

## Sefer Devarim

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### 1) Rav Tzadok

"The reason why it says, 'These are the words,' is that this *parasha* contains two matters: one is that this is a repetition of the Torah, and it is the beginning of the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu, which represents the Oral Torah, as it is written (*Megilla 31b*), 'Moshe uttered them [these words] from his own mouth, and as it is written, 'Moshe began to declare this Torah,' and as Rashi explains: 'He explained it to them in seventy languages.' And so we learn: 'She [wisdom] has hewn out her seven pillars' – this refers to the seven days of Creation (*Sanhedrin 38a*). These are the seven lower attributes and as it is written in the Holy Zohar (*Tosefet to Parashat Beha'alotekha 151a*), with the seventh attribute corresponding to the Queen Shabbat,] or *malkhut* (kingship) – the mouth; it is called the Oral Law.] And so it is taught (*Shabbat 116a*): 'She has hewn out her seven pillars – these refer to the seven Books of the Torah.'] This Book is the seventh Book, corresponding to the attribute of *malkhut*... And this is the reason why this *Sefer* includes the Ten Commandments for a second time, as it is written (*Shemot Rabba, parasha 47*): 'Now that you are contrite, I shall give you laws, *midrash*, and *aggadot*, etc

### 1a) Ramban introduction to Sefer Devarim:

Before he began explaining the Torah, he began to rebuke them and remind them of their sins, how much they rebelled in the desert and how the Almighty acted with the Attribute of Kindness. This was to inform them of His great kindness with them so that they would not return to their iniquity, lest they add to all their sins, and to encourage them, by letting them know that He will forever deal with them with the Attribute of Kindness. Nobody will then say that it is impossible to conquer the land, for there is nobody who does not sin, and were the Attribute of Justice be employed against him, he will be destroyed. Moshe therefore informed them that the Almighty is merciful and full of compassion, and His forgiveness and absolution serve as help and support for people in His service... These words of introduction and reproof extend until... the verse 'Observe His laws and commandments, which I enjoin upon you this day, that it may go well with you and your children after you, and that you may long remain in the land that the Lord your God is assigning to you for all time' (4:40). Moshe then called to all of Israel who were before him and said, 'Hear O Israel, the laws...' and began explaining the Torah, the Ten Commandments.

### 2) vilna goan

"Know that [all the text] from "These are the things" up to "the Lord our God" are the introduction to the *Sefer*. Therefore these verses include three mentions of Moshe speaking: "These are the things which Moshe spoke..."; "Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael"; and "Moshe began...." [The reason for this is] because this *Sefer* has three parts: from the beginning of the *Sefer* up to "Moshe called out," preceding the Ten Commandments, teaching 'mussar'; then, from "Moshe called out" up to the blessings and the curses in *parashat Ki Tavo*, teaching the commandments; and from then on [the section] dealing with the blessings and the curses and the other matters. Therefore prior to "Moshe called out" the text says, "These are the testimonies and the statutes....," and thereafter it

begins, "Moshe called out" – which is all the same subject. Likewise before the blessings it says, "he explained well," and thereafter, "Moshe spoke."

And these three [matters] represent all of the Torah, and the Torah also consists of three Books – Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar. Bereishit is the root of all of the Torah. And therefore the Midrash is also divided into three parts: Sifra, Sifri, and Mekhilta. And this the meaning of the teaching, "He gave a three-part teaching" ([Shabbat 88a](#)), meaning three books. And the three parts of Sefer Devarim correspond to the three Books of Torah. In other words, "These are the names" (Shemot) corresponds to "These are the things"; "Vayikra" ("And He called out") corresponds to "Moshe called out," and "Bamidbar" corresponds to "Moshe spoke (va-yedaber)..."

rebuke	1-4:40	Verse 1-2	shemot
mitzvot	5-26:19	3-4	Vayikra
covenant	27-34	5	bamibar

### **3) Ralbag-End of Shemot**

Perhaps we may say that it was the convention at the time of the giving of the Torah to fashion literature in this way and that the prophet expresses himself through the conventions of the times.

### **4) Shemot 20:8-11**

**ח** זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:

**יא** כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה ה' אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיִּנַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ:

"Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it... **For [in] six days God made the heavens and the earth**, the sea, and all that is in them, **and He rested on the seventh day**; therefore God blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it."

### **4a) Devarim 5:12-15**

**יב** שְׁמֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ::  
**טו** וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עַבְדְּ הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה עַל-כֵּן צִוָּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת:

"Observe the Shabbat day to sanctify it... **in order that your manservant and your maidservant shall rest like you. And you shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt**, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commands you to observe the Shabbat day."

### **5) Vayikra 23:40**

**מ** וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ הָדָר כַּפַּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף עֵץ-עֵבֶת וְעַרְבֵי-נַחַל וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a beautiful tree, branches of the date palm, and twigs from the tree with thick bark, and willows of the river, and **you shall rejoice** before the Lord your God seven days."

#### **5a) Devarim 16:12-14**

**יב** וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי-עַבְדָּהְיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וּשְׂמַרְתָּ וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה:

**יד** וּשְׂמַחְתָּ בַּחֲגֹךָ אִתָּהּ וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוֹם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

"And you shall remember that you were a servant in Egypt... and you shall rejoice in your festival – you and your son and your daughter, and your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your gates."

#### **6) Shemot 17:14**

**יד** וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב זֶאת זְכָרוֹן בְּסֵפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנִי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי-מָחָה אֶת-זְכָר עַמְלֶק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:

"For **I shall surely erase the memory** of Amalek from under the heavens"

#### **6a) Devarim 25:17-19**

**יז** זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֶק בְּדַרְךָ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם:  
**יח** אֲשֶׁר קָרַךְ בְּדַרְךָ וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כָּל-הַנְּחָשִׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאִתָּהּ עִיף וַיִּגַע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים:  
**יט** וְהָיָה בְּהַנִּיחַ ה' אֶל-לִהְיֶיךָ לְךָ מִכָּל-אֵיבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בְּאַרְצָךָ אֲשֶׁר הוּא-לִהְיֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ נַחְלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת-זְכָר עַמְלֶק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

"For meeting you on the way, and attacking the stragglers who trailed after you, while you were tired and weary..." "For meeting you on the way, and attacking the stragglers who trailed after you, while you were tired and weary"

#### **7) Devarim 7:7-8**

**ז:** לֹא מֵרַבְּכֶם מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים חָשַׁק ה' בְּכֶם וַיִּבְחַר בְּכֶם כִּי-אַתֶּם הַמְעַט מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים  
**ח** כִּי מֵאַהֲבַת ה' אֶתְכֶם וּמִשְׁמֵרוֹ אֶת-הַשְּׁבֻעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם הוֹצִיא ה' אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וַיִּפְדֶּךָ מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים מִיַּד פְּרַעֲה מִלֶּךְ-מִצְרַיִם:

"It is not because you are more numerous than any other nation that God set His love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest among all the nations; [rather,] **it was out of God's love for you**, and for Him to keep the oath which He swore to your forefathers..."

**8) Devarim 23:6**

**ו** וְלֹא-אָבָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמַע אֶל-בִּלְעָם וַיְהַפֵּךְ ה' אֶת-הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָה כִּי אָהַבְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ

"The Lord your God would not listen to Bil'am, and the Lord your God transformed the curse into a blessing, for the Lord your God loves you."

**9) Devarim 6:5**

**ה** וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (6:5);

**10) Devarim 11:1**

**א** וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַרְתָּ מְשֻׁמְרָתוֹ וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו כָּל-הַיָּמִים

"You shall love the Lord your God and observe His charge and His statutes and His judgments and His commandments for all time."

**11) Devarim 30:2-5**

"And you shall return to the Lord your God, and obey Him... and the Lord your God will bring back your captivity, and have mercy upon you, and gather you back from all of the nations... and the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your forefathers inherited, and you shall take possession of it, and He shall be good to you, and multiply you more than your fathers."

**ב** וְשָׁבַת עַד-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעַתְּ בְּקִלּוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם אֶתְּךָ וּבְנֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ  
**ג** וְשָׁב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת-שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפְיָצֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה:  
**ד** אִם-יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךְ בְּקִצְהָ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ:  
**ה** וְהִבְיָאֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יִרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וּרְשֻׁתָּהּ וְהִיטְבֶּךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ מְאֹד:  
**ו** וְשָׁבַת עַד-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעַתְּ בְּקִלּוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם אֶתְּךָ וּבְנֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ

**12) Devarim 30:6**

**ו** וּמָל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת-לִבְבְּךָ וְאֶת-לִבְבֵי זַרְעֶךָ לְאָהֳבָה אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ

"And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live."

**13) Devarim 11:12**

**יב** אָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ דֹרֵשׁ אֶתְּךָ תִּמְיֵד עֵינֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּהַ מְרֻשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה:

"from the beginning of the year until the end of the year"

**14) Vayikra 21:5-6**

ה לא-(יקרחה) [יקרחו] קרחה בראשם ופאת זקנם לא יגלחו ובבשרם לא ישרטו שרטת:  
ו קדשים יהיו לאלהיהם ולא יחללו שם אלהיהם כי את-אשי ה לחם אלהיהם הם  
מקריבם והיו קדש:

"They shall not make a bald patch on their head, nor shall they shave the corners of their beard, nor make any cut in their flesh. They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane the Name of their God, for it is the offerings of the Lord made by fire, the bread of their God, that they offer up; therefore they shall be holy."

#### 14a) Devarim 14:1-2

א בנים אתם לה אלהיכם לא תתגדדו ולא-תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת:  
ב כי עם קדוש אתה לה אלהיך ובך בחר ה להיות לו לעם סגלה מפל העמים אשר על-פני  
האדמה:

"You are children to the Lord your God; you shall not gash yourselves, **nor make a baldness between your eyes for the dead**. For you are a **holy nation** unto the Lord your God, and the Lord your God has chosen you to be a **special possession for Himself out of all the nations** that are upon the face of the earth."

#### 15) Vayikra 22:8

ה נבלה וטרפה לא יאכל לטמאה-בה אני ה:

That which dies of itself, or is torn by beasts, he [the kohen] shall not eat of it, to defile himself with it"

#### 15a) Devarim 14:21

כא לא-תאכלו כל-נבלה לגר אשר-בשעריך תתננה ואכלה או מכר לנכרי כי עם קדוש אתה  
לה אלהיך לא-תבשל גדי בחלב אמו:

"**You shall not eat any animal that dies of itself**; you shall give it to the stranger who is in your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for **you are a holy nation** unto the Lord your God."

#### 16) Devarim 28:9

ט יקימך ה לו לעם קדוש כאשר נשבע-לך כי תשמר את-מצות ה אלהיך והלכת בדרכיו:

"The Lord shall establish you for Himself as a holy nation, as He promised you, **if** you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and follow in His ways."

Joshua Berman

<https://www.torahmusings.com/2013/09/rethinking-orthodoxy-and-biblical-criticism-iii/>