

# 0 Comments

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 [sightedmoon.com/why-moses-could-not-enter-the-land/](https://sightedmoon.com/why-moses-could-not-enter-the-land/)

## **News Letter 5856-041**

**The 4th Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle**

**The 25th year of the 120th Jubilee Cycle**

**The 19th day of the 10th month 5856 years after the creation of Adam**

**The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle**

**The Middle of the 70th Jubilee Since Yehovah told Moses To go Get His People**

**The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence**

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**December 5, 2020**

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Shabbat Shalom to the Royal Family of Yehovah,

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## **Shabbat Zoom Meeting**

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There are many people in need of fellowship and who are sitting at home on Sabbath with no one to talk to or debate with. I want to encourage all of you to join us on Shabbat at 12:30 PM Eastern Time Zone, and to invite others to come and join us as well. If the time is not convenient then you can listen to the teaching and the midrash after on our [youtube channel](#).

We hope you can invite those who want to keep Torah to come and join us by hitting the link below. It is almost like a Torah teaching fellowship talk show with people from around the world taking part and sharing their insights and understandings.

We start of with some music and then some prayers and it as though you were sitting around the kitchen back in Newfoundland having a cup of coffee and all of enjoying each others company. I hope you will grace us with your company some day.

Sabbath Dec 5, 2020, will be a 1 PM Eastern.

Joseph Dumond is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Joseph Dumond's Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3505855877>

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## Updates

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We have begun a few things and I wanted to update you on them.

We are about to begin having the book “it Was A Riddle Not a Command” done in audio so you can listen to it while you are driving. We have hired Sally Cave for this job which is something she does professionally. I am excited to see this done.

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We have also been approached and are about to begin having our videos dubbed over into Urdu, the language of India and Pakistan. They will also be changing out the slide with the scriptures on them and inserting slides with those scriptures written in Urdu. We are about to begin this work and I am again excited to see the first one completed before we commit to the entire video series. This is not going to be cheap, so your prayers and support will be needed.

We would like to do the same for Chinese, Spanish and French but we have not found someone who can do this for us.

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On December 3, 2020, Nancy Bebe, Randy Cates and I attended a Conclave of Elders hosted by Chaim Goldman. It went on from 11 AM eastern to about 6 PM with a few short breaks in between. We had 5 ministries there with about 14 people in attendance. Chaim had chosen some subjects that he wanted to discuss and see where we all stood.

Although everyone calls themselves Hebrew Roots in some form, it soon became clear we are not all on the same page on a number of subjects. I do believe Chaim was looking for some common ground upon which he could build this group of elders. So he had asked groups he has seen working for the Kingdom over the past many years, to attend.

I am extremely blessed to have Nancy and Randy come and speak up on behalf of Sightedmoon. As they spoke I realized I could have asked at least 20 others to come and represent sightedmoon.com and they too would have represented us with dignity. Without any coaching from me they held their own and spoke well each time they had the opportunity.

One of our goals going into this meeting was to make sure each of these groups understood just how short the time is that we have left. We did share that message a few times but I am not sure they realized or understood just how short it is. It just did not seem to stick. But we did speak up.

There may be more meetings in the future and we will see where this leads us. As of right now we are not sure where this is going.

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James has begun to build the Acubene web site and incorporation of the company has now begun. This is the vehicle we have been working on in order to do some of our charitable work in other countries. Namely the Philippines and Burundi. They each have a board of directors and are working to get set up to do the work we have planned for them.

Over the past year, sightedmoon.com has been blessed with many talented and gifted people who have stepped up and begun to take the reins for various projects that are too much for me to do on my own. James and I complained to Yehovah for years for help. Help did come but it was never enough. Now things are beginning to happen and I am humbled to be a part of it. It is amazing what happens when you get like minded people working together for a common goal. Maybe that is the dichotomy I am taking away from the events of the recent week.

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One clear contrast that stands out is that last week, working together with the information I gave to the Mishkan project people, Kurt Mcpherson discovered for the very first time in that past 3300 years where Moses built the first Tabernacle. Randal Buckli also found another potential site in the same area. This is an historic discovery. Then again this week, after a discussion of the places Israel went to once they left Mount Sinai, Randy Cates discovered what is potentially the first place they camped as they went towards Kadesh Barnea. And Randal found another one after that. These are the results of people working together for a common goal. To understand and to know Yehovah. Now that we have discovered the pattern they used to travel, discovering the places they camped is easier to find. We are looking for every single place they camped up to and including when they arrived at what today is Joshua's Altar.

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## Prayer

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Yehovah is bringing together His People into a community around the Sighted Moon ministry. What started out as a short term plan to bridge the Covid lockdowns this past spring, has sprung into a wellspring of wisdom and understanding as we study to “Prove All Things”. We are growing in our love for one another and are building koinonia, whether it’s in the small groups; the Zoom meeting on Shabbat or the business side of things behind the scenes.

One of these behind the scenes things is me, Sombra, trying to build the prayer support for the ministry and for the community. But I need your help. We are building a directory to have a centralized log of everyone who participates here, whether great or small. We are trying to keep an active prayer wall listing prayer requests that can be publicized, and we’re taking private prayer requests to a more intimate prayer team.

What I need from you is to have you be listed in the directory, and have you sharing your prayer needs. What I will do is make sure these prayers are circulated appropriately and we are all bathed in prayer flowing from the many mouths of the community to the heart of our Heavenly Father.

Hey! I just thought, want to jump into the pool with me and join our prayer team? I’m looking for a few who will join me on a zoom prayer time once or twice a week. I’ve got two getting their feet wet with me right now. Come, let us bow before the Throne and let our hearts flow rivers of living waters in the Spirit to wash away the tears from the eyes of the brethren.

“Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it” (Proverbs 16:22);

“The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook” (Proverbs 18:4).

koinonia noun koi·no·nia | \ ,kɔɪnəˈneɪ, ,kɛnə- \ 1: the Christian fellowship or body of believers 2: intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community

38 Whoever believes in me, as[a] the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:38 17

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:17

You can go to the home page of [sightedmoon.com](http://sightedmoon.com) and click on the home page or you can write to Sombra at [prayerwallsightedmoon@gmail.com](mailto:prayerwallsightedmoon@gmail.com)

And if you want to help and be part of this team then do contact Sombra.

## Pavlov's Dogs

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By Saul McLeod, updated 2018

Like many great scientific advances, Pavlovian conditioning (aka classical conditioning) was discovered accidentally.

During the 1890s, Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov was researching salivation in dogs in response to being fed. He inserted a small test tube into the cheek of each dog to measure saliva when the dogs were fed (with a powder made from meat).

Pavlov predicted the dogs would salivate in response to the food placed in front of them, but he noticed that his dogs would begin to salivate whenever they heard the footsteps of his assistant who was bringing them the food.

When Pavlov discovered that any object or event which the dogs learned to associate with food (such as the lab assistant) would trigger the same response, he realized that he had made an important scientific discovery. Accordingly, he devoted the rest of his career to studying this type of learning.

To summarize, classical conditioning (later developed by Watson, 1913) involves learning to associate an unconditioned stimulus that already brings about a particular response (i.e., a reflex) with a new (conditioned) stimulus, so that the new stimulus brings about the same response.

Last weeks responses to our News Letter was just like what Pavlov discovered. Many of the brethren are conditioned to react in a certain way each and every time certain key words are put in front of them. It does not matter what facts are presented, the salivation begins the moment you mention the word vaccine.

Once this word is spoken then they watch and wait for you to say something they do not agree with. When that happens then the verbiage of abuse takes place. No longer is there debate and dissemination of the information presented but full attack mode is released. And as I mentioned last week it usually brings with it the cancel culture attitude. We had a number of threats from people stopping their financial support to threats to me and my family.

Cancel culture (or call-out culture) is a modern form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles – either online on social media, in the real world, or both. Those who are subject to this ostracism are said to be “canceled.”[1] Merriam-Webster defines cancel as “to stop giving support to that person,”[2] and Dictionary.com defines it as “withdrawing support for (canceling) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive.”[3] The expression “cancel culture” has mostly negative connotations and is commonly used in debates on free speech and censorship.

The notion of cancel culture is a variant on the term call-out culture and constitutes a form of boycott involving an individual (usually a celebrity) who is deemed to have acted or spoken in a questionable or controversial manner.

In a democracy opposing views are expressed in an open debate. Freedom of expression it is called. Today the democracy of the west is now gone even amongst the brethren. Only views that agree with the mob will be tolerated. We have entered a sad time in history.

There were a few insightful comments last week and I appreciate those. But.....

I never began this web site to gain a following or to collect your money for my gain. I began this web site to share the truths I saw with those who wanted to hear it.

I did not share all the comments last week. Some of the vulgar and bigoted idiots who threatened me and my family I had to out right delete. So I am not going to share them with you now.

There were many people who started out their comments like the one below.

Joseph Dumond

thank you for your exceptional work in sharing the truth about the lost tribes of Israel and your work in interpreting prophecies. That being said I'm flabbergasted at not only your seemingly pro vaccine position but at your willful ignorance on the topic and how uneducated and misguided you are surrounding the truth about vaccines.

People praise me up for research on many subjects that they have benefited from and then claim I am incapable of doing research on vaccines. Others benefit from our research and love learning these things and then once I have expressed my thoughts on vaccines or conspiracy teachings, they leave to never come back.

After our warnings this past spring for all of you to stop feeding at the conspiracy trough of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, most did not heed my warning. Some left and after a few months apologized and wanted to again come back and be part of the midrash groups. This week they went rabbid again.

I am not here to go through the vaccine debate with you all again. And that is not what this News Letter is about.

After reading all of your comments from those who claim to be brethren, I must ask myself why do I bother to teach or share the things I am learning with any of you at all? Why bother to have the weekly midrashes? Why should I bother to answer any of your emails? Why should I talk to you on the phone for hours at a time? Why teach you anything at all? Most of you do not pay me for this work I do or my time involved in it. Although I have to pay for the many things associated with running the site and its upkeep. And we also sponsor the work being done in the Philippines and East Africa. Thousand read our teachings. Millions have watched the video that we had to pay for and they watch them for free. They do not support this work. They do not pay me for my time and all my research that goes into it. Why should I bother with these people. Let them figure it out themselves.

Should I teach people who are ungrateful, unthankful, unappreciative? Why should I work for nothing for these disrespectful self absorbed people? Why should I bother to help them escape what is coming? I could just go myself and it would be so much easier.

Don't get me wrong. I do not mind debate. I see no reason for the threats or the mean spirited people who call themselves brethren.

I have always thought this scripture from Timothy was about the world. I never ever thought it could or would apply to those who call themselves brethren.

2Ti 3:1 Know this also, that in *the* last days grievous times will be at hand.

2Ti 3:2 For men will be self-lovers, money-lovers, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Ti 3:3 without natural affection, unyielding, false accusers, without self-control, savage, despisers of good,

2Ti 3:4 traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2Ti 3:5 having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; even turn away from these.

2Ti 3:6 For of these are those who creep into houses and lead captive silly women loaded with sins, led away with different kinds of lusts,

2Ti 3:7 ever learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of *the* truth.

This ever learning and never coming to the full knowledge of the truth is conspiracy studying. But what do I know?

Like tares they are proud to shout out their pharmakia message and stand upright spewing out their false teachings and mixing the truth of Yehovah diluting it with the conspiracy lies. They will not humble themselves like the wheat and submit to Yehovah

and His truths alone. But they cannot see their own faults. They are blind to it. And most certainly do not want to hear it from an uneducated man like me. So why do I bother?

After talking to James, we discussed pulling the pin and shutting down the web site. Closing the Shabbat meetings and just walking away.....I'm done!

Then right after that conversation I got a spoken message and the following email.

HI Joseph,

Let me follow up my statement today by writing how important it is for you to write your newsletters, controversial or not, each week! I can't imagine how much backlash you receive for any of your writings, but I am assuming that for every bad email you get, there will be several not even composed, which will be from those who are thankful to have received and read it, from those who are in agreement, and from those who have had their minds expanded and their opinions slightly changed or supported.

Thank you for your newsletter last week.

Thank you for your previous newsletters.

We may not read them every week, but we can, and we do value them.

Your motto is prove all things, and before I got to know you, I always appreciated Rico Cortes' sayings of don't believe me, look it up yourself!

May you continue to experience Yehovah's blessings as you construct this week's newsletter 😊

Shalom,

Then the following message.

I just want to encourage you in this big often yucky spiritual battle of life. I have been struggling to get through all of your newsletter last week. I find it interesting that a lot of the long haulers struggle with what I have been struggling with for the past few years and I wonder if Lyme Disease is a catalyst for those with lingering issues. Anyhow, Don't worry I'm not gonna attack you, you are simply a messenger, I understand that. I just wanna give you a big hug. Keep challenging those of us who are willing to be challenged. I love you big brother.

And then another one.



Joe,

Thank you for bringing up the immunization issue in your newsletter. A hot topic for sure. When I began reading it my first thought was oh no many people are going to be triggered! I laugh but its one of the topics that will set off a barrage. I was happy for all our sakes that it did not come up in Shabbat group. There is such a polarization that people feel compelled to defend their hill. I was grateful in your newsletter you presented info and really did not pick a for sure stance. From reading that I really could not guess whether you would be vaccinated or not if you had to. It is an important topic and we are probably close to having to chose so thanks for bringing it up. You presented it for the readers to do their own research so I am not sure why the reaction if nothing else we should be seeking Yehovah and praying more about it.

And they are trickling in.

Been praying for you too today Joe. I know you're taking a beating for the newsletter last week. Have been pre-reading this weeks newsletter and my esteem for you has grown in leaps and bounds. You really put your money where your mouth is.. I really appreciate you, and this life's work. And looking at your ministry, it's not just the website, or the books, or the Shabbat group..... it's Ecubene, and Philippines, and Burundi and Kenya and Mishnah and Footprints... you do give and give.. and study, and go and see for yourself, and there's so many elements to it all. I really appreciate and am in Awe of how Yehovah is using you and am humbled to be the new kid on the block coming in to participate.

**1Ki 19:18** Yet I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him.

Are there really 7000 out there who have not submitted to the baal of conspiracy teachings? The baal of false flag events, the baal of pharmakia hypocrisy, the baal of vaccine hysteria and the baal of hypocrisy for free speech but not letting others speak? Are there still some who have not kissed the tree of knowledge of good and evil and allowed Satan the deceiver of the whole world to lead them in these last days? Are there still some who want to study Torah and not study conspiracy teachings? Who want to learn about Yehovah and not about baal?

Yehovah told Elijah there were 7000, I have only heard from a few. Will there be more who comment that they want to learn the truth than those who commented last week about vaccines and pharmakia? I understand, most do not want to get involved in this debate and be ostracized. So they write me privately. I get it. Why is this one subject so polarizing amongst the brethren?

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## What Did The Spies Do Wrong?

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Beth: Hey there listeners, welcome to Parsha Lab. I'm Beth Lesch, I'm a writer here at Aleph Beta.

Ami: I'm Ami Silver, another writer at Aleph Beta.

Beth: Thanks so much for joining me, Ami. I'm excited to do this with you today.

Ami: Yes, it's great to be with you, Beth.

Beth: So I want to also give a shout out and a thank you to our listeners, those who have subscribed, keep on tuning in, you guys are awesome. If you haven't already, make sure you sign on and you give our app five stars. That way all of your other parsha-loving friends can also find us. If you have not yet subscribed, now is the time to do so.

So Ami, let's dive in. We're talking about Parshat Devarim. I've got some stuff I want to share with you, and I've got some questions. So I'm looking forward to some of the work that we can do together in making sense of all of this. Let's just start by situating our listeners a little bit. What is going on here at the beginning of the book of Deuteronomy, where are we?

Ami: Okay, so let's start geographically. From what I recall we're basically on the banks of the Jordan River, or in their general vicinity. The nation has gone through the 40 years of wandering in the desert and is preparing to enter the Land of Israel. The Book of Devarim, Deuteronomy, it's basically Moses' final farewell speech where he rehashes and repeats a lot of the stories and also gives the people a lot of guidance and kind of instruction and encouragement with regard to what they're going to need to know and remember, moving forward into the land.

Beth: Exactly, Ami, so the rehashing is what I want to focus on with you today. In particular there's one story that Moses really zooms in on in the first chapter of Deuteronomy that he devotes the majority of his time too. You know which story I'm thinking about?

Ami: I have an inkling. Does it have to do with the spies, Beth?

## **Moses Sends Out 12 Spies**

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Beth: Exactly, it rhymes with byes and ties. All right the story of the spies, that's the one that I'm talking about. So I found something fascinating that's going on in Moses' retelling of the story of the spies, but before we can even get there, before we can appreciate it, we have to first appreciate the telling. So I want us to flip back to Numbers, Chapter 13, where the story first takes place, where it's first narrated. I'm going to ask you some questions about the story as it's told over there and then in the end we're going to come back to our placeholder in Deuteronomy and see if that opens any doors for us.

Ami: Okay, great. I'm excited, let's do it.

Beth: All right. So here we are, we're going back to Numbers. Take a look at the command that Moses gives to the spies. Let's read through that command and see what their mission was.

Ami: Okay so we're in Bamidbar, Numbers, Chapter 13, Verse 17.

“Vayishlach otam Moshe latur et eretz Cana'an”, Moses sends them out to explore, to scout the land Canaan, “Vayomer aleihem alu zeh banegav v'alitem et hahar”, he says to them go up in the Negev and ascend the mountain. “U're'item et ha'aretz ma hi”, you'll see the land, what is it? “V'et ha'am hayoshev aleha hechazak hu harafeh”, and the nation that's dwelling in that land, is it a strong nation, a weak nation? “Hame'at hu im rav”, are they small, are they many?

“U'ma ha'aretz asher hu yoshev bah”, and what's the land like that that nation is dwelling in? “Hatovah hi im ra'ah”, is it a good land or a bad land? “U'ma he'arim asher hu yoshev bahena”, how about the cities that the nation is dwelling in? “Hab'machanim im b'mivtzarim”, are they encampments or are they fortified cities? “Uma ha'aretz hashemena hee im razah”, what's the land like, is it fat or is it skinny? “Hayesh bah eitz im ayin”, kind of a really strange phrasing but to say it in normal English we'd say is there a tree or is there not? “V'hitchazaktem u'lekachtem mipri ha'aretz”, you should strengthen yourself and take from the fruit of the land. “V'hayamim y'mei bikurei anavim”, then the Torah tells us that it was the season at that time of the first grapes.

Beth: Okay, awesome. So let's just recapitulate real quickly, turn that mission into a bullet point list.

Moses tells them to do a few things, he says go up to the Negev and go to the Har, so go to the South, go to the mountains. See the land and in particular, look out for the people. He gives them this dichotomy, right, is the people strong or weak, are they many or few? Then he goes back to the land, lookout for the land. Again, another dichotomy, is the land good or bad?

Now the cities, another dichotomy, are the cities unfortified vulnerable tent-like encampments or are they fortified?

Then another dichotomy, what about the land again, is it fat or is it, you know, is it a poor land? Is it a lean land, is there a tree in it?

And then sends them on a mission, go ahead and also bring back some of the fruit.

So now keep that whole bullet point list in mind and skip down to when the spies come back and they bring their report, and I want us to see if the spies in fact fulfill all of these bullet points. If they execute the whole mission or if there's something missing.

Ami: If they're faithful messengers and they come back with the information Moses asked them or not?

## **Did the Spies Fulfill Moses' Commands?**

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Beth: Exactly. He asks them for information and he also asks them for the fruit, right, so do they bring back the fruit and do they bring back the requested information?

Ami: “Vayesapru lo”, they told him, “vayomru”, and they said, “banu el ha’aretz asher shelachtanu”, we arrived to the land that you sent us to, “v’gam zavat chalav u’devash hee v’zeh piryah”, and that land, it is also flowing with milk and honey and this is its fruit. So we have a report about the land here, it seems like a rich land, milk and honey are flowing out of it, and they’ve brought the fruits it seems like, right, so that’s two of the bullet points that they’ve covered.

“Efes ki az ha’am hayoshev ba’aretz”, this word “efes” is pretty strange. How would you translate that word, Beth?

Beth: So “efes” to me is zero out what I just said, so it’s a but, it’s a how be it.

Ami: It’s refuting everything they said until now, it seems like. So “Efes ki az ha’am hayoshev ba’aretz”, because the people, the nation that dwells in that land, they are “az”, they are powerful. “V’he’arim betzurot gedolot me’od”, their cities are these huge fortresses, “v’gam yeladei ha’anak ra’inu sham”, we also saw the children of the giants there. “Amalek yoshev b’eretz hanegev”, the nation Amalek is dwelling in the land of the negev, the south, “v’hachiti v’hayevusi v’ha’emori”, all these other nation “yoshev bahar”, they live there in the mountains, “v’hacana’ani yoshev al hayam”, the Canaanites, they live on the shore, “v’al yad hayarden”, and by the Jordan as well.

Beth: That’s where their report ends. So did they cover all the bullet points, Ami?

Ami: Okay, so let’s think about it. They talked about the people, and while they’re not giving population numbers, they mention a whole lot of different nations that lived there, so maybe that’s talking about the multitude of nations living there. Moses asked are they strong or are they weak and they say that they’re “az”, it sounds like they’re powerful. Moses asks do they live in encampments or “mivtzarim”, which we said is some kind of fortified cities, and they say they have “betzurot gedolot”, from that same root of mivtzar, so it sounds like they reported on the fortresses. Am I missing anything?

Beth: So we brought back the fruit. In terms of information, we said we covered the people, we covered the cities and we covered the land. Now let’s go back to what Moses said about the land. Moses really asked them to report back two things about the land, there were two dichotomies, right? Did they address both dichotomies?

### **Moses’ Question to the Spies: Good or Bad?**

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Ami: So as I’m looking back, there’s two things Moses asked about the land, is it good or is it bad? Is it fat or is it lean?

Beth: Mm-hm, so which one of those did they answer, or did they answer both?

Ami: So it sounds from the surface of it like they answered the second one, is it a productive land or not, and the answer is yes, it is so productive, it's just flowing with milk and honey, but we don't hear is it good or is it bad.

Beth: What do you make of that? Moses gave them a direct mission, and they seemed to take that mission pretty literally because when they come, and they bring back their report, so much of their report is literally word for word addressing what Moses said to them. Right, they say yes, the people is "az" (powerful), and the cities are "betzurot" (strong), and all of these things, but they're completely silent on the question of good or bad.

Ami: It's really interesting Beth. Something that strikes me is, it sounds like good and bad on this list of things Moses is asking them, it's the only one that is sort of subject to opinion. The others seem to be somewhat quantifiable; are they a lot or are they a little, is there produce there, is there not, what do the cities look like?

Beth: Interesting.

Ami: Is the nation strong or are they weak? But good and bad, how are they supposed to judge that? Especially you have a group of 12 people, are they all supposed to decide, whoever says it's good raise your hand, whoever says bad raise your hand, you know, thumbs up, thumbs down. What are they judging that based on?

Beth: I hear, so I want to complicate that a little bit. So turn with me now to the very next chapter. This is the continuation of the story of the spies. This is the people's reaction to the spies' report. Of course, the spies are going to go on to say a lot more than what we just read. They're going to say the people there are much, much stronger than us, and we were like grasshoppers in their eyes and we can't do this and we're doomed. In response the people cry, and the people say "lu matnu b'eret mitzrayim", would that we had died in the land of Egypt. Now take a look for me at Verse 3.

Ami: Okay, so they go on, "V'lamah Hashem meivi otanu el ha'aretz hazot", why is God even bringing us to this land, "linpol bacherev", to die by the sword, "nafshenu v'tapeinu yihyu lavaz", our wives and children, they'll become captives there, "halo tov lanu shuv Mitzrayma", wouldn't it be good for us to return to Egypt? There we have "tov", there we have good coming in.

Beth: Exactly. But what do you make of these two things in contrast?

Ami: So first of all just as far as the function of good goes, in relation to all those other questions, or all those other ways of analyzing something, good here, it seems like the conclusion, this is what we see. They're strong, they're going to kill us, we don't stand a chance, now I can decide what would be good here. What would be good here is to go back to Egypt. I would say, you know, if we go back to the list of questions, you know, it didn't happen in this order, but good and bad is only something they could really judge after they acquired all of the rest of that information about the land and really kind of analyzed it.

Beth: So let me say it back to you to see if we're on the same page. If we had just read Chapter 13 and we just saw what the spies said about the land, we'd say their report about the land was positive. They said it was a land that flows with milk and honey. Their report about the inhabitants was pretty scary, that was foreboding, but the land itself, it seems like they came back with a positive report. Sure, they didn't say that it was good, but they implied that it was good. But I hear you saying when you turn to Chapter 14 and you see this word good and you see that they described returning to Egypt as good, all of a sudden, now you understand that in Chapter 13, the omission of good really meant not good. Moses gave them a command, tell me if the land is good or bad, and their failure to say whether it was good or bad really implies retrospectively that they didn't think it was good at all.

Ami: Okay, so Beth, if I'm understanding you correctly, it sounds like what you're saying here is that maybe their report about the land, that it's basically a fat land, it's a productive land, but not calling it good somehow is there to imply that maybe they didn't actually think it was a good land, whatever that might mean here.

Beth: That's what I'm getting at, Ami. I want to just give you another piece of evidence to underline just how conspicuous it is that they don't say anything about good, as if it's not enough that the primary question Moses asks them about the land is tell me is it good or bad. If you'll just turn with me for a second to Exodus, Chapter 3.

Ami: Okay. Are we going to the burning bush by any chance Beth?

## **Moses, the 12 Spies... and the Burning Bush?**

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Beth: We're in burning bush, we're standing there, our shoes are off and we're hearing God explain to Moses, promising to Moses for the very first time what it is that He's going to do when he brings the people out of slavery. He's going to redeem the people from Egypt and we're looking at Verse 8.

Ami: Mm-hm.

Beth: Tell us what God promises us and tell me what jumps out at you here.

Ami: Okay, so God says "V'eireid l'hatzilan miyad Mitzrayim", I'm going to descend into Egypt to save, rescue the nation from the hands of Egypt, "U'lehaloto min ha'aretz hahi", and to lift the people out of that land, "el eretz tovah urechavah", to a land that is good and expensive, "el eretz zavat chalav udevash", to a land that's flowing with milk and honey. So it seems like this verse is somehow preempting what the spies are ultimately going to say when they come back from the land.

Beth: Right. The spies are reaching back to this verse. The spies were plagiarizing this verse.

Ami: Okay, should I read to the end of the verse here?

Beth: Yes, keep going.

Ami: “El mekom Ha’Cana’ani v’achiti v’ha’emori v’haperizi v’hachivi v’hayevusi”, to the place, here again we have again the list of nations that are living there. It kind of sounds oddly like the seed for the spies’ report was planted back here at the burning bush.

Beth: It really does, doesn’t it? Right, so this is the first time that we hear about the Land of Israel through God’s eyes, and the spies’ report is the first time that we hear about the Land of Israel through the people’s eyes. So what’s the same and what’s different?

Ami: Right, okay, I like the question. What’s the same is it’s a land that’s flowing with milk and honey. What’s the same is that a bunch of these nations are mentioned in both verses. What’s different is that God calls it an “eretz tovah urechavah”, God calls it a land that’s good.

Beth: Exactly. There’s one thing missing, the very first thing that God promises about this land, the very first qualifier in the entire book that God gives us to describe the land as it’s a good land, that’s fundamentally its essence. That’s what Moses says, God promised us a good land, go and see if it’s good or bad, and that’s the one thing that the spies conspicuously leave out. It seems like such a positive report, it’s a land flowing with milk and honey, but there’s this conspicuous omission. If the spies knew God’s words enough to quote them, the people knew God’s words well enough to quote them. Maybe they heard that echo too, or the lack of that echo.

Ami: It also kind of sounds to me like Moses and God, they both know that this land is good or maybe even potentially good. This is a word that Moses is associating with the Land of Israel, that God for sure associates with the Land of Israel. But the spies, somehow they’re not on the same page. They’re somehow are not relating that word at all to the Land of Israel.

Beth: Now let’s look at the... we know the people’s reaction, the people hear the spies’ report and they cried. They say “tov lanu shuv mitzraymah” (it would be better for us to return to Egypt), right? What’s Moses response? When do we first hear a response from Moses to the spies’ report?

## **Understanding the Reaction of Moses**

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Ami: You mean, other than falling on his face?

Beth: I’m talking about falling on his face. When does he fall on his face?

Ami: Okay, so we’ve got from that verse we read about the nation’s words that they said in response. Then the people turned to one another and say let’s appoint a leader, it seems, and return to Egypt and then at that point, Moses and Aaron fall on their face.

Beth: In other words, maybe Moses, who knows God's words, who knows that this is a good land, who was charging the spies to go out and see it but hoping that they would be able to recognize, but I guess this is a good land indeed just as God promised it.

Maybe when they come back and they give their report and they say it's a land flowing with milk and honey but he doesn't hear that word good, maybe he gives them the benefit of the doubt, but when they then use that word good in Verse 3, but they use it to describe not the Land of Israel, but Egypt, that seems to be the breaking point for Moses. That's when he falls on his face and says this people, how could you possibly – God told you he's going to bring you to a good land, and not only can you not bring yourself to see the goodness in that land with your own eyes, but you attribute goodness to that evil place that God just redeemed you from. That's a slap on the face and for him, that makes him fall on his face.

Ami: It seems all the more poignant in that at the burning bush God said I'm going to take you out of that land to a land that's called good...

Beth: Exactly.

Ami: ...and the people are saying no I want to go, we want to go back to that land and for us that's where it's good.

Beth: I think that's exactly right, it is the exact inverse of the God perspective. Now we saw how Moses responds and of course Aaron falls on his face with him. Who are the other leaders in this story, the emerging leaders and how do they respond?

## **The Good Spies vs the Bad Spies**

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Ami: Okay. So we have Joshua and Caleb and I'm just looking here and glancing down to Verse 7 that they turn to the people and they say "ha'arets asher avarnu ba latur otah", that land that we passed through, that we went to scout out, "tovah ha'arets me'od me'od", not only is it good, it's very, very good.

Beth: Okay, so what are they doing here? Let me add some fire to the question. The spies have said a lot of troubling things up until this point, namely they have extolled the strength and might of the inhabitants of the land and they have first implied and then said explicitly that the people can't take them, that the people of Israel won't be able to conquer the inhabitants of the land, they won't be able to conquer the land.

Ami: They won't stand a chance.

Beth: They won't stand a chance. Now if I hadn't read this story before, I would've expected Caleb and Joshua to stand up and say something else. I would've expected them to stand up and say, "Of course we can take the inhabitants of the land, they're strong but we and our God are stronger." They do say that, they say that earlier at the end of Chapter 13, but here they say something different. What is it that they say and why do they say it?



Ami: So it sounds like they are pronouncing that missing goodness, that good that the spies, as you pointed out, just left out of their report. The good that was misplaced by the people in response to that report, they're bringing it back and not only are they bringing it back, they're bringing it very, very, they're doubly amplifying it.

Beth: What does it remind you of to say that something is very, very good?

Ami: So the double very doesn't remind me of anything in particular but using the words very good bring me back to Genesis, to the six days of creation. Is that where you're going, Beth? Is that what you're thinking of?

Beth: That's what I'm thinking about. Ami, what do we do with that? What do we do with the fact that Caleb and Joshua seemingly hear the conspicuous omission of the spies, the spies faltered in some serious way by not describing the land as good, and Caleb and Joshua stand up and they say, not only is it good, it's very good, in a way that harkens back to God's creation, and I want you to think about that, Children of Israel. What could be going on there?

Ami: Okay, so I'm just running some of those associations through my mind, and I'll tell you what comes up for me. In the story of creation, we have God calling a whole lot of things good, we have God finally calling all of creation very good, we have a tree that's good and not good, which is reminiscent of what Moses basically tells the spies, go see is it good or bad, that land, right, we have the tree of knowledge, good and bad. Then we have people who sort of take good into their own hands.

Beth: Literally.

Ami: Literally taking their hands, and not only that, it's the fruit, right? The spies had to go in and they had to take some fruit as well. So we have this kind of eerie mix of elements of good, bad, very good and fruit.

Beth: We've heard this before.

Ami: Right. So to come back and answer your question. You know, what you called the God perspective of the Land of Israel, it almost sounds like if the spies, the people are somehow walking back down the trail that Adam and Eve slipped up in. Perhaps Caleb and Joshua are sort of harkening back to the place of very good, that Godly perspective of the goodness of creation that existed before the point of breakdown, before eating from that tree and everything that came afterwards.

Beth: Awesome. So, Ami, here's what I'm wondering. Could it be that Caleb and Joshua, they are saying two things at once? On the one hand they're saying, guys, the spies got it wrong, this isn't just a land that flows with milk and honey, it's a good land. But they're also saying something else, they're saying there's something egregious about the spies getting it wrong, there's a reason the spies got it wrong, there's something fundamental that they forgot that they need to be reminded of.

What they need to be reminded of is the fact that there was a first being in the world who was given the task of evaluating, of assessing good and bad, and that being was God, the Master and Creator of the universe. God created everything and of course by the time we get to the sixth day, God has created the universe and man in it and looks at that and pronounces that very good. It's within God's power and no one else's to evaluate what's good and what's not good, mankind included.

Now mankind, the very creation that was once pronounced very good by God has the audacity to look at the land, the very land that God designated as good and to somehow not see its goodness. Right, I wonder if the spies are supposed to be seeing the land through God's perspective, and instead they're seeing it through their own perspective and that that is what Caleb and Joshua are responding to.

Ami: So Beth, just a few things that pop up for me when you say that. One is, in the following verses, Caleb and Joshua say “ach b'Hashem al timrodu”, don't rebel against God. They're calling out, they're saying what's really going on here is not that you're saying no we can't go into the land, we should go somewhere else, it's a flat-out rebellion against God.

I'm wondering, I'm thinking back also to, like, why would Moses tell these people go see if this land is good or bad? Like isn't that some kind of setup? But at the same time, what strikes me is yes, God, the Creator has the ultimate good and bad vision as Creator. What ultimately happens, whether it's intentional or not intentional, is that after Adam and Eve also partake in the tree of good and evil, we become partners in deciding what's good and bad. I think you said it in a way, the spies needed to go into the land with that Godly perspective, seeing it through the eyes of God. Can they see the land the way God sees the land? That in a sense might be what Moses is asking them about.

I also just one to throw one thing, Beth, into the mix here, which is, isn't it funny that Moses goes and tells them “and is there a tree there?”

Beth: Exactly.

Ami: “Hayesh bah eitz im ayin”?

Beth: Exactly. So what do you make of that? Does Moses think that Israel is the land of Eden, the Garden of Eden, is that what they're about to walk in to?

Ami: It sounds like there's some kind of awareness, whether it's an awareness of the text or it's Moses consciously channeling the story of the Garden of Eden where there's an awareness that we're stepping into similar territory here. The spies going into the land is in a sense re-approaching the garden, and we need to see what's going to happen when they do that.

## **Moses and the Spies' Test: Eden, Take Two?**

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Beth: Ami, wasn't that exactly the test in the Garden of Eden? The test in the Garden of Eden, one way of explaining it is it was a test to see whether mankind, whether Adam and Eve could see things through God's perspective and could let God be the arbiter of good and evil as opposed to them. Right, because God says don't eat from this one tree, but Eve looks at the tree and she says mmm, that tree looks good to me, right, that tree looks "tov." So she goes ahead and she says I don't care about God's good and evil, I know my good, my good is that I want to bite into that fruit, and she goes ahead and picks it, right.

Ami: That's so much what we're seeing with the contrast between what God said at the burning bush, that I'm taking you to the land that's good and plentiful, and what the nation ultimately said here which is, it would be better for us to go back to Egypt.

Beth: Exactly.

Ami: Isn't it interesting, Beth, that Moses doesn't only tell them go see what the land is like, go take its fruit but also says "and is there a tree there?" I mean, can you get any more wink, wink than that?

Beth: That's right. I think you're totally right about that. In other words, maybe Moses has the sense that what the people are going to enter, it's a Garden of Eden, take two. Right, they failed that once a long time ago, to see things through God's perspective, and now this is a chance for them to see it anew. They're going to walk into that land, a land which God told him was a land that's good, and the question is can the people bring themselves to see it as good? I don't think it's an easy test because what are the people going to see when they go to the land? On the one hand, yes, they are going to see that it's fertile. But they're also going to see something else, they're also going to see that it's a land inhabited by really strong people who build really strong cities.

Ami: Right.

Beth: That's a real test of faith, for a human in that perspective to be able to say but nonetheless I defer to God as the arbiter of good and evil. He says this is a good land, so I'm going to describe this as a good land.

Ami: Right, and it's interesting, nobody disagrees here with the fact that it's a land flowing with milk and honey. They all say this land makes great food, makes great fruit, it's pumping with milk and with honey. Their big question is do we stand a chance against the people who live there.

Beth: Exactly...

Ami: And that ends up defining it as not a good place for them.

Beth: Exactly. Because of that failure to see things through God's perspective, that failure to defer to God and to say okay God You are the Creator of the world, You get to call the shots about what's good and evil, not me. There's a punishment, and the

punishment is that they're never going to be able to see that land. The only people who are going to see it are their children. Let's see how God describes their children. Come with me to Verse 31 and let's look at God's language.

Ami: Verse 31 in what Chapter?

Beth: In Numbers 14.

Ami: Okay, so it says "V'tapchem asher amartem lavaz yihiyeh", your children who you said are going to be taken captive, "v'heiveiti otam", and I'll bring them, "v'yodu et ha'aretz asher me'astem bah", and they will know the land which you were disgusted with.

Beth: Now here's the cool thing about this verse. We started to say in the beginning, of course this is a podcast on Parshat Devarim, we started this whole discussion with Parshat Devarim, which is when Moses retells the story of the spies. So I want us now to go back to Parshat Devarim and see if we can find the verse that parallels this one. Where does Moses restate this? Where does he talk about the fact that the people described their children, they were worried that their children would be taken captives and that God ultimately said that He would bring their children into that land? What verse is that? Take your time, Ami, it's not a pop quiz.

Ami: Okay, I'm searching, I'm searching. Okay, I think I found it, Beth. We're in Deuteronomy, Chapter 1, Verse 39. Again, the word "V'tapchem", it opens with the same word as that last verse we just read. Your children, "asher amartem lavaz yihiyeh", same exact opening, right? Your children who you said were going to be taken captive, "u'veneichem", and your sons, "asher lo yad'u hayom tov v'ra", look at that, who do not know today good and evil, good and bad, "heimah yavo' u'shamah", they are the ones who will come there, "v'lahem etnenah v'hem yirashuhah", I will the land to them, they are the ones who will inherit it.

## Who Went Into the Promised Land?

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Beth: So there's a couple of things we've got to talk about here. First of all, I think this is nuts, and I think it's nuts for the following reason. This language of knowledge, good and bad, it appears in two contexts in the entire Pentateuch, right? This is one context and you know the other context? What's the other context where we get knowledge, good and bad?

Ami: We have the tree of knowledge, of good and evil.

Beth: Exactly, we're right back in the Garden of Eden. There are these two contexts and that's it. Second thing we have to talk about is, what's going on in the contrast between this verse in Numbers and this verse in Deuteronomy. They seem to be saying the same thing, they seem to be equated. But in Numbers, the children are described as knowing the land, "v'yad'u et ha'aretz", and in Deuteronomy how are the children described?

Ami: Not knowing good and evil.

Beth: What do you make of that? What does it mean that the children that get to inherit the land don't know good and evil, and why should it be that someone who doesn't have knowledge of good and evil, does have knowledge of the land?

Ami: Well I'd say that perhaps based on all the things that we've been noticing until now, if entering the land is somehow Garden of Eden, take two, so knowing good and evil as humans, i.e. not in partnership with God, the way the spies were, the way the previous generation was, that would be an obstacle to being able to enter the land.

Beth: Exactly. In other words, to know good and evil, it's certainly an euphemism, to know good and evil is to not know good and evil. God is the arbiter of good and evil and to have eaten from the tree means that you think you know good and evil. That you think you can arbitrate between good and evil just like God does. But in fact, if you're in such a position that you are a knower of good and evil, that you've eaten from the tree, what it means is that you don't know. You are then unable to have knowledge of the land.

Ami: What it means in the context of the Garden of Eden is that you get kicked out of that garden. Right, Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden after they knew good and evil, so to speak.

Beth: Exactly and is there an exile that follows the sin of the spies.

Ami: Well, the whole generation is going to die off. They just won't be given entry to the land.

Beth: Exactly, so it's a sort of exile. What was the other punishment in the Garden of Eden? There was an exile but there was also a threat that if they ate from the tree something would happen.

Ami: Okay, that they were going to die.

Beth: Do we have a threat of death in the story of the spies?

Ami: We have an outcome of death. They all just die off, that is their fate.

Beth: Which is exactly what happens with Adam and Eve. Right, they don't die immediately, the spies don't die immediately, but God touts their mortality.

Ami: Yes, Beth, I just want to throw in one more thing and I think our listeners can probably do a bit more research into this, but I was noticing when we were flipping through Numbers that the spies are called an "eidah ra'ah", and they come with a "dibah ra'ah". There's a whole bunch of "bad" language in that chapter also which is contrasted with all the good that they are missing out on.

Beth: Exactly, and of course all of those descriptors, that's all God perspective, right? Ami, this link, this being the generation that doesn't know good and evil and therefore it's the generation that can know the land, this is it for me. This makes it clear to me that what was happening with the sending of the spies was the Garden of Eden, part two.

## **Moses, the Spies... and a Failed Test?**

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Beth: Moses was setting them up for a test, God was setting them up for a test. With every expectation that they would pass it, with every expectation that a people who had just been liberated from slavery by God and been the beneficiaries of miracle upon miracle performed by God, would be able to defer to God as the arbiter of good and evil. But they failed that test.

They had every reason to be able to see this land as good and instead, they just can't bring themselves to see it, they're too scared by the nations they see and they just can't believe that this God who fought for them and liberated them is going to be able to actually clear the path for them and realize the goodness of this land, and so their knowledge actually blinds them.

I think that's what the contrast in Deuteronomy is telling us. The people who know good and evil are unable to know the land, and the people, the generation that will know the land, that's the generation that doesn't know good and evil. God has to start over again, and there's going to be a Garden of Eden, take three with the next generation, and the test will be will that generation be able to see the goodness of the land, even when things are tough and will they be able to defer to God's perspective.

Ami: Beth, I really love the way that you've set up this parallel here. I think that it's very rich, I think there's a lot that can be explored here and expanded. Wow, thank you, thanks for sharing. It was really awesome.

Beth: Yes, it was good, right? That's just a little Garden of Eden humor for you.

Ami: It was good.

Beth: You know, Ami, I don't know if you've been a part of any of the research that's been happening here at Aleph Beta for the new Ninth of Av video that's coming out. It really relates to a lot of these ideas about the Garden of Eden and who gets to call good and who gets to call bad. You know listeners, you should check it out, it's going to be coming out please God this year on the Ninth of Av. I think that that will really enrich the story for you.

Ami: Wow, I'm excited and I'm glad we've had this introduction to get us ready to jump into the Ninth of Av course too.

Beth: Awesome. Thanks so much Ami, looking forward to doing it with you again soon.

Ami: Okay. Thanks, Beth.

Beth: Just a reminder, everyone, if you haven't subscribed already, make sure you do so now and if you haven't already, now's the time to go ahead, go on to the app store and give us five stars so all your friends can find us. Good learning Torah with you all.

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## Why Was Moses Not Allowed into the Promised Land?

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Why can't Moses enter the land? Well, the Book of Numbers tells us why, doesn't it?

## Why Was Moses Not Allowed into the Promised Land?

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Moses hit the rock when he was supposed to speak to the rock and for that apparently trivial misdeed, for some reason Moses can't go into the land – but that at least is the story that Parshat Chukat, back in the Book of Numbers, seems to tell.

But there's a little, tiny problem with this, and it crops up in this week's parsha. Because in this week's parsha Moshe goes back to the question of why he can't enter the land and if you read closely he seems to give an answer that doesn't seem to have anything to do with the rock at all.

Gam bi hitanaf Hashem biglalchem – Moses says to the people, and G-d become angry at me because of you;

Leimor – saying;

Gam atah loh tavoh sham – you too shall not go into the land.

Now just stop there for a minute, what is this business 'and G-d became angry at me because of you,' on your account? If Moses hit the rock, doesn't it strike you as kind of sour grapes to blame the people for that?

## The Fault of Moses' Sin?

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The people didn't hit the rock, Moses hit the rock. Yes, the people were complaining and Moses was angry at them and called them rebels, but it's hard to make the case that that makes it their fault, he decided to hit the rock.

Now if it were the only time that Moshe talked like this, maybe it's an anomaly, but it's not actually the only time, he says it again in next week's parsha.

Vayitaber Hashem bi lema'anchem – and G-d became angry at me because of you;

V'loh shamah eilai – and didn't listen to me.

Why is it their fault? I mean again, he's the one who hit it.

Now I'd like to suggest a theory to you, I'm going to need two weeks to take you through this theory, so this is our going to be our parsha video through this week and next week, the two weeks where Moses seems to cast his inability to go into the land in the terms

that I've described to you – it's the people's fault.

## **Understanding Why God Didn't Allow Moses into the Land**

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Let's jump right in. So here's the thing. Rashi and a couple of other classical commentators reads the text as I've just read it to you, that Moshe here in Deuteronomy is obliquely referring to the sin of striking the rock which was described back in Numbers as the reason why he can't enter the land. But there are other commentators who see it differently, who said, Numbers yeah, that was telling one story but for some reason in Deuteronomy there seems to be a different story emerging, a second reason of why Moshe can't go into the land.

Now, how those two reasons interact is a question we'll eventually have to address, but let's leave Numbers behind here and just read Deuteronomy on its own terms for a minute and see what seems to emerge. Because actually if you look at Moses' declaration here in this week's parsha, that I can't go into the land because of you, you see that right before he said that, for the last 15 verses, he was describing the sin of the spies.

He was describing how the people had asked for spies and Moshe had gone along with it, and then the people started complaining and didn't have faith in G-d. Then G-d became angry and said, none of you can go into the land, you're going to die out for 40 years, and then: Gam bi hitanaf Hashem biglalchem – G-d became angry at me also because of you.

## **Why Was God Really Angry with Moses?**

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The first word there is Gam, Gam bi – literally, also me G-d became angry at, because of you. Because you guys went after the spies, I didn't, it wasn't really my fault.

That's true, it wasn't really his fault, Moshe was one of the good guys. I mean, Kalev and Yehoshua, these were the good spies, and Moshe along with them, was desperately pleading for the people to have faith in G-d, he really was one of the good guys.

So in a way, these commentators are answering a question, the text seems to flow better according to them, because it would make sense now that Moses is actually referring to the story of the spies, and that really wasn't his fault. So when he's saying that it wasn't my fault, it's kind of true.

But then again, it just makes life harder in another way, which is: why should Moshe be held accountable for something that wasn't his fault? Isn't it kind of mean of G-d to say, you can't go into the land because of this?

Plus, however we understand that, which I've still got to figure out how it jives together with the Book of Numbers, I mean, there can't be two reasons for the same thing, which is it? So there's a lot of questions which we need to struggle with and I'll try to do that with you over the course of these two weeks.



It turns out, I think, that this week's parsha answers these questions for us, but it does so in remarkable and astounding ways. I need to warn you now that my conclusion here over these next two weeks is going to come across as counterintuitive – I really wish that other people had seen this before me, maybe they have.

I invite you to go back and look through the earlier commentators, if you have somebody who sketches out this theory I'll be a very, very happy camper. But in the meantime, I'm just going to lead you in the direction that I think the text is taking you and put the evidence out there and kind of allow you to reach your own conclusions. But here's the evidence as I see it.

## Uncovering Moses' Real Sin

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Sefer Devarim as a whole really begins with a speech that Moses gives when he's standing with the people on the cusp of entering the land of Israel in the 40th year of their sojourn in the desert. One of the questions you have to ask about the speech is what is its main theme? What is Moses trying to say in this speech? He's not just randomly talking about a bunch of stuff, there's an idea that it all revolves around, what is that idea?

You get a clue, a very important clue, I think, from the preamble to the speech. I'm going to read the preamble with you, and as we read it you'll find that there's a whole bunch of places mentioned to describe where the speech took place.

You don't need that many places to triangulate your position, but one of them stands out as different from the rest. You can play one of my favorite "Sesame Street" games over here; Which One of These Things is Not Like the Other? The thing that is not like the other here is quite instructive.

Eileh hadevarim asher diber Moshe el kol Yisrael – these are the words that Moses spoke to all of Israel. Here are the places;

B'eiver ha'Yarden – place number 1;

Bamidbar – in the desert, place number 2;

Ba'Arava – in Arava;

Mul Suf – opposite Suf;

Bein Paran u'bein Tofel – between Paran and Tofel;

V'Lavan va'Chatzeirot v'Di Zahav. Achad asar yom mei'Chorev – 11 days away from Chorev;

Derech Har Se'ir – passing by the way of Har Se'ir, going towards Kadesh Barnei'ah.

Vayehi b'arba'im shanah – and it happened in the fortieth year;

B'ashtei asar chodesh b'echad la'chodesh – on such and such a date;

Diber Moshe el Bnei Yisrael k'chol asher tzivah Hashem oto aleihem – Moses said the following.

Okay that was the preamble, which place seemed different than all the others? I think the place that seems different is Chorev. Chorev, another word for Mount Sinai; Achad asar yom mei'Chorev – we were 11 days away from Sinai.

It's the only place to which a time period is attached. All the other places are described geographically in terms of where they are, here it's described in terms of when they were, 11 days walk from Chorev, that's where the speech took place. Then, another time period; Vayehi b'arba'im shanah – and it happened in the 40th year of their sojourn in the desert that Moshe gave this speech. Those two time periods tell a story, don't they?

Just do the math. When are they right now when Moses gives the speech? They've been walking through the desert for 40 years. But where are they? They're just 11 days away from Chorev. It was 40 years since they've been in Chorev, that happened in the very first year of the sojourn in the desert, but they're only 11 days away from where they were 40 years ago, just an 11-day walk. That is the burning problem that this entire speech revolves around. It's all there to explain why did it take so long. Why did an 11-day walk take 40 years?

If that's the question that Moses is asking in the speech, the answer should be obvious. It was the sin of the spies, that's what sealed their fate, that's what made this whole thing take 40 years, when it could have taken 11 days. And indeed, as if to corroborate our theory, Moshe does get to the sin of the spies quite quickly in the speech.

He starts to give a very brief rundown of the history. He says, we were in Chorev and then we left, and then this happened, and then the story of the spies. I mean, he skips over a whole bunch of stuff, he skips the sin of the Golden Calf, not a word, he skips the sin of Korach, not a word, he skips the whole story of the Manna, the whole story of Miriam's well and the water crises, all of that. Not even a word, but he doesn't skip over everything. He dwells on one, little episode that seems so trivial: the easily forgotten story of Yitro's judges.

Va'omar aleichem ba'eit hahi – I told you at that time; Loh uchal levadi se'eit etchem – I can't alone carry you. Find yourselves wise men who can help me with this burden of judging the people. You're so many, you're so numerous, I wish you even more, but I need some help with this. So I suggested to you how about some of these intermediate judges that could bear the legislative and judicial burden along with me? That, of course, is the story of Yitro's judges, originally recounted in Parshat Yitro, back in the Book of Exodus.

But this whole thing is an unconscionable digression. He goes into such detail. He describes exactly how he instructed the judges, what it is that he told them, how the people gave him permission to do it when he asked them. I mean, all – every last, little detail with these judges. Why is it here in a story that's really about why it took us 40 years to traverse 11 days? A story that begins at Chorev – where it should – and ends with the Meraglim, the story of the spies – where it should; what is the story of Yisro's judges doing here to the exclusion of everything else in the 40-year history?

That is the great \$64,000 question of our parsha, and in its answer lies a key to the one of the most profound puzzles that the Torah gives us: why Moshe couldn't enter the land.

I think the Torah's text is inexorably leading us to a startling – indeed a shocking – conclusion. If you want to understand the story of the spies you cannot understand it without reference to another seemingly entirely disconnected story, the story of Yitro's judges. The two stories are somehow connected.

## **Clues to Why Moses Was Forbidden to Enter the Land**

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If you want to understand why Moshe couldn't go into the land, the proximate answer to that question is the story of the spies, there was something about the spies that couldn't allow Moshe to go into the land. But if you ask why was it Moshe's fault – the sin of the spies wasn't Moshe's fault – then you really need to look a little further don't you? Because you can't really understand the story of the spies without another story.

Moshe with the benefit of 40 years' hindsight, looking back at why he can't go into the land points to the story of the spies, says, I was held accountable for that. But also points us even deeper to the story of Yitro's judges. Why are these two stories connected? What explains Moshe's perspective on all of this? We'll come back and explore that when we return next week.

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## **What Did Moses Do Wrong? Part II**

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### **The Hidden Reason Moses Was Not Allowed Into The Promised Land**

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Last week I left you with a few questions, let me just review them quickly.

Why Was God Angry at Moses?

Moses in last week's parsha, as well as in this week's parsha, seems to blame the people for the fact that he can't go into the land. Gam bi hitanaf Hashem biglalchem – G-d became angry at me on your account.

Why was it the people's fault? They didn't force him to hit the rock back in the Book of Numbers. What we suggested last week that if you take a close look at the Book of Deuteronomy it doesn't seem like the Book of Deuteronomy is relating to that sin of hitting the rock at all, it seems to locate the reason why Moshe can't go into the land, seemingly in the story of the spies. Somehow Moses is held accountable for that, despite the fact that he was a good guy.

He, along with Joshua and Kalev, were exhorting the people to have faith in G-d, and yet somehow Joshua and Kalev, they're allowed to go into the land, but not Moses. Why of all things would Moses be held accountable for what happened with the spies?

Now, I suggested to you last week that maybe the answer to all of these questions has to do with an apparent digression that Moshe makes in the speech that he makes to the people at the very beginning of Deuteronomy. Right there in that speech Moshe is explaining to the people why it is that it's taken them 40 years to get to the land, because of the sin of the spies. But right before he talks about the spies, he inserts a digression, he speaks about one other event that happened long ago, an apparently trivial event. The story of Yitro's intermediate judges.

#### The Backstory to Understand Moses' Sin

It happened all the way back in Parshat Yitro in the Book of Exodus. Yitro suggests that Moses would probably do a lot better if he had some help in judging the people, he's standing there from morning until night just judging them and answering all their questions and explaining the laws to them. If there was a system of judges underneath him, Moshe would be much more effective, they could handle the small stuff and Moshe could handle the big stuff. Moshe accepted this advice and proposed it to the people and the people accepted this advice.

For some reason, Moses here in Deuteronomy, 40 years later, feels compelled to tell us that whole story in detail, right before relating to the people the disaster of the sin of the spies. The great question is why? Why is that digression included in the speech?

Unless it's not a digression. We theorized last week that perhaps you can't understand the sin of the spies without understanding the story of the intermediate judges. In Moses' mind 40 years later, looking back on everything, those two stories are inextricably linked.

Last week I suggested to you that as just a possible theory, but this week I'd like to show you what I think is ironclad evidence in the text for that theory. If you read the story of the intermediate judges as Moses relates it here in Deuteronomy, you will find parallel after parallel after parallel to Moses' account of the story of the spies which he gives right after this.

If it were just one connection or two you might dismiss it as a coincidence, but it's multiple connections. The Torah seems to be interweaving all of the language of the intermediate judges into the story of the spies, indicating that in fact these two stories are intimately connected. Let me show you what I mean here.

#### Biblical Parallels to Uncover What Moses Did Wrong

Let's start at the beginning of the story of the intermediate judges. Moshe says, there we were at Sinai and G-d told us it was time to go into the land:

Re'ei natati lifneichem et ha'aretz – see I've given you the land;

Bo'u u'reshu et ha'aretz – come, take possession of the land.

Now stop right there and go to the very beginning of the story of the spies, just a few verses later:

Re'ei natan Hashem Elokecha lefanecha et ha'aretz – see, G-d has given you the land;

Aleh resh – go up and take possession of it.

It's like exactly the same thing, but it's not just this first element, it continues being exactly the same.

Look at what happens after this in the story of the intermediate judges. Moshe makes a request for some help, he says, it's hard for me to judge all of you, could I have some intermediate judges who would help me in this task? Vata'anu oti vatomru tov ha'davar asher dibarta la'asot – and you answered me and you said, that's a good idea.

Now go to the story of the spies a few verses later. The people make a request of Moses, do you think Moses we could send out some people before us who would help spy out the land for us? Please. Here's Moshe's response: Vayitav b'einai ha'davar – and it was good in my eyes the thing that you asked for.

We've heard that language before, it was good in my eyes, it's good the thing you asked for. In each case a request and in each case a response: it's good what it is that you propose.

So back to the intermediate judges, so what did Moses do? Va'ekach et roshei shivteichem – so I took the heads of your tribes, I made them judges. Now to the story of the spies; Va'ekach mikem shneim asar anashim – and I took from you 12 people; Ish echad la'shavet – one from each tribe. One more time the taking of representatives from tribes. The first time as judges, the second time as spies.

Let's keep on reading. Back in the intermediate judges Moses then instructed the judges. Moses told them: Ka'katon ka'gadol tishma'un – treat little people just like big people, give everybody a fair shake before the law. In the story of the spies why were the people scared? It's because they failed to treat little people like big people.

Look at Moses' description. The people said our hearts are melted: Am gadol va'rom mimenu – they were huge, big people, much taller than us. Arim gedolot u'b'tzurot bashomayim – cities that were big with walls up to the heaven, and we, we feel small, and the people are so big. But the people are making an error, little people are just like big people according to Moses, but somehow it doesn't ring true for them. Little people are little people and big people, well, they're big people.

Back to the judges, right after Moses says little people are just like [big 6:33] people, he says: Loh taguru mipnei ish – don't be afraid of any people, you judges, nobody can harm you. Why? Ki hamishpat l'Elokim hu – because G-d is right behind you, G-d is the ultimate Judge and He stands behind you, don't be afraid.

Now in the spies, the same theme echoes and Moses says, and then I told you when you were worried about the big people and you thought you were small people; loh ta'artzun v'loh tire'un meihem – don't be afraid of them. Why? Hashem Elokeichem haholech

lifneichem hu yilachem lachem – because G-d is in front of you, He will war on your behalf. You have nothing to fear.

But the people were fearful and you might ask why though? Why were the people so fearful? Why in the story of the spies did the people not listen to Moshe's desperate entreaties? So they're big people, who cares, there's G-d behind you, G-d is going to be there for you. Why did that desperate plea on the part of Moshe fall on deaf ears? It was so logical.

Listen to how Moshe puts it. Loh tire'un meihem – don't be afraid of these huge giants that you see in the land. He says:

Hashem Elokeichem – the L-rd your G-d;

Haholech lifneichem – that even now is walking before you;

Hu yilachem lachem – that G-d is going to battle on your behalf.

You know how I know that, Moshe says, just look at your own experience: K'chol asher asah itchem b'Mitzrayim l'eineichem – He's going to do for you just what He did for you in Egypt before your very own eyes. I'm not asking you to trust in something you didn't see, you saw this.

U'bamidbar asher ra'ita – and in this desert that you yourself have seen;

Asher nesa'acha Hashem Elokecha – that G-d has carried you through the desert;

Ka'asher yisah ish et beno – like a man would carry his child;

B'chol haderech asher halachtem – this whole way that you've travelled;

Ad bo'achem ad hamakom hazeh – until you come to this place.

Look at your experience. Your experience shows that you can count on G-d. U'ba'davar hazeh einechem ma'aminim baHashem Elokeichem – but somehow in this you did not have faith in G-d. It made so much sense but you wouldn't listen. Why didn't they listen?

Moshe in his words here, if you read them carefully, teaches you why. Look at the most emotional part of Moses' appeal to them: G-d has carried you through this desert like a man carries his child, why wouldn't you trust a father who steadfastly carried his child? G-d hasn't faltered, He never put you down, why would you mistrust Him now?

Now look at the story of the intermediate judges, see if you can find that theme. The theme of a child being carried and a theme of being put down because it's too hard to carry you anymore.

Look at what Moshe says to the people when he requests the intermediate judges: Loh uchal levadi se'eit etchem – I cannot carry you anymore. Eicha esah levadi torchachem

u'masa'achem ve'rivchem – how can I possibly carry all of your burdens anymore, I need the judges, I need some help, I've got to put you down.

### What Did Moses Do Wrong?

So in the end, as it turns out, the people had experienced a father of sorts who had put them down when it was too hard to carry them, but that father wasn't G-d, it was Moses. Moshe hadn't intended it, but he had laid the precedent in the events of the intermediate judges for the sin of the spies.

He had been the father who put the child down because it was too hard and now the child no longer trusts father. Doesn't make a difference earthly father, Father in Heaven, I no longer trust father, if I've been put down once, I can be put down again. Moshe rails and says how could you not trust in G-d who has been carrying you this whole time, don't you see your experience? Yes, that's true, but they had experienced a father who had put them down. If it happened once, it could happen again, and they can't bring themselves to trust G-d.

Not in a million years had Moshe intended to cause this tragedy, he just wanted a little help, it was exhausting, morning till night he judged the people. But that judgment in a way was loving, it was their connection to G-d, that's how Moshe describes it back in Exodus: Ki yavoh eilai ha'am lidrosh Elokim – the people are coming to me to seek out G-d.

### Moses' Real Sin

It's not just a matter of judgments, it's a matter of connecting to G-d and Moshe would lovingly teach them the laws. And now that connection would be compromised through these intermediates that have no business being there. Then, the people would ask for intermediates that have no business being there, spies, that get in the way of the loving connection between the people and G-d.

G-d was going to lead the people in directly, but now the people say no, we need these people in between us and G-d, these spies, let's just do it the normal way. Any normal country with a military operation would send out scouts and spies, well why can't we have those spies? Recoiling from the direct connection to G-d, and somehow it all traces back in Moshe's own mind to the story of the intermediate judges. It couldn't have happened without that story.

Is Moshe to blame for the story sin of the spies? Blame would probably be too strong of a word; Moshe was a good guy in that story, he desperately pleads with the people to have faith in G-d. But when the people fail, and when, because of that failure, an entire generation cannot enter the land, Moshe cannot enter too. As the unwitting facilitator of the sin of the spies he, along with the people, are subject to its bitter consequences.

### Why Moses Wasn't Allowed to Enter the Promised Land

Why in the end can't Moshe go into the land? There's two answers to that question because there's two reasons why Moshe might have been able to go into the land. He

might have been able to go into the land just as an ordinary citizen like anyone else might have, or he might have been able to go in the land because he was the leader that needed to lead them there.

If you look at the Book of Numbers Moshe can't take the people in the land because he hit the rock. But look at the language there, Moshe can't take the people into the land, in the language of the verse, lachein loh tavi'u et ha'kahal hazeh – therefore you shall not lead the people into the land. It wasn't a decree against him as a private citizen, he just couldn't be the leader anymore.

But that left open a tantalizing question didn't it? Maybe Moshe couldn't lead the people into the land, but couldn't he just go in as a private citizen? That's actually what he asks for in this week's parsha: E'everah nah v'ereh – couldn't I please just go in, just cross over and see the land? Couldn't You just allow me to do that? But G-d does not allow even this and the reason why has nothing to do with hitting the rock, it's because just as the generation of the spies could not go into the land, so Moses could not as well.

The speech that we get here from Moses is a speech informed with 40 years of hindsight: Eicha – how could it be? Lamenting the time, that almost without even realizing it, while seeking nothing but respite from the task of judging and teaching an entire nation all alone, Moshe had put the child down when that child had seemed too heavy to carry.

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