

How the Torah of the Jews Became Corrupted During The History of Banī Isrā’īl: Evidence that Moses Did Not Write the Torah of the Jews: Part 5



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In previous articles we provided **background historical information** that invalidates any claim that the Torah of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) was transmitted—orally or textually—in an unbroken chain by honest, upright, truthful, believers through to the post-exile era (5th century BC). The occurrence of wholesale apostacies, raids on kingdoms, lootings and demolitions, exiles, foreign influences—all combined provided the setting for the loss of the Torah of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام). In this article, we present internal evidence that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) was not the author of the

Torah possessed by the Jews from its actual contents. Much has been written on the subject, so we present the most salient points and arguments here. Some of these points were realised by the scholars of the Jews themselves such as **Abraham ibn Ezra** (d. 1167)—more about him later, he alluded to a “secret” that should be kept from people.

What follows below is not a comprehensive list, but only a sample through which the point is illustrated for the sake of brevity.

1. The story of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) is always told in **the third person** and not in the first person. Mūsā, the alleged author, never says, “I”, but the story is always told as “Moses said”, or “Moses did” and this occurs **over six hundred times** in the four books of the Pentateuch excluding Genesis wherein he is not mentioned at all. Thus, this was a historical account written after him and not by him. To get around this, the claim is made that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) wrote as if he was making a diary or a documentary of the events that took place and hence speaking as a third person. Very clever explanation with good use of imagination. But completely baseless and pure conjecture without a shred of evidence.

2. In Deuteronomy 3:5-8, the death and burial of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) is described. **A person cannot write about their**

own death and burial.¹ It is then claimed that Joshua (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), wrote this last section of Deuteronomy, being the successor to Mūsā. But again, the actions of Joshua are described in the third person too.² So he cannot be the author either. Also, it is made clear straight after that the author lived a very long time after both Mūsā and Joshua: In the tenth verse of Deuteronomy 34 there occurs: “Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.” This statement can only be made many centuries after.

3. Numerous texts make references to Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) **writing things down** or **being commanded to write things down**, including law.³ Hence, this amounts, not to a claim that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) wrote these books, such as Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, but only to the fact that these books were written by someone else in which mention is made of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) writing things down

¹ “And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him[a] in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.”

² “Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the LORD had commanded Moses.” Deuteronomy 34:9.

³ For example, in Exodus 24:7 there occurs: “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.’”. See also: Exodus 17:14, 24:3, 34:1-4, 34:27, Numbers 33:2, Deuteronomy 31:9, 31:24.

which would have been from the Torah that he taught the Israelites. Hence, whilst these books might contain some details of the Torah, they are not the actual Torah of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). In other words, the author(s) of these books are really saying that they made use of what were claimed to be texts of the Torah that were passed down and they put them in these books, which means they cannot be the actual Torah. This is very clear.

4. There are numerous editorial comments by the author(s) which **reveal their location and time period** and prove without a doubt that they came centuries after Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and could not have existed before Dawūd and Sulaymān (عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ) which is five centuries after Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ).⁴ In these comments they make mention of place names and list of kings that did not exist until well after Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). In Genesis 36:31 there occurs: “These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites...” This means that this was written after the Israelites

⁴ Refer to examples given by Professor Christopher Rollston of George Washington University in his article, “*Who Wrote the Torah According to the Torah*” on TheTorah.Com (23 August 2017). He states, after the examples: “The above evidence shows that the Torah’s author is not Moses. This author or these authors must have lived in the Cisjordan no earlier than the time of King Saul (the Edomite Kings List) or even Solomon (the saying about Mount Moriah).” And also: “And so, if we take the Pentateuch seriously, it is clear that all it claims is to be privy to some sources written by Moses, and to knowledge of discourse between Moses and God, or Moses and Israel, just as it does with Abraham, Jacob, Noah, etc.”

had a king, and the first of them was Saul, followed by Dāwūd (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام). This could not have been written except five centuries after Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام).

5. The existence of what are referred to as “doublets” wherein stories are told twice or but contradict each other in some of the details. This indicates that there were different authors. Examples include:

- two creation stories
- two stories of Ibrāhīm’s (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) covenant
- two stories about naming of Ishāq
- two version of the ten commandments
- and others.⁵

6. There are different styles of speaking about Allāh, sometimes there is mention of ulūhiyyah—His unique right to be worshipped—and His names and attributes and other times there is tajsīm and tashbīh—likening him to His creation—as well as ascribing defects and blameworthy traits to him, such as tiredness, regret, injustice, sadness and forgetfulness. This indicates the influences of the doctrines of the idolatrous nations and worshippers of humans as gods upon the writers of the materials used to compile and write the Torah. The Messengers of Allāh call to purity of Tawḥīd and glorify Allāh above defects and human shortcomings. Thus, such materials in the Torah are from the hands of men

⁵ It is possible that the editors after the 5th century tried to mix parts of the Torah of the Jews with parts of the Torah of the Samaritans in which the same story is told with some variations.

under influence of foreign ideas and could never be from Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). This is a proof that Mūsā did not author the Torah in the hands of the Jews.

What we have covered above are types of evidence that establish with certainty that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was not the author of the Torah of the Jews and the Torah of the Samaritans. Under each type are many examples. This leads to the conclusion that there are remnants of the original Torah in the Pentateuch, and that it is simply a reconstruction by multiple authors and editors which contains obvious foreign influences and the insertion of ideologies by its authors and editors.

In the section below, we will summarize how the old view of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) being the author was overturned and how it is now pretty much accepted—except by the staunchest of Jews and Christians⁶—that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) did not write the Pentateuch and that it is not the unchanged speech of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ).



⁶ Even in their view, they can only claim that the later authors and editors were inspired by God to write down faithfully and accurately what was the Torah of Moses—and not that they actually had the Torah of Moses, in which case, there would have been nothing for them to do except make a copy. But that evidently is not the case. Hence, it cannot be claimed by any Jew or Christian, that the Torah in the hands of the Jews was written by Moses (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ).

How the view of Mosaic authorship among Biblical scholars changed to the view of later, combined authorship

In the 11th century CE **Isaac Ibn Yashush** (d. 1057) found the list of the kings of Edom in Genesis 36 included kings that came after Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام). The Hadad mentioned in Genesis 36:35 is Hadad the Edomite in 1st Kings 11:14. Ibn Yashush concluded that this verse about the list of kings was added afterwards. He was ridiculed for his discovery. Then came **Abraham Ibn Ezra** (d. 1167), a renowned commentator on the Torah. He suggested the death of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) was not written by Mūsā, but by Joshua. He discovered numerous other anomalies but advised that scholars “keep silent” so as not to alert the less learned to this problem regarding authorship. This is referred to as “the secret of Ibn Ezra”. A few centuries later, **Josef ben Elizier Bonfils** (late 14th century) ignored the advice of keeping silent and pointed out the six verses that were problematic. He also revealed “the secret” by writing: “It would not be appropriate to reveal this secret to average people, lest they make light of the Torah, for anyone who is not sufficiently wise cannot differentiate between verses that contain mitzvot and verses that are simply narrative. Additionally, because of the nations, who tell us, ‘your Torah was once the truth, but you replaced it and changed it,’ for these reasons he says, ‘the wise will

be silent,’ for the wise know that this does no damage, only the fools would attack him (ibn Ezra) for this.”⁷

In other words, whilst we know that the Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) could not have written this Torah, we will not divulge this to anyone, because to us it does no damage, but to other nations, they will have evidence for what they say. For the next few centuries, evidence kept on mounting up that **the vast majority** of the Torah was not authored by Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). Jews and Christians remained adamant for a couple of hundred years until the 19th century when the evidence could no longer be denied.

Julius Wellhausen (d. 1918) was the originator of what became known as the “**documentary hypothesis**”. Upon a detailed analysis of the Torah text he proposed that there were four different authorship styles:

- J (Yahwist)
- E (Elohist)
- D (Deuteronomist), and
- P (Priestly)

And that the Torah was a combination of the writings of these authors, weaved together by an editor or “redactor”. Whilst this hypothesis gained widespread acceptance, it did receive critiques and it paved the way

⁷ Refer to the article: *Seven Torah Passages of Non-Mosaic Origin According to Ibn Ezra and R. Joseph Bonfils*. Translated by Rabbi Dr. Zev Farber. See <https://thetorah.com/non-mosaic-torah-passages-ibn-ezra-and-bonfils/>

for other ideas also based on multiple authorship. One of them is the “**supplementary hypothesis**” where there was a core text or group of texts edited and added to by others, and who also became authors thereby. Then there is the “**fragmentary hypothesis**” which states that was a large number of small texts, fragments. Multiple editors put them together to create their own narrative using these materials.

Irrespective of where the truth lies, it is fairly well established that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) did not author the Torah in the hands of the Jews today. It is impossible for that to be the case given the evidence that has accumulated. The truth lies within the above hypotheses of multiple authorship at a much later period, after the 6th century BC. “The different parts of the Torah were written by priests and scribes in the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah during the First Temple period and the Babylonian Exile (9th to 6th centuries BCE). These parts were stitched together by Ezra the Scribe to create a single historic narrative and legal code for the returning exiles. (Ezra was the priest appointed by the Persian overlords to lead the Jews in Judea.)”⁸ We addressed the issue of Ezra recovering the Torah for the Jews in the previous article, and stated that the affair of the Torah did not end there in the 5th

⁸ Elon Gilad in “*Did Moses Really Write the Torah*”, Haaretz online 22 May 2015.

century BC. This is because under the Greek rule of Antiochus (d. 164 BC), there were many trials and tribulations for the Jews. Also a new “revelation” appeared in the form of the “Oral Law” which became the Talmūd centuries later and in which the views and opinions (often contradictory and mutually exclusive) are conferred divine status by the claim that they were also revealed to Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) in addition to the written Torah. So as well as problems with the textual integrity of the alleged Torah, another layer was added, which was the upgrading of the views and opinions of men to the status of divine revelation. This led to the appearance of “Rabbinical (Talmūdic) Judaism” which is addressed in the verse:

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ

“They took their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah...” (9:31).

With the meaning that they followed them in altering the law, by making the lawful unlawful and vice versa. This is not the religion of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ).

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