



# THE HEBREW KEY

## #10 – The Most Cowardly Word

דבר  
(*davar*)  
“word / report”

דבש  
(*davash*)  
“honey”

דבת  
(*davat*)  
“evil report”

ד ב ד = “report”  
ש ב ד = “honey”  
ת ב ד = “evil report”

### Numbers 13:26-32

... They brought back **word** to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup> And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and **honey**, and this is its fruit. <sup>28</sup> But, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.” <sup>30</sup> Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” <sup>31</sup> Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup> So they brought to the people of Israel a **bad report** of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. “

### Numbers 13:28

“**But**, the people who dwell in the land are strong...”

אפס  
(*ephes*)  
“however, but” / “zero, nothing”

## Comments on אָפֶס:

*“Such is the way of those who speak malicious speech, they open their words with good and they conclude with evil.”* (Bamidbar Rabbah 16.17)

*“All is nothing, loses all value to us, for the people are too strong for us.”* (R' S.R. Hirsch)

*“It was completely appropriate for them to say that ‘the people who dwell in it are powerful and the cities are fortified’ for they were expected to answer words of truth to the one who sent them, for, after all, this is what [Moses] commanded them to explore. However, their iniquity was in using the word אָפֶס.”* (Ramban)

*“Without that word [אָפֶס], Jewish history would have been entirely different.”* (R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik)

אָפֶס = 141 = ינאף

(*ynaph*)

“commits adultery”

## Luke 21:26

... men ready to die through fear and expectation of what is coming on the habitable earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

## Proverbs 31:25

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the future.

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## REFERENCES:

**1<sup>st</sup> apps - Genesis 47:15-16** And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone [אָפֶס, *ephes*].” And Joseph answered, “Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone [אָפֶס, *ephes*].”

**Isaiah 5:8** Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more [אָפֶס, *ephes*] room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.

**Isaiah 34:12** ... there is no one there to call it a kingdom, and all its princes shall be nothing [אָפֶס, *ephes*].

**Isaiah 45:6** That people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none [אָפֶס, *ephes*] besides Me. I am Adonai, and there is no other.”

**Leviticus 20:10** If a man commits adultery [ינאף, *ynaph*] with the wife of his neighbor, both the one who commits adultery [ינאף, *ynaph*] and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.