



# BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

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**PARSHAT HASHAVUA** RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH



## 100 Years of Daily Learning

The Hebrew date of the upcoming Shabbat is 9th of Elul, 5783 (ה'תשפ"ג). Exactly one hundred years ago, on the 9th of Elul, 5683 (ה'תרפ"ג), a young Rabbi, only thirty-six years old, presented an idea before the great rabbis of the era that changed the Jewish world - the Daf Yomi study program. This momentous event took place during the first grand convention of Agudat Yisrael in Vienna, with the presence of prominent rabbis of the generation, such as Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (the "Chafetz Chaim") and Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter (the "Imrei Emes") of Ger.

Rabbi Meir Yehuda Shapira of Lublin proposed the idea that the entire Jewish nation should unite as one, to study one page of the Babylonian Talmud every day. The idea was enthusiastically received, and from Rosh Hashanah 5684 (ה'תרפ"ד), Jews around the world joined together in the daily communal study of one page of the Talmud.

The Talmud, in Zevachim 116a, recounts that when the Torah was given to the Jewish people, there was a great noise felt in the world, and the nations of the world were alarmed and asked their prophet, Balaam, about the meaning of this noise. They asked, "What is the noise of many (Kol Hamon) we heard? Perhaps a flood is coming to the world?" Balaam replied, "G-d has already sworn not to bring another

flood to the world." They then asked, "Perhaps a flood of fire is coming?" Balaam replied, "G-d has sworn not to destroy all flesh." So they asked, "What is the meaning of this noise of many?" Balaam answered, "It is the sound of Hakadosh Baruch Hu giving his most precious- the Torah- to the Jewish people, as it is said (Psalms 29:11), 'The Lord will give strength to His people', and the nations replied- 'the Lord will give peace to his people'.

### *The Jewish people are united daily...because of the gift of Torah*

Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin asked the following question- what is the connection between what Balaam told the nations about G-d giving the Torah and their response that "the Lord will give peace to his people"?

Balaam gave an answer that surprised them, that the reason the Jewish people are now "united as one, with one heart" is because G-d gave them the Torah. While other nations may unite only during times of crisis or disaster, the Jewish people are united daily, regardless of external circumstances, because of the gift of the Torah, which connects all parts of the Jewish people. Therefore, it is fitting for the

nations to respond with the verse, "May the Lord give strength to His people," acknowledging that God gave the Torah to Israel, and "the Lord will give peace to his people," signifying that with the acceptance of the Torah, the Jewish people received an additional gift—peace and unity together.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro's idea has been practically implemented with the foundation of the Daf Yomi study program. The idea is that every Jew, anywhere in the world, can enter a synagogue in Canada, Israel, Europe, or Australia and find a Talmud class in progress, engaging in learning and discussing the same Talmudic topic, allowing each Jew to feel connected to the Jewish people "as one, with one heart" through the Torah.

In this year's first publication of "Toronto Torah" (fifteen years now!), I want to express Beit Midrash Zichron Dov's commitment to the same ambition and aspiration- the aspiration to create brotherhood, unity, and community around Torah study. I want to invite you all to our many learning opportunities, and may the study of Torah connect all parts of the Jewish people together and G-d forbid not serve as something that divides us, and by that, may we be blessed this year and many years to come with Shalom. 



**TANACH** RABBI MORDECHAI TORCZYNER, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH EMERITUS

## Yeshayahu 55

From Chapter 40 through Chapter 66, Yeshayahu's message is primarily a vision of comfort for a desolate nation. He pledges future prosperity, and predicts the spiritual and practical means through which it will happen. But Chapter 55 emphasizes that this is not a vague, distant future; it is immediately accessible.

Our chapter begins with a message found in Yirmiyahu as well: you hold the power to end your suffering. Don't seek support from your neighbours, who will not provide it. Instead, turn to Hashem and you will receive everything, including the international support you seek. All we need to do is go to the "water", which our Sages explain refers to Torah. (Avodah Zarah 5b) Hashem reminds them of the ways He helped King David, and pledges to continue to elevate the Jews. Even nations who never knew of us will hear of Hashem's wonders

and come in support of our return to Israel. (55:1-5)

Yeshayahu then declares that Hashem is available to anyone who calls Him; this is the start of the Haftorah we read on the afternoons of fast days, summoning us to

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repent. Yeshayahu says we should be *doreish*, which literally means to "seek"; this may be a call to perform mitzvot, or to pray. (See Ramban to Bereishit 25:22) (55:6-7)

Hashem states that His path is far from the path of human beings, and is guaranteed to succeed. (55:8-11) Commentators explain this contrast of paths in different ways:

- Our paths are corrupt, and we should adopt Hashem's path, which is the Torah. (Rashi)
- We thought Hashem would punish us even if we repented, but Hashem's path is to forgive us. (Ibn Ezra)
- Human beings take revenge against those who wrong them, but Hashem's path is forgiving. (Radak)

The chapter ends with a promise that we will emerge from the Diaspora with joy, the land of Israel will celebrate our return, and cedar and cypress will emerge in place of thorns and nettles. (55:12-13) This vision of the rejuvenation of the land with our return is common in Yeshayahu, demonstrating our bond with the land as well as Hashem's miraculous salvation. 🕍

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**MACHSHAVA** RABBI JONATHAN ZIRING, SGAN ROSH BEIT MIDRASH EMERITUS

## Introduction to Rambam and His Theory of Ethics

This year, we will do deep dives into key ideas in Jewish philosophy. We will start with the Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, among the greatest halachists and Jewish philosophers. Rambam (1138-1204) was born in Cordoba, Andalusia (Spain), which was under Muslim rule. His family fled when the region was conquered by the Alomohads who abolished the protected class, *dhimmi*, that Jews had before. After traveling around Spain, Morocco, and Israel, Rambam settled in Fustat, Egypt, becoming a communal leader and physician of Saladin.

In his youth, he wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Mishna. His central halachic work is the Mishne Torah, later known also as the Yad HaChazaka, the strong arm (because the numerical value of *Yad* is 14, the number of books in the Mishne Torah). Rambam writes in his introduction, the work is intended to comprehensively record all the Oral Law such that one would only need Mishne Torah and Tanach. This goal was controversial. While some communities fully accepted Rambam's ruling, most considered him a great authority, but not the final word.

Thus, Rabbi Yosef Karo in his Beit Yosef and Shulchan Aruch uses the rulings of Rambam, Rif, and Rosh to generate a "consensus" position.

His major philosophical work was the Guide for the Perplexed, covering metaphysics, ethics, and the gamut of philosophical issues. Much material is also found in his introduction to the Mishna, as well as the introduction to Avot (the Shemona Perakim) and the final chapter of Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek.

In the coming weeks, we will focus on his view of ethics. Specifically, Rambam endorses a version of virtue ethics, meaning that the purpose of ethical action is to shape the character of the person acting. We will frame this within other ethics theories and explain the passages in Torah from which Rambam develops this theory. We will explore practical implications for how one engages in acts of kindness, whether it is better to struggle to fulfill mitzvot or for them to come naturally, and explain the role of ethics in the Rambam's metaphysics. 🕍

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**HALACHA** RABBI YEHUDA MANN, ROSH BEIT MIDRASH YMANN@TORONTOTORAH.COM

## Blowing the Shofar in Elul: Who, Where, and When?

The Tur brings the custom of blowing the Shofar during the month of Elul. This is because on the first day of Elul, Moshe ascended the mountain to receive the second tablets, and during this event, the Shofar was blown to prevent the people from engaging in idol worship. Additionally, it served as a means to awaken the people to repentance, as described in the Book of Amos 3:6 – “If a Shofar is blown in the city, will the people not tremble?”

Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky explains that since the purpose of blowing the Shofar is to awaken repentance through the sound of the Shofar, it is not necessary for it to be blown by a person who is Bar Mitzvah, rather, even a minor can blow it.

What is the ruling when a person didn't hear the Shofar after Shacharit, should he blow the Shofar for himself at home? Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg is of the opinion that there is no obligation for an individual to blow, considering that the entire institution of blowing the Shofar was established only for the public, as described in the sources of the Tur – that they blew the Shofar in the camp of Israel,

meaning it was done in public. Additionally, the verse in Amos indicates that the blowing took place in a public place – “blown in the city.” Furthermore, since the purpose of the blowing is to arouse repentance, repentance is more accepted and achieved when done by the public together.

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What is the ruling if the entire congregation did not blow the Shofar during the morning prayer because there was no Shofar? Should they complete the blowing during the Mincha prayer? Rabbi Moshe Feinstein rules that the blowing should be done during Mincha. The purpose of the institution to blow during the morning prayer was because the people

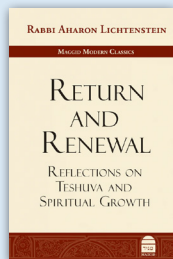
gather for tefillah, and it is advisable to awaken repentance before going to work. However, if it is not feasible to blow before going to work, they should blow when the congregation gathers again for the Mincha. 📌

[Tur Orach Chaim 581; Koveitz Halachos; Tzitz Eliezer 12-48; Igros Moshe OC 4-21]



**BOOK CLUB** RABBI JARED ANSTANDIG JANSTANDIG@TORONTOTORAH.COM

## Week 1: Introduction



*Return and Renewal: Reflections on Teshuva and Spiritual Growth*  
By Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein  
Maggid Press, 2018

As our inaugural book for our book club, we will be studying Rav Aharon Lichtenstein's *Return and Renewal*. This work is an adaptation of twelve different teshuva derashot that Rav Lichtenstein gave between 1989 and 2008.

Over the course of the next several weeks, I invite you to study this book together with me as we approach the Yamim Noraim. And, whether you read along or not, I encourage you to check out this weekly column for summaries and food for thought on *Return and Renewal*. God willing, we will come together in person Thursday September 21st to discuss the themes and ideas that emerge from Rav Lichtenstein's writings.

First, who was Rav Aharon Lichtenstein? Born in France, he arrived in America with his family in 1941. He received his semicha from Yeshiva University, and a doctorate in English literature from Harvard. He made aliyah in 1971, where he joined Rav Yehuda Amital as head of Yeshivat Har Etzion. In 2014, Rav Lichtenstein received the Israel Prize, Israel's highest honour, for his countless contributions to the Torah world. Rav Lichtenstein passed away in April 2015.

In *Return and Renewal*, Rav Lichtenstein encourages us to rethink teshuva – what the concept means, and how we perform it, as individuals and as a community. I hope you will join me in studying this book as we prepare for the Yamim Noraim! 📌

The book 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 [NSONENBERG@TORONTOTORAH.COM](mailto:NSONENBERG@TORONTOTORAH.COM)

- What role can ethical legislation towards animals (such as the mitzvot in this week’s parsha) play in creating a society of righteousness, justice, loving-kindness and compassion?
  - Do you think having pets plays a role in creating this society?
- After Shabbat, please submit the answers that were discussed in your family to [nsonenberg@torontotorah.com](mailto:nsonenberg@torontotorah.com) in order to enter a draw to win 1 challah and 6 bilkas from Richmond Bakery for your Shabbat table next week!*

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

	Program	Where?	When?	Maggid Shiur
<b>Shabbat</b>	Halacha from the Parsha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha and Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
<b>Sunday</b>	Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Seuda	Clanton Park	9:00 am	Rabbi Mann
<b>Monday</b>	Teshuva	Zoom	2:00 pm starting September 11	R’ Idan Rakovsky
	Towards Tishrei	Shomrei Shabbos	8:30 pm	Rabbi Mann
<b>Tuesday</b>	Shivat Tzion	Zoom	1:30 pm starting September 5	Rabbi Horovitz
<b>Wednesday</b>	The Nature of Sin and the Evil Inclination	Zoom	10:00 am starting September 6	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Contemporary Halacha: Tishrei Edition	Clanton Park	One hour before Mincha	Rabbi Mann
<b>Thursday</b>	Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Mizrachi Milevsky BM)	8:00 pm	R’ Ezer Diena
<b>Sun–Thu</b>	Community Night Seder	Or Chaim	8:00–9:00 pm	

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

Program	Where?	When?
Tishrei in a Night	Shaarei Shomayim	Sunday, September 10
	BAYT	Wednesday, September 13

**YOUR BEIT MIDRASH**

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