

## Mysteries of Deuteronomy

- Devarim, first in Deuteronomy, is always right before Tish'a b'Av (which begins Monday evening)
- Book includes Moses' farewell addresses, blessings and death.
- Means "Second Law" (Mishne Torah). Recapitulates main religious principles and legislation, including ten commandments, but some new laws.
- Emphasis on single central sanctuary, uniqueness of God [Shema], choice of Israel, rejection of idolatry.

### Biblical authorship

-Who wrote Deuteronomy? Does Tradition really answer 'God'? See Talmud:

And who are the writers [of the Scriptures]? Moses wrote his book, and the parts dealing with Bilaam [Num. 23-24] and the Book of Job. Joshua wrote his book and [the last] eight verses of the Torah.

*[Umi ch'tavan? Moshe katav sifro, uparshat Bilaam, v'lyyov. Yehoshua katav sifro ve-shmona f'sukim she-baTorah.]* [Baba Bathra 14b]

But some disagree:

This is the opinion of R. Yehudah, or, according to others, of R. Nehemiah. Said R. Shim'on to him: Can [we imagine the] scroll of the Law being short of one word, and is it not written, "[Moses said before he died], 'Take this book of the Torah?'" [Deut. 31:26] [Implying it was complete.]

No; what we must say is that up to this point the Holy One, blessed be He, dictated and Moses repeated and wrote, and from this point God dictated and Moses wrote with tears [about his own death]... [Baba Bathra 15a]

[Moses did not repeat to avoid telling a lie, and wrote with tears, not ink, so it would dry up later, to be rewritten in ink by Joshua.]

Resolution:

Which of these two authorities is followed in the rule laid down by R. Yehoshua b. Abba which he said in the name of R. Giddal who said it in the name of Rav: **The last eight verses of the Torah must be read [during the Torah service] by one person alone?** [May mean it is not required that a second person should stand by, as for the rest of the Torah.] It follows R. Yehudah and not R. Shim'on. I may even say, however, that it follows R. Shim'on, [who would say that] since they differ [from the rest of the Torah] in one way, they differ in another. [Baba Bathra 15a]

### Rest of attribution:

Samuel wrote his book and the Book of Judges and Ruth.

David wrote the Book of Psalms...

Jeremiah wrote his book, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations.

Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.

The Men of the Great Assembly wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel and the Scroll of Esther.

Ezra wrote his book and the genealogies of the Book of Chronicles up to his own time. [That Book was finished by] Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. [Baba Bathra 14b-15a]

*-What was the book that "Moses wrote", if not Deuteronomy?*

*Tradition says "The Torah". But he did not write "the Torah" in the sense that the others wrote "their books" – one was dictated, the others are original works.*

*And if "The Torah", why add "and the parts dealing with Bilaam", which are included in Torah?*

### Chronology of events in Judah leading up to Tish'a b'Av

-King Hezekiah (Chizkiah) – good, 19 years, 715–687 BCE (last 10 co-regent with son). Tries religious reform, but fails.

-King Manasseh (Menasheh)– very bad, 55 years (longest-reigning), 687-642 BCE. Reinstated pagan worship in Temple, built pagan altars. Repented before death.

-King Amon – bad, 2 years, 642–640 BCE. Moral depravity and idolatry; murdered.

-King Josiah (Yoshiyahu) – good, 31 years, 641–609 BCE.

Starts at age 8. In 18<sup>th</sup> year of reign, initiates radical religious reforms: Wipes out idolatry, centralizes cult, institutes national Pessah festival in Jerusalem (which had not been done since Judges). Gets inspiration from "a Torah book" found in Temple. Dies in battle against Pharaoh of Egypt.

-King Jehoahaz bad, 3 months, 609 BCE, killed in Egypt

-King Jehoiakim, bad, 11 years, 609–598 BCE. Burned scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies.

-King Jehoiachin, bad, 3 months, 598 BCE

-King Zedekiah (Tzidqiyahu), bad, 11 years, 597–587 BCE

-587 BCE: Temple destroyed by Babylonians.

*Tish'a b'Av commemorates this event.*

### King Josiah's Book – What was it?

2 Kings 22

1. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty one years in Jerusalem...
2. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

2 Chronicles 34

3. And in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the carved images, and the molten images.
4. And they broke down the altars of the Baalim in his presence; and he cut down the images that were on top of them; and the Asherim, and the carved images, and the molten images, he broke in pieces, and he made dust of them...

2 Kings 22

3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent... Hilkiah the high priest... to repair [the Temple]
8. And Hilkiah the high priest said...I have found [a] book of the Torah in the house of the Lord.  
**[Sefer haTorah matzati bevet HaShem]**

2 Chronicles 34

14. And [in] the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a Book of the Torah of the Lord by the hand of Moses. **[Matza Chilkiyah ha-Kohen et sefer Torat HaShem beyad Moshe]**

*-Some say it was the original Torah manuscript written by Moses himself that had been hidden away by the bad kings and rediscovered*

2 Kings 22

- [He] read it before the king.
11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the Torah, that he tore his clothes [and said]
  13. Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that was found; for great is the anger of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us.
  14. And Hilkiah the priest [and others] went to Huldah the prophetess...
  15. And she said to them, Thus said the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man who sent you to me,
  16. Thus said the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read;
  17. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my anger shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.
  18. But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him, Thus said the Lord God of Israel, Concerning the words which you have heard;
  19. Because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the Lord...
  20. ...you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought back word to the king.

2 Kings 23

1. And the king... gathered... all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.
2. And... went up to the house of the Lord... and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord.

3. And [they]... made a covenant...to keep [God's] commandments... with all their heart and all their soul...

4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the gatekeepers, to bring out from the temple of the Lord all the utensils that were made for Baal, and for the Ashera, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Beth-El.

5. And he deposed the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places around Jerusalem; also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. [etc]

21. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

22. Surely there was not celebrated such a Passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

23. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, when this Passover was celebrated to the Lord in Jerusalem.

*-Ex. 12 says to celebrate Pessah at home, but Deut. 16 says to do it in Jerusalem*

24. Moreover the mediums, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the Torah which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

25. And there was no king before him like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Torah of Moses; and after him there did not arise any like him.

26. However the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, with which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him with.

27. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also from my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there...

29. In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates; and king Josiah went against him; and he killed him at Megiddo, when he saw him.

## Discussion

-Some non-traditional scholars say that Josiah's "Torah book" was Deuteronomy and was written at that time (~1000 years after Moses).

They say:

-Language shows strong linguistic and structural resemblance with vassal treaties of Neo-Assyrian kings in 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Examples: "Love with all your heart" and "obey the voice of".

-Structure follows tripartite pattern of treaties in ancient Mideast: Introduction (1-11), legal body (12-26), blessings and curses (27-30).

*-Stylistic arguments unconvincing.*

*-They do not explain:*

*-If Israel had Torah Books 1-4, why would "discovery" of 5 make such a huge difference, and affect King Josiah so much?*

*-And if they had all Books, 1-5, what was Josiah's "Torah book"?*

-Some say what upset Josiah was the line:

Deut. 28:36. The Lord shall bring you, and your king which you shall set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known; and there shall you serve other gods, of wood and stone.

because he thought he might be that king.

*-But would it not be more natural for him to assume his grandfather Menashe was that wicked king, as he knew he himself was good?*

-Talmud: King Menashe destroyed all sifrei Torah. Later, during Josiah's reign, a full sefer Torah (that had been hidden) was found in the Temple, open to the verse:

Cursed be he who does not maintain all the words of this Torah to do them. (Deut. 27:26).

Josiah tore his garments and exclaimed, "Alai lehakim" -- it is incumbent upon me to uphold – and led teshuvah to delay Temple destruction. [Talmud Yerushalmi, Sotah 7:4]

*-But would Torah have been so thoroughly forgotten that it would be such a great revelation? Surely many had memorized it.*

*-Did Josiah use this incident and build it up to bolster his religious reforms?*