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[Home](#) > Droschos - Root of Learning Torah

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Why did Hashem have to reveal Himself to us at Mt. Sinai at the Giving of the Torah? If the entire purpose of the Giving of the Torah was so that our nation should receive the Torah, it would have been enough to receive this gift even through an emissary. Why did Hashem Himself have to reveal Himself when He gave us the Torah?

Another question is, we know that our souls left us at this revelation. If we weren't able to handle this spiritual revelation, why didn't Hashem just give the Torah to Moshe? Why did we have to receive it directly from Hashem?

The existence of the universe depends on the Torah. Learning the Torah began at Mt. Sinai; before this, there was no "giving" of the Torah, and all Torah that we had we learned from ourselves. At Mt. Sinai, we, the Jewish people, received the way how to learn Torah. Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin zt"l said that everything is contained in its beginning; thus, in order to understand anything, we must know its root. The root of learning Torah was when we stood at Sinai. Let us think about this. The first commandment was, "I am Hashem your G-d." The Sages expound on this that when anyone sits and learns Torah, Hashem sits and learns next to him. The Torah wasn't only for Mt. Sinai! Hashem descended onto the mountain. The Sages said that not only on Mt. Sinai did Hashem come, but every time a person learns, Hashem is there. That was what we received at Sinai - that every time we learn Torah, it is a revelation of Hashem's presence. Just like our souls left us at Sinai, so too when we learn Torah, in a sense, our souls leave us. Learning Torah, throughout all the generation, resembles the way we received the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

Another thing we find by the Giving of the Torah is that on every word that Hashem spoke, our souls left us. We find this well in our own learning. The Rambam writes that a person has to kill himself over the words of Torah; so, in a sense, when we exert ourselves in learning, it is as if our souls are leaving us, because we are "killing" ourselves in our toil. Why did their souls leave them when they heard each word of the Torah? Because when they heard each word, they saw Hashem. From their great *d'veykus* to Hashem, they could see Hashem through each word they heard. (This is like the words of the *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*, that learning Torah itself is *d'veykus* to Hashem). If a person learns Torah without this *d'veykus*, the Torah he is learning does not represent the Torah that was given by Sinai.

The Torah was not just given so that it could be given to us. The Torah was given to us so we could connect to the One who gave us the Torah.

We know that a person can send a *sheliach* and give *kiddushin* to a woman, and the *kiddushin* is valid. But if a *chosson* sends a *sheliach* to his *kallah* to give her *kiddushin*, it might be a valid *kiddushin*, but it is clear that such a *chosson* doesn't know anything about the relationship between a husband and wife.

That is why the Torah could not be given through a *sheliach*; it was like the wedding of Hashem with the Jewish people.

These words are not novel concepts. They are written in the words of the Torah and in the words of the Sages, but we just don't reflect on them.

Why did Hashem give us the Torah?

"Hashem and the Torah are one." If a person forgets Hashem, it's like a *kallah* who forgets about her *chosson* on her wedding day.

It's possible that a person can learn Torah the entire day and he never interrupts his learning, yet he is still very far from the Torah. Why? Because a person might still think that the Torah could have been given through a *sheliach*...

He might think, "*Baruch Hashem*, we have many *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*. We have many *sefarim*. My own learning isn't so needed..."

People can learn and learn and even enjoy their learning, but they are missing something. They might be thinking that the Torah belongs only to Moshe - "*Toras Moshe*"...

But we have to know: Without our learning Torah, there is nothing in the world.

"Hashem is always near me." That is the beginning of *Shulchan Aruch*. Why is this the first *halacha*? It

is because in order to learn Torah, first we must know that there is Hashem.

In the laws of learning, it is brought in *Shulchan Aruch* that a person, before he learns, should be aware that he is in Hashem's presence. This doesn't mean that a person has to keep thinking of this fact obsessively throughout the day. It just means that for two minutes, or even one minute, we should remember that we are learning Torah in front of Hashem.

How do we prepare for receiving the Torah? This is by accepting the responsibility of Torah on ourselves. It means to actually accept the Torah – this is by thinking for a minute before we sit down to learn: There is a Hashem, Who gave us the Torah. We are not alone when we learn; Hashem is sitting with us. We should all be zoche to learn Torah with *kedushah* and become close to Hashem all day with it.

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/droshos-root-learning-torah>