of Israel*, we will face some challenges. It is important we prepare ourselves, not only spiritually but physically for the Greater Exodus. One scripture detailing the Greater Exodus is **Yirme'yahu / Jeremiah 16:14-16**. Notice this is followed by scripture dealing with gentiles finding they have been following man-made lies (**verses 19-21**). Also, could the 42 camps be tied to the 42 months of satan's tribulation from Daniel? Your thoughts are welcome.

## CHAPTER 34 ~ BORDERS OF THE LAND

The Torah describes the exact borders of *Eretz Yisra'el/Land of Israel*. It would appear **B'midbar/Numbers 34** becomes a critically important “legal document” as the official borders of *Eretz Isra'el/Land of Israel* are defined by Yehovah. As one commentator said, “Woe to anyone who seeks to alter it, diminish it, or negate it!” Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Binyamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon have all found out the hard way The Holy One protects His Land **for** His people. They were trying to give away land belonging to Yehovah and they were all uprooted! Rabin by assassination; Peres, Netanyahu and Barak by election rejection. Ariel Sharon, too, joined the above list when he relinquished the Gaza Strip. Had he not suffered a stroke, who knows what the elections would have produced? Since Ehud Olmert lost the last election, due to some unsavory practices, it will be interesting to see what Netanyahu does with the West Bank! So far, so good!!! Only The Holy One knows the future.

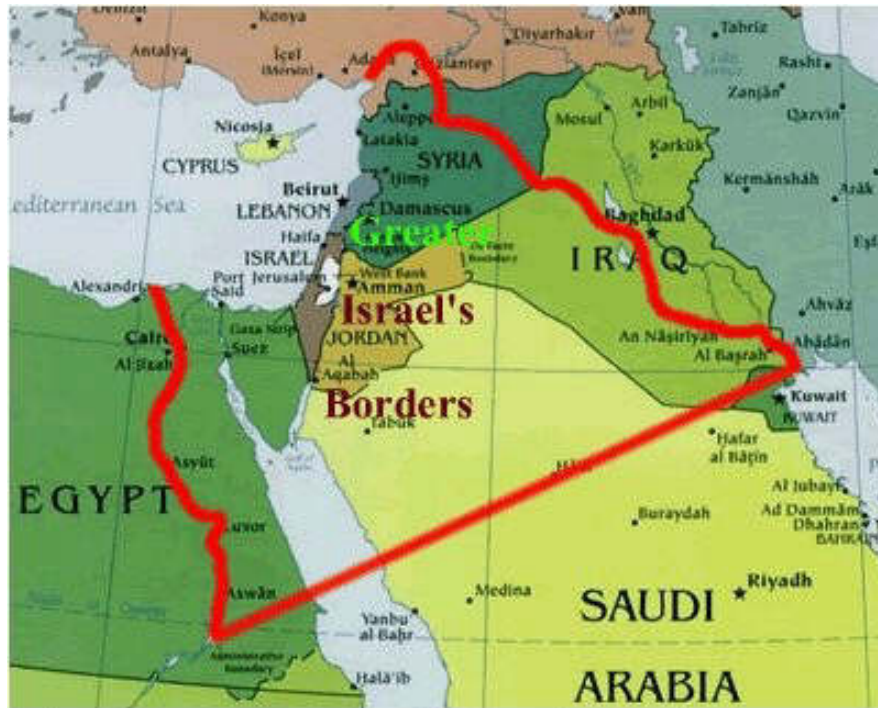
And how will The Almighty deal with America and the European Union as they try to force peace while supporting the Palestinian Authority? Again and again, only Yehovah knows the future.

**Verses 16-28** tell us Yehovah speaks to Moshe giving him the names of the tribal leadership who will be in charge of taking possession of the Land. They in turn, would apportion the land to the individual families. Those taking Aharon's and Moshe's positions were El'azar, the *cohen/priest* and *Y'hoshua/Joshua*, the son of (noon) Nun. One leader from each tribe was also appointed. They were . . .

<u>Leader</u>	<u>Tribe</u>
• Kalev/Caleb	Y'udah/Judah
• Sh'mu'el/Samuel	Shim'on/Simeon
• Elidad	Binyamin/Benjamin
• Buki	Dan
• Hani'el	M'nasheh/Manasseh
• K'mu'el	Efrayim/Ephraim
• Elitzafan	Z'vulun/Zebulun
• Palti'el	Yissakhar/Issachar
• Achihud	Asher
• P'dah'el	Naftali/Naphtali

Gosh, there are only 10 tribes listed here. What's up with this? Do you remember? Gad and *Re'uven/Reuben* wanted to stay on the East side of the *Yarden/Jordan* River because they perceived it was better grazing land for their flocks and herds. They agreed to be the vanguard for the rest of B'nei Israel when they crossed over the river to inherit The Land. (**B'midbar / Numbers 32**)

Before we move on, I thought you might be interested in seeing "the lay of the land" Yehovah had in mind originally . . .



The tiny, little sliver of land which the nations want Israel to divide even further, definitely is NOT the plan of The Almighty and there will be consequences for those who insist on this taking place. Woe be to the United States!

### CHAPTER 35 ~ Levitical and Refuge Cities

The tribe of Levi received 48 cities to dwell in, which were scattered throughout the land. **Verse 2** mentions “open space” and one of the Sages indicated it was to be left open and undeveloped for beautification of the town. And we thought an “urban beautification project” was a 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century idea? Guess not! However, **verse 3** makes it pretty clear as to the usage of that area. “. . . their open space shall be for their animals (those used for riding and carrying burdens); for wealth (sheep and cattle) and for all their needs (such as beehives, dovecotes and the like).”

**Verses 9-15** tell us, of those 48 cities, six of them became known as “cities of refuge”. The six cities were . . .

- Bezer
- Ramot
- Golan

. . . which were **East** of the *Yarden/Jordan River* (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 4:43**)

. . . and **West** of the *Yarden/Jordan River* were . . .

- Kedesh in Galilee
- Shechem
- Kiriath-Arba (Hebron)

. . . according to **Yehoshua/Joshua 20:7**.

These “cities of refuge” were for someone who committed unintentional manslaughter. Some believe this is the first example of rehabilitation of criminals. Instead of sending them to prison to be around bigger criminals (and possibly become worse!), they were sent to the cities of scholars and teachers.

When the *Kohen HaGadol/High Priest* of the city the individual was from, died, the individual could return to their city without fear of retribution. Additionally, these “criminals” became more righteous than when they entered. This foreshadows our *Kohen HaGadol*, Yeshua, who died to free all people, from sin and guilt, whether intentional or not. (Hebrews/Ivrim 9:11-15)

As we press on in these latter days, I believe it is helpful to consider the role of the local Torah community as a sort of Levitical city in the midst of our lives. Our communities are scattered and unique (or should be) when compared to other congregations around them. However, we are not to be too isolated or separated. Our role is to “teach the ordinances”. “Our communities are meant to be cities of refuge and reservoirs of Torah.”

One final thought: As I read the entirety of this chapter and specifically verses 16-21, it is quite clear the murderer “must be put to death” (mentioned no less than six times). No where does it say that the murderer is to be imprisoned, fed, clothed and sheltered at the expense of the community. Where in the world did our judicial system come up with a “Life Sentence” in prison? Oy vey!!!!

### **CHAPTER 36 ~ Marriage of Daughters of Tzafchad**

The tribe of Manasseh complained “since a woman is inherited by her husband or sons, if the daughters of Tzafchad married into another tribe, they would transfer the land of Manasseh to another tribe. So Moshe proclaimed they could marry whomever they pleased as long it was within their own tribe. This only applied to the generation which entered and conquered the land. All other generations could marry into other tribes.

### **IN CONCLUSION**

*B'midbar/Numbers* begins and ends with Isra'el on the verge of entering the Promised Land. During this journey, we have learned about . . .

- the ten spies, who poisoned the minds of the people
- the rebellion of Korach and his entourage
- Moshe's and Aharon's error which cost them the privilege of entering The Land.

But it also ends with the first step in the conquest of the Land of Isra'el.

### **Masaei ~ מַסְעֵי ~ Stages/Journeys**

### **Haftarah: Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2**

Here, Jeremiah addresses Israel's disloyalty to Yehovah who . . .

- . . . saved them from slavery
- . . . gave them a Torah

- . . . gave them a Land and
- . . . gave them the values they could build their lives upon.

The Almighty provided everything they would need for accomplishment and greatness but Israel chose to turn away from it all. The Chumash compares the goodness of Yehovah to “springs flowing with vibrantly flowing teachings”. However, Israel turned away from them and dug cisterns to catch the stagnant water of alien beliefs. Even the cisterns were broken and unable to contain their filthy contents. Israel traded the Torah for false beliefs and denied themselves the cure for their illness. The destruction and exile continued.

However, 4:1-2 says “Isra’el, if you will return,” says יהוה, “yes, return to me; and if you will banish your abominations from my presence without wandering astray again; and if you will swear, ‘As Yehovah lives,’ in truth, justice and righteousness; then the nations will bless themselves by him, and in him will they glory.”

### Masaei ~ מסעי ~ Stages/Journeys B’rit Hadashah: Ya’akov/James 4:1-12

**Ya’akov/James 4:1-12** For the life of me, I couldn’t really find a parallel to our Torah portion until HaShem enlightened me with regard to **verses 1-3**. How much we are like the Children of Israel, ourselves. We see the ways of the world and we want more:

- |                  |                    |                |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| • more of this   | • greater salaries | • bigger homes |
| • better of that | • faster cars      | • more “stuff” |

. . . mostly because we compete with our neighbors. Why can we not be content with what our Father gives us? When Yeshua taught His *talmidim/disciples* to pray, which includes us, He said “give us this day our daily bread”. It doesn’t say a word about storing up riches here on earth! Unfortunately, many believers are being taught, through Western mentality, the “name it and claim it” game, believing HaShem gives approval to selfish prayer. This teaches people to desire things and pray with wrong motives which makes prayer like a magic charm, not unlike witchcraft, which is an abomination to our Father.

I wish I had remembered **verses 11 & 12** a few weeks ago when I was attacked by a “sister in the L~rd”. “Brothers, stop speaking against each other! Whoever speaks against a brother or judges a brother is speaking against Torah and judging Torah. And if you judge Torah, you are not a doer of what Torah says, but a judge. There is but one Giver of Torah; He is also the Judge, with the power to deliver and to destroy. Who do you think you are, judging your fellow human being?” Further, I pray HaShem will bring these verses to my remembrance should I be tempted to judge another.

In addition, notice **verse 12** says the one who gave us the law (Torah) is also our judge and the one who brings salvation: none other than Yeshua. SO, when Yeshua says, “If you love me keep my commandments: he was telling those of us who follow Him to KEEP HIS TORAH – all of it!!!

*The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 49*

It is customary after the completion of a book of the Torah to say:

*“Chazak, Chazak v’nit chazek!”  
(Kah - zahk, kah - zahk v’neat kah - zehk)  
Be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened!*

**Next week’s lesson: Parashah #44**

**D’varim ~ דברים ~ Words**

**Torah: D’varim/Deuteronomy 1:1~3:22**

**Haftarah: Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 1:1 - 27**

**B’rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 15:1 - 11; Ivrim/Hebrews 3:7 ~ 4:11**

**Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.**

*Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim*

**The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving of Torah happens all the time, in every generation.**

*Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe*

**Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah, since it can best be acquired in association with others.**

*Talmud: Berkot 63b*

*Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!*