

# Hindsight

## Deuteronomy 8:1-6

### Dr. Pierre Cannings

#### I. Today v. 1

- a. All the Commandment
  - i. It is to be taken in a collective sense, the whole of the law as delivered by Moses on this occasion.
  - ii. language reminiscent of Deut 6:1–3 and 4:1–8 Moses continues his exposition of the content of the covenant principles by focusing on the Lord as the source of all blessing, both past and future
  - iii. Also in line with previous literary and theological pattern, Moses recalled the past—especially from the time of covenant making at Sinai-Horeb—as a means of underscoring both the redeeming and preserving grace of God and the wicked unbelief and insufficiency of his people Israel (vv. 2–5; cf. 4:1–8; 1:6–3:29).
  - iv. *All the commandment, which, &c.*] 11:8, 22, 15:5, 19:9, 27:1, cf. 6:25: comp. on 5:28 (31). The *whole* of the Deut. law—the principle of 11:22b, together with all that is involved in it—is to be obeyed by, the Israelite.
- b. Careful – pay attention
- c. Swore – a covenant guaranteed

#### II. Remember vs. 2-5

- a. Remember
  - i. Remember – Both worship and tradition served this memory. Through the great festivals with their rituals and songs, the people participated in both establishing and remembering the meaningful history of Israel and thus understood themselves better in the light of that meaningful past. Memory provided community and continuity. In the cycles of apostasy, affliction, repentance, and deliverance which the Deuteronomistic Historian used to interpret Israel’s history and to call exiles to return, the failure to remember could be used as the equivalent of apostasy (Judg 8:34). The failure to remember was not mere absentmindedness; it was covenant unfaithfulness, the failure to fulfill the obligations of the covenant. Other texts, too, explained God’s judgment as being due to Israel’s forgetfulness (e.g., Isa 17:10; Jer 3:21; 13:25; 18:15; Ezek 22:12; 23:35; Hos 2:13; 4:6; Pss 78:42; 106:7; Neh 9:17)
- b. Way
  - i. Led- To follow God

1. Ways - *to walk in his ways*. Compare 5:30; 10:12; 11:22; 19:4; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16. Following law and justice was conceived in the Bible as following God's ways; cf., for example, Gen 18:19, "they will keep the way (*drk*) of YHWH by doing justice and righteousness
- 2.
- ii. Wilderness
  1. 40 Years
  2. *Led thee forty years in the wilderness*] Am. 2:10.—*To humble thee*] by teaching thee, viz., thy dependence upon Him; cf. v. 3, 16.—*To prove thee*]
  - 3.
- c. He May
  - i. Humble - to **oppress**, cause someone to feel dependent:
    1. Let you be Hungry
      - a. He did this by allowing them to hunger and then to be fed by the miraculous supply of manna (Exod 16:1–30; Num 11:4–9), an act so clearly supernatural that the people had to recognize that it was all of God and not of themselves (v. 3; cf. Exod 16:32). In fact, the manna symbolized more than mere physical nourishment but the word of God itself (v. 4), for the God who could provide in such a mighty and unexpected way was well worth listening to
      - b.
    2. Fed you Manna
      - a. Which You Did not Know
        - i. Or Father's Know
        - ii. It was a food unknown before. Compare Exod 16:15, "for they did not know what it was,"
        - iii. the manna is pointed to, as illustrating the discipline of the wilderness: Israel's self-sufficiency was "humbled," first by its being suffered to feel a want, and afterwards by the manner in which its want was supplied; it was thus taught how, for its very existence, it was daily (Ex. 16:4) dependent on the (creative) word of God. On the manna, see Ex. 16
        - iv. Thus even the name suggests the uniqueness of this event; for this provision was a miracle, designed to teach Israel that "the words [הדברים] of God" to his people, namely all that proceeds from the mouth of YHWH (v 3), are the fundamental source of life itself. When the command of God comes, it must be obeyed.

Physical limitations are not sufficient excuse for disobedience on our part; for “God’s commandments are God’s enablements,”

- v. The manna functioned as a test for Israel’s disposition regarding God (cf. the rebellious attitude in connection with the manna in Num 21:5) and as a test for the obedience of God’s instructions

ii. Test – God test in order to ascertain

1. They derive from the fact that one on a public path becomes known and his goal and purposes are revealed by the road he takes. Most important is the sense of God’s purposes and will, *e.g.* Ex. 33:13; Jb. 21:14, 31; Ps. 67:2; Pr. 8:22; Ezk. 18:25.
2. whether or not Israel would accommodate itself, trustfully and contentedly (Nu. 21:5), to this state of continued dependence upon God, and whether therefore it could be trusted to obey properly any other laws which might in future be laid upon it. Thus the manna (1) taught Israel its dependence upon Jehovah, and (2) operated as a test of Israel’s disposition
3. Happy is the man whom you YHWH chastise (*tysrnw yh*) and from your teaching you instruct him (*wmtwrnk tlmndw*.)” The noun *mwsr* derived from *ysr* means education in general (Prov 1:2, 8; 4:1; etc.) and is found in Deut 11:2, “your children, who neither experienced nor witnessed the *lesson* (*mwsr*) of YHWH your God.” As in the educational human process, where punishment is actually correction that brings improvement in the future, so God chastised Israel in the desert for its future benefit (cf. v 16).
4. but in light of the verbs “humble” and “test” in v. 2, it may be best to see the desert itinerary as a learning experience rather than a punishing one (cf. Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:16; 13:4 [Eng., 13:3]). Thus this is discipline in the positive sense of education.
5. Ps 119:71, “How good it is for me to have been chastised (*‘unêti*) so that I learn your rules” and v 75, “I know your judgments are just, you chastised me rightly (*w’mwneh ‘nytny*.)”*to test you.* Compare 6:16
6. man testing God in chap. 8 and God testing man in 6:16. Provision of food in the desert is the proper example for this. By asking for water in the desert, the people test God. Conversely, by giving manna God tests the endurance of the people.

d. To Know

i. To Know

1. understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

- a. The author rather wants to convey the idea that the existence of man depends not on food alone but on God's providence
    - b. God is able to guarantee the existence of man even when nature does not. All of this goes well with the idea of the whole chapter that man should not rely on his power and wealth but on God
  - 2. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.
- ii. What was in your heart
  - 1. Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.
  - 2. "heart," is often rendered "mind." Here it refers to the inner attitude of the people.
  - 3. This sentence explains in fact the concept of "testing" in the present context. By causing deprivation and lack of food, God tests man to see whether he really puts his trust in him.
- iii. Keep Commandments
  - 1. The same attitude is reflected in the story about the testing of Jesus by Satan. After Jesus fasts for forty days, Satan tests him to see whether he will be able to turn stones into bread. Jesus replies by quoting this verse (Matt 4:1-4; Luke 4:3-4). Thus the "testing" in Deut 8:2, 16 is understood as being initiated by Satan,
  - 2.

### III. Will Keep v. 6

- a. Keep- to do something carefully
  - i. Commandment
  - ii. Walk – to follow God
    - 1. In His Ways
  - iii. Fear Him- reverence, awe, honored

# Word Studies

## Key Terms

Today

Careful meaning to **do something carefully**<sup>1</sup>

Swore- to swear, followed by a direct object: a covenant guaranteed<sup>2</sup>

Remember –

The most frequent object of human remembering in the OT, however, is God (Deut 8:18; Judg 8:34; Ps 22:7; 42:6; 63:6; 77:3; 78:35; Eccl 12:1; Isa 57:11; 64:5; Jer 51:50; Ezek 6:9; Jonah 2:7; Zech 10:9), including God's works (Deut 5:15; 7:18; 8:2; 9:7; 15:5; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 32:7; Pss 77:11; 78:42; 105:5; 143:5; Ezek 16:22, 43, 61, 63; Mic 6:5) and (less frequently) God's law (Num 15:39, 40; Pss 103:18; 119:52; Mal 3:22; cf. Exod 13:3; 20:8).

Both worship and tradition served this memory. Through the great festivals with their rituals and songs, the people participated in both establishing and remembering the meaningful history of Israel and thus understood themselves better in the light of that meaningful past. Memory provided community and continuity. The Passover, for example, which Israel was to "remember" (that is, observe, Exod 13:3), was itself a "remembrance" (Heb *zikkārôn*, Exod 12:14) of God's deliverance of them from Egypt. By ritual and celebration subsequent generations made that story their own (cf. the Passover Haggadah; *m. Pesah*<sup>3</sup> 10:4–6). Similarly, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed to "remember" the Exodus (Exod 13:8–10; Deut 16:3; consider also the Feast of Booths, Lev 23:43). New Year's Day is also described as a memorial (Heb *zikkārôn*; Lev 23:24), presumably of God's creative activity and sovereignty. Later commemorative festivals might also be mentioned: Purim (cf. Esth 9:28) and Hanukkah (1 Macc 4:52, 59). Even the wearing of phylacteries (Deut 6:8; 11:18; Exod 13:9) and tassels (Num 15:39) served as a memory of God's works and law. Thus Israel "remembered" the Lord. (At the same time, of course, the cultic ceremonies and prayers served to bring the people to God's remembrance.)

The cult was an important context for remembering, but there were others: notably, the instruction of children (Deut 6:20–25; Josh 4:4–7). For the Deuteronomist, memory assumed a special and central importance; the reform depended upon it. There was no greater danger to identity and community than forgetfulness (e.g., Deut 8:11, 19). The remedy for forgetfulness was to tell the old stories, to rehearse the traditions of God's election and grace, to remember. And remembering was never merely "recollecting"; it had the shape of obedience, of covenant

---

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [\*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament\*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1583.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [\*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament\*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1399.

<sup>3</sup> *Pesah Pesahim*

<sup>4</sup> *Pesahim*

faithfulness (8:1, 2; consider also the stereotyped formula in 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). The point was not some cultic actualization of the past, already then remote, not some mysterious reliving of it, some of which was painful, but continuity with it, covenant identity and fidelity in a new situation, the reformation of Judah's cult and community.

In the cycles of apostasy, affliction, repentance, and deliverance which the Deuteronomistic Historian used to interpret Israel's history and to call exiles to return, the failure to remember could be used as the equivalent of apostasy (Judg 8:34). The failure to remember was not mere absentmindedness; it was covenant unfaithfulness, the failure to fulfill the obligations of the covenant. Other texts, too, explained God's judgment as being due to Israel's forgetfulness (e.g., Isa 17:10; Jer 3:21; 13:25; 18:15; Ezek 22:12; 23:35; Hos 2:13; 4:6; Pss 78:42; 106:7; Neh 9:17).<sup>5</sup>

The Way - They derive from the fact that one on a public path becomes known and his goal and purposes are revealed by the road he takes. Most important is the sense of God's purposes and will, e.g. Ex. 33:13; Jb. 21:14, 31; Ps. 67:2; Pr. 8:22; Ezk. 18:25. There follows the idea of God's commandments, cf. especially Ps. 119. 'Way' is used generally of man's conduct, good or bad, and even of that of animals, e.g. Ps. 1:1, 6; Pr. 30:19–20. These usages are common in the Qumran literature.<sup>6</sup>

Led – to follow God

Humble - to **oppress**, cause someone to feel dependent:<sup>7</sup>

Test - God tempts men Gn 22:1 Ex 16:4 20:20 Dt 8:2 in order to ascertain<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Allen Verhey, "[Remember, Remembrance.](#)" ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 668.

<sup>6</sup> H. L. Ellison, "[Way.](#)" ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1232–1233.

<sup>7</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 853.

<sup>8</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 702.

# Commentary Study

## Comment

**1** The term כל-המצוה, “all the commandment,” is used independently of the several other keywords for “law” in Deuteronomy, here and in 6:25; 11:8, 22; 15:5; 19:9; and 27:1 (cf. 30:11; 31:5). It is to be taken in a collective sense, the whole of the law as delivered by Moses on this occasion.

**2–6** The people are to “remember all the way” in which YHWH led them in the wilderness of times past. Those “forty years” were a time of testing, “to know what is in your heart” (v 2). The term לבב, “heart,” is often rendered “mind.” Here it refers to the inner attitude of the people. The text says that God will test the people of Israel so as “to know what is in your heart,” which implies that God did not know how the people would act and that he would thus learn something in the process. As Tigay has shown ([1996] 92), traditional Jewish interpreters had difficulties with this concept as illustrated by Maimonides, who interpreted this verse as meaning that “the test was for *others* to learn the strength of Israel’s obedience and to see how God provides for those who are devoted to him.” Tigay rejects this view, arguing that “humanity has free will” and this means that “God does not know how people will act, and he therefore tests them” ([1996] 92).

The term מן(ה), “(the) manna,” appears only twice in Deuteronomy, here and in v 16 below (cf. Exod 16:14, 31; Num 11:8). As N. Sarna has noted (*Exploring Exodus* [New York: Schocken, 1986] 117), there is no known substance that corresponds in all details to the biblical description. Two types of homopterans, or sucking insects, are known to infest the hardy tamarisk bushes in the semi-arid desert regions of the Sinai Peninsula: the *Trabutina mannipara* E. in the upper elevations, and the *Nojacoccus serpentinus* G. in the lowlands. These scale insects suck the sap of the tamarisk and excrete the surplus onto the twigs in the form of tiny globules that soon crystallize and fall to the ground. The substance is sweet, sticky, and edible; but it must be collected quickly, before the heat rises and the ants get to it. Chemical analysis reveals that this “manna” is a combination of three basic sugars with pectin. The quantity produced is conditioned by the winter rainfall; but under the best conditions, the annual yield would not exceed 600 pounds for the whole of the Sinai Peninsula. Moreover, the phenomenon usually begins in early June and lasts no more than six weeks. The “manna” of the biblical account is not to be explained so simply. In the Hebrew language the term מן means essentially “what is it?” Thus even the name suggests the uniqueness of this event; for this provision was a miracle, designed to teach Israel that “the words [הדברים] of God” to his people, namely all that proceeds from the mouth of YHWH (v 3), are the fundamental source of life itself. When the command of God comes, it must be obeyed. Physical limitations are not sufficient excuse for disobedience on our part; for “God’s commandments are God’s enablements,” as my Sunday school teacher was wont to say years ago. When Jesus refused to turn the stones into bread, he did so with this very passage in mind (cf. Matt 4:1–4; Luke 4:1–4).

The miracle of the manna is underscored by the fact that “your clothing did not wear out ... and your foot did not swell these forty years” (v 4).<sup>9</sup>

**8:1** In language reminiscent of Deut 6:1–3 and 4:1–8 Moses continues his exposition of the content of the covenant principles by focusing on the Lord as the source of all blessing, both past and future.<sup>13101</sup> He begins this new section by calling attention to the need to base all belief and behavior on the covenant relationship, one reduced here to the single word “command” (*mišwâ*, v. 1).

**8:2–3** Also in line with previous literary and theological pattern, Moses recalled the past—especially from the time of covenant making at Sinai-Horeb—as a means of underscoring both the redeeming and preserving grace of God and the wicked unbelief and insufficiency of his people Israel (vv. 2–5; cf. 4:1–8; 1:6–3:29). The Lord had led them through the desert in order to humble and test them about their commitment (v. 2). He did this by allowing them to hunger and then to be fed by the miraculous supply of manna (Exod 16:1–30; Num 11:4–9), an act so clearly supernatural that the people had to recognize that it was all of God and not of themselves (v. 3; cf. Exod 16:32). In fact, the manna symbolized more than mere physical nourishment but the word of God itself (v. 4), for the God who could provide in such a mighty and unexpected way was well worth listening to.<sup>13112</sup> This is the point Jesus made to the devil when he quoted this very passage while being tempted to change stones into bread (Matt 4:4). There are relative values in life, and one of them is that spiritual food is more important than physical.<sup>13123</sup>

**8:4–5** The granting of unending supply of food, of clothing that never wore out, and of physical stamina for the wilderness journey (v. 4) were all part of the process by which God instructed and prepared his people on their way to Canaan. The translation “disciplines” (v. 5) is suitable generally for the verb used here; but in light of the verbs “humble” and “test” in v. 2, it may be best to see the desert itinerary as a learning experience rather than a punishing one (cf.

---

<sup>9</sup> Duane L. Christensen, [\*Deuteronomy 1–21:9, Revised\*](#), vol. 6A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 173–174.

<sup>10131</sup> R. H. O’Connell, “Deuteronomy viii 1–20: A Symmetrical Concentricity and the Rhetoric of Providence,” *VT* 40 (1990): 437–52.

<sup>11132</sup> F. G. Lopez, “Yahve, Fuente Ultima de Vida: Analisis de Dt 8,” *Bib* 62 (1981): 21–54; R. C. Van Leeuwen, “What Comes out of God’s Mouth: Theological Wordplay in Deuteronomy 8,” *CBQ* 47 (1985): 55–57.

<sup>12133</sup> L. Perlitt, “Wovon der Mensch Lebt (Dtn 8:3b),” in *Die Botschaft und die Boten. Festschrift H. W. Wolff*, ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 403–26; A. B. Taylor, “Decisions in the Desert: The Temptation of Jesus in the Light of Deuteronomy,” *Int* 14 (1960): 300–309.



Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:16; 13:4 [Eng., 13:3]).<sup>13134</sup> Thus this is discipline in the positive sense of education.<sup>14</sup>

8:1. *all the commandments*. For the meaning of the term *mišwah* see the NOTE to 5:28 and cf. 6:25; 11:8, 22; 15:5; 19:9; 27:1. The transition from singular in the first clause to plural in the rest of the opening verse is also characteristic of the closing sentences of this chapter; compare 19aβ–b with 19b–20. This change may allude to framing function of these verses, which indeed form a kind of *inclusio* for the chapter: promise at the beginning and threat at the end.

*that you may live and increase*. For this pair of concepts, see 30:16 (*wḥyyt wrbyt*) in the singular.

*come in and possess the land*. Compare 4:1, 5; 6:18 (in the singular); 7:1; etc. (see Weinfeld 1972a, p. 342 n. 2). The transition from the singular in the opening phrase, “all the commandments that I command *you*” to the plural in the continuance, “*you* shall observe,” etc., is also found in the parallel of 6:17 (on the parallel, see the COMMENT), “Be sure [pl.] to keep the commandments ... as he has commanded *you* [sing].”

2. *that YHWH your God led you in the wilderness these past forty years*. Compare Amos 2:10, “I led you in the wilderness for forty years,” and 29:5.

*in order to chastise you*. Compare vv 3, 16, in the sense of discipline, as in v 5. And compare Ps 119:71, “How good it is for me to have been chastised (*‘unêti*) so that I learn your rules” and v 75, “I know your judgments are just, you chastised me rightly (*w’mwneh ‘nytny*).”

*to test you*. Compare 6:16 and the NOTE there.

*to know what was in your heart: whether you would keep his commandments or not*. Compare 13:3; Judg 3:4; 2 Chr 32:31. The verse here is dependent on the manna episode in Exod 16:4, “That I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.” The manna functioned as a test for Israel’s disposition regarding God (cf. the rebellious attitude in connection with the manna in Num 21:5) and as a test for the obedience of God’s instructions. Compare Exod 16:19–20, 26–29 for the violation of the divine commandments in connection with the gathering of the manna.

3. *He chastised you and made you hunger*. The verb *‘nh*, especially when joined with *npš* ‘soul’, indicates fast and hunger; cf. Lev 16:29, 31; 23:27, 32; Num 29:7; Ps 35:13; Isa 58:3, 5; Ezra 8:21 (*hithpael*); Dan 10:12 (*hithpael*). Compare the noun *t’nyt* for ‘fast’ in Ezra 9:5 and in late Hebrew.

*and fed you with the manna that neither you nor your fathers had ever known*. It was a food unknown before. Compare Exod 16:15, “for they did not know what it was,” but here dressed in

---

<sup>13134</sup> Thus Keil and Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, III:332. In referring to *הָנַח* in particular, Cairns (*Word and Presence*, 96) observes that to be humbled “is to be led to an awareness of our own meager resources and hence into trustful dependence on the resources of God.”

<sup>14</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 4, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 185–186.

rhetorical language typical of Deuteronomy; cf. also 13:7; 28:36, 64, and implying something never experienced before.

*in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but lives on anything that YHWH decrees.* Some commentators see here a juxtaposition of bread with manna: the manna is given by God, unlike bread, which is prepared by man, but this is hardly what is meant here. The manna, though coming from heaven, is called “bread” (see Exod 16:2, 4, 32; Ps 105:40; Neh 9:15) and is also prepared by man (cf. Exod 16:23). Like bread, the manna comes to satisfy the need of men. The author rather wants to convey the idea that the existence of man depends not on food alone but on God’s providence. A distinction should indeed be made between *ḥyh b* or *ḥyh mn* ‘living on’ (2 Kgs 4:1–7) and *ḥyh l*, which means existing or depending on (cf. Gen 27:40). Man *lives on* food consumed by him but *exists* on whatever God decrees. It is not bread alone that ensures man’s existence, but God’s providence. This is the lesson gained by the phenomenon of the manna. God is able to guarantee the existence of man even when nature does not. All of this goes well with the idea of the whole chapter that man should not rely on his power and wealth but on God (cf. Perlitt 1981). This sentence explains in fact the concept of “testing” in the present context. By causing deprivation and lack of food, God tests man to see whether he really puts his trust in him. This is indeed the way the Rabbis understood the testing here. Rabbi Eleazar of Modi’in says, “Whoever has what to eat today and says: what shall I eat tomorrow? is deficient of faith, as it is written: ‘In order that I may test him [Exod 16:4]’ ” (*Mek. Mas. waYassa*’, §2, p. 161).

The same attitude is reflected in the story about the testing of Jesus by Satan. After Jesus fasts for forty days, Satan tests him to see whether he will be able to turn stones into bread. Jesus replies by quoting this verse (Matt 4:1–4; Luke 4:3–4). Thus the “testing” in Deut 8:2, 16 is understood as being initiated by Satan, who represents evil (compare the “testing” of Satan in Job, chaps. 1 and 2). After this episode we find in the NT the episode about Satan’s testing of Jesus by enticing him to fall from the roof of the Temple, to which Jesus reacts with the quotation of Deut 6:16, “you shall not test YHWH your God” (Matt 4:5–7; Luke 4:9–12). Associated with these two episodes is the third test concerning submission to Satan, which is rejected by Jesus, who relies on Deut 6:14 (Matt 4:8–10; Luke 4:5–8; see above, in the COMMENT on 6:10–19). As indicated in the COMMENT below, Deut 8 actually corresponds to Deut 6:10–19, and the “testing” in these two pericopes is presented ambiguously: man testing God in chap. 8 and God testing man in 6:16. Provision of food in the desert is the proper example for this. By asking for water in the desert, the people test God. Conversely, by giving manna God tests the endurance of the people.

*on anything that YHWH decrees.* Literally, “on that which comes out from the mouth of YHWH,” meaning a decision that cannot be annulled. For this usage, *yš’ mpy X* in the sense of ‘decree’, cf. Isa 45:3; 48:3; 55:11, “so is the word that comes out from my mouth (*šr yš’ mpy*), it does not come back to me unfulfilled.” The phrase here has some affinities to the Egyptian phrase in the Harris papyrus 44.6, “one lives from what comes out of his [God’s] mouth” (cf. Brunner 1958, p. 428) but, as indicated, it is not limited to food but to the dependence of man’s destiny on God’s will.

4. *The clothes upon you did not wear out.* See 29:4; Neh 9:21; and compare in the Gilgamesh epic 11.244–46, “until he gets to his city [var. to his land], until he finishes his journey let not [this] cloak have a moldy cast (*šiba aj iddima*), let it be wholly new” (cf. Paul 1968, p. 119 n. 3.).

*blh* is paralleled with *kl š* ‘eaten by moth’ in Isa 50:9 and Job 13:28 (concerning cloth), which makes the parallel with Gilgamesh’s “moldy cast” even stronger.

*nor did your feet swell.* Compare Neh 9:21. In 29:4, “nor did your sandals wear out on your feet,” and so the Aramaic Targumim here, “you were not barefooted.” In fact, both Deut 8:4 and 29:4 express an identical idea: swollen feet cannot bear shoes on them (see Blau 1956).

5. *Bear in mind.* Literally, “know in your heart.” Compare 4:39 and see the NOTE there.

*that YHWH your God disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son.* Hebrew *ysr* denotes training by chastising and punishing as a father does to his son (see 21:18; and cf. Prov 19:18; 29:17). For the didactic idea compare Prov 3:11–12, “My son, despise not the chastening of YHWH (*mwsr YHWH*) ... for whom YHWH loves he corrects (*ywkyh*),” also Job 5:17, “Happy is the man whom God corrects, do not despise the chastening (*mwsr*) of Shaddai”; and Ps 94:12, “Happy is the man whom you YHWH chastise (*tysrnw yh*) and from your teaching you instruct him (*wmtwrk tmdnw*).” The noun *mwsr* derived from *ysr* means education in general (Prov 1:2, 8; 4:1; etc.) and is found in Deut 11:2, “your children, who neither experienced nor witnessed the *lesson (mwsr)* of YHWH your God.” As in the educational human process, where punishment is actually correction that brings improvement in the future, so God chastised Israel in the desert for its future benefit (cf. v 16).

6. *Therefore, keep the commandments.* This verse rounds off the passage (vv 1–6) that started with the injunction to keep the commandments of YHWH: *tšmrwn l šwt* (v 1).

*to walk in his ways.* Compare 5:30; 10:12; 11:22; 19:4; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16. Following law and justice was conceived in the Bible as following God’s ways; cf., for example, Gen 18:19, “they will keep the way (*drk*) of YHWH by doing justice and righteousness,” and see Prov 2:8–9; 8:20; etc. Similarly, in the Mesopotamian sources the “way” of justice is frequently referred to (see Weinfeld 1985d, pp. 15–17). In Deuteronomy following the way of YHWH, or rather walking in his ways (*hlk bdrkyw*), means to keep his commandments. The word *halakha* in rabbinic literature, which denotes the whole lore of Jewish practice, is also derived from *hlk* ‘walk’. For general behavior defined as *way*, cf. Jer 5:4; compare also *drk* ‘way’ in Qumran (1Q5 9:21; 4:22; 8:10; etc.) and *hodos* ‘way’ in the NT (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 24:14; etc.); cf. Weinfeld 1985, pp. 15–17.

*to fear him.* Compare 6:13 and the NOTE there.<sup>15</sup>

## 8. The lessons of the wilderness.

—1–5. **Let Israel remember how their life in the wilderness had been a period of discipline, in which God had taught the infant nation its dependence upon Him.**—1. *All the commandment, which, &c.*] 11:8, 22, 15:5, 19:9, 27:1, cf. 6:25: comp. on 5:28 (31). The *whole* of the Deut<sup>16</sup>. law—the principle of 11:22b, together with all that is involved in it—is to be obeyed by, the Israelite. The exhortation of 5:29f, (32f.) 6:2f, 17–19, 7:11, 12 is repeated, for the purpose of enforcing it by a fresh motive, v. 2ff.—*Observe to do*] 5:1.—*That ye may live,&c.*] cf.

<sup>15</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 388–391.

<sup>16</sup>Deut. “Deut.,” attached to citations from Jud. or Kings, indicates that the passages referred to are the work of the Deuteronomistic compilers of the books in question (see p. xci f.).

4:1, 5:30 (33) 6:3.—*Go in and possess,&c.*] 1:8—2–6. The new motive: the recollection of the years spent in the wilderness, and the evidence which they afforded of the loving, yet searching and testing, providence of God.—2. *Led thee forty years in the wilderness*] Am. 2:10.—*To humble thee*] by teaching thee, viz., thy dependence upon Him; cf. v. 3, 16.—*To prove thee*] cf. on 6:16. Hunger (v. 3), or other privations, according to the spirit in which they are received, are a test of the temper of those who experience them.—*To know what was in thine heart*] i.e. to discover thy real purposes and disposition: cf. 1 S. 14:7, 2 K. 10:30, 2 Ch. 32:31 (לנסותו לדעת כל בלבבו).—*Whether thou wouldest keep,—c.*] cf. esp. Ex. 16:4 J<sup>17</sup>E (of the manna); Jud. 3:4.—3. In particular the manna is pointed to, as illustrating the discipline of the wilderness: Israel's self-sufficiency was “humbled,” first by its being suffered to feel a want, and afterwards by the manner in which its want was supplied; it was thus taught how, for its very existence, it was daily (Ex. 16:4) dependent on the (creative) word of God. On the manna, see Ex. 16 (JE and P), Nu. 11:4–9, 21:5 (both J<sup>18</sup>E); and comp. Bacon, *JBLit*<sup>19</sup>. 1892, p. 185 ff.; *Triple Tradition*, pp. 83–86. Further, the manna “proved” Israel (v. 16; Ex. 16:4), by showing, viz. whether or not Israel would accommodate itself, trustfully and contentedly (Nu. 21:5), to this state of continued dependence upon God, and whether therefore it could be trusted to obey properly any other laws which might in future be laid upon it. Thus the manna (1) taught Israel its dependence upon Jehovah, and (2) operated as a test of Israel's disposition.—*Which thou knewest not, &c.*] cf. 13:7 (6) 28:36, 64. It was a food unknown before (Ex. 16:15); and consequently a signal evidence of God's sustaining providence.—*That man doth not live on bread alone, but on every utterance of Jehovah's mouth doth man live*] the didactic treatment of the history continues, a further lesson being based on the narrative of the manna. The narrative showed that the natural products of the earth are not uniformly sufficient for the support of life: the creative will of God, in whatever other way it may, upon occasion, specially exert itself, is also a sustaining power, on which man may find himself obliged to rely. But the words, though originally suggested by the history of the manna, are not limited in their import to that particular occasion: they are of wider application; and they are accordingly quoted by our Lord, in His answer to the tempter (Mt. 4:4), for the purpose of showing that needs of sense do not exhaust the requirements of human nature, that man leads a spiritual life as well as a physical life, and that by yielding inopportunely to physical necessity, higher spiritual needs may be neglected or frustrated.—*Utterance (אָמַר)*] on 23:24.—4. *Thy raiment wore not away from off thee, neither did thy foot blister, these forty years*] a further illustration of God's sustaining providence during the years passed in the wilderness. The terms of the description are rhetorical, and are not of course to be understood literally, as was done, for instance, by the Jews, who even fabled (v. Rashi: cf. Just. c. *Tryph.* § 131) that the clothes of the Israelite children grew with their bodies, “like the shell of a snail”! Cf. 29:4 (5) Neh. 9:21 (a quotation).—5. *Know (4:39), then, with thine heart, that like as a man disciplines his son, Jehovah thy God is disciplining thee*] in the wilderness, Jehovah had been as a father *disciplining* his child (see on 4:36; and cf. Pr. 4:1, 19:18, 29:17), and educating him with a view to his ultimate good (v. 16). Cf. Hos. 2:16 (14) (the wilderness a place of discipline for renegade Ephraim).—6. Let Israel, then, respond with filial

---

<sup>17</sup>JE Denoting the other Pentateuchal sources

<sup>18</sup>JE Denoting the other Pentateuchal sources

<sup>19</sup>*JBLit. Journal of Biblical Literature* (Mass. U.S.A.).

obedience.—*And keep*] see below.—*To walk in his ways*] *i.e.* in the ways which He approves, and which He directs men to follow (Ex. 18:20): so 19:9, 26:17, 28:9, 30:16, with *all* 10:12, 11:22, Jos. 22:5 (<sup>20</sup>D<sup>212</sup>) 1 K. 2:3, 3:14, 8:58, 11:33, 38 (all Deut<sup>22</sup>), and occasionally besides. With other verbs, both *way* and *ways* are frequent in the same moral application: *e.g.* Gen. 18:19 (J<sup>23</sup>E) Ps. 18:22 (21); cf. on 5:30.—*To fear him*] 6:13, 24.

**8:1.** וּרְבִיתָם pf., as 4:1.—**2.** אָם לֹא ... הָ—2:7 [וְהָ] Ex. 16:4, Nu. 11:23 *al.* (Le<sup>24</sup>x<sup>25</sup>. **2 ה ב**).—**3.** וַיִּדְעוּן so v. 16<sup>26</sup>†. The ׀ in 0the 3rd pl. *perf.*—unlike the ׀ in the 2nd and 3rd ps. pl. *impf.* (on 1:17)—is both anomalous, and philologically questionable. The only other example in the OT. is Is. 26:16 וַיִּקְוּן. The form is met with occasionally in Syriac and other late dialects (as the Palest. Targums and the Jerus. Talmud); but it is difficult to think that the three isolated cases in the OT. are original: had the form been in actual use in ancient Hebrew, the occasions for its employment would surely have been more numerous (v. Dr<sup>27</sup>. § 6 *Obs.* 2, p. 6 f., with the *reff.*).—**3.** עַל] Gen. 27:40, Is. 38:16.

**4.** מֵעַלֶיךָ a pregnant constr., “wear away (and drop) from upon thee”: so 29:4, cf. Job 30:17, 30.—בְּצִקָּה Neh. 9:21<sup>28</sup>†.—**5.** וַיִּדְעָתָּה] *know, then*, as 7:9.—**5.** עִם לְבַבְךָ] for this idiom. use of עִם, cf. 15:9, Jos. 14:7, 1 K. 8:17, 18, 10:2 (= 1 Ch. 6:7, 8, 2 Ch. 9:1) 1 Ch. 22:7, 28:2, 2 Ch. 1:11, 24:4, 29:10.—**6.** וַיִּשְׁמְדָתָּה] *and keep* (as an imper.), carrying on וַיִּדְעָתָּה.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>20</sup>D Deuteronomist sections of Joshua, or sometimes (as p. lxxvi f.) secondary parts of Deuteronomy.

<sup>212</sup> Deuteronomist sections of Joshua, or sometimes (as p. lxxvi f.) secondary parts of Deuteronomy.

<sup>22</sup>Deut. “Deut.,” attached to citations from Jud. or Kings, indicates that the passages referred to are the work of the Deuteronomic compilers of the books in question (see p. xci f.).

<sup>23</sup>JE Denoting the other Pentateuchal sources

<sup>24</sup>*Lex A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT., based on the Lexicon and Thesaurus of Gesenius*, by F. Brown, C. A. Briggs, and S. R. Driver, Oxford, 1891 ff. (parts 1–10, reaching as far as קרן, at present 1906.

<sup>25</sup>. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT., based on the Lexicon and Thesaurus of Gesenius*, by F. Brown, C. A. Briggs, and S. R. Driver, Oxford, 1891 ff. (parts 1–10, reaching as far as קרן, at present 1906.

<sup>26</sup>† The sign following a series of references, indicates that all examples of the word or form in question, occurring in the OT., have been quoted.

<sup>27</sup>Dr. Driver, S. R., *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (ed. 3, Oxford, 1892).

<sup>28</sup>† The sign following a series of references, indicates that all examples of the word or form in question, occurring in the OT., have been quoted.

<sup>29</sup> S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3rd ed., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 106–108.