



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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This *Shabbat* we read the *Parshiot* of *Matot -Masei*, as well as commemorate *Rosh Chodesh Av*. These *parshiot* frequently occur on the *Shabbat* either immediately preceding *Rosh Chodesh Av* or as is the case this year, on *Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Av*.

Parshat Maasei recalls for a second time the passing of *Aharon HaKohen*, and tells us that the date of his passing is *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

And Aharon died there, during the fortieth year after Bnai Yisrael went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month on the first of the month.

So, we must ask, why does the *Torah* specify the exact date of *Aharon's* passing, a detail that is not elaborated upon for any of the *Avot* or *Imahot*, or for *Moshe Rabbeinu*? Why is the date of *Aharon's* passing mentioned here in this second account, and not in the earlier account of his passing which

we read of a few weeks ago in *Parshat Chukat*? Why is the date of his passing specified now, in the midst of describing the journeys of the Jewish people in the wilderness?

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz, the *Patiker Rav zy'a*, suggests that there is an eternal message to be gleaned from the date of *Aharon's* passing being both revealed during the verses which describe the extended wanderings of the Jewish People in the wilderness, as well as the actual date of *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

Aharon, as we know, represents the ultimate *Ish Shalom*, the great peace-maker and unifier of the Jewish People. The Jewish People, as we know, will experience an extended reality of wandering that will occur following the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, which of course we commemorate, during the nine days, beginning with *Rosh Chodesh Av*. As we begin these days of reflection of the destruction and absence of the *Beit HaMikdash*, we also recall the life and legacy of *Aharon HaKohein*, whose legacy we must work to emulate, which will form the foundation to re-building the *Beit HaMikdash*.

Yehi Ratzon, that as we recall the date that *Aharon HaKohein* left this world, that indeed we merit to emulate his ways, to love one another, to come together in unity and harmony, and to usher in an era of tranquility with the *Binyan Beit HaMikdash*. ■

ת"ב

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