

The  
**CHASSIDUS**  
**PERSPECTIVE**  
*with Reb Yoel Kahn*



To hear this talk in Yiddish, visit:  
[MerkazAnash.com/cp/devorim5779](http://MerkazAnash.com/cp/devorim5779)

Prepared by  
 Rabbi Yehudah Leib Altein

## IS DEVARIM DIFFERENT?

Parshas Devarim marks the beginning of Sefer Devarim, which is also known as Mishneh Torah.

The Gemara in Megillah states that Moshe said Sefer Devarim *mipi atzmo*, on his own accord. The *mefarshim* question what this means. After all, if someone posits that even one word of the Torah was formulated by Moshe independently of Hashem, he is an *apikores*. Sefer Devarim certainly comes from Hashem as well; the only difference is that Moshe said it in a way of *mipi atzmo*. What does this mean?

Tosafos in Megillah explains that Moshe said Sefer Devarim with *ruach hakodesh*. Moreover, Rashi in Sanhedrin explains that Moshe transmitted Mishneh Torah to the Jews as he had received it from Hashem.

In fact, in the second *parshah* of Shema (written in Sefer Devarim), Moshe says "*Venasati metar artzichem*, I will give the rain of your land." If Moshe was the one speaking, why did he say "I will give" and not "Hashem will give"? Chazal explain that the *Shechinah* was speaking through Moshe's mouth.

If Mishneh Torah is also from Hashem, what exactly is the difference between it and the first four *sefarim*?

### TWO TYPES OF TRANSMISSION

There are two ways in which Moshe transmitted the words of Hashem. One way is as a *shliach*, in which it is not necessary to understand the divine message; the *shliach's* job is merely to convey Hashem's words. A second way is to understand what Hashem said, and then proceed to pass it on to others.

Chassidus explains that there are two ways in which an entity can serve as a *memutza*, an intermediary between two things. One way is *derech maavar*, in passing, and another way is *derech hislabshus*, internally.

An example is the difference between the hand and the brain. When writing an

intellectual concept, the hand is merely serving as a conduit to convey the *sechel* on paper. The hand is not a *keili* for the *sechel*; the *sechel* merely passes through it. The brain, by contrast, is a *keili* for the *sechel*; the *sechel* doesn't just pass through it but becomes part of it.

---

If Mishneh Torah also comes from Hashem, how is it different from the first four *sefarim*?

---

This is the difference between the first four *sefarim* and Mishneh Torah. With the first four *sefarim*, Moshe served as a *shliach* to give over the words of Hashem (as Rashi says in Megillah). Whether he understood it or not was irrelevant; he was merely a conduit to convey Hashem's words.

With Mishneh Torah, by contrast, the words of Hashem settled in Moshe's intellect, and he then proceeded to give it over to the Jewish nation. This is why it is called *mipi atzmo*, not because they were his own words *chas veshalom*, but because Hashem's words had become part of him.

### EXPOUNDING SEMUCHIN

This can help us understand another concept:

The Gemara says that there is a *machlokes* whether *darshinan semuchin*—whether we can learn something from the fact that one *parshah* (paragraph) is written specifically adjacent to another *parshah*. The Gemara continues that even if we cannot be *doresh semuchin* in the first four *sefarim*, we can certainly do so in Mishneh Torah.

What is the logic behind this distinction?

---

Mishneh Torah was not Moshe's own words; it is the word of Hashem, as it became united with Moshe's intellect.

---

The order of the *parshiyos* in the Torah is surely exact, and there is certainly a reason why one paragraph is written near the next one. The question, however, is whether we can understand this order or not. It is possible that the order is G-dly in nature and cannot be understood with mortal intellect.

This is the difference between the first four *sefarim* and Sefer Devarim. The order in the

first four *sefarim* is also exact and has a reason. However, since those *sefarim* did not bond with Moshe's intellect, their order might be beyond our intellectual capabilities, in which case we cannot derive conclusions from it.

Mishneh Torah, however, is different. It was grasped by Moshe's intellect, so that he would be able to transmit it to us so that we, too, could understand it. Therefore, we have the ability to expound the order of its *parshiyos*.

## ALL FROM HASHEM

We know that everything in Torah She'baal Peh has a source in Torah She'bichsav. Sefarim explain that the same is true regarding Torah She'baal Peh in general: the source for the general concept of Torah She'baal Peh is Mishneh Torah.

In this light, all the above applies to Torah She'baal Peh as well.

Although Moshe said Mishneh Torah *mipi atzmo*, this does not mean that it was his own words; it is the word of Hashem, as it became united with Moshe's intellect.

The same is true with Torah She'baal Peh—be it Gemara, Midrashim, Rishonim, and even Acharonim (those *sefarim* that became accepted by world Jewry). We must know that they are all equally the word of Hashem. "Whatever a sharp student will ever innovate was given to Moshe at Har Sinai."

You may ask: "This teaching was only taught at a later point in time, by this particular Rishon or Acharon. Moreover, the Rishon or Acharon grasped the idea with his own intellectual reasoning. What do you mean that it was given at Har Sinai?"

The fact that the concept was revealed at a later time by a particular person doesn't mean that it was *his* idea. Everything derives equally from Hashem. The only difference is that Hashem wanted certain ideas to be transmitted in certain ways and at certain times: some—via Moshe as a *shliach*; others—via

Moshe in a way of *mipi atzmo*; and others—through the Jewish sages of each generation, through utilizing their intellect to grasp and reveal them.

We call them *chiddushim* because they were revealed later by a particular person; however, they stem (not from human intellect, but) from Hashem. Tosafos says that Moshe said Mishneh Torah with *ruach hakodesh*; a similar thing can be said about the teachings of the true *tzaddikim* and *chachmei Yisroel* of each generation.

## THRESHOLD OF ERETZ YISROEL

Mishneh Torah was said right before the Jews entered Eretz Yisroel. In other words, although at first glance this *sefer* appears to be lower than the other four, it was specifically Mishneh

Torah that enabled the Jews to enter Eretz Yisroel.

The same is true today, when we are standing at the threshold of entering Eretz Yisroel with Moshiach. The way to merit this is through giving proper significance not only to Torah She'bichsav, but to Torah She'baal Peh as well, and not only to the Gemara and Midrashim, but also to the Rishonim and Acharonim; by studying them and

keeping the *chumros* and *takanos* they instituted.

Through this, we will merit to experience what the *posuk* states at the conclusion of Sefer Devarim: "*ad hayom ha'acharon*," which Rashi explains as meaning "*ad hayom ha'acharon* – until the final day," the coming of Moshiach.

For further study, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1087–1090. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, pp. 9ff.

---

Moshe said Mishneh Torah with *ruach hakodesh*. A similar thing can be said about the *tzaddikim* and *chachmei Yisroel* of each generation.

---



**merkazanash.com**  
info@merkazanash.com  
347.471.1770

Dedicated in honor of  
the tireless director of Sichos In English

**Rabbi Yonah Avtzon** ע"ה  
who led the way in disseminating  
English Chassidus

by his children  
**Rabbi Yitzchok and Chanie Wolf** שיחיו