



# BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

# TORONTO TORAH

## PARASHAT BEREISHIT

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Ruth and Gerald Warner in memory of Ruth's parents Margaret and Mike Smaye, מירל צביה בת דוד and יחיאל מיכל בן יהושע.



**DVAR TORAH BEREISHIT** RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

## This land is Your land

Rashi begins his commentary on the Torah by bringing a midrash which explains why the Torah, which is our guide to living, begins with the story of creation instead of starting with the first commandment that was given to the Jewish people:

For should the peoples of the world say to Israel, "You are robbers, because you took by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan," Israel may reply to them, "All the earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it to whom He pleased. When He willed He gave it to them, and when He willed He took it from them and gave it to us."

The problem with this approach is that unfortunately we know all too well that historical and theological arguments to justify our presence in Israel provide little to no ability to defend ourselves in world public opinion. Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch of Telshe suggested that we could understand this message as giving the Jewish people strength in their own beliefs when faced with challenges from the outside world. When our legitimacy is questioned, it is important to be able to answer for ourselves so that we can maintain our convictions.

While our ability to justify our presence

in Israel to ourselves and to others is important, we know that our actions and deeds are the main focus of Torah and it is still strange to start the Torah in a way that doesn't align with its main goal. I believe that if we look deeper into this midrash we can discover that it is not only telling us about our historical and theological right to the land but there is also embedded within it the instructions of how we are able to act in order to merit this inheritance and Hashem's protection.

***By living our lives  
according to these values,  
we merit to inherit  
and keep the land.***

The midrash is based on a verse from Tehillim:

He has declared to His people the power of His works in giving them the heritage of the nations. (111:6)

There is another midrash in Bamidbar Rabbah that further develops this verse and explains that it was within Hashem's power to give us an uninhabited land, with no need to displace a local population, but instead He chose this path in order to show us the power of His actions. Ramban explains that the events

recounted from creation develop the idea that people are only able to stay on their land as long as they live according to the ideals of Hashem. The Torah is given to a people about to enter their land and they need to know that its inheritance is based on them meriting the land and those that were occupying it having lost that merit due to their sins (See Bereishit 15:16).

If we continue to the next verse in that chapter of Tehillim we see what Hashem values:

The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are sure.

According to Malbim, truth is the connection to and awareness of Hashem and justice is the need to live moral and ethical lives in our relationship with others. Only by living our lives according to these values can we merit to inherit and keep the land which ultimately belongs to Him. In these difficult times we can often get preoccupied justifying ourselves to world opinion. While this has its place and importance, it is also essential for us to strengthen our connection to Hashem and to each other. By living lives dedicated to Hashem and relating to others according to the precepts of justice taught in our Torah, we will merit to have Hashem's help in settling and living in His land.



## Yeshayahu 60 – Bereishit 5784

Chapter 59 ended with a promise of redemption. Chapter 60 continues that optimistic note, earning it a place as the sixth haftorah of consolation following Tishah b'Av.

The chapter begins with a call to the Jews, "Rise, shine!" Per Radak, we are summoned to rejoice, radiating joy. [Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra reads it differently.] A new radiance will illuminate not only for us, but also for the nations who join us (60:1-3).

Yeshayahu predicts that our children will return from their exile overseas, increasing our radiance and joy. Wealth will arrive from overseas, along with caravans from the desert. We will receive animals, which we will bring as offerings to Hashem (60:4-7).

We will react to this abundance with shock, asking how it is that our children, and all

of this wealth, are brought to us. Hashem will respond that the nations are bringing them; they will also build up our cities and look after our needs. Even the descendants of our oppressors will come to us, humbled. Whereas once we had been neglected and even despised, now we will be elevated in splendour. This may predict the start of the book of Ezra, when Cyrus conquers Babylon and sends the Jews back to Israel with great wealth (60:8-16).

Hashem promises to elevate us by replacing copper with gold, iron with silver, wood with copper and stone with iron. No longer will we rely on the sun and moon for light; in a verse which is customarily recited at the conclusion of a shivah, Yeshayahu promises that Hashem will be a source of eternal light for us, and the days of our mourning will end. We will be entirely righteous, and even the small among us

will become great; Hashem will hasten this "at its time" (60:17-22).

In Toronto Torah 5:1 (Ki Tavo 5773), Rabbi Baruch Weintraub noted Rabbi Yochanan's question: Hashem may replace our materials, but who will replace Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues? (Rosh Hashanah 23a). He quoted the Chatam Sofer's observation that Jews will not settle for an incomplete redemption, however luxurious. (Torat Moshe, Parshat Shoftim) But he also quoted Rabbi Yehuda Amital: "It is clear that the Chatam Sofer's claim that we reject an incomplete redemption was silenced in the years of the Holocaust." We rejoiced when the State of Israel was established in 1948, even knowing that war was coming. After all we have suffered, we will celebrate every redemption Hashem sends to us.



## Week 1: Ramban and the Spirit of the Law

Ramban, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides) was one of the most prominent Rishonim. He was born in Girona, Spain in 1194 and died in Israel around 1270. His contributions to every area of Jewish thought are profound. He wrote a commentary on the Torah which both analyzes local issues in verses as well as overarching themes in large units and books (and is thus popular among modern literary scholars of Tanach). He wrote several works defending earlier scholars from criticism. He wrote the *Milchamot Hashem* to defend Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi (Rif) from the criticism of Rabbi Zerachia HaLevi (Baal HaMaor), as well as a defense of the Halachot Gedolot's count of mitzvot from Rambam. He wrote *responsa*, a major work on indirect damages (*Dina D'garmi*) and on halachic and philosophical issues around death and reward and punishment (Torat HaAdam, with the section *Shaar HaGemul*). He was also a leading kabbalist, either as a member of the school of Rabbi Isaac the Blind, Rabbi Ezra and Azriel of Girona, or a member of a parallel school. He was also

a participant in a famous disputation in Barcelona in 1263. He had to defend tenets of Judaism from critiques by the apostate Jew, Pablo Christiani. He was also a doctor.

Moshe Halbertal has written a comprehensive treatment of Ramban's worldview (*Nahmanides: Law and Mysticism*) and Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig has written a dissertation (at Bernard Revel Graduate School) contending that Ramban (rather than Tosafot) created the conceptual approach to Torah study that would later be expressed in the "Brisker methodology", as well as explaining why Ramban was devoted to defending earlier scholars.

In the coming weeks, we will explore Ramban's powerful contention that the mitzvot are not intended to be part of an exhaustive list of our obligations in this world, but rather as pieces of a broader worldview that must be pursued. We will see his exposition of this in three areas of law, ritual, interpersonal, and Shabbat laws, as well as the influence his position has had on later thinkers in a variety of halachic issues.



## Starting From The Beginning - *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*

After an exciting and inspiring holiday season, we start reading the Torah from the beginning, and this is an excellent opportunity to join and learn the weekly parasha *Shnayim Mikra Ve' Echad Targum* (reading the Torah text twice and read once the "translation"). In the following article, we will try to address some common questions about *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*:

**Question:** Is it an obligation or optional?

**Answer:** It's an obligation! The Talmud in Berachot 8 says, "A person should always complete the weekly Torah portions with the congregation *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*." Rabbi Moshe Feinstein emphasizes the importance of this commandment and says this is a mitzva like any other that one cannot be exempted from because he learns other parts of the Torah [Igrot Moshe Orach Chayim, Part 5, Siman 17].

**Question:** Should one learn the Onkelos translation or Rashi's commentary?

**Answer:** The Shulchan Aruch in Orach Chayim 285:2 says that one can fulfill the

obligation with either of these options. The Mishnah Berurah says that one can even fulfill the obligation by studying translations in other languages as well, as long as they are based on the words of Chazal (our sages).

**Question:** How should one recite *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*?

**Answer:** The Mishnah Berurah in Orach Chayim 285:2 presents two options - Option 1: Read each verse twice and then read the translation. Option 2: Read a complete Parasha Petucha or Setuma (recognized in your Chumash in the point which ends with a Peh or Samech) or a logical stopping point (which seemingly includes aliyot) twice and then read the translation. Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky presents an additional option in the introduction to his book "Emet LeYaakov" and suggests to read the aliyah or parasha and then read a verse and its translation one by one.

**Question:** From when can one start reciting *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*?

**Answer:** The Talmud states that one should complete the portion with the congregation, and therefore, you begin when the congregation starts reading the upcoming portion, which is from Mincha service on Shabbat [Mishnah Berurah 285:7].

**Question:** Until when should one complete the recitation of *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum*?

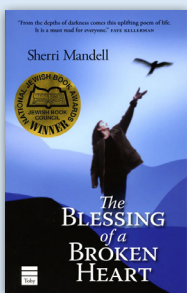
**Answer:** The Shulchan Aruch initially recommends completing it before the Shabbat meal, but if not, it can be completed by Tuesday. The absolute latest is until the Chag Shemini Atzeret of the following year.

**The importance of this commandment:** The Talmud says, 'Anyone who completes the weekly portions with the congregation, will prolong his days and years.' May we merit in the coming year to be consistent in the study of *Shnayim Mikra Ve'Echad Targum* and merit long days and years.

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at [ymann@torontotorah.com](mailto:ymann@torontotorah.com).



## Week 1: Our Next Book – *The Blessing of a Broken Heart*



*The Blessing of a Broken Heart*  
By Sherri Mandell  
The Toby Press, 2003

On May 8th, 2001, two Jewish teens from Tekoa, Koby Mandell and Yosef Ishran, decided to skip school. What should have been a relatively ordinary day turned horrifying when the two boys were murdered in cold blood by Palestinian terrorists. Our next book, *The Blessing of a Broken Heart* was written by Koby Mandell's mother, Sherri. In her book, she masterfully tells the story not only of her terrible loss, but of how she learned to cope and grow from it.

Israel is currently engaged in a battle for her survival. Even as we watch, the number of casualties continues to rise. As we try to make sense of this unprecedented

loss, perhaps we can find hope and strength in Sherri Mandell. Today, we all have broken hearts. But, as she writes, "But when you touch broken hearts together, a new heart emerges, one that is more open and compassionate, able to touch others, a heart that seeks God. That is the blessing of a broken heart" (page 7).

I hope you will join me in our reading of *The Blessing of a Broken Heart* and, by coming together, find strength in this difficult time. I look forward to meeting to discuss the book together on Sunday, November 19th.

Below, you can find a link to purchase the book directly from Koren's website; an excerpt of the opening 14 pages of the book can be found at [tinyurl.com/TBOABH](http://tinyurl.com/TBOABH).

*The Blessing of a Broken Heart can be purchased from Koren Publishers at [tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD](http://tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD). Use the code TorontoTorah for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.*



## TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

### Source: Rashi (Bereishit 1:16)

הגדולות המאורות - THE GREAT LUMINARIES: They were created of equal size, but that of the moon was diminished because she complained and said, "It is impossible for two kings to make use of one crown" (Chulin 60b).

### Questions to Discuss

- Can two kings make use of one crown? Was the moon wrong?
- What should the moon have said or done instead?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at [nsonenberg@torontotorah.com](mailto:nsonenberg@torontotorah.com) to enter our raffle for a challah and six bilkas from Richmond Bakery to enjoy at your Shabbat table next week!

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

<b>Shabbat</b>	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
<b>Sunday</b>	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Seuda	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz and Rabbi Mann
<b>Monday</b>	The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach	Zoom	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha – Towards Tishrei	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	University Women's Beit Midrash	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
<b>Tuesday</b>	Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach	Zoom	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Women's Gemara Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:15 PM	Rabbi Mann
<b>Wednesday</b>	Finding Meaning and Connection in the Psalms from the Siddur	Zoom	10:00 AM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Contemporary Halacha: Tishrei Edition	Clanton Park	After Mincha/Maariv	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Eliyahu HaNavi: A Prophet of Fire & Water	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
<b>Thursday</b>	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/ Mizrachi Beit Midrash)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
<b>Sun-Thu</b>	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30-9:30 PM	

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Women's Midreshet Yom Rishon	Shaarei Shomayim	Sunday, October 15	10:00 AM
Rabbi Yehuda Mann - BAYT scholar in residence	BAYT	Shabbat, October 20-21	

## YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

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