

Me, Myself, and Moshe – Devarim's New Narrator

Source Sheet by Mark Glass

I. Moshe as "Primary Author"

דברים א':א'

(א) אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בַּמִּדְבָּר
בְּעָרְבָה מֹל סוּף בֵּין-פָּאֲרָן וּבֵין-תְּפֵל וְלִבְנֵי וַחֲצֹרֹת וְדִי זָהָב:

Deuteronomy 1:1

(1) 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,

רמב"ן על דברים א':א'

והנה הזכיר בכאן שני דברים אמר שדבר משה אל בני ישראל "ככל אשר צוה ה' אותו אליהם" – וזה רמז אל המצות שיאמר להם בספר הזה שלא נזכרו עד הנה בתורה.
ואמר שהם "ככל אשר צוה אותו השם" לא הוסיף ולא גרע על מה שנצטווה. והזכיר זה בעבור שלא אמר בהם "וידבר ה' אל משה" ולכן כלל אותם עתה שהם כולם ככל אשר נצטווה מפי הקב"ה.

Ramban on Deuteronomy 1:1

Thus Scripture mentioned two things here. [The first thing is:] it stated *that Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, according to all that the Eternal had commanded him for them*, this being an allusion to the commandments which he would tell them in this book that have not been mentioned thus far in the

Torah.

And it says that these commandments were exactly as G-d commanded him; he did not add to, or subtract from what he had been commanded. It was necessary that this be stated because Scripture does not state of them “And the Eternal spoke unto Moses;” therefore it included them now, [emphasizing] that they were all according to what he was commanded from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He.

אברבנאל על תורה, דברים א':א'

כי משה מעצמו דבר אותם, וראתה החכמה האלהית יתברך לצוות שיכתבו על ספר כשאר חלקי התורה.

Abarbanel on Torah, Deuteronomy 1:1

Because Moses himself spoke these words, and the Divine Wisdom, may it be blessed, saw fit to command that it be written as a book along with the other parts of the Torah.

מגילה ל"א ב

בְּתַעֲנִיּוֹת בְּרֻכּוֹת וּקְלָלוֹת, וְאִין מִפְּסִיקִין בְּקְלָלוֹת. מִנָּא הָיִי מִיָּלִי? ... אָמַר אַבְיִי: לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא בְּקְלָלוֹת שֶׁבְּתוֹרַת כְּהֻנִּים, אֲבָל קְלָלוֹת שֶׁבְּמִשְׁנֵה תוֹרַה — פּוֹסֵק. מֵאִי טַעְמָא — הִלְלוּ בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבִּים אֲמִוּרוֹת, וּמִשָּׁה מִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה אֲמָרוֹן, וְהִלְלוּ בְּלִשׁוֹן יְחִיד אֲמִוּרוֹת, וּמִשָּׁה מִפִּי עֲצֻמוֹ אֲמָרוֹן.

Megillah 31b

The mishna states: **On fast days** the congregation reads the portion of **blessings and curses** (Leviticus, chapter 16), **and one may not interrupt** the reading of the **curses** by having two different people read them. Rather, one person reads all of them. The Gemara asks: **From where are these matters derived? ... Abaye said: They taught this only with regard to the curses that are recorded in Leviticus, but with regard to the curses that are recorded in Deuteronomy, one may interrupt** them by having two different people

read them. **What is the reason** for this distinction? **These** curses in Leviticus **are stated in the plural, and Moses pronounced them from the mouth of the Almighty.** As such, they are more severe. However, **these** curses in Deuteronomy **are stated in the singular, and Moses said them on his own.**

II. Moshe as Narrator

בראשית א'א'

(א) בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

Genesis 1:1

(1) When God began to create heaven and earth—

a. Moshe: Me, Myself, and I

דברים א'א'-ו'

(א) אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בַּמִּדְבָּר
בְּעַרְבֵהּ מִלִּל סוּף בֵּין-פָּאֲרָן וּבֵין-תַּפֵּל וְלִבְנֵי וַחֲצֹרֹת וְדִי זָהָב: (ב) אַחַד עָשָׂר יוֹם
מִחֲלֹב דֶּרֶךְ הַר-שַׁעִיר עַד קִדְשׁ בְּרִנְעַ: (ג) וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּעַשְׁתֵּי-עָשָׂר
חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶתְּךָ אֱלֹהִים:
(ד) אַחֲרַי הִכְתוּ אֶת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶת עֹג מֶלֶךְ
הַכְּשִׁין אֲשֶׁר-יוֹשֵׁב בְּעַשְׁתָּרֹת בְּאֲדָרְעִי: (ה) בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל
מִשָּׁה בְּאֶר אֶת-הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר: (ו) ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ דִּבֶּר אֵלֵינוּ בְּחֹרֵב לֵאמֹר
רַב-לָכֶם שָׁבֹת בְּהַר הַזֶּה:

Deuteronomy 1:1-6

(1) 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, (2) it is eleven days from

Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by the Mount Seir route. — (3) 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 ה' had given him for them, (4) after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth [and] Edrei. (5) On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, **Moses undertook to expound this Teaching. He said:** (6) The LORD our God **spoke to us** at Horeb, saying: You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

דברים א':ט'

(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא־אוּכַל לְבַדִּי שְׂאֵת אֶתְכֶם:

Deuteronomy 1:9

(9) Thereupon **I said to you**, "I cannot bear the burden of you by myself.

דברים ב':ב'

(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

Deuteronomy 2:2

(2) Then the LORD said to me:

b. Yitro Erased

שמות י"ח:י"ג-כ"ד

(יג) וַיְהִי מִמְּחֻרָת וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה לְשַׁפֵּט אֶת־הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם עַל־מִשְׁהַ מֶן־הַבְּקָר עַד־הָעָרֶב: (יד) וַיֵּרָא חֵתָן מִשְׁהַ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה לָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה לָעָם מִדּוֹעַ אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב לְבַדְּךָ וְכָל־הָעָם נֹצֵב עָלֶיךָ מִן־בְּקָר עַד־עָרֶב: ... (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר חֵתָן מִשְׁהַ אֵלַי לֹא־טוֹב הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר

אֲתָהּ עֹשֶׂה: (יח) נִבְּל תִּבֹּל גַּם־אֲתָהּ גַּם־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עִמָּךְ כִּי־כַבֵּד מִמָּךְ
הִדְבַּר לֹא־תִוְכַל עֲשֹׂהוּ לְבִדְדֶךָ: (יט) עֲתָהּ שָׁמַע בְּקִלִּי אִיעֲצָךְ וַיְהִי אֱלֹקִים עִמָּךְ
וַיְהִי אֲתָהּ לָעָם מֹוֹל הָאֱלֹקִים וַהֲבֵאתָ אֲתָהּ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֶל־הָאֱלֹקִים: (כ)
וְהִזְהַרְתָּה אֶתְהֶם אֶת־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־הַתּוֹרֹת וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ יִלְכוּ בָּהּ
וְאֶת־הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן: (כא) וְאֲתָהּ תִּחְזֶה מִכָּל־הָעָם אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִּל יִרְאִי
אֱלֹקִים אַנְשֵׁי אִמַּת שְׂנָאִי בַצַּע וְשָׁמַתָּ עֲלֵהֶם שָׂרֵי אֱלָפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי
חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֵת: (כב) וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם בְּכֹל־עֵת וְהָיָה כָּל־הַדְּבָר הַגָּדֹל
יָבִיאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְכֹל־הַדְּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפָּטוּ־הֵם וְהָקֵל מֵעֲלֶיךָ וַנִּשְׂאוּ אֲתָךְ: (כג) אִם
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה תַעֲשֶׂה וְצִוִּיתָ אֱלֹקִים וַיִּכְלַת עִמָּךְ וְגַם כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה עַל־מִקְוָם
יָבֹא בְשָׁלוֹם: (כד) וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה לְקוֹל חֲתָנֹו וַיַּעַשׂ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר אָמַר:

Exodus 18:13-24

(13) Next day, Moses sat as magistrate among the people, while the people stood about Moses from morning until evening. (14) But when Moses' father-in-law saw how much he had to do for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you act alone, while all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" ... (17) But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing you are doing is not right; (18) you will surely wear yourself out, and these people as well. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. (19) Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You represent the people before God: you bring the disputes before God, (20) and enjoin upon them the laws and the teachings, and make known to them the way they are to go and the practices they are to follow. (21) You shall also seek out, from among all the people, **capable individuals who fear God—trustworthy ones who spurn ill-gotten gain.** Set these over them as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and (22) **let them judge the people** at all times. Have them bring every major dispute to you, but let them decide every minor dispute themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them share the burden with you. (23) If you do this—and God so commands you—you will be able to bear up; and all these people too will go home unwearied." (24) Moses heeded his father-in-law and did just as he had said.

(ט) וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא־אוּכַל לִבְדִּי שְׂאת אֶתְכֶם: (י) ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם הִרְבָּה אֶתְכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב: (יא) ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲבוֹתְכֶם יִסֹּף עֲלֵיכֶם כָּכֶם אֶלֶף פְּעָמִים וַיְבַרְךָ אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם: (יב) אִיכָּה אֲשָׂא לְבַדִּי טְרַחְכֶם וּמִשְׂאֲכֶם וְרִיבְכֶם: (יג) הִבּוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְנִבְנִים וַיִּדְעוּם לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאֲשִׁימֶם בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶם: (יד) וְתַעֲנֵנּוּ אֹתִי וְתֹאמְרוּ טוֹב־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: (טו) וְאָקַח אֶת־רָאשֵׁי שִׁבְטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וַיִּדְעוּם וְאֶתְּנֵן אוֹתָם רָאשִׁים עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְשְׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשְׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֹת וְשֹׁטְרִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם: (טז) וְאַצִּיֵּה אֶת־שַׁפְטֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא־אֶמַר שְׁמַע בֵּין־אֲחֵיכֶם וְשִׁפְטֵתֶם צְדָק בֵּין־אִישׁ וּבֵין־אָחִיו וּבֵין־גֵּרוֹ: (יז) לֹא־תִפְּלוּ פְּנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בַּקֶּטָן בְּגַדְלֵי־תִשְׁמְעוּן לֹא תִגְּרוּ מִפְּנֵי־אִישׁ כִּי הַמִּשְׁפָּט לְאֱלֹקִים הוּא וְהַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּיו: (יח) וְאַצִּיֵּה אֶתְכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן:

Deuteronomy 1:9-18

(9) Thereupon I said to you, "I cannot bear the burden of you by myself. (10) The LORD has multiplied you until you are today as numerous as the stars in the sky.— (11) May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase your numbers a thousandfold, and bless you as promised.— (12) **How can I bear unaided the trouble of you, and the burden, and the bickering!** (13) Pick from each of your tribes candidates who are **wise, discerning, and experienced**, and I will appoint them as your heads." (14) You answered me and said, "What you propose to do is good." (15) So I took your tribal leaders, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you: chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens, **and officials for your tribes.** (16) I charged your magistrates at that time as follows, "Hear out your fellow Israelites, and decide justly between one party and the other— be it a fellow Israelite or a stranger. (17) You shall not be partial in judgment: hear out low and high alike. Fear neither party, for judgment is God's. And any matter that is too difficult for you, you shall bring to me and I will hear it." (18) Thus I instructed you, at that time, about the various things that you should do.

c. Who Gave the Orders?

במדבר י"ג:א-ג'

(א) וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (ב) שְׁלַח־לְךָ אַנְשִׁים וַיִּתְרוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן
אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְמִטַּה אֲבֹתָיו תִּשְׁלַחוּ כָּל
נְשִׂיא בָהֶם: (ג) וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַר פָּאֵרָן עַל־פִּי ה' כְּלֵם אַנְשִׁים
רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה:

Numbers 13:1-3

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (2) “Send agents to scout the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelite people; send one participant from each of their ancestral tribes, each one a chieftain among them.” (3) So Moses, by the LORD’s command, sent them out from the wilderness of Paran, all of them being men of consequence, leaders of the Israelites.

דברים א':כ"ב-כ"ג

(כב) וַתִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי כְּלִמְדָם וַתֹּאמְרוּ נִשְׁלַחְהָ אַנְשִׁים לְפָנֵינוּ וַיַּחְפְּרוּ־לָנוּ אֶת־
הָאָרֶץ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֹתָנוּ דַּבְּרֵךְ אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נַעֲלֶה־בָּהּ וְאֵת הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר נָבֵא
אֲלֵיהֶן: (כג) וַיֵּיטֵב בְּעֵינַי הַדָּבָר וְאֶקַּח מִכֶּם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר אַנְשִׁים אִישׁ אֶחָד
לְשִׁבְט:

Deuteronomy 1:22-23

(22) Then all of you came to me and said, “Let us send agents ahead to reconnoiter the land for us and bring back word on the route we shall follow and the cities we shall come to.” (23) I approved of the plan, and so I selected from among you twelve participants, one representative from each tribe.

d. Two Small, But Revealing Examples

דברים א':ו'

(ו) ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ דָּבַר אֵלֵינוּ בְּחֶרֶב לְאמֹר רַב־לָכֶם שָׁבַת בְּהַר הַזֶּה:

Deuteronomy 1:6

(6) The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying: You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

דברים א':א'

(א) אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בַּמִּדְבָּר
בְּעֶרְבָה מִלִּל סוּף בֵּין־פָּאֲרָן וּבֵין־תַּפֵּל וְלִבְנֵי וַחֲצֹרֹת וְדִי זָהָב:

Deuteronomy 1:1

(1) 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,

רש"י על דברים א':א'

(א) אלה הדברים. לפי שהן דברי תוכחות ומנה כאן כל המקומות שהכעיסו
לפני המקום בָּהֶן, לפיכך סתם את הדברים והזכירם ברמז מפני כבודן של
ישראל (עי' ספרי):

Rashi on Deuteronomy 1:1

(1) THESE ARE THE WORDS — Because these are words of reproof and he is enumerating here all the places where they provoked God to anger, therefore he suppresses all mention of the matters in which they sinned and refers to them only by a mere allusion contained in the names of these places out of regard for Israel (cf. Sifrei Devarim 1:1; Onkelos and Targum Jonathan).

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