



The Israelites got the water they were desperate for but not exactly the way they wanted it: “Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, ‘Listen, *you rebels*, shall we get water for you out of this rock?’” (Num. 20:10). Moses, perhaps stabbed with a grief unacknowledged and lacking patience for more grumbling, did not merely speak to the rock. He did not only hit the rock with his rod. He called the people – his people – rebels (*hamorim*).

Rashi explains the word as “foolish people.” Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra similarly writes that their request was farfetched, prompting Moses and