

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES



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Parashat Devarim is the beginning of a new *sefer* (book) of the Torah, and it sets the stage for everything that follows. Much of *Sefer Devarim* is a retelling of earlier events that the Jewish people experienced – but this time, they are told from Moshe's (Moses) perspective rather than directly from God.

The perspective Moshe gives on the past 38 years in the

desert – when the Jewish people were journeying from slavery to freedom, both physically and spiritually – is very different from the more straightforward way these events were originally presented. Moshe speaks more personally and openly. He is not afraid to challenge or even criticise the people, pushing them to reflect on their actions and take responsibility for their choices.

A key part of the *parasha* is the story of the spies who were sent to explore the Land of Israel. When they returned, most of them gave a negative report, and the people chose to believe them instead of the minority who spoke

positively. This led to fear, lack of trust, and ultimately serious consequences. Moshe retells this story to remind the new generation of what went wrong and to encourage them not to repeat the same mistakes.

As modern Jews, we can learn an important lesson from this. We all face challenges, and it's not always easy to have faith in God. But our history shows us that faith and trust have helped our people survive and grow for thousands of years. If we learn from past mistakes – and also from past successes – we can make better choices and build a stronger future.

Finish these sentences:

- One thing I can learn from Moshe in this *parasha* is...
- When everyone around me thinks one way, I can...
- One lesson from the story of the spies is...
- If I had been there, I think I would have...
- One message I would give to my friends about this *parasha* is...
- Being a leader means...
- Courage is when...
- The Jewish people could have acted differently by...
- A positive way to look at a difficult situation is...

