

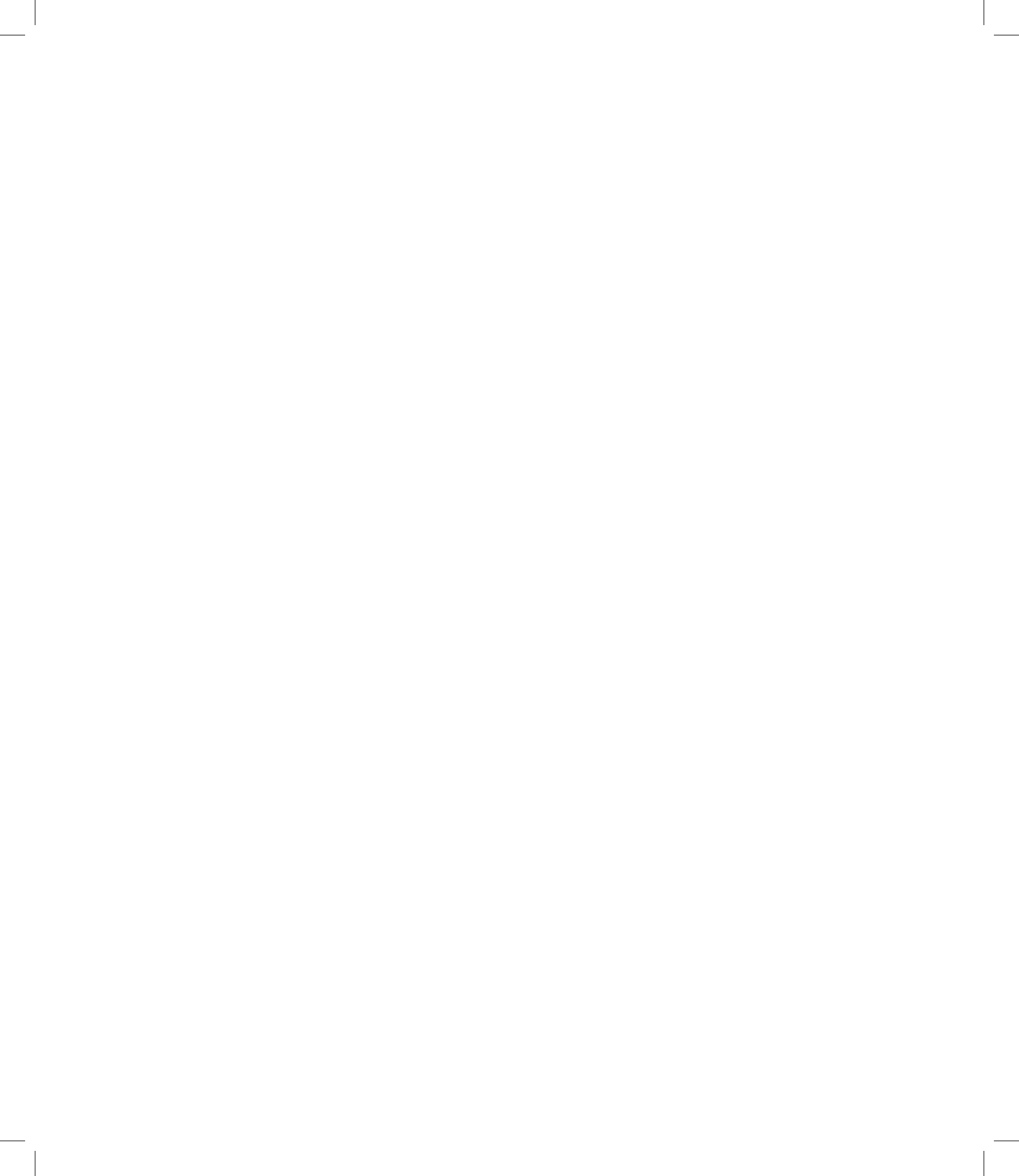
THE NAGEL EDITION

חומש קורן לב לדעת
THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH

ספר דברים
DEVARIM/DEUTERONOMY



KOREN

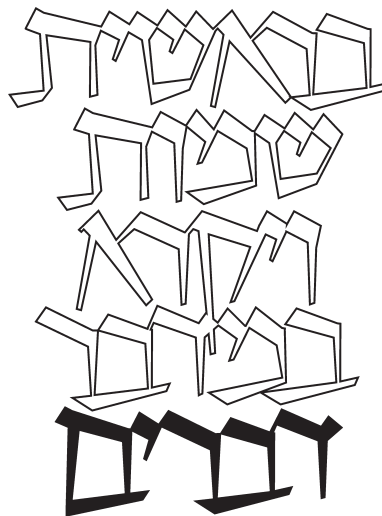


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TORAH TRANSLATION BY

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זצ"ל

COMMENTARIES BY

Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn, Executive Editor
and Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet, Senior Editor

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YAHDEV05

THE NAGEL EDITION
OF THE KOREN YOUNG ADULT HUMASH LEV LADAAT
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

Jack M. Nagel ז"ו

ר' יעקב אלימלך ז"ל

A beloved husband, devoted father, adoring grandfather and great-grandfather.

A true Visionary, who survived the Shoah, and whose philosophy was
to deal compassionately and kindly with all people.

His love for Torah and being a mensch guided him throughout his life.

He believed Education was the key to Jewish survival, and he made it his life's mission
to enrich the Los Angeles community with all aspects of Jewish scholarship and culture.

He established and remained committed to many yeshivot and Centers of Jewish
Learning throughout the United States and in his cherished homeland, Israel.

He had great faith, great heart, and great courage and was blessed
together with his Eshet Chayil, our Mother Gitta,
to leave a legacy of Tzedaka, Chesed and Emunah.

מרבח תורה מרבח חיים. מרבח צדקה מרבח שלום.

"The more Torah, the more life. The more charity, the more peace." (Avot 2:8)

Dedicated with love by his children:

Dr. Ronnie and Cheryl Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Esther and Dr. Paul Lerer

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

David and Marnie Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Careena and Drew Parker

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

And his devoted wife, Dr. Gitta Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA





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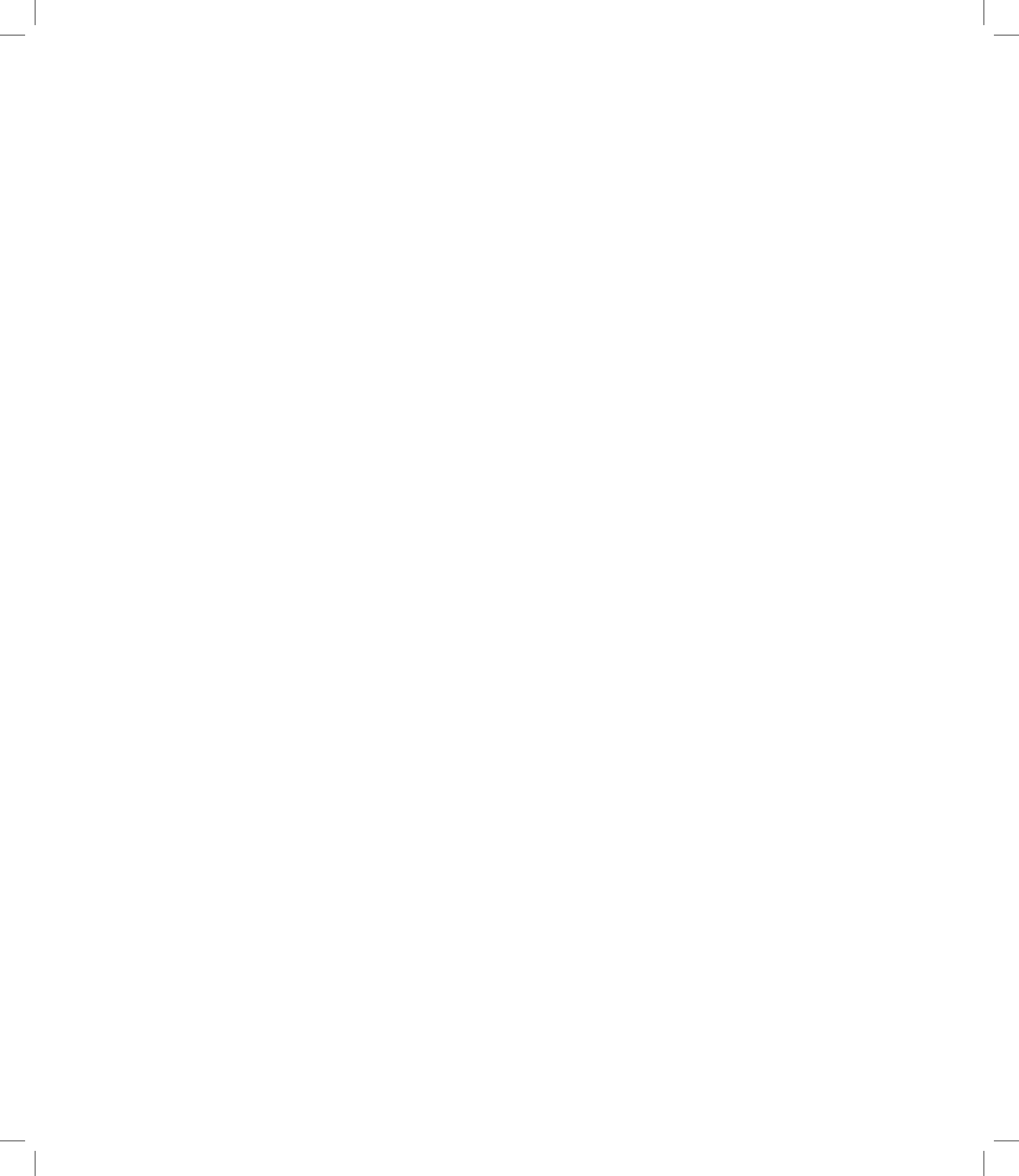
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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

“דוד לדוד ישבח מעשיו” (תהלים קמה, ד)

“One generation will praise Your works to the next...” (Psalms 145:4)

It is with gratitude and a certain ambition that we introduce this volume of **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH**, a Hūmash designed to encourage connection, reflection, and learning of our foundation stone, the Torah.

The connection between Jewish young adults and the Torah is critical. Our children must learn the text of the Hūmash and the classical commentators who have illuminated difficult passages. But it is just as important – and all-too-often neglected – that the student or young adult engage emotionally and experientially with the text. How does the Torah give them a prism to view the world around them? The need for this deeper, spiritual interaction gives rise to the name of this edition: **Lev Ladaat: The Understanding Heart**. For our ambition is that every Jew engage with the Torah and incorporate its values into his or her daily life, not just as an academic exercise.

It is with this ambition that Koren Publishers Jerusalem has created this edition, designed for high school students and young adults in synagogue *minyanim*. Since 1962, the Koren Tanakh has been recognized for its textual accuracy and innovative graphic design. We have remained committed to these qualities, and we have recently had the privilege of enriching the Hūmash text with the eloquent English translation of one of the most articulate and original Jewish thinkers of our time, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *zt”l*.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge Rabbi Sacks for this exceptional translation of the Torah. And our thanks are no less due to Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn, from whose fertile imagination and broad educational

experience the concept for this Young Adult Hūmash sprang. Likewise to Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet, whose intimate knowledge of the Hūmash and its commentaries has enriched these pages inestimably. And to Caryn Meltz, our Managing Editor, who brought it all together into a handsome and useful edition. And finally, to the team of translators, editors, and typesetters – Rabbi Yedidya Naveh, Rabbi Jonathan Mishkin, Suri Brand, Ilana Sobel, Carolyn Budow Ben-David, Rina Ben-Gal, Efrat Gross, and Avichai Gamdani – who made the volume a reality.

None of this would have been possible without the support and detailed involvement of the Nagel Family of California and New Jersey, who understood both the ambitions and methods of this edition. **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH** is dedicated to the memory of Jack Nagel, *z”l*, who was an exceptional community leader. He and his beloved wife Gitta have enabled so much of Jewish life in the Los Angeles community, especially in the area of Jewish education: *yeshivot*, high schools, and so much more. Surviving the Holocaust and making a new life for himself and family, Jack’s was an exemplary Jewish life, combining *Torah im derekh erez*. Koren is honored to be associated with his memory.

On behalf of all our *rabbanim*, scholars, and designers, we thank the Nagel Family. And to the many thousands of readers, in this and future generations: We are forever in your debt.

We hope the use of this Hūmash will bring Jews closer and closer to the Torah and all the good it represents.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, 5783 (2023)

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What if there were no more bookstores left on Earth? What if we woke up to discover that the written word had been almost eliminated? This is the frightening possibility we confront when we visit “The Last Bookstore” in downtown Los Angeles. The Last Bookstore takes the guise of a survival shelter where all of Earth’s great books are sold, in case there may one day be no other places to find books. I once had the opportunity to spend some time there, and I found my way to a Bible, which included a commentary for teenagers. It roused my curiosity – why is there no edition of the H̄umash directed toward young adults? Ought we be simply waiting for young Jewish people to come to the Torah, instead of bringing the Torah to them?

Some might say that teens aren’t interested in the H̄umash. They are mistaken. For twenty-two years I have been teaching young adults, and I have always found them to be as hungry for knowledge and connection as any other group. Whenever I look past a student’s distracted veneer and genuinely engage them with some profound thought, it opens a reservoir of dialogue that I could not have found elsewhere.

With social media and technology becoming a constant part of our lives, our need for real and deep connection has only grown stronger. The Torah, we know, is an עץ בה חיים היא למחזיקים בה – a tree of life for all who hold on to it.

Putting together a project like this H̄umash is complex. It’s very easy to slip into anachronistic concepts aimed at grabbing attention. But we owe more to ourselves; we are hungry for substantive and truly thought-provoking conversations.

To you, our young adults, we now offer this H̄umash. Will you use it? Will you allow it to guide you? When you are having a hard day and the walls seem to close in on you, will you pick this Torah up and let it lift you up? Will you let God into your life? We find Him in these words.

Why do we study Torah?

- *The Torah is a blueprint of the universe*, starting at the beginning – Bereshit. The Midrash teaches that God “looked into the Torah and created a world.” Do we want

to understand the world? “We should look at where it came from.”

- *How to practice Judaism.* Torah teaches us how to live as Jews. It teaches us how to practice our Judaism. The Gemara teaches: “תלמוד גדול, שהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה” – learning is great in that it moves us to action. I love the word *halakha*, which denotes Jewish Law. It means to walk. We can’t walk in the ways of Judaism unless we know the *halakha*.
- *The values of Judaism.* The Torah guides us not only in how to practice Judaism’s laws but, at times more importantly, how to live its values. The emphasis that our people places on charity, education, visiting the sick – it’s all derived from the sensibilities of the Torah.
- *To help us do battle.* The sages interpret the wars described in the Torah as symbolic of our struggle against the *yetzer hara*, our evil inclination. Our shadow side is cunning. We have only one weapon against it, says the Gemara in Kiddushin: Torah study.
- *It is our oxygen, our life force.* The Gemara in Berakhot teaches us that just as a fish cannot live without water, so too we cannot exist without Torah. There isn’t an example of a Jewish community that has thrived and flourished over multiple generations without a love and appreciation for producing Torah.
- *Crisis management.* Think about what enabled Yosef to survive trauma after trauma in Egypt? What made him so resilient? What did Yosef have that allowed him to survive? Rashi tells us that before he was thrown into the pit, Yosef would spend his time with Yaakov, studying the Torah taught by Shem and Ever. Shem and Ever were survivors. They had endured the flood and the generation of the dispersion. Deep down, Yaakov knew that Yosef would need this Torah.
- *To develop a relationship with God.* Part of our mission in this world is to cleave to the Almighty. Through a relationship with God one learns what it means to be a proper human being. We enter into a relationship with our Father in Heaven by learning His word.

- *It's the great equalizer.* Rav Boruch Ber, the great rosh yeshiva, is quoted to have once said that Torah is the great equalizer. A child starting sixth grade could learn Bava Metzia, as though it's the most basic and simple piece of the Gemara. But at the same time, it's one of the hardest parts of the Talmud, challenging even the most advanced scholars. Torah is accessible to everyone at all levels.
- *It's your story.* Project years ahead and imagine bringing your spouse back to the house of your parents. While you're cleaning up the house, you find your old year-book. You can't wait to share it with the person that you love. Why are you so excited? Because you are going to share the story of your life. That's why we open up the Torah. Our entire legacy is there; where we came from, what we went through, where our customs come from, and where our identity has come from.
- *And finally: It's your way out.* Imagine you are lost in a maze. You cannot find the way out. Suddenly, you're told by the maze keeper, who stands above the maze, that there is one way out. It's the simplest way of all – the way that you came in. Retrace your steps, and that's how you'll find a way out. The Jews have survived the Shoah and have rebuilt a remarkable edifice called the State of Israel. We have done amazing things in America and around the world. We have built *yeshivot* filled to the brim with students. But we also find ourselves at a crossroads, facing multiple challenges. God's guidance for us is: Retrace your steps. Figure out where you became lost, because that will tell us how to get through the maze of life. That's why we need the Torah.

With all these ideas in mind, we have designed this *Humash* in such a way as to maximize the student's opportunity for reflection, connection, and learning. In addition to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks's beautiful new translation of the Torah, we have included several different commentaries to add meaning to your journey:

WISDOM OF THE HEART: This commentary is designed to make you think critically about the stories, laws, and poetry in the Torah and how they relate to your life. It

often includes a question about your own experiences and opinions.

THE CLASSIC COMMENTATORS: This section begins with a guiding issue or question and brings two or three classic commentaries from Jewish history who have offered answers. Compare the answers given by the different commentaries. With whom do you agree? These are followed by *Questions for Thought*, which push you to read the commentaries more closely and find hidden ideas below the surface.

TEXTUAL SKILLS: These questions encourage you to read the text of the Torah more closely. The exact words and phrases appear carry tremendous meaning, and by paying attention to details we can make ourselves better readers.

QUICK BITES: This section provides a brief thought about the Torah that we can take with us out of the classroom and share with family and friends. It can be a jumping-off point for a deeper conversation.

EXPLORING HASHKAFKA: This essay at the end of most *parashot* deals with a "big idea" that challenges us as Jews in the modern world. It is not meant to give us easy answers, but to help us learn to think in creative ways about complex questions.

I write these words with profound gratitude to God. It is my hope that this project brings about a deeper love and understanding of God among the Jewish people.

It is an honor to work on this project together with Koren Publishers. Their professionalism, responsibility to tradition, and keen sense of style have made this a truly wonderful experience. Thank you to Matthew Miller and all the talented and hardworking editorial staff at Koren.

Thank you to my wonderful school and community, Yeshivat Yavneh, where many of these teachings were first developed and shared with teenagers.

Thank you to my wife, Shira. We were standing on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea when you held a rough draft of this *Humash* in your hand. You looked at me and said: "This project must happen."

◀ Thank you

Thank you to my parents and family who continue to encourage, praise, and support my work.

Thank you to the Nagel family. The connection between our families goes back over sixty years, and our bond of Torah began with a family *havura* on Wilshire Boulevard. Together with Jack, of blessed memory, we completed Sanhedrin and then began Bava Batra. It has been an exceptional privilege, and I have the *zekhut* of

continuing this tradition with the family. This work was made possible by the incredible family vision gifted to the Nagels by Jack and Gitta. To Dr. Ronnie, Esther, David, and Careena, my blessing is that the merit of this project may stand for your whole family's long life and health. May we continue to follow your trailblazing path, as together we celebrate this very historic moment – *The Koren Lev Ladaat Humash*.

Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn
Executive Editor

פרשת דברים

PARASHAT DEVARIM

“You make a new life by making new choices.”

Sean Stephenson

The book of Deuteronomy reviews the mitzvot and focuses on and expands upon many of them. It also contains Moshe’s magnificent farewell – a series of speeches with Moshe’s spiritual-ethical will for his people. Moshe models how to leave a legacy, how to say goodbye, and how to help ensure that those we love are properly cared for.

PARASHAT DEVARIM

- 1 ¹ These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel east of the Jordan, in the wilderness; in
 2 the Arava across from Suf, between Paran and Tofel, Lavan, H̄atzerot, and Di Zahav. By
 3 way of Mount Se'ir, it takes eleven days to cross from H̄orev to Kadesh Barnea. In the
 4 fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moshe spoke to the Israelites exactly
 5 as the LORD had commanded him regarding them, after he had defeated Sihon, king of
 the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtarot and
 in Edre'i. On the east bank of the Jordan, in the land of Moav, Moshe began to expound

רשב"ם

כל הנוכרים בפסוק זה מקומות הן ... צריך לפרש היכן נאמרו המצוות ... כשבא משה לפרש את המצוות "אלה העדות החקים והמשפטים אשר דבר משה וגו'. בעבר הירדן בגיא מול בית פעור בארץ סיחון מלך האמורי הואיל משה" וגו' "בעבר הירדן" - ובאיזה עבר הירדן? - "במדבר" - באותו עבר הירדן שהוא לצד מדבר שהיו בני ישראל מ' שנה ... "בערבה" - כלומר באיזה מקום במדבר? - באותו מדבר שבערבות מואב...

ר' עובדיה ספורנו

אמר שבכל אחד מהמקומות שהזכיר פה, והם מקומות אשר עיוותו שם אורחות דרכם בגזרת האל יתעלה להניעם במדבר בעון המרגלים, אמר משה לכל ישראל: "אלה הדברים" שזכיר, והם אחד עשר יום מחורב וגו' וזה כי כל ל"ח שנה שהניעם במדבר אנה ואנה, לא הלכו בדרך ישר מכוון אל מקום נודע, וכשהיו מגיעים אל מקום אשר משם היו נעים וחוזרים לאחוריהם או לצדדין ולא בדרך ישר, היה משה אומר להם: ראו מה גרמתם שהרי מהלך י"א יום יש מחורב עד קדש ברנע דרך הר שעיר, שהוא הדרך היותר קצר.

RASHBAM

All the names listed in this verse are those of places.... The Torah wishes to delineate the site where its commandments were given, as a later text reads: "These are the testimonies, decrees, and laws that Moshe spoke to the Israelites when they had come out of Egypt and were beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beit Peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites" (4:45–46). Similarly here our verse specifies that Moshe taught the law on "the east bank of the Jordan." On which bank of the river did that take place? On "the wilderness" side – the same side of the river that the people of Israel had been on for the previous forty years.... And where exactly on the eastern side, in the wilderness? "In the Arava," in the plains of Moav.

RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

Every place that is listed here refers to a site where Israel strayed from the word and wish of God. As a consequence of the sin of the spies the nation was made to wander in the wilderness. Thus Moshe said to all of Israel, "These are the words." During the thirty-eight years that the people journeyed back and forth across the desert, they never traveled in a straight line toward their destination. Hence, even once they reached a spot, they would subsequently backtrack, or they would travel laterally, but never directly. Whereupon Moshe rebuked them, saying: look what your behavior has led to. For it is merely an eleven-day journey from H̄orev to Kadesh Barnea by way of Mount Se'ir, which would have been the shortest possible way.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- In what way are the explanations of Rashi and Sforno similar? What is the main difference between them?
- How would Sforno explain why verse 2 follows verse 1?
- What do you think is the main weakness of Rashi's explanation?
- In what ways is Rashbam's explanation dramatically different from those of Rashi and Sforno?

פרשת דברים

א אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן
 בּמִדְבָּר בְּעֵרְבָה מִזֶּל סוּף בֵּין-פָּאֵרָן וּבֵין-תּוֹפֵל וּלְבָן וַחֲצֹרֹת
 ג וְדִי זְהָב: אֶחָד עָשָׂר יוֹם מִחֹרֵב דֶּרֶךְ הַר-שֵׁעִיר עַד קָדֵשׁ בְּרִנְעֵ:
 ד וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה בְּעֶשְׂתֵּי-עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ דִּבֶּר
 ה מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים: אַחֲרָי
 ו הִפְתּוּ אֶת סִיחֵן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶת עֹג
 ז מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר-יוֹשֵׁב בְּעִשְׂתָּרֹת בְּאַדְרָעִי: בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן
 ח בְּאַרְצֵן מוֹאָב הַזֵּאִיל בְּאֵר אֶת-הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The identification of the place in the first verse seems long and complicated, including sites the text has not previously mentioned.

רש"י RASHI

לפי שהן דברי תוכחות, ומנה כאן כל המקומות שהכעיסו לפני המקום בהן, לפיכך סתם את הדברים והזכירם ברמז מפני כבודן של ישראל.
 במדבר - ... בשביל מה שהכעיסוהו במדבר שאמרו (שמות יז:ג) "מי יתן מותנו במדבר".
 בערבה - שחטאו בבעל פעור בשטים בערבות מואב.
 מול סוף - על מה שהמרו בים סוף ... שאמרו (שמות יד:יא) "המבלי אין קברים במצרים" ...
 בין פארן ובין תופל ולבן - ... על הדברים שתפלו על המן שהוא לבן, שאמרו (במדבר כא:ה) "ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלוקל" ...
 וחצרות - במחלוקתו של קרח ...
 ודי זהב - הוכיח על העגל ...

Since what follows is rebuke, in the form of a list of locations where the nation angered the Almighty [without listing, the verse merely alludes to these transgressions, to protect the Israelites' honor.
 "In the wilderness" refers to how the nation infuriated God in the desert, such as when they complained, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 16:3).
 The term "in the Arava" refers to the sins that Israel committed in their worship of Baal Peor, which took place in Shitim on the plains of Moav.
 "Across from Suf" refers to when the people rebelled against God at the Sea of Reeds [Suf] and griped, "Were there no graves in Egypt – is that why you brought us here to die in the desert?" (Ex. 14:11).
 The words "between Paran and Tofel, Lavan" are code for the fact that Israel belittled [taflu] the manna, which was white [lavan], when they protested, "There is no bread, there is no water; we detest this miserable food!" (Num. 21:5).
 "Hazerot" refers to the challenge that Korah launched against Moshe's leadership.
 "Di Zahav" refers to the golden [zahav] calf.

6 this Law: “The LORD our God spoke to us at Horev; He said: You have settled long enough
 7 at this mountain. Start out and advance into the hill country of the Amorites and all the
 neighboring regions – the Arava, the hill country, the lowlands, the Negev, and the
 8 seacoast – the land of the Canaanites and the Lebanon, as far as the Euphrates River. See:
 I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore
 He would give to your ancestors – to Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov – and to their descen-
 9
 10 dants after them. At that time I said to you, ‘I cannot bear the burden of you alone. The
 LORD your God has increased your numbers: today you are as numerous as the stars of the
 11 heavens. May the LORD, God of your ancestors, multiply you again a thousandfold and
 12 bless you, as He has promised. But how can I bear alone all your problems, your burdens,

ר' עובדיה ספורנו RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

ומשאאכם – בצרכי רבים. The term “burdens” refers to the needs of the public that Moshe had to deal with.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- In what way is Rashi’s explanation different from that of Ibn Ezra and Ramban? What does Rashi’s explanation suggest about his attitude about *Benei Yisrael* in the wilderness?
- What do Ibn Ezra and Ramban include to back up their explanations that Rashi does not?
- In what way is the proof brought by Ibn Ezra stronger than the one brought by Ramban?
- In what way is Sforno’s explanation dramatically different from all the others?
- Which explanation do you think best fits the context of what Moshe is saying here?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice that the land is described not by its inhabitants but by its geographical regions. Why do you think that is? the people is in Numbers 11:14. Notice the similarity in the language between verse 9 here and the text there. What major differences can you find between the two places?
2. The initial story in which Moshe says that he cannot handle

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Moshe describes how he recognized that he could not bear the responsibility for the people solo. What a powerful lesson in humility and leadership! After all, wasn’t he the one who spoke with God “mouth-to-mouth,” who faced down Pharaoh, and who split the sea? Yet that very same Moshe was not ashamed to acknowledge that when it came to the day-to-day affairs of the people, he needed help. One of the keys to a happy and successful life is to recognize your own strengths, understand where your weaknesses are, and try to

compensate and grow by asking for help.

Some people are afraid to ask for help, thinking that they will look or feel incompetent. Others ask for so much help that they become too dependent. How do you know when you’ve achieved a healthy balance between those two extremes? How do you feel when someone else asks you for help?

1 יהוה אלהינו דבר אלינו בחרב לאמר רב לכם שבת בהר
 2 הַזֶּה: פָּנּוּ וּסְעוּ לָכֶם וּבְאוּ הַר הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶל-כָּל-שִׁכְנָיו בַּעֲרֵבָה
 3 בְּהַר וּבְשִׁפְלָה וּבְנֶגֶב וּבְחוּף הַיָּם אֶרֶץ הַפְּנִיעֵנִי וְהַלְבִּנוּן עַד-
 4 הַנֶּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר-פָּרָת: • רֵאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
 5 בָּאוּ וּרְשׁוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם לְאַבְרָהָם
 6 לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָהֶם וּלְזָרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם: וְאָמַר אֵלֶיכֶם
 7 בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא-אוּכַל לְבִדִי שְׂאֵת אֶתְכֶם: יְהוָה
 8 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הִרְבָּה אֶתְכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרֹב:
 9 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יִסֹּף עֲלֵיכֶם כָּכֶם אֵלֶּף פְּעָמִים וּבִרְךְּ
 10 אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם: • אֵיכָּה אִשָּׂא לְבִדִי טַרְחָנְכֶם וּמִשְׂאֲכֶם

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe points out that he cannot handle **טַרְחָנְכֶם וּמִשְׂאֲכֶם וּרִיבֵיכֶם**, translated as “your problems, your burdens, your disputes.” To what is he referring?

רש"י RASHI

ומשאכם – מלמד שהיו אפיקורוסין. הקדים משה לצאת – אמרו: מה ראה בן עמרם לצאת, שמא אינו שפוי בתוך ביתו. איחר לצאת – אמרו: מה ראה שלא לצאת, מה אתם סבורים, יושב ויועץ עליכם עצות וחושב עליכם מחשבות.

אבן עזרא IBN EZRA

ומשאכם וריבכם – שבקשו מים ולחם ובשר, כמו: לשום את משא כל העם הזה עלי (במדבר יא:יא). וריבכם – זה עם זה.

רמב"ן RAMBAN

משאכם – כנגד: לדרוש אלהים (שמות יח:טו), שהוא ענין תפלה שמתפלל עליהם, והוא מלשון: ונשאת תפלה (מלכים ב' יט:ד).

We learn from here that the Israelites were heretics [for disparaging Torah scholars]. If Moshe ever left home early to go to work judging the people, the masses would gossip and say: The son of Amram escapes from his house because he's having marital problems. Whereas, when Moshe was somewhat tardy, the Israelites would say: What do you think he's been doing all this time? Surely sitting around planning how he can mess up our lives.

“Your problems, your burdens” refers to the burden the people placed upon Moshe when they demanded water, bread, and meat, as an earlier verse states, “Why have I found so little favor in Your sight that You lay all the burden of this people upon me?” (Num. 11:1). “Your disputes” recall the quarrels between the Israelites.

The term “burdens” relates to the prayers that Moshe expressed on behalf of the people, as in the verse, “oh, offer [ve’nasata] a prayer for the sake of the surviving remnant!” (II Kings 19:4).

1:13–18 Moshe describes how he proposed to set up an entire judicial system with an organized hierarchy so that the leadership could work better, to which the people readily agreed. He instructed the new judges to pursue justice and instructed the people in their obligations as well.

13 your disputes? Choose for yourselves men who are wise, discerning, and known to your
 14 tribes, and I will appoint them as your leaders.’ You answered me, ‘The plan you propose
 15 is a good one.’ So I took the leaders of your tribes, wise men and well known, and appointed
 them to be leaders over you, chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, chiefs
 16 of tens, and officials, for your tribes. I charged your judges at that time: ‘Hear the disputes
 among your people and judge fairly, between one person and another, whether Israelite
 17 or migrant. Do not show partiality in judgment: listen equally to the small and the great.
 Do not be intimidated by any man, for judgment belongs to God. Any case that is too
 18 difficult for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.’ I charged you at that time, with all the things

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Which of the above commentaries represents the most straightforward explanation of this instruction?
- What issue in the justice system does *Haamek Davar* suggest that Moshe is addressing? How does the context of this instruction help to explain why he chooses to read it differently from what you might have expected?
- In what way is Rashi’s explanation significantly different from all the others?
- R. Hirsch’s explanation is the only one that does not assume that judges will fall victim to some kind of corruption. Do you think that this assumption can be taken as a given? If R. Hirsch is not concerned about some kind of moral corruption, then what concerns him?
- Each of the above commentaries addresses a different challenge that judicial systems often encounter. Which do you think is most critical? Which do you think would have been most present in Moshe’s mind?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. In this passage, notice that Moshe initially suggests that the people choose the judges but that afterward it says that he appointed them.
2. The initial story of appointing judges can be found in Exodus 18:14–26. There are a number of differences between the two descriptions. What differences can you find in the description of the qualifications necessary to become a judge?
3. What other differences between the two versions can you find?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The first story that Moshe recounts describes the pursuit of justice – perhaps one of the most important values in establishing a healthy society. Justice, however, does not necessarily mean that everyone gets exactly the same thing. Just imagine a society which allots a certain amount of fabric to every person for clothes, regardless of their size, or a certain amount of money for

medical care, regardless of their health. American author Christina Hoff Sommers writes: “a fair and just society offers equality of opportunity for all. But it cannot promise, and should not try to enforce, sameness.” It is no wonder that Psalms is filled with descriptions of God as loving *mishpat* (legal justice) and *tzedaka* (a kinder and softer form of justice).

יג וְרִיבְכֶם: הָבוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חַכְמִים וְנִבְנִים וַיִּדְעוּם לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם
 יד וְאֲשִׁימָם בְּרֵאשֵׁיכֶם: וְהִתְעַנּוּ אֹתִי וְתֹאמְרוּ טוֹב-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-
 טו דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: וְאָקַח אֶת-רֵאשֵׁי שִׁבְטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חַכְמִים
 וַיִּדְעוּם וְאֵתְּן אוֹתָם רָאשִׁים עֲלֵיכֶם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת
 טז וְשָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֹת וְשֹׁטְרִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם: וְאַצְוֶה אֶת-
 שֹׁפְטֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר שָׁמַע בֵּין-אֲחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפִטְתֶם צֶדֶק
 יז בֵּין-אִישׁ וּבֵין-אָחִיו וּבֵין גֵּרוֹ: לֹא-תִפְדּוּ פָנִים בְּמִשְׁפַּט פְּקוּטָן
 כג דְּלֹא-תִשְׁמָעוּן לֹא תִגְדּוּ מִפְּנֵי-אִישׁ כִּי הַמִּשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהִים הוּא
 יח וְהַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וּשְׁמַעְתִּיו: וְאַצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe's instructions includes the prohibition against showing favoritism. While the meaning might seem obvious, the commentaries expressed a variety of opinions as to what this prohibition refers.

רש"י

זה הממונה להושיב את הדיינים, שלא יאמר: איש פלוני נאה או גיבור – אושיבנו דיין, איש פלוני קרובי – אושיבנו דיין בעיר.

RASHI

This warning is directed at the officials responsible for appointing judges. Do not say: So-and-so is handsome, or powerful, and I will therefore make him a municipal judge.

אבן עזרא

תכירו – להכריע הדין למי שיכיר.

IBN EZRA

A judge must not tilt his rulings to favor individuals he knows.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

בעת שאתם מעיינים בדעתכם ופוסקים את הדין, אל תשימו לב לאישיותם של בעלי הדין; התבוננו רק בנושא הנידון. כלל יסוד במשפט ישראל הוא, שדיין שאינו מכיר את בעלי הדין יפסוק דין אמת; ואם הוא מכיר אותם, עליו "לשכוח" מי הם.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

When a judge deliberates a case and strives to reach a verdict, he must not consider the characters of the disputants. He must focus instead only on the content of the matter at hand. This represents a fundamental principle in Jewish law: only a judge who is not familiar with the litigants will be able to rule impartially and correctly. And should a judge indeed know the men involved, he must suppress that previous knowledge.

העמק דבר

לא תכירו פנים במשפט – היינו לשמוע משפטו תחילה.

HAAMEK DAVAR

Judges may not show favoritism by giving precedence to certain cases.

19 you are to do. Then we set out from Horev and journeyed through all that vast and fearful wilderness that you have seen, toward the hill country of the Amorites, as the LORD our
 20 God had commanded us, until we reached Kadesh Barnea. I said to you, ‘You have reached
 21 the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. See, the LORD your
 God has laid the land out before you. Go up, take possession, as the LORD, God of your
 22 ancestors, has promised. Do not fear and do not be dismayed.’ Then all of you drew close
 to me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead of us to explore the land and bring back a report
 23 to us about the route by which we should go up and the towns we will come to.’ The plan
 24 seemed good to me, so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. They set out
 and went up into the hill country. And, arriving at the Eshkol Ravine, they spied it out.
 25 They took some of the fruit of the land, which they brought down to us, and they brought

ר' יוסף אבן כספי

RABBI YOSEF IBN KASPI

יש לתמוה: איך היה טוב בעיניו הדבר. ולא אוכל
 לפרש.

This point is quite surprising: why did Moshe ever think this was a good idea?
 I have no way of explaining the matter.

ר' עובדיה ספורנו

RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

כי חשבתי שלא היה ספק אצלכם בדבר האל יתברך
 שתכבשו הארץ ושהיא טובה, אבל שהייתם רוצים
 לבחור את החלק ממנה היותר טוב לכם עתה.

Moshe now admits to the nation: At the time I thought that you never doubted
 God's word that you could conquer the land and that it was a good land. I
 figured that you wished to choose the best areas to settle first.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Which of the above responses is most surprising to you?
- Which of the commentaries would say that Moshe thought that their request was a good idea, and which would say that he reluctantly agreed to it? What does the text of the Torah say?
- What value does Ibn Ezra suggest was of paramount importance to Moshe?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. The original story of the scouts appears in Numbers, chapter 13. What differences can you find between the two descriptions of the report of the scouts?
2. Notice that both in this story and in the previous one, the one regarding the judges, Moshe describes that he was the one who chose (ואקח מכם) the judges and the scouts.
3. In what way is the definition of the mission of the scouts as described here different from the one described in Numbers?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The word Moshe uses to describe the plan to send the spies is **ויחפרו**, which literally means “to dig up.” There are various ways to explore; some are superficial, while others are very deep. Usually, we plan to dig deep when making important decisions – buying a house, choosing a career, choosing a life partner. When we dig

deep we are likely to discover many things, some good and some less so, and we must be prepared to make decisions that weigh both the aspects that we like and those that we don't. Either way, it is important that our decision not be based on superficial criteria, and also that we not second guess our decisions.

יט בַּעַת הַהוּא אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֹׂון: וַנִּסַּע מִחֹרֵב וַנֵּלֶךְ
 אֵת כָּל־הַמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם דְּרֹךְ הַר
 הָאֵמֹרִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ וַנָּבֵא עַד קָדֵשׁ בְּרִנְעָ:
 כ ואֵמַר אֲלֵכֶם בְּאַתֶּם עַד־הַר הָאֵמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן
 כז לָנוּ: רְאֵה נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ עֲלֵה רִשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר
 כח דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְךָ אֶל־תִּירָא וְאַל־תַּחַת: וַתִּקְרְבוּ
 כט אֵלַי כָּלכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ נְשַׁלְחָה אֲנָשִׁים לְפָנֵינוּ וַיַּחְפְּרוּ־לָנוּ אֶת־
 ד האָרֶץ וַיָּשָׁבוּ אֲתָנוּ דִּבֶּר אֶת־הַדְּרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר נַעֲלֵה־בָּהּ וְאֵת
 ע העָרִים אֲשֶׁר נָבֵא אֱלִיהֶן: וַיֵּיטֵב בְּעֵינַי הַדְּבָר וְאֶקַּח מִפֶּסֶם
 עג שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר אֲנָשִׁים אִישׁ אֶחָד לְשִׁבְט: וַיִּפְנוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ הַהָרָה וַיָּבֵאוּ
 עה עֵד־נַחַל אֲשַׁכַּל וַיַּדְּגְלוּ אֹתָהּ: וַיִּקְחוּ בְיָדָם מִפְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּרְדוּ
 אֵלֵינוּ וַיָּשָׁבוּ אֲתָנוּ דִּבֶּר וַיֹּאמְרוּ טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה

שלישי

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

It ultimately became abundantly clear that sending the scouts had been a bad idea. That being the case, why did Moshe initially think that it was a good one?

רש"י

משל לאדם שאומר לחברו: מכור לי חמורך זה. אמר לו: הין. נותנו אתה לי לניסיון? אמר לו: הין. בהרים ובגבעות? אמר לו: הין. כיון שראה שאין מעכבו כלום, אמר לו הלוקח בלבו: בטוח הוא שלא אמצא בו מום. נאמר לו: טול מעותיך, איני מנסהו. מעתה, אף אני הודיתי לדברכם, שמא תחזרו בכם כשתראו שאיני מעכב, ואתם לא חזרתם בכם.

RASHI

This may be compared to a man who says to his neighbor: Sell me this donkey of yours, to which the other agrees. But the first man asks: Will you let me take the animal out for a test? Yes, says the owner. Can I take it over hills and through valleys? Yes, says the owner. Once the buyer sees how accommodating the owner is, he says to himself: This donkey is certainly without flaws. Immediately he offers: Here, take your money, I do not need to try out your beast. So too, Moshe says to the nation: I complied with your requests because I believed that you would interpret my acquiescence as a sign of the land's perfection. But I was wrong – you did not retract your request.

אבן עזרא

בעבור שכולכם הסכמתם על זה.

IBN EZRA

Said Moshe: I was pleased that you unanimously agreed on this plan.

26 us back a report: ‘The land that the LORD our God is giving us is good.’ But you were
 27 unwilling to go up, and you rebelled against the word of the LORD your God. You grum-
 bled in your tents and said, ‘It is because the LORD hates us that He has brought us out of
 28 the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the Amorites to destroy us. Where can we go? Our
 brothers have melted all the bravado from our hearts by telling us, “The people are stronger
 and taller than we are. The cities are large and walled to the sky; we even saw the Anakites
 29 there.”’ And I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified and have no fear of them. The LORD your
 30 God, who is going before you, He will fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before
 31 your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you saw the LORD your God carry you as a man
 32 carries his child, all along the way you traveled until you reached this place. And yet despite
 33 all this, you show no faith in the LORD your God, who goes ahead of you on your
 journey – in fire by night, and cloud by day – to seek out a place for you to camp and show

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Imagine that you were standing there listening to Moshe’s speech. Which of the above interpretations of Moshe’s words might you have thought of without being aware that they might be written thousands of years later? Why?
- Based on Ramban’s explanation, which sins that we know about from Exodus and Numbers would we not expect to find in Moshe’s speeches in Deuteronomy?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. The root of the word **וּתְרַגְּנוּ**, in verse 27, appears only this time in the entire Torah.
2. Compare what Moshe says in verses 29–33 to the account described in Numbers 13:30–14:9. What do you see as the most significant difference between them?
3. The root **ע-ר-צ**, meaning “to be afraid,” appears five times in Deuteronomy but in none of the other books of the Torah.

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Avot 2:4 warns us not to be too sure of ourselves until our final day. It’s easy to profess faith, but until there is a crisis we never know how we are going to turn in that fateful moment. The Torah attests that the scouts that Moshe sent were good people and respected leaders. When faced with a challenge, ten out of twelve let fear get the better of them. We often see people we think are just like us, committed to a particular value or cause, and are shocked when we later discover that they took a very different path. There are no magical formulas for knowing who

will turn this way or that, or even to make sure that we avoid certain outcomes. Perhaps that is why the mishna cautions us not to be overconfident. Perhaps, paradoxically, it is the caution itself which provides that measure of protection against sliding away from our values. As the verse in Proverbs (28:14) suggests, vigilance and caution are the beneficial products of being fearful.

What are the downsides of being fearful, vigilant, and cautious?

כו אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִתַּן לָנוּ: וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לַעֲלֹת וּתְמַרּוּ אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה
 כז אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וּתְרַגְּמוּ בְּאֵהֲלֵיכֶם וּתֹאמְרוּ בְּשִׁנְאַת יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ
 הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָתֵת אֶתָּנוּ בְּיַד הָאֹמְרֵי לְהַשְׁמִידֵנוּ:
 כח אַנְּהָ וְאֲנַחְנוּ עָלִים אֲחֵינוּ הִמָּסוּ אֶת־לִבְבָנוּ לֵאמֹר עִם גְּדוֹל
 וְרֵם מִמֶּנּוּ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְעוֹרֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וְגַם־בָּנֵי עֲנָקִים רָאִינוּ
 כט שָׁם: וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם לֹא־תַעֲרֹצוּן וְלֹא־תִירָאוּן מֵהֶם: יְהוָה
 ל אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהֱלִיךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם הוּא יִלַּחֶם לָכֶם כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶתְכֶם
 ל בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיכֶם: וּבְמִדְבָר אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַךְ יְהוָה
 ג אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא־אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ בְּכָל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הִלַּכְתֶּם
 ל בְּעַד־בְּאֵכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: וּבַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֵינְכֶם מֵאֲמִינִים
 ג בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: הֵהֱלִיךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ לְתוֹר לָכֶם מָקוֹם
 לַחֲנֻתְכֶם בְּאֵשׁ וְלַיְלָה לְרֹאשׁוֹתֵיכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכוּ־בָהּ וּבַעֲנָן

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe describes that the scouts returned only a positive report, which is quite different from what is described in Numbers, chapter 13. This discrepancy troubled the commentaries.

רש"י RASHI

מי הם שאמרו טובתה? יהושע וכלב.

רמב"ן RAMBAN

והנה הזכיר כל המעשה ההוא... וגם לא הזכיר הדבה, כי לא ידבר בגנאי היחידים אבל יוכיח את הרבים שכולם חטאו וכולם נענשו.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

על שאר דברי המרגלים מדלג משה רבינו, כיון שהם מובנים מאליהם מתוך הסיפור הבא.

Our teacher Moshe did not mention the scouts' negative report, because it was easily inferred from the following story.

34 you the way you should go.' Hearing your words, the LORD became furious and swore an
 35 oath: 'Not one man of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give your
 36 ancestors, except for Kalev son of Yefuneh. He will see it, and to him and his descendants
 I will give the land on which he set foot, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly.'
 37 And because of you, the LORD was enraged even with me, and said, 'You also shall not
 38 enter it. Yehoshua son of Nun, who stands before you – he shall enter there. Encourage
 39 him, for he will give Israel their possession. As for your little ones, whom you thought
 would be taken captive, and your children who do not yet know good from bad, they shall
 40 enter, and I will give it to them, and they will take possession of it. But you – turn around

אברבנאל

אלו היה העם טוב כמו שהארץ טובה היה ראוי שיבאו שמה ... אבל אחרי שהיה בדור ההוא רע ומשחת לא היה ראוי שיכנס אל הארץ אשר היא טובה ולא רעה ... והנה אמר שהדור הרע ההוא לא די שלא יבאו אל הארץ אבל גם מרחוק לא יראוה ... ולפי זה היה משה אמצעי ביניהם כי הוא ראה את הארץ מרחוק מה שלא ראה דור המרגלים ... אבל גם היה להם יתר שאת באותה הגזרה על משה והוא שעם היות שלא באו הם אל הארץ הנה בנייהם וטפם ... המה יבאו שמה והם יירשוה. ואם כן מה שאבדו האבות קנו הבנים מה שלא היה כן למשה. כי נסתלק ממנו המנוי והשרדה. ולא חזרה האל לבנו אבל נתנה ליהושע.

ABARBANEL

Had the nation been as good and well behaved as the country was wholesome, they would have deserved to enter the land... However, since that generation of Israelites was corrupt, it would have been inappropriate for them to be brought into the good place they had originally been promised... Indeed, not only would these people not be allowed to enter the territory, they would not be allowed even to glimpse it from afar... As such, Moshe served as an intermediary for the nation, since, unlike the generation of the scouts, the prophet was privileged to see the country from a distance... On the other hand, the men and women who died out in the wilderness were granted a certain advantage that Moshe was not given, namely that their children were given entry to the land and allowed to inherit the place, although they themselves were not. In that sense, the generation's children acquired something that their parents had lost. Such was not the case with Moshe; the office and the authority that were taken from him were not bequeathed to his two sons, but were given instead to Yehoshua.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Only one of the commentaries understands that Moshe is included in the decree, and even then only partially. Which commentary is that? According to that commentary, in what way is Moshe included and in what way is he not included?
- Each of the commentaries has an explanation for why Moshe mentions his punishment here. According to Bekhor Shor, in what way is Moshe's sin linked to that of *Benei Yisrael*?
- According to Ramban, why does Moshe mention his ban from the land here?
- Abarbanel suggests that Moshe is emphasizing that his punishment was even greater than that of *Benei Yisrael*. In what way was it greater?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice that the Torah distinguishes between Kalev and Yehoshua. Why?
2. The combination of the words **יודע טוב ורע** appears only twice in the Torah. Once is in verse 39. Where is the other?

יֹמָם: וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל דְּבָרֵיכֶם וַיִּקְצֹף וַיִּשָּׁבַע לֵאמֹר:
 אֲסִירָאֶה אִישׁ בְּאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה הַדּוֹר הַרַע הַזֶּה אֶת הָאָרֶץ
 הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָתֵת לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם: זֹלָתִי כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֹה
 הוּא יִרְאֶנָּה וְלֹא־אַתֶּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דִּרְדַּבְּהָ וּלְבָנָיו יַעַן
 אֲשֶׁר מָלֵא אַחֲרַי יְהוָה: גַּם־בִּי הִתְאַנֵּף יְהוָה בְּגַלְלֶכֶם לֵאמֹר
 גַּם־אַתָּה לֹא־תָבֵא שָׁם: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון הָעֵמִד לְפָנֶיךָ הוּא יָבֵא
 שָׁמָּה אִתּוֹ חֵזֶק כִּי־הוּא יִנְחַלְנָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְטַפְכֶם אֲשֶׁר
 אָמַרְתֶּם לְבֹי יִהְיֶה וּבְנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ הַיּוֹם טוֹב וְרַע הַמָּה
 יָבֹאוּ שָׁמָּה וְלָהֶם אֶתְנֶנָּה וְהֵם יִירְשׁוּהָ: וְאַתֶּם פָּנּוּ לָכֶם וּסְעוּ

רביעי

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe seems to suggest that it was the sin of *Benei Yisrael* in this incident that was the cause of his being denied entry into the Promised Land. That bothers the commentators, since Numbers 20:7–13 explicitly attributes this consequence to a completely different incident.

ר' יוסף בכור שור

לפי שאתם מקטני אמנה, והיה לי לפרש בפירוש שאוציא מים מן הסלע, ואמרת: המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים (במדבר כ"ז), ואמרתם: לא היה סבור שיצא משם מים ומקרה הוא, ולכך הקפיד הקב"ה.

רמב"ן

יאמר: הנה חטאתכם אשר עשיתם בעת ההיא במרגלים מנעו מכם את הארץ הטובה, ועוד הוספתם לחטוא בפעם אחרת עד שמנעתם גם אותי מלעבור, כי רצה להזכיר יחד עונש כל הנמנעים מעבור אל הארץ כי הכל בגרמת עונותיהם, וכדי שיזכיר כאן ענין יהושע כי הוא יעבור לפני העם.

RABBI YOSEF BEKHOR SHOR

Says Moshe to the nation: Because at that time you had little faith, I should have been more explicit when I announced that I would draw water from the stone. What I said then was, "Listen now, rebels! Shall we produce water for you from this rock?" (Num. 20:10). But since you understood that I did not believe that the water would actually emerge, the Holy One, blessed be He, became angry at me...

RAMBAN

Moshe argues that Israel's sin regarding the scouts prevented them from entering the good land. Furthermore, the people sinned another time such that Moshe too was barred from the country. The prophet wished to emphasize that all the punishments that kept individuals from the land were a consequence of the nation's sins. Moshe also wanted to explain why Yehoshua would be leading the Israelites forward.

- 41 and set out into the wilderness by way of the Sea of Reeds.’ And you answered me: ‘We have sinned against the LORD! We will go up and fight, as the LORD our God commanded us.’ So each of you strapped on your weapons thinking that it would be easy to go up into
- 42 the hill country. The LORD said to me, ‘Tell them, “Do not go up and do not fight, for I
- 43 will not be with you. Do not be struck down by your enemies.”’ And I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the word of the LORD and willfully went up into
- 44 the hill country. The Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you and chased
- 45 you like a swarm of bees. In Se’ir they struck you down, as far as Horma. You came back and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to you, nor pay you any heed.
- 46 And so you remained at Kadesh for a long time – all that time that you were there.
- 2 1 Then we turned and journeyed back into the wilderness, by way of the Sea of Reeds, as

העמק דבר

אף על גב שלא שמע הקב"ה תפלתכם, מ"מ הועלתם מחצה שישבתם בקדש במקום אחד הרבה שנים אשר ידעתם. ובפירוש רש"י בשם הספרי היו י"ט שנים – מחצה ממש. וכל זה מוסר והדרכה לישראל גם כן לדורות שלא יתייאשו מן התפלה, ואם לא תועיל כפי שמתפללים מכל מקום תועיל הרבה.

HAAMEK DAVAR

Even though the Holy One, blessed be He, did not heed the nation's prayers, nevertheless, God did grant Israel a minor concession by allowing them to camp at Kadesh for an extended period of time. According to Rashi, who cites the *Sifrei*, the nation spent a full nineteen years at Kadesh, exactly half the duration of their thirty-eight year sentence. That result served as a lesson and as guidance for that generation and for future generations of Israel, teaching us never to doubt the efficacy of prayer. While a request might not be granted in full, it will also not be wholly rejected.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to each of the above commentaries, was the extended stay in Kadesh a reward or a punishment?
- In the context of Moshe's speech, which of these explanations seems to make more sense to you? Why?
- Imagine that you and your friends had done something wrong and were suffering a consequence. Which of the two messages discussed by the commentaries do you think would have a greater positive impact on you as you look toward the future?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice the language in verse 1:40 and its relationship with verse 2:1.
2. Moshe compares the defeat at the hands of the Amorites to being chased by bees. Compare this to Exodus 23:28.

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The Torah describes the attack of the Amorites as being like an attack of a swarm of bees. Rabbi Velvel Soloveitchik points out that bees die when they sting, so that the Amorite attack was effectively a suicide mission. Sometimes we get so caught up in our animosity toward others that we damage ourselves in the process of trying to hurt others. It takes incredible internal

strength to catch ourselves and ask: What am I trying to accomplish? What price will I pay for getting that vengeance?

What kinds of things can you do to break your own internal cycles of rage and regain control of your own life?

מ"א הַמְדַבְּרָה דֶרֶךְ יַם־סוּף: וַתַּעֲנֵנוּ וַתֹּאמְרוּ אֵלַי חֲטָאנוּ לַיהוָה
 אֲנַחְנוּ נַעֲלֶה וְנִלְחַמְנוּ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוֵּנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַתַּחֲגְרוּ
 מ"ב אִישׁ אֶת־כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָתוֹ וַתַּהֲיֵנוּ לַעֲלֹת הַהָרָה: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
 אֵלַי אָמַר לָהֶם לֹא תַעֲלוּ וְלֹא תִלַּחֲמוּ כִּי אֵינְנִי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְלֹא
 מ"ג תִּנְגַּפוּ לִפְנֵי אֲיִבֵיכֶם: וַאֲדַבֵּר אֵלֵיכֶם וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וַתִּמְרוּ
 מ"ד אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וַתִּזְדוּ וַתַּעֲלוּ הַהָרָה: וַיֵּצֵא הָאֱמֹרִי הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּהַר
 הַהוּא לְקִרְאֹתְכֶם וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂינָה הַדְּבָרִים
 מ"ה וַיִּכְתּוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּשַׁעִיר עַד־חֲרָמָה: וַתִּשְׁבוּ וַתִּבְכוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 מ"ו וְלֹא־שָׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקִלְלָכֶם וְלֹא הֶאֱזִין אֵלֵיכֶם: וַתִּשְׁבוּ בְּקֹדֶשׁ
 ב' יָמִים רַבִּים כַּיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַּתֶּם: וַנִּפֶן וַנִּסַּע הַמְדַבְּרָה דֶרֶךְ
 יַם־סוּף כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלַי וַנִּסַּב אֶת־הַר־שַׁעִיר יָמִים

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe mentions their extended stay in Kadesh (the place from which they sent their scouting mission), despite God's instruction that they turn away from the land and begin traveling in the wilderness. What was that stay in Kadesh about?

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

היה זה בקדש, בגבול המדבר, מקום שממנו הייתה להם דרך קצרה להגיע לארץ, ושם היו צריכים להישאר זמן רב באותו מקום ... שהייה זו במקום אחד הייתה העונש המר ביותר על החטא שרביץ עליהם. לפי האמור בסדר עולם (פרק ח) הם שהו שם תשע עשרה שנה. וכאשר הגיע זמנם לעזוב - כפי שיסופר בפסוק הבא - לא הורשו להמשיך קדימה להיכנס לארץ, אלא נאלצו לחזור בחזרה למדבר, בדרך המוליכה לים סוף.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Israel camped in Kadesh at the edge of the wilderness, a spot which was only a short distance to the land. And yet, the nation was compelled to stay in that place for a lengthy period of time.... This protracted sojourn in a single location – according to *Seder Olam* (ch. 8) Israel stayed in Kadesh for nineteen years – represented the most bitter punishment for the nation's sins. And when the people were finally granted permission to leave the site, as the next verse (2:1) reports, they were not directed forward into the cherished land, but were forced to backtrack into the wilderness, on the path toward the Sea of Reeds.

2:2–8 *When passing Mount Se'ir, where Esav had settled, Benei Yisrael was instructed to be extremely careful not to antagonize Esav's nation, as Esav was the brother nation of Benei Yisrael and God had given it that land. Instead, Benei Yisrael was to purchase food and water from them. Indeed, as Moshe tells, Benei Yisrael passed all the way around Mount Se'ir, keeping distant from Esav.*

2 the LORD had told me and, for a long time, made our way around Mount Se'ir. Then
 3 the LORD said to me: 'You have circled about this hill country long enough now. Turn to
 4 the north. And give the people these orders: You are about to pass through the territory
 of your kinsmen, the descendants of Esav, who live in Se'ir. They will be afraid of you, but
 5 be very careful. Do not provoke them, for I will not give you even a foot of their land; I
 6 have given Mount Se'ir to Esav as his possession. You shall pay them in silver for the food
 7 you eat, pay them silver for the water that you buy from them and drink. For the LORD
 your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your wan-
 derings through this vast wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with
 8 you: you have lacked for nothing.' So we passed by, away from our kinsmen, the descen-
 dants of Esav who live in Se'ir. We turned from the route of the Arava, away from Eilat and

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to each of the above commentaries, what could possibly happen if *Benei Yisrael* were not careful?
- Which of the insights offered above could be helpful to you in your interactions with people?
- Which of the dangers pointed out by the commentaries do you think poses a greater danger to the Jewish people today?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. What is the connection between verse 6 and verse 7? 20:14–21. What significant differences can you find between the two descriptions?
2. What is unusual about verse 8?
3. The encounter with Edom is initially described in Numbers

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Most people understand verse 7 as meaning that because God was with *Benei Yisrael* they lacked nothing, as He provided for them. But a close reading reveals another possibility – that the very presence of God among *Benei Yisrael* meant that they lacked nothing, as God's presence made everything else irrelevant. God's presence in our lives doesn't take away our debts, responsibilities, or concerns. What it does do, however, is provide an entirely

different perspective on those things. It allows us to reshape the importance that those concerns play in our lives, and allows us to gain control over our own lives rather than having us be controlled by external forces.

Can God-consciousness be taught or is it something that we have to achieve on our own?

ב רַבִּים: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: רַב־לָכֶם סֹב אֶת־
הָהָר הַזֶּה פָּנּוּ לָכֶם צַפְנָה: וְאֶת־הָעַם צוּ לֵאמֹר אֶתֶם עֹבְרִים
בְּגִבּוֹל אֶחֱיֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־עִשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׁעִיר וַיִּירָאוּ מִכֶּם וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם
מְאֹד: אַל־תִּתְגַּדּוּ בָם כִּי לֹא־אֶתֶן לָכֶם מֵאֲרָצָם עַד מְדֻרָּךְ
כִּי־רָגַל כִּי־יִרְשָׁה לַעֲשׂו נִתְּתִי אֶת־הָר שֵׁעִיר: אֲכַל תִּשְׁבְּרוּ
מֵאֲתֶם בַּכֶּסֶף וְאֲכַלְתֶּם וְגַם־מִים תִּכְרוּ מֵאֲתֶם בַּכֶּסֶף וּשְׂתִיתֶם:
כִּי יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ בְּרַכְךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ יִדַע לְכַתֹּךְ אֶת־הַמְדַבֵּר
הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה זֶה ׀ אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ עִמָּךְ לֹא חָסַרְתָּ
דָּבָר: וְנִעְבְּרָ מֵאֵת אֶחֱיֵינוּ בְּנֵי־עִשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׁעִיר מְדֻרָּךְ
הַעֲרִבָה מֵאִילַת וּמֵעֵצִין גִּבֹר וַנִּפֹן וְנִעְבְּרָ דְרָךְ מְדַבֵּר

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Moshe tells *Benei Yisrael* not to antagonize Esav (Edom), because Esav is fearful of *Benei Yisrael* and they must therefore be extremely cautious. If Esav is fearful, why is there a need for extra caution?

מלאכת מחשבת

צבא המלחמה הבוטח בגבורתו על נקלה אויביו ינצחוהו. כי לא ישמר מהם בבטחו בכוחו ועוצם ידו. אמנם האיש הירא, עיניו לנוכח יביטו, ותמיד יראה בשונאיו שלא ירעו לו ולא יאונה לו כל אוון. לכן אמר: לפי שבני עשו יראים מכם, יתנו לב להימלט מידכם. לכן "ונשמרתם מאד", דאו שתשתמרו מאוד מהם, כי יותר צריך לפחד מהאיש הירא מן האיש אשר איננו ירא.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

הם יראים שיסבלו רבות מידכם; שכן הם סבורים שלאחר המסע הארוך במדבר, הנכם מורעבים וחסרי כל, ושעתה עם כניסתכם לראשונה לארץ נושבת, תחטפו כל דבר שתוכלו להניח ידכם עליו. אנא, שלטו בעצמכם והראו להם שההפך הוא הנכון.

MELEKHET MAHASHEVET

When a nation's army is too confident in its strength, it tends to downplay the abilities of its enemies, who in turn will be able to defeat it. However, when a people is anxious and cautious, it will take its opponents seriously and will not be caught unprepared. Hence Israel is warned that because Esav fears its cousins, the nation will try to defend itself. As such Israel must be very careful, for one must always be more wary of potential adversaries who are fearful and cornered than of those who are bold and undaunted.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Esav fears that they will suffer greatly at Israel's hands. They imagine that after a long journey, Israel is low on food and supplies, and will snatch whatever goods they can acquire. This is why Israel is advised to restrain themselves and demonstrate to Esav that quite the opposite is the case.

- 9 Etzyon Geber, and journeyed in the direction of the Wilderness of Moav. Then the LORD said to me: ‘Do not mistreat the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession: I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot for a possession.’” The Emim lived there originally – a strong and numerous people, as tall as the Anakites. Like the Anakites, they are considered Refaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. Horites used to live in Se’ir, but the descendants of Esav dispossessed them, destroying them and settling in their place, as Israel did in the land that the LORD gave them as a possession. “Now, get up and cross the Zered Stream.’ So we crossed the Zered Stream. From the time we left Kadesh Barnea to the time we crossed the Zered Stream was thirty-eight years – until the entire generation of warriors had perished from the camp – as the LORD had sworn to them. And the LORD’s hand was against them to trouble

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

הם נועדו לעורר בעם את אומץ הלב לקראת המלחמה הצפויה עם יושבי הארץ ילידי הענק, בהזכירם לעם שעמים ענקיים לא פחות גורשו בעזרת ה' על ידי בני לוט ובני עשו, היושבים עתה בשלווה בארצותם.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

This history lesson was intended to encourage Israel in the face of their impending campaign of conquest. Since the nation was about to encounter a population of giants in Canaan, they are taught that the descendants of Lot and Esav had previously managed to defeat such peoples. These distant relatives of Israel now lived tranquilly in those captured lands.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Three opinions are expressed in the above commentaries: (1) If God would do this for other nations, he would certainly do this for *Benei Yisrael*. (2) Not only did God help Avraham’s descendants, He helped even those who weren’t Avraham’s descendants. (3) This was meant to inspire courage among *Benei Yisrael*, because God is stronger than the giants. Match the ideas with the commentaries above.
- What is the main difference between the explanations of R. Hirsch and *Hoil Moshe*?
- How is this connected to the story of the sending of the scouts?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Hizkuni points out that only after the entire generation that wandered in the wilderness died, including Moshe himself, did *Benei Yisrael* enter the land. Theoretically the nation could have entered sooner, as verse 16 notes that Moshe was the last of the generation of the wilderness to die, but it would have been too disrespectful to Moshe for them to have entered and left him by himself on the other side of the Jordan River. The sacrifice of *Benei Yisrael*, delaying the fulfillment of their dream out of respect for

their beloved leader, is a valuable model of self-restraint. Imagine yourself eagerly waiting for something you desire – the juiciest piece of meat on the serving platter, the front seat at a concert – and then willingly forgoing it to show respect to another.

What internal quality must a person possess to allow them to feel good about giving up something they want in deference to someone else?

ט מואב: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אַל-תֵּעַר אֶת-מוֹאָב וְאֶל-תִּתְגַּר בָּם
 מִלְחָמָה כִּי לֹא-אֵתָן לְךָ מֵאֲרָצוֹ יְרֻשָּׁה כִּי לְבְנֵי-לוֹט נָתַתִּי
 י אֶת-עַר יְרֻשָּׁה: הָאֲמִים לְפָנִים יֵשְׁבוּ בָהּ עִם גְּדוֹל וְרַב וְרַם
 יז כְּעַנְקִים: רַפְּאִים יַחֲשֹׁבוּ אֶף-הֵם כְּעַנְקִים וְהַמֹּאבִּים יִקְרְאוּ
 יב לָהֶם אֲמִים: וּבִשְׁעִיר יֵשְׁבוּ הַחֲרִים לְפָנֶיךָ וּבְנֵי עֵשׂוֹ יִירָשׁוּם
 וַיִּשְׁמִידוּם מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶרֶץ
 יג יְרֻשָּׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן יְהוָה לָהֶם: עֵתָה קָמוּ וְעַבְדוּ לָכֶם אֶת-נַחַל
 יד זָרָד וְנַעֲבֹד אֶת-נַחַל זָרָד: וְהַיְמִים אֲשֶׁר-הִלְכְּנוּ מִמֶּקְדָּשׁ בְּרַנֵּעַ
 עַד אֲשֶׁר-עַבְדְּנוּ אֶת-נַחַל זָרָד שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה עַד-תָּם
 כָּל-הַדָּוָר אֲנִשִּׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה מִקְרָב הַמַּחְנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה
 טו לָהֶם: וְגַם יִרְיֵהוּ הִיתָה בָּם לְהַמֵּס מִקְרָב הַמַּחְנֶה עַד תָּמָס:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why does Moshe tell *Benei Yisrael* about all these other nations and their prehistory?

ר' עובדיה ספורנו

מפני שלא היו בני לוט יורשי אברהם בדין כלל, הודיע שגם להם נתן ה' את הארץ כמו לבני עשו. והעד על זה כי שניהם כבשו את הארץ שלא כמנהג העולם.

RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

Since the descendants of Lot were not in any way Avraham's heirs, Israel is now told that God nevertheless granted them land like He did the progeny of Esav. This point is demonstrated by the fact that these two nations could not have conquered their territory purely on their own.

הואיל משה

אם עשה כן לעם נכרי כל שכן לעם סגולתו השמידום וישבו תחתם; אם כן ה' מנחיל את הארץ לאשר ירצה, ומגרש ממנה הרשעים, וכן יעשה גם עתה לבני כנען שכל תועבה בהם, וכחם לא יועיל להם.

HO'IL MOSHE

This account teaches Israel the following lesson: if God assisted these outsider nations in conquering their countries, surely He will help His treasured people to settle theirs. Ultimately, God bestows lands upon whomever He wishes, and expels the wicked from their homes. He will do so regarding the sinful inhabitants of Canaan, whose abominations know no bounds. Their pitiful human power will be of no avail to them.

2:16–23 After *Benei Yisrael* passed Moav, God issued them the same warning about not antagonizing Amon, for similar reasons: the Amonites are descendants of Lot, and God gave them this land, even helping them to destroy the giants who had lived there previously.

16 them from the camp until they had all perished. When all those warriors among the
 17 people had died, the LORD spoke to me: “Today you are going to cross the border of
 18 Moav at Ar. When you come to the Amonites, do not harass them or provoke them to
 19 war, for I will not give you any of the land of the Amonites as a possession: I have given
 20 it as a possession to the descendants of Lot.” This too was considered a land of Refaim.
 21 Refaim lived there originally, although the Amonites call them Zamzumim – a strong
 and numerous people, as tall as the Anakites. The LORD destroyed them so that the
 22 Amonites could dispossess them and settle in their place, just as He did for the descen-
 dants of Esav, who live in Se’ir, by destroying the Horites before them so that they could
 23 dispossess them and settle in their place to this day, where they still remain; likewise
 the Avim, who had lived in villages as far as Aza – the Caftorites, emerging from Caftor,

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to *Haamek Davar*, what was the source of the strength of this nation?
- Do you think that Ramban agrees or disagrees with *Haamek Davar*?
- R. David Tzvi Hoffman doesn’t address here the source of their strength or the meaning of their name. What does his comment contribute?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Verse 16, similar to verse 14, refers to the generation that died in the wilderness as “those warriors among the people.” The commentaries explain that these were the men between age twenty and sixty, who were initially counted as part of the army. What is the irony in using this phrase to describe them?
2. There is one nation listed here that God helped to conquer their land, even though they are not related at all to Avraham. Which nation is that?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The Torah’s lengthy discussion about the lands of Amon, Moav, and Edom mentions the giants that God helped those nations overcome, that He gave them their lands, and that *Benei Yisrael* were forbidden from going to war against them because their lands were promised to them by God, just as the land of Israel was promised to *Benei Yisrael*. Although *Benei Yisrael* establish a unique bond and covenant with God, the parallel between the relationships these other nations have with their divinely gifted lands and the relationship that *Benei Yisrael* have with their

divinely gifted land – including the fact God will protect those gifts – cannot be overlooked. It strengthens the overwhelming message in the Torah that God cares about all people, even though there are some nations with whom His relationship is clearly deeper, closer, and more intense.

Does the idea that God can have special relationships with other nations, not just with *Benei Yisrael*, make you feel more comfortable or just less special?

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר-תָּמוּ כָּל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה לָמוּת מִקָּרֵב
 הָעַם: וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: אֶתָּה עֵבֶר הַיּוֹם
 אֶת-גְּבוּל מוֹאָב אֶת-עַד: וְקִרְבַּת מוֹל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל-תְּצַרֶם
 וְאֶל-תְּתַגֵּר בָּם כִּי לֹא-אֶתֶן מֵאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי-עַמּוֹן לְךָ יְרֵשָׁה כִּי
 לְבָנֵי-לוֹט נִתְּתִיָּה יְרֵשָׁה: אֶרֶץ-רַפָּאִים תַּחֲשֹׁב אֶרֶץ-הוּא רַפָּאִים
 יֵשְׁבוּ-בָּהּ לְפָנִים וְהַעֲמָנִים יִקְרְאוּ לָהֶם זְמוּזִיִּם: עַם גָּדוֹל וְרַב
 וְרַם כְּעַנְקִיִּים וַיִּשְׁמִידֶם יְהוָה מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשֶׁם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם:
 כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְבָנֵי עֵשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד אֶת-
 הַחֲרִי מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשֶׁם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: וְהָעוֹיִם
 הַיֹּשְׁבִים בַּחֲצָרִים עַד-עֵזָה פַּתְתָּרִים הַיִּצְאִים מִפְּתַר הַשְּׁמִידֶם

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

One of the groups of giants is called **זמוזימים**. Who are they, and what does their name mean?

רמב"ן

עם שלא יבצר מהם כל אשר יזמו לעשות.

RAMBAN

This is a group who face no obstacles in pursuing whatever they set out [*yazmu*] to do.

העמק דבר

שהיו בעלי מחשבה וזמה על כן היה קשה לכבשם דרך הטבע. וכאן הקדים הכתוב זה הכנוי להא שהיו עם גדול ורב ורם ללמדנו שזה שהיו זמוזימים היה קשה לבני עמון יותר ממה שהיו עם גדול.

HAAMEK DAVAR

The Zamzumim were plotters and schemers [*zimah*], which made it difficult to conquer them by ordinary methods. The text labels this group as Zamzumim before describing them as "a strong and numerous people," to teach that their strategizing character made them a greater threat to Amon than their size and strength.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

יש לשער שהם זהים עם הזוזים (בראשית יד:ה) שהוכו על ידי כדרלעומר.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

We can assume that the Zamzumim were the same people as the Zuzim (Gen. 14:5), who were defeated by Kedorlaomer.

24 destroyed them and settled in their place. “Set out and cross the Arnon Stream. I have given over Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon, with his land, into your hands. Begin to
 25 take possession of it; enter into battle with him. This day I am beginning to put the terror and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the skies. When they hear reports
 26 of you, they will tremble in dread of you.’ So I sent messengers from the Kedemot wilderness to Sihon, king of Heshbon, with an offer of peace: ‘Let us pass through your
 27 land. We will stay on the main road, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left.
 28 Provide us with food and we will pay for it in silver and eat; give us water and we will pay for it in silver and drink. Only let us pass through on foot – just as the descendants
 29 of Esav living in Se’ir and the Moabites living in Ar did for us – until we cross the Jordan
 30 into the land that the LORD our God is giving us.’ But Sihon, king of Heshbon, refused to let us pass through, for the LORD your God had hardened his spirit and made his

ר' שמואל יצחק רג'יו

שלח לו בתחלה דברי שלום כדי שמתשובתו יבינו ישראל כי ה' הקשה את לבבו.

RABBI ISAAC SAMUEL REGGIO

Moshe initially dispatched a message of peace to Sihon so that Israel would then infer from the king's response that the LORD had hardened his heart.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

אף על פי שה' כבר גזר על המלחמה, מכל מקום צוה לישראל להתנהג כפי משפטי העמים.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

Even though the LORD had already declared a war against Sihon, He also commanded Israel to follow the customary rules of conduct between nations.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- In what way is R. Reggio's explanation dramatically different from the other two?
- According to R. David Tzvi Hoffman, the message of peace had no practical purpose. What, then, was its value?
- What different life lessons or religious values do you think can be learned from each of the above commentaries?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice the similarity between Sihon (v. 30) and Pharaoh (Ex. 7:3). What is similar in *why* God does this to both? and Edom. Compare this description with Numbers 21:11–15 and 22:2–6.
2. Moshe describes positive interactions he had with Moav

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Sihon's stubborn refusal to let *Benei Yisrael* pass through his territory led to the total destruction of his kingdom. Sometimes we stick stubbornly to preconceived ideas and beliefs, and don't allow ourselves to be open to new thinking. While some might call that “sticking to your guns,” the inability to be flexible in the face of reality can be self-destructive. R. Yosef Albo, in *Sefer*

Ha'ikkarim, understands the ability to change our thinking as the foundation of *teshuva*, a divine gift.

When it comes to values and beliefs, how can we tell the difference between stubbornness and deep commitment?

כד וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַחְתָּם: קוֹמוּ סֵעוּ וְעַבְרוּ אֶת־נַחַל אַרְנֹן רְאֵה נְתַתִּי
 בְּיַדְךָ אֶת־סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ־חֹשְׁבֹן הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־אֲרֵצוֹ הַחַל רֶשֶׁת
 כה וְהַתְּגַר בּוֹ מִלְחָמָה: הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶחַל לָתֵת פְּחָדְךָ וַיִּרְאַתְךָ עַל־
 פְּנֵי הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן שְׁמֶעְךָ וְרָגְזוּ וְחָלוּ
 כו מִפְּנֵיךָ: וְאֶשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים מִמִּדְבַר קַדְמוֹת אֶל־סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ
 כז חֹשְׁבֹן דְּבַרִי שְׁלוֹם לְאָמֹר: אֶעֱבְרָה בְּאֶרְצְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֵלַי
 ח לֹא אֶסּוֹד יַמִּין וְשְׂמֹאל: אֲכַל בַּכֶּסֶף תִּשְׁבְּרֵנִי וְאֶכְלֹתִי וּמִים
 טט בַּכֶּסֶף תִּתֶּן־לִי וְשִׂתִּיתִי רֶק אֶעֱבְרָה בְּרַגְלִי: כֹּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוֹ לִי
 בְּנֵי עֲשׂוֹ הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשִׁעִיר וְהַמּוֹאֲבִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעַר עַד אֲשֶׁר־
 אֶעֱבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ:
 וְלֹא אָבָה סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֹשְׁבֹן הָעֵבְרָנוּ בּוֹ כִּי־הִקְשָׁה יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־רוּחוֹ וְאָמַן אֶת־לִבּוֹ לְמַעַן תִּתֵּן בְּיַדְךָ בַּיּוֹם

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

God had told Moshe that unlike his encounters with Edom, Amon, and Moav, he could antagonize Sihon and start a battle with him. Despite that, Moshe sent a message of peace. Did Moshe defy God's instruction?

ר' יוסף אבן כספי

אין בזה סתירה כי להקדים בדברי שלום אין הזק, כל שכן שאף על פי שהשם אמר לו החל רש והתגר בו מלחמה (דברים ב:כד), כונתו יתברך היתה, והוא גילה סודו למשה, שזה יהיה אם לא יתנם לעבור בגבולו, כי ירושת הארץ מהירדן הנה לא כונתו יתברך הראשונה, כי ההגבלה היה מהירדן, אבל נודמן שסיחון ועוג נלחמו בישראל, עד כי ישראל למלט נפשם נהפכו אליהם ונצחום והורישום, לכן אם עוד יהפך לב סיחון ועמו ויעבירו ישראל בגבולם, לא התגרו ישראל במלחמה, ולכן שלח משה מלאכיו.

RABBI YOSEF IBN KASPI

Moshe did not disobey God by making an overture to Sihon, since there is never any harm in initially approaching in peace. Furthermore, even though the Almighty told Moshe, "Begin to take possession of [his land]; enter into battle with him" (2:24), what He meant – and what he told Moshe privately – was that Israel should pursue the path of war in the event that Sihon refused the nation passage across his border. For God's initial plan was that Israel's territory should, in the east, extend only to the Jordan River. But once Sihon and Og decided to fight the nation, the latter was forced to defend itself and ended up conquering the two kings' territories and settling them. Subsequently, should Sihon and his nation again change their minds and permit Israel to pass through their borders, Israel would not be permitted to wage war against them. This is why Moshe "sent messengers... to Sihon."

2:31–3:11 *Siḥon attacked with full force and suffered a devastating defeat, as God promised. When Benei Yisrael turned to pass Og, the famed giant who was king of Bashan, he also attacked and suffered a similar fate. Benei Yisrael took no prisoners but did take spoils of war and control of the land, including many heavily fortified walled cities.*

- 31 heart defiant in order to give him over into your hands, as He has now done. The LORD
 said to me, ‘I have begun to give Siḥon and his land over to you. Go: begin to conquer
 32 and possess his land.’ Then Siḥon and all his people came out to meet us in battle at
 33 Yahatz. The LORD our God gave him over to us, and we struck him down, together with
 34 his sons and all his people. At that time we captured all his towns and completely
 35 destroyed them, men, women, and children alike, leaving not a single survivor. Only
 the livestock and the spoil of the cities we captured did we keep as booty for ourselves.
 36 From Aroer on the banks of the Arnon Stream, including the town in the ravine, as far
 as Gilad, not one city was unattainable to us. The LORD our God gave us all of them.
 37 But you did not touch the land of the Amonites, not the land around the Yabok Stream,
3 1 nor the towns of the hill country that the LORD our God commanded us to leave. After
 this, we turned and journeyed along the road toward Bashan. Og, king of Bashan, with
 2 all his people came out to Edre’i to engage us in battle. But the LORD said to me, ‘Do
 not be afraid of him, for I have given him into you hand, with all his people and his land.

הואיל משה

כונת הפסוק כאן ... לתת כלי זין ביד ישראל נגד שכניהם הרעים עמון ומואב ואדום, להתנצל מהם אם יאמרו שישראל לקחו מארצם כמו שהיה טוען מלך מואב בימי יפתח ... ואם כן אחר שספר לנו בפסוק י' שירשו כל ממלכת עוג שהוא לקחה מלפנים מיד בני עמון ומואב, הוא אומר שמן הדין לישראל לנחול את הארץ הזאת, ואין להם שום חובה להשיבה לעמון ומואב שישבו עליה קודם ממלכות עוג כי הם לקחוה מיד הרפאים והארץ ההיא היתה מעותרת מימי קדם לבני ישראל והראיה לדבר שעמון ומואב לקחוה מיד הרפאים היא שערש עוג קיימת עוד היום ברבת בני עמון.

HO'IL MOSHE

The purpose of this verse is to provide Israel with an argument against their wicked neighbors such as Amon, Moav, and Edom, who might later claim that *Benei Yisrael* stole their lands. This indeed was the claim proffered by the king of Moav in the time of the judge Yiftah... And hence, after verse 10 describes Israel's conquest of Og's kingdom, territory that that monarch had previously taken from Amon and Moav, the text explains that Israel was justified in capturing this land from Og. Israel had no obligation whatsoever to return the lands to the people of Amon and Moav who had lived there prior to Og's conquest, as those nations had previously seized those areas from the Refaim, whereas the lands had been designated from earliest history to be granted to Israel. The proof that Amon and Moav acquired the land from the Refaim is that Og's bed "is still there, in Raba of the Amonites."

לא הִזָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי רְאֵה הִחַלְתִּי תַתּוֹת לְפָנֶיךָ ג שְׂשִׁי
 לב אֶת־סִיחֹן וְאֶת־אֲרָצוֹ הִחַל רֹשׁ לְרֵשֶׁת אֶת־אֲרָצוֹ: וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן
 לג לְקִרְאֹתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל־עַמּוֹ לְמַלְחָמָה יִהְיֶה: וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 לד לְפָנֵינוּ וַנַּךְ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ: וַנִּלְכֹּד אֶת־כָּל־עָרָיו
 לה בַּעֲת הַהוּא וַנַּחֲרֵם אֶת־כָּל־עִיר מְתָם וְהַנְּשִׁים וְהַטָּף לֹא
 לו הִשְׁאֲרָנוּ שְׂרִיד: רַק הַבְּהֵמָה בָּזְזוּנוּ לָנוּ וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר
 לו לְכַדָּנוּ: מִעֲרֵעַר אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֹׁפֵת־נַחַל אֲרָנָן וְהָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בַּנַּחַל
 לו וְעַד־הַגִּלְעָד לֹא הִיְתָה קִרְיָהּ אֲשֶׁר שָׁגְבָה מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־הַכֹּל נָתַן
 לו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ: רַק אֶל־אֲרָץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן לֹא קָרַבְתָּ כָּל־יָד
 ג ׀ ג נַחַל יַבְקָ וְעָרֵי הָהָר וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: וַנַּפֵּן וַנַּעַל
 ב דָּרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עֹג מֶלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁן לְקִרְאֹתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל־עַמּוֹ
 ב לְמַלְחָמָה אֲדָרְעִי: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל־תִּירָא אֹתוֹ כִּי בְיַדְךָ
 ג נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ וְאֶת־אֲרָצוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why does Moshe describe Og, and even his bed, at such great length?

רשב"ם RASHBAM

הנה ערשו - עריסה של קטן כשהיה תינוק. ערש ברזל - לפי שכשהיה קטן היה חזק מאד, ובהשתטחו היה משבר ערס של עץ, לכך עשאוהו של ברזל.

The verse indeed refers to the cradle which Og slept in as a child. It was fashioned out of iron, because even as an infant Og was exceptionally strong, and he would break any wooden bed he was given. Hence Og was placed in an iron cradle.

ר' יוסף בכור שור RABBI YOSEF BEKHOR SHOR

הנה ערשו ערש ברזל - כלומר: מבצר חזק כברזל היה לו ברבת בני עמון, שהיה מוקף חומה חזקה כברזל. תשע אמות ארכה - גובה של החומה שסביב המבצר. וארבע אמות רחבה באמת איש - של חומה.

The verse refers to a fortress that was as strong as iron which Og held in Rabbat in Amon. This citadel was surrounded by an impenetrable wall as tough as that metal. Thus when the verse states that it was "nine cubits long" it is describing the height of the walls around the garrison; while "four cubits wide, as measured by a man's forearm" refers to the thickness of those walls.

3 Do to him what you did to Siḥon, king of the Amorites, who lived in Ḥeshbon.’ So the LORD our God also gave over to us Og, king of Bashan, and all his people. We struck
 4 him down until not a single survivor remained. We captured all his towns at that time; there was not a single town we did not take from them – sixty towns, the entire region
 5 of Argov, Og’s kingdom in Bashan. And these were all fortress towns with high walls, gates, and bars – there were a great many unwalled towns besides. And we utterly
 6 destroyed them, as we had done to Siḥon, king of Ḥeshbon, in each town utterly destroying them: men, women, and children. All the livestock and the spoil of the towns
 7 we kept as booty for ourselves. At that time, then, we took from the two kings of the Amorites the land beyond the Jordan, from the Arnon Stream to Mount Ḥermon” – the
 9 Sidonians call Ḥermon Siryon, and the Amorites call it Senir – “all the towns of the plateau, the whole of Gilad, and the whole of Bashan, as far as Salkha and Edre’i, towns
 11 of Og’s kingdom in Bashan.” Only Og, king of Bashan, was left then of the remaining Refaim. His bed, made of iron, is still there, in Raba of the Amonites: it is nine cubits

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. The Torah provides testimony regarding Og’s size and counts sixty walled cities aside from the many unfortified ones. Based on Numbers 13:28, why are these details so important?
2. In 3:2 Moshe tells the nation that God told him not to fear. Why would Moshe be afraid?
3. There are two words used to describe spoils of war (see 2:35). What are the two different words? What do you think is the difference between them?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Remember the people that Moshe sent to scout out the land soon after they left Egypt? When they came back with reports of giants in the land and cities that fortified to the skies the people were convinced that this would be their downfall. They lost heart, and as a result they lost the right to enter the land. Here we are at the end of the forty years. Siḥon was king of the mightiest empire in the region, and Og was the giant who struck fear in everyone. Not only that, their cities were “fortress towns with high walls, gates, and bars” – exactly the things that the first generation feared. As they prepare to enter the land God arranges for them to fight and defeat the most terrifying nations. In doing so they conquered something even greater – their own fears. If, with God’s help, they

could handle this, then they could handle anything.

The land that *Benei Yisrael* captured from Og was filled with heavily fortified cities, the same kinds that scared the scouts that Moshe had sent years earlier. In our lives we sometimes encounter heavily fortified people – they have extensive personal defenses to ensure that they are well protected from perceived threats. These people can appear strong and aggressive, designed to keep others away. But behind that bluster there is often a weak, fragile, insecure person. We can learn from this that we are better served by building ourselves inside as strong and confident without the need for any artificial walls we might build.

ג לְסִיחֵן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן: וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 בְּיַדְנוּ גַם אֶת-עוֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבְּשָׁן וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וַנַּפִּיחֵהוּ עַד-בְּלַתִּי
 ד הַשְּׂאִיר-לוֹ שְׂרִיד: וַנִּלְכְּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא הִיְתָה
 ה קְרִיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-לִקְחָנוּ מֵאֵתֶם שְׂשִׁים עִיר כָּל-חֶבֶל אֲרָגָב
 וּבְרִיחַ לְבַד מְעֵרֵי הַפְּרָזִי הֲרַבָּה מְאֹד: וַנַּחֲרֶם אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר
 ו עָשִׂינוּ לְסִיחֵן מֶלֶךְ חֻשְׁבוֹן הַחֲרָם כָּל-עִיר מְתֵם הַנְּשִׁים וְהַטָּף:
 ז וְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים בַּזּוֹנוֹ לָנוּ: וַנִּקַּח בְּעֵת הַהוּא אֶת-
 ח הָאָרֶץ מִיַּד שְׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִנַּחַל אֲרָנָן
 ט עַד-הַר חֶרְמוֹן: צִידָנִים יִקְרָאוּ לְחֶרְמוֹן שְׂרִיז וְהָאֱמֹרִי יִקְרָאוּ-
 י לוֹ שְׁנִיר: כָּל ׀ עָרֵי הַמִּישֹׁר וְכָל-הַגְּלָעַד וְכָל-הַבְּשָׁן עַד-סֹלְכָה
 יא וְאֲדָרְעֵי עָרֵי מַמְלַכַת עוֹג בַּבְּשָׁן: כִּי רַק-עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן נִשְׂאֵר
 יב מִיֵּתֶר הַרְפָּאִים הִנֵּה עָרְשׁוֹ עָרֵשׁ בְּרָזֶל הָלָה הוּא בְּרַבַּת בְּנֵי
 יג עַמּוֹן תִּשְׁעֵ אֲמוֹת אֲרָכָה וְאַרְבַּע אֲמוֹת רְחֹבָה בְּאַמַּת-אִישׁ:

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Based on his understanding of the word **ערש**, Rashbam suggests that the bed described here was actually Og's cradle. If that is true, what is the Torah trying to tell us?
- Bekhor Shor understands that the description of Og's bed is a metaphor. For what is it a metaphor? What are the strengths and the weakness of this explanation?
- *Ho'il Moshe* explains that this entire account is included in the Torah because it will be important for future generations. In what way is this similar to Rashi's first comment on the Torah (Gen. 1:1)? In what way is it very different?
- R. David Tzvi Hoffman cites a non-Jewish rationalist commentary who suggests that Og made his bed extra large so that people would think that he was even bigger than he really was. Which of the three above commentaries is R. Hoffman challenging?

12 long and four cubits wide, as measured by a man’s forearm. “Of the land that we took possession of at that time, I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites the territory from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Stream, as well as half the hill country of Gilad with its towns.
 13 To the half tribe of Menashe I gave the rest of Gilad and all of Bashan, Og’s kingdom – the whole region of Argov: all that portion of Bashan that used to be known as the
 14 land of the Refaim.” Yair of Menashe took the whole region of Argov – that is, Bashan – as far as the border of the people of Geshur and of Maakha – and named it after him-
 15 self, hamlets of Yair, as it is called to this day. “To Makhir I gave Gilad, and to the
 16 Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory from Gilad as far as the Arnon Stream, with the middle of the ravine as a border, and up to the Yabok Stream and the Amonites’
 17 border. It included also the Arava, with the Jordan and its banks, from the Sea of Galilee
 18 down to the Arava Sea, the Dead Sea, with the lower slopes of Pisga on the east. At that time, I charged you: ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess, but all
 19 your troops must cross over armed before your fellow Israelites. Only your wives, children, and cattle – I know that you have much cattle – shall stay behind in the towns I
 20 have given you, until the LORD gives rest to your fellows as to you, and they too have taken possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan.
 21 Then you may each return to the land that I have given to you.’ And I charged Yehoshua also at that time: ‘Your own eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to
 22 cross. Do not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who is fighting for you.’

TEXTUAL SKILLS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Giving the land to Reuven, Gad, and half of Menashe is first described in Numbers, chapter 32. How many differences between the two descriptions can you find?</p> <p>2. Moshe describes the instructions he gave earlier to Yehoshua, even though those instructions are absent earlier in the</p> | <p>Torah. What is unusual about the instruction he describes here?</p> <p>3. In light of what Moshe says in verses 21–22, in what way is the last word in Moshe’s instruction to Yehoshua (end of v. 22) surprising?</p> |
|---|--|

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Moshe recounts that he gave land captured from Sihon and Og to Reuven and Gad. He also says that he gave land to the family of Makhir, the son of Menashe. Different from those is the land that ended up in the hands of Yair, the son of Menashe, as Moshe did not give those lands to him; rather, Yair conquered them. There is a huge difference between the things that we are given as gifts and those which we work hard for. We place a higher value

on the things that we earn ourselves; we feel like we really own them and we take pride in them. Even if we subsequently lose them, the pride in our accomplishment can never be taken away.

**What would you rather take pride in:
 things you acquired, your personal spiritual growth,
 or your deeds that benefited others?**

יב וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת יִרְשׁוּ בְּעֵת הַהוּא מֵעַד־עַד אֲשֶׁר־עַל־נַחַל
 יג אֲרָן וְחֵצֵי הַר־הַגִּלְעָד וְעַרְוֵי נְתַתִּי לְרֵאוּבֵנִי וּלְגָדִי: וְיִתֵּר
 הַגִּלְעָד וְכָל־הַבָּשָׂן מִמְּלַכַת עֹזֵג נְתַתִּי לְחֵצֵי שִׁבְט הַמְּנַשֶּׁה כָּל־
 יד חֶבֶל הָאָרֶזֶב לְכָל־הַבָּשָׂן הַהוּא יִקְרָא אֶרֶץ רְפָאִים: יֵאִיר בֶּן־
 מְנַשֶּׁה לָקַח אֶת־כָּל־חֶבֶל אֲרֶזֶב עַד־גְּבוּל הַגִּשּׁוּרִי וְהַמַּעֲכָתִי
 וַיִּקְרָא אֹתָם עַל־שְׁמוֹ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂן חֲוֹת יֵאִיר עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:
 טו וְלִמְכִיר נְתַתִּי אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד: וְלְרֵאוּבֵנִי וּלְגָדִי נְתַתִּי מִן־הַגִּלְעָד
 טז וְעַד־נַחַל אֲרָן תּוֹךְ הַנַּחַל וּגְבֹל וְעַד יַבֵּק הַנַּחַל גְּבוּל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:
 יז וְהָעֲרָבָה וְהַיַּרְדֵּן וּגְבֹל מִכְּנָרַת וְעַד יַם הָעֲרָבָה יַם הַמֶּלַח תַּחַת
 יח אֲשֶׁר־תִּפְסָגָה מִזְרַחָהּ: וְאַצּוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר יְהוָה
 יט לִפְנֵי אַחֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־בְּנֵי־חֵיל: רַק נְשִׁיכֶם וְטַפְכֶם
 כ וּמִקְנֵיכֶם יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־מִקְנֵה רַב לָכֵם יֵשְׁבוּ בְּעַרְיֹכֶם אֲשֶׁר נְתַתִּי
 כא לָכֶם: עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִנַּח יְהוָה לְאַחֵיכֶם כַּכֶּם וַיִּרְשׁוּ גַם־הֵם אֶת־
 כב הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָהֶם בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן וּשְׁבַתָם
 כג אִישׁ לִירֻשָּׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נְתַתִּי לָכֶם: וְאֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ צִוִּיתִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא
 לד לֵאמֹר עֵינֶיךָ הִרְאֵת אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְשְׁנֵי
 הַמַּלְכִּים הָאֵלֶּה בֶּן־יַעֲשָׂה יְהוָה לְכָל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ
 טו עִבֵּר שָׁמָּה: לֹא תִירָאוּם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא הַנִּלְחָם
 לָכֶם:

שביעי

MORE QUICK BITES

- **1:5** Rashi understands verse 5 as hinting that Moshe explained the Torah in seventy languages. That is quite odd, as it is unlikely that the people to whom he spoke understood more than two of them, and most of Deuteronomy focuses on applying the mitzvot to life in the Promised Land. Perhaps Rashi's message is that although the Torah was intended primarily for life in the land of Israel, it was inevitable that some people would be living outside of the land, and that there might be periods in which the majority of the people would be outside of the land. Moshe wanted to make sure that the Torah would serve as a guide no matter where they lived or what language they spoke.
- **1:6** R. Hayyim Cohen, also known as the *Halban*, suggests that Deuteronomy is the book which takes the Torah from the theoretical and drives it into being the essence of the people. It is where the word of God from Horev cuts into the hearts of the people like a sword [*herev*].
- **2:2–8** Twice in this passage Moshe refers to Esav as the brother of *Benei Yisrael*. It would be difficult to find people today who would relate to who the Rabbis consider Esav's spiritual descendants as Israel's brothers. Moshe models an incredible openness of spirit, an ability to look beyond historical tension between people, in an attempt to build a better present and future.
- **2:18–19** Amon and Moav, two of the nations with specially gifted lands, are Lot's children, not Avraham's direct descendants. Moreover, they were born of an illegitimate relationship Lot had with his daughters (see Gen. 19:30–38). You might have thought that these nations would be despised by God, yet God maintains hope even for them. A woman from Moav would eventually become the ancestor of King David (see Ruth 4:17), and a daughter of Amon became the ancestor of all the Judean kings after Shlomo (see I Kings 14:21).

EXPLORING HASHKAFAT

THE NATURE OF DEUTERONOMY

The book of Deuteronomy is known by our Sages as *Mishneh Torah*, literally, a repetition of the Torah. In fact, even a superficial reading reveals that almost all the incidents described by Moshe are already described in detail earlier, and many of the mitzvot listed appear in the previous three books of the Torah. Ramban suggests that the mitzvot are not simply repeated; rather, they are given a new twist in light of the reality that *Benei Yisrael* are about to enter the land. As such, phrases like “the place that God chooses” are found throughout the book, describing where sacrifices happen, where the festivals are to be celebrated, and more.

R. Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (*Netziv*) takes issue with Ramban, noting that Deuteronomy includes many mitzvot which seem to have nothing to do at all with entering the land, such as those regarding marriage, divorce, *yibum*, sending away the mother bird, and many more. He suggests that Deuteronomy represents

the first layer of learning the Torah – the repetitions add new layers of meaning; the nuances add moral-ethical-spiritual dimensions that weren’t apparent in their earlier meanings. *Mishneh Torah* is not about receiving the Torah but about studying it, finding new layers of meaning, and understanding how to apply it to our lives in ever-changing ways.

Indeed, there are many, including Rav Kook and other great thinkers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, who have referred to Deuteronomy as the beginning of the Oral Torah, the shifting of the focus from God’s commands to *Benei Yisrael’s* understanding, interpretation, and internalization of those commands. The differences we find between Deuteronomy and the earlier books represent the beginning of the process of bridging between God’s word, perfect and sublime, and the imperfect people whose lives it is designed to guide and uplift.