

Parsha Paths:

Devarim: The Next Stage

Setting the Scene

These are the words that Moses addressed to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan.—Through the wilderness, in the Arabah near Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab, it is eleven days from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by the Mount Seir route.— It was in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses addressed the Israelites in accordance with the instructions that GOD had given him for them, (Devarim 1)

Caleb and His Inheritance

וְזֵלֹתִי כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה הוּא יִרְאֶנָּה וְלֹא־אֶתֶּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דָּרַרְתָּהּ וְלִבִּי יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר מָלֵא אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה:
none except Caleb son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his descendants will I give the land on which he set foot, because he remained loyal to GOD.— (Devarim 1:36)

There was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel. The man was very wealthy; he owned three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. At the time, he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful, but the man, a Calebite, was harsh and an evildoer (Samuel I 25:2-3)

Rashi: **A Calebite.** Of the house of Caleb

The Judahites approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know what instructions God gave at Kadesh-barnea to Moses, the agent of God, concerning you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of God sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I gave him a forthright report. While my companions who went up with me took the heart out of the people, I was loyal to my Eternal God. On that day, Moses promised on oath, 'The land on which your foot trod shall be a portion for you and your descendants forever, because you were loyal to my Eternal God.' Now GOD has preserved me, just as promised. It is forty-five years since GOD made this promise to Moses, when Israel was journeying through the wilderness; and here I am today, eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as on the day that Moses sent me; my strength is the same now as it was then, for battle and for activity. So assign to me this hill country as GOD promised on that day. Though you too heard on that day that Anakites are there and great fortified cities, if only GOD is with me, I will dispossess them, as GOD promised." So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and assigned Hebron to him as his portion. Thus Hebron became the portion of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, as it still is,

because he was loyal to the ETERNAL, the God of Israel.— The name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba: [Arba] was the great man among the Anakites. (Joshua 14)

From there they marched against the inhabitants of Debir (the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher). And Caleb announced, “I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher.” His younger brother, Othniel the Kenizzite, captured it; and Caleb gave him his daughter YiAchsah in marriage. (Judges 1)

Hermon: Eyes on the Prize

צִידָנִים יִקְרְאוּ לְחֶרְמוֹן שֶׁרִין וְהָאֲמֹרִי יִקְרְאוּ־לּוֹ שֵׁנִיר:

Sidonians called Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir— (Devarim 3:9)

Onkelos צִידָנָי קִרְאָן לְחֶרְמוֹן סִרִּין וְאֲמֹרָאִי קִרְאָן לֵיה טוֹר תִּלְגָּא:

And because it is a mountain of snow, also on account of its frigid temperature causing it to be bleak [and unapproachable], it is called Hermon [from the word *cherem* — “banned”], this being a surname of the mountain. (Ramban)

from Aroer on the banks of the wadi Arnon, as far as Mount Sion, that is, Hermon; (Devarim 4:48)

From Lebanon come with me;
From Lebanon, my bride, with me!
Trip down from Amana’s peak,
From the peak of Senir and Hermon,
From the dens of lions,
From the hills of leopards. (Song of Songs 4:8)

God’s voice breaks cedars;
God shatters the cedars of Lebanon—

making Lebanon skip like a calf,
Sirion, like a young wild ox. (Tehillim 29:5-6)

Refaim: Giants or Ghosts?

רְפָאִים יִחְשְׁבוּ אֶפְרָהִם כְּעַנְקִיִּים וְהַמֹּאבִּים יִקְרְאוּ לָהֶם אֱמִים:

Like the Anakites, they are counted as Rephaim; but the Moabites call them Emim. (Devarim 2:11)

It, too, is counted as Rephaim country. It was formerly inhabited by Rephaim, whom the Ammonites call Zamzummim, (Devarim 2:20)

In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh-kiriathaim, (Bereshit 14:5)

The boundary then ran up to the top of the hill that flanks the Valley of Hinnom on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim (Joshua 15:8)

Three of the thirty chiefs went down to the rock to David, at the cave of Adullam, while a force of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. (Divrei HaYamim I 11:15)

Yiftach and Historic Justice

Yiftach then sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, “What have you against me that you have come to make war on my country?”

The king of the Ammonites replied to Jephthah’s messengers, “When Israel came from Egypt, they seized the land that is mine, from the Arnon to the Jabbok as far as the Jordan. Now, then, restore it peaceably.” Yiftach again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites. He said to him, “Thus said Yiftach: Israel did not seize the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. When they left Egypt, Israel traveled through the wilderness to the Sea of Reeds and went on to Kadesh. . . .” Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon. Israel said to him, ‘Allow us to cross through your country to our homeland.’ But Sihon would not trust Israel to pass through his territory. Sihon mustered all his troops, and they encamped at Jahaz; he engaged Israel in battle. But the Eternal, the God of Israel, delivered Sihon and all his troops into Israel’s hands, and they defeated them; and Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that land. . . . Do you not hold what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we will hold on to everything that the Eternal our God has given us to possess (Judges 11)

What is an Emori?

פָּנוּ | וּסְעוּ לָכֶם וּבָאוּ הָרַ הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶל-כָּל-שְׂכֵנֵי בְעֶרְבָה בְּהָר וּבְשִׁפְלָה וּבְנֶגֶב וּבְחֹף הַיָּם אֶרֶץ
הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַלְבָּנוֹן עַד-הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר-פָּרָת:

Start out and make your way to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Shephelah, the Negeb, the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and the Lebanon, as far as the Great River, the river Euphrates. (Devarim 1:7)

Thus we seized, at that time, from the two Amorite kings, the country beyond the Jordan, from the wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon— (Devarim 3:8)

When the Eternal your God brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess, and dislodges many nations before you—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations much larger than you— (Devarim 7:1)

MISHNA: One may go out on Shabbat with a locust egg, and with a fox tooth, and with a nail from the crucified, for the purpose of healing; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. The Rabbis prohibit using these remedies even during the week, due to the prohibition of following the ways of the Amorite.” (Shabbat 67a)

You must be wholehearted תמים with the Eternal your God” (Devarim 18:13)

The Bashan and the Cows

וַנֵּפֶן וְנָעַל דֶּרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עוֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרָאתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל-עָמּוֹ לְמִלְחָמָה אֲדָרְעִי:

We made our way up the road toward Bashan, and King Og of Bashan with all his troops took the field against us at Edrei. (Devarim 3:1)

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan
On the hill of Samaria—
Who defraud the poor,
Who rob the needy;
Who say to your husbands,
“Bring, and let’s carouse!” (Amos 4:1)

Many bulls surround me,
mighty ones of Bashan encircle me. (Tehillim 22:13)

Og’s Finger

כִּי רָקַע־עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן נִשְׁאַר־מִיָּתֵר הַרְפָּאִים הִנֵּה עֶרְשׁוֹ עֶרֶשׁ בְּרָזֶל הָלָה הוּא בְּרִבְתּוֹ בְּנִי עֲמֹן תִּשָּׁע אֲמֹת אֲרָכָה וְאַרְבַּע אֲמֹת רָחְבָּהּ בְּאֶמֶת-אִישׁ:

Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaim. His bedstead, an iron bedstead, is now in Rabbah of the Ammonites; it is nine cubits long and four cubits wide, by the standard cubit: (Devarim 3:11)

Rabbi Yehuda ben Rabbi Simon said: “A great feast” – a feast of all the great people; Og and all the great men were there. They said to Og: ‘Did you not used to say: Abraham is a like barren mule and cannot beget a child?’ He said to them: ‘Now, what is his gift [Isaac], is it not puny? If I place my finger on him I could crush him.’ The Holy One blessed be He said to him: ‘Why are you disparaging his gift? By your life, you will [live to] see thousands upon thousands and myriads upon myriads emerging from his grandchildren, but that man [you, Og] will meet his end only by his hand,’ as it is stated: “The Lord said to Moses: Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand...” (Numbers 21:34). (Bereshit Rabba 53:10)