



In both of these cases we see Nevi'im Rishonim referring to a law in ספר תורה משה. In both cases we find this law word for word in Sefer Debarim. The Nevi'im never refer to the books of Torah by the names we commonly use for them. Rather, they refer to Debarim as Sefer Torat Moshe.

*Why did the Nevi'im think only of Debarim as "Moshe's teaching" if he wrote all five books?*

Because Debarim contains mostly Moshe's own speeches. Of all the five books, Debarim is the most personally connected to Moshe. We can prove this from the following three observations:

- a. The first four books refer to Moshe in third person while Sefer Torah Moshe refers to Moshe in first person. Compare וידבר ה' אלי לאמר in Debarim 2:17 to the usual וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר used almost 100 times in the first four books.
- b. While in the first four books Moshe is usually repeating something told to him by Hashem, Debarim never says that these words were dictated to Moshe by Hashem. Abarbanel even says that Moshe composed these speeches by himself and only afterwards did Hashem command him to write down the speech and make it part of Humash. See source 3.
- c. Bavli Megilah 31b brings the opinion of Abaye that one may not call more than one person up to the Torah when reading the curses of Vayikra but one may split up the curses of Debarim. The reason given is that Moshe uttered the curses of Debarim in his own name. See source 4.

3. In source 4, we find a third name for Sefer Debarim used by Hazal – משנה תורה. This phrase is also used in Debarim 17:18.

*What does this name mean and why is it called that?*

This means the repetition of the Torah. This reflects the idea that Debarim is a repetition of Torah. Moshe here reviews some of the most important laws and ideas for the second generation that they will need as they go into Israel. (See Ibn Ezra on Debarim 1:5.) The modern English name Deuteronomy comes from the Greek Septuagint name which is nothing other than a translation of the Hebrew משנה תורה.

In class exercise. Go through each of the first four books from memory and see which stories and laws they have in common with Sefer Debarim. Write the results on the board as you go:

**Sefer Breishit** - Sefer Debarim makes almost no mention of any of its stories: not the Creation, the Flood, the Avot, or the brothers.

**Sefer Shmot** - We find only a few details of the Exodus & **no** details of the Mishkan. We do however find the story of Ma'amad Har Sinai & Chet Ha'egel. Some of the laws in Mishpatim are also found in Debarim.

**Sefer Vayikra** - Debarim makes almost no mention of any of its Mitzvot.

**Sefer Bamidbar** - Although some of its stories are mentioned, e.g. the Meraglim and defeating Sichon & Og, **none** of its Mitzvot are recorded.

In fact, if we look through the contents of the first four book, relatively little is repeated here. Furthermore, there are many additions in Debarim not found in the other

books and some of the laws which are repeated provide different details than those given on the other books. משנה תורה is certainly not a summary of the first four books. Rather, Moshe gives a new perspective on some laws they have learned already or emphasizes ones that are most important. He may also be giving laws that he had received earlier but had not yet taught Bnei Yisrael, perhaps because they were not yet relevant. Most of the stories in Beresheet and Shemot were probably already well known and so Moshe did not have to repeat them. Moshe only repeats what needs emphasizing or updating. For example, in chapters 1-3 Moshe will repeat the commandment given to the first generation to go and inherit the land. This must be repeated because it was never fulfilled by the first generation and so the responsibility now falls on the second generation. An example of a law not mentioned previously are laws that dictate the behavior of a king. This law was not relevant to the first generation. An example of an updated law are all those related the expansion of the land like eating non-sacrificial meat and setting up extra cities of refuge. (See further in the commentary of S. R. Hirsch on Debarim 1:3.)

In sum, these three names set up for us a basic question about Sefer Debarim. The first name - ספר אלה הדברים - hints at the basic structure of the book as we will see in the next lesson is a collection of speeches. The other two names are reflective of two different aspects of the content of the Sefer. On the one hand this is Moshe's book and it presents Moshe's personal reflections and advice to this new generation. A new message was necessary for a new generation since Moshe wants to make sure they do not repeat the same mistakes as the first generation. Therefore, it is called ספר תורת משה.

On the other hand, much of the speech is a repetition of laws found in the first four books; it is a משנה תורה. But if Moshe is repeating them then he is probably also emphasizing some aspect of it that was not obvious beforehand. So the speech is a combination of old and new. It repeats information from the first four books but Moshe adds a new perspective on them relevant to the second generation. In this sense Moshe Rabbenu is the quintessential Rabbi – applying the eternal messages of the Torah he received at Har Sinai and Ohel Mo'ed with the needs of the new generation standing before him. In a sense, the second generation represents us – every generation after the first who did not directly experience Har Sinai and must learn the laws from our teachers. We are as much Moshe's audience as are the members of Bnei Yisrael standing before him. Let's hear what he has to say.