

¹⁻¹These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the wilderness east of the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. ²(It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.) ³In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. ⁴This was after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and at Edrei had defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. ⁵East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying: **“The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. ⁷Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates.** ⁸See, **I have given you this land** . Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.”

1. אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים—*These are the words. Deuteronomy*, the fifth Book of the Torah is referred *מִשְׁנֵה תּוֹרָה*, *the repetition of the Torah*, because it contains elements of the four previous Books. *Vilna Gaon*¹ states that Genesis, the first Book, is the foundation of the entire Torah and so its spirit permeates each of the other Books. The next three Books are *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. The message of each is reviewed in the three major addresses to Israel that form the Book of *Deuteronomy*. These three addresses are alluded to here in the introductory verses.²

These are the words, refers to the first address, which contains exhortations and reprimands that begin with v. 6 and continue to the Ten Commandments in Chapter 5. The inspiration for this address was derived from the Exodus and the related experiences of the people.

When Moses spoke to the Children of Israel according to everything that Hashem commanded him to them (v. 3), refers to the second address, a detailing of the Laws of the Torah, beginning with the Ten Commandments and extending to the words: *You shall inscribe on the stones all the words of this Torah, well clarified* (27:3).

The words *בְּאֵר הַיֵּטֵב*, *well clarified* (27:8) are a signal that the third address is about to begin, alluded to by the words here in v. 5, *הוֹאִיל הַזֶּאת*, *Moses began explaining this Torah*. The principle message of this third address is contained in the specifics of the blessings and rewards lying in store for those who observe it and in the punishments and curses that may be expected by those who do not (*Aderet Eliyahu* [“Mantle of Elijah”]).

2. אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה—*That Moses spoke*. Although the structure of Deuteronomy can be readily visualized with the aid of *Vilna Gaon*'s insight, discussed above, the various degrees of Divine inspiration that guided Moses in presenting these three addresses present some difficulty ...

Nevertheless, *Rambam* stresses that anyone who claims Moses spoke even a single word of the Torah on his own is a heretic (*Hil. Teshuvah* [Laws of Repentance] 3:8) To be sure, Moses had reached such a high level of Divine inspiration that it encompassed him and enabled him to speak Hashem's words as His messenger (*Rashi to Megillah* 31b).

R' *Bachya* notes that the familiar expression, *וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה*, *Hashem spoke to Moses, saying*, does not appear in *Deuteronomy*. That phrase, **which we find missing here**, speaks of God using the Name Hashem, symbolically referring to His attribute of mercy. Instead, that Name is combined throughout *Deuteronomy* with His Name of Strict Justice in the phrase *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ*, *Hashem your God*. **This mirrors the general tone of admonition and warning to be found throughout the fifth Book of the Torah.**

It is also worthy of note that the previous three Books of the Torah begin with the letter *vav*, meaning *and*, whereas *Deuteronomy begins without it*. This indicates that Deuteronomy is not tied to the past, although the past nonetheless belongs to it.

a. **The traditional view (of inspiration) is that the Pentateuch in its entirety emanated from God, every verse and letter being consequently inspired**; hence the tannaitic statement that “he who says the Torah is not from Heaven is a heretic, a despiser of the Word of God, one who has no share in the world to come” (*Sanh. xi. 1; ib. Gemara, 99a*) is expressly explained to include any one that says the whole Torah emanates from God with the exception of one

1 Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, (1720-1797), also known as HaGra (“HaGaon Rabbenu Eliyahu [“The sage, our teacher, Elijah”]) was a Talmudist, halakhist, kabbalist, and the foremost leader of (non-hasidic) Jewry of the past few centuries.

2 Rabbi Elie Munk, *The Call of the Torah, Deuteronomy*, (Mesorah Publications, Ltd.), pp. 2-14.

verse, which Moses added on his own responsibility, or any one that finds verses like Gen. xxxvi. 12 and 22 too trivial to assign to them a divine origin (Shab. 99a, b) ... **Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch at God's dictation, even, according to R. Simeon, the last eight verses, relating to his own death** (B. B. 14b). On the other hand, some held that the curses in Lev. xxvi. were pronounced by "the mouth of the Divine Power," **whereas those in Deut. xxviii., by Moses, were of his own prompting** (Meg. 31b; but see Tosafot, "this does not exclude divine inspiration"). **Every letter of the Torah was fixed by the Masorah and counted by the Soferim** (Kid. 30a), and on each particle, such as "et," "ve," "gam," "af" ("and" or "also"), were based important laws (Pes. 22b; Sanh. 70a) ... R. Ishmael said to R. Meir while the latter was occupied with the professional work of a scribe, "*Be on thy guard concerning thy sacred task, for if you omit or add one single letter to the Law you destroy the whole world*" (Er. 12b). **This whole view of plenary inspiration was in the main ... ([but] includes the Prophets and Hagiographa) strictly held only in regard to the five books of Moses—the Torah. Upon the absolute completeness of the Torah rested the fundamental rabbinical principle, "No prophet after Moses was allowed to change anything in the Law"** (Shab. 104a; Yoma 80a; Meg. 2b; based upon Lev. xxvii. 34 or Num. xxxvi. 13). **Whatever is written in the other holy writings must therefore, somewhere or somehow, have been alluded to in the Torah** (Ta'an. 9a) ... All the canonical books are "kitbe kodesh" = holy writings" (Shab. xvi. 1), and were read at divine the service as the divinely inspired Word ("Mikra" = "the recited Word of God"). **The prophetic and hagiographic books are implicitly included in the Torah** (Tan., Re'ch, ed. Buber, p. 1), **but the Torah is the standard by which their value or holiness is judged and gaged** (see Shab. 13b, 30b; Meg. 7a; Ab. R. N. i.; Tos. Meg. iv. 19; Yer. Meg. iv. 73d). **The final composition as well as the writing of the Hagiographa was ascribed to the "men of the Great Synagogue," who also were regarded as working under the influence of the Holy, or prophetic, Spirit, having among them the last of the Prophets** (B. B. 15a; see Synagogue, Great).³

- b. The word *inspiration* comes by way of Latin Vulgate and the King James English translations of the Greek word θεοπνευστος (theopneustos, lit., "God-breathed") found in 2Timothy 3:16-17:⁴

¹⁶**All scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

- 1) By inspiration in this sense is meant that operation of the Holy Spirit by which the prophets of Israel were enabled to utter the word of God. **The vocabulary was theirs; the message was his.**⁵
- 2) The term "Scripture" is here used in a special sense, referring to the canonical writings of the (Hebrew Bible). It was Paul's belief that the (Hebrew Bible) had come from God, that (it was) literally *God-breathed*.⁶

c. Hebrews 3:7-11

⁷So, **as the Holy Spirit says**: "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. ¹⁰That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' ¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'" (Psa 95:7-11).

d. Hebrews 9:6-12

⁶When everything (in the Tabernacle) had been arranged like (it was intended to be), the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. ⁷But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. ⁸**The Holy Spirit was showing by this** that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning ...

¹¹But when Messiah came as high priest **of the good things that are now already here**, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, **is not a part of this creation**. ¹²He ... he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption ... ¹⁴so that we may serve the living God!

e. 2Peter 1:19-21

¹⁹We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that **no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own**

³ <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8126-inspiration>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_inspiration

5 F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, (InterVarsity Press), p. 264.

6 Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, (Baker Books), pp. 201-202.

interpretation of things. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- 1) The ... writers (of the Hebrew Bible), Peter said, did not invent or devise the messages of their books. What each of them said and wrote was due to an influence outside themselves: **they spoke from God as the Holy Spirit guided them**. Each of these passages (2Pet 1:19-21 and 2Tim 3:16 above) plainly affirms that the (Hebrew Bible) is of divine origin.⁷
- f. When the (Apostolic) writings were later included with the (Hebrew Bible) as part of “all scripture,” it was natural to conclude that they too were “inspired by God.” That they were (and are) so inspired is not to be denied, **but most of the (Apostolic) writers do not base their authority on divine inspiration**.⁸
 - 1) Only one of the (Apostolic) writers expressly bases the authority of what he says on prophetic inspiration. The Apocalypse is called “the book of this prophecy” (e.g., Rev 22:19); **the author implies that his words are inspired by the same Spirit of prophecy as spoke through the prophets of earlier day: it is in their succession that he stands** (Rev 22:9).⁹
 - a) Revelation 2:7, 11, 17 (cf., 2:29; 3:6, 13, 22)
⁷Whoever has ears, **let them hear what the Spirit says to the (k’hilot)**. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God ...
¹¹Whoever has ears, **let them hear what the Spirit says to the (k’hilot)**. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death ... ¹⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the (k’hilot). To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.
 - 2) Paul, for example, claims to have “the mind of (Messiah)”; his gospel preaching, he says, was attended by “demonstration of the Spirit” (which was the secret of its effectiveness), and his instruction was imparted “in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit” (1Cor. 2:14-16). But when he needs to assert his authority—authority “for building up and not for tearing down” (2Cor 13:10)—**he rests it on the apostolic commission which he had received from (Yeshua)**. In his exercise of this authority, he told the Corinthian (disciples), they

would find proof which they demanded “that (**Messiah**) is speaking in me” (2Cor 13:3).

John ... implies, by his report of the Lord’s promises regarding the Paraclete (Advocate, Helper) ... that he himself in his witness experiences the Spirit’s guidance “into all truth” as he brings to the disciples remembrance what the Lord had said and makes its meaning plain (Jn 14:26; 16:12-15). Luke, for his part, claims no more than to give a reliable account of his twofold work, based on eyewitness testimony and on his own participation in the course of events which he narrates (Lk 1:1-4) ... As for Mark, the tradition that his record is based (in part at least) on the preaching of Peter may have a foundation in fact, but no appeal is made to Peter’s authority in the course of the record. Neither is any appeal made to divine inspiration.¹⁰

3. אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל—*To all Israel*. These words were spoken to the entire people because they contained a message of reproach and so it would have been humiliating for the words to be addressed to individuals. Moreover, they were said unto all Israel so that no one could claim that had he been present, he would have answered back. Furthermore, they were spoken only after recent victories had occurred, so that the people would not accuse Moses of being frustrated by failure (*Rashi* and *Midrashim*).
For *Sifre*, the words *to all Israel* demonstrate that all Jews were then able to take criticism. Reference is made to the Talmud (*Arachin* 16b), in which R’ Tarfon casts doubt on the ability of his generation to accept reprimand; R’ Eleazar ben Azarya doubted their ability to give reprimands; but R’ Yochanan declared: I call Heaven and Earth to witness that I have often scolded R’ Akiva ben Yosef before R’ Gamliel, and he only appreciated me more because of it, as it is stated (Proverbs 9:8): *Reprove not a scorner lest he hate you; **reprove a wise man and he will love you***.
 - a. Leviticus 19:17-18
¹⁷”Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. **Rebuke your neighbor frankly** so you will not share in their guilt. ¹⁸”Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself**. I am the LORD.
 - 1) הוֹכִיחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיתְךָ—*Reprove your fellow*. (This duty is subject to certain restrictions, summarized in the *Shulchan Aruch*

⁷ Ibid., p. 202.

⁸ Bruce, *The Canon*— p. 265.

⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 265-266.

(*Choshen Mishpat* ["Breastplate of Judgment"] 228), which are based

on Talmudic discussions in *Arachin* 16b and *Bava Metzia* 58b.]

The two parts of this verse complement each other: do not hate your brother in your heart, but do reprove him instead. [Or, **reprove your neighbor only when you no longer feel hatred toward him; reproaches must be uttered out of love, not ill-will**].

According to *Malbim*, the three main conditions of the duty to correct one's neighbor are: **irreproachable conduct of the one who will give the reproach, a proper state of mind of the one who is to be reproached, and a style of reproach which does not shame another in public**.

a) Matthew 7:1-5

¹"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

2) וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטָא—*And do not bear a sin because of him*.

This phrase is not an independent statement, but a condition: reproach your neighbor, but do it so that you do not bear sin because of it (*Rashi*) **The sin would be brought about by reprimanding him in public**. Based on this prohibition, R' Eliezer Papo writes that nowadays people no longer accept being scolded when they act badly. It is therefore the duty of the one going to preach in public not to lecture his audience in harsh and bitter terms which will arouse resentment. **It is more appropriate to speak to the sinner in private and admonish him in polite and gentle terms** (*Sefer Pele Yoetz* [Book of Wonder Advisor]).

R' Yisroel Meir HaKohen (1838-1933) of *Radin* said to his students: "When you become rabbis to the Jewish people, it is important that you not rebuke your congregation with harsh words, for such words will not re-echo in their hearts, which are grown heavy with cares. First of all, explain the seriousness of the prohibition in question and make them understand what Hashem expects of us. That will be much more useful than the strong language preferred by most preachers, words that no one

takes to heart" (*Chofetz Chaim* ["Desirer of Life"] *Al HaTorah* ["On the Torah"], *Sidrah Ki Sisa*).

R' Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821) writes that the person who does not know how to exhort with mildness is exempt from the duty of תּוֹכְחָה, *reprimanding the sinner* (*Orchos Chaim* ["Lifestyles"] 143).

However, according to *Ramban* [following *Onkelos*], this verse comes to teach us something else: whoever neglects to reprimand his fellow man *bears his sin with him* because of the principle of עֲרֻבוּת, *mutual accountability*, in which all members of the community share responsibility for each other's moral behavior. In his commentary to 26:37, *Rashi* notes this principle. He interprets the phrase they will stumble over one another to mean, they will stumble because of each other's sins, for all the people of Israel are responsible for one another. By neglecting to help another return to the right path, one becomes an accomplice to his sin.

a) Matthew 18:15

¹⁵"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, **just between the two of you**. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

b) 1 John 2:9

⁹Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.

c) Luke 17:3

³So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.

d) Galatians 6:1

¹Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should **restore that person gently**. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

4. (v. 2) אֶחָד עָשָׂר יָמִים—*Eleven days. Eleven days journey versus forty*

years in the desert—the contrast between this verse and the next is meant to teach Israel the seriousness of its sins ...

5. (v. 6) הָיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ—*HASHEM, our God. This is the first time that this*

expression is used in the Torah. It will recur more than twenty times. This designation of Hashem bespeaks an intimacy based on a reciprocal love between Hashem and Israel. No term has done as much to encourage devotion and piety.

7. (v. 7) עַד־הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה—*Until the great river, the Euphrates River.*

R' Hirsch comments that Moses is specifying the borders of the Promised Land. However, a careful reading shows that **the land area designated here is much larger than what they would actually possess**. For example, this verse refers to all of the present state of Jordan up to the banks of the Euphrates, whereas in reality only a part of that land was annexed to the land of Israel. **According to tradition, the decrease in area was probably fixed after the sin of the spies**, which Moses mentions at the end of the second chapter of Deuteronomy.



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