



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT VAYEITZEI

VOL. 15 NUM. 12 (#596) • 12 KISLEV 5784 / NOVEMBER 25, 2023

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated לע"נ, מאת משפחת גולדמן

Dr. Mordechai (Macky) Goldman
Mr. Jack Weinbaum
Mrs. Anne Weinbaum
Mrs. Carmen Fraenkel

גלבע יג' כסלו תשע"ח
גלבע יג' כסלו תשע"ה
גלבע ט' כסלו תשפ"ב
גלבע י' כסלו תשע"ז

ר' מרדכי פייביש רפאל בן אריה צבי הכהן גולדמן זצ"ל
ר' יעקב בן ר' אברהם חיים הלוי ווייבוים זצ"ל
חנה לאה בת ר' יהושע ווייבוים זצ"ל
קינדי בת יהודה פרענקעל זצ"ל



DVAR TORAH VAYEITZEI RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Lessons Learned From Stones

At the beginning of this week's parasha, Rashi brings a midrash that anthropomorphizes stones and then tells of them miraculously fusing together. This midrash is solving an apparent contradiction in the text: Jacob took from many stones and placed them by his head before going to sleep (28:11) and upon waking he took the one stone that was placed by his head to serve as a monument (28:18). The midrash's approach isn't the only way to address this contradiction. Commentaries such as Rashbam, who focus on the plain meaning of the text, solve the contradiction by explaining that Jacob initially took one from the many available stones—thus matching the conclusion of the story where there was only one stone. The midrash's goal is not only to address textual difficulties but also to provide deeper insight to teach us how to live our lives.

The midrash tells us that Jacob took twelve stones from the altar used by Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and placed them around his head for protection while he slept. The stones began to argue among themselves with each vying to be the stone upon which he would rest his head. In order to resolve this dispute, Hashem fused them together into one stone and as such, they all were able to merit acting as Jacob's headrest.

It's clear that the theme of the midrash is creating unity as hinted to in the fusing of the arguing stones together. The symbolism of the twelve stones references the Jewish people, the twelve tribes of Israel. The message embedded in the midrash is that unlike the lineages described up until this point in history, Jacob would merit to have one united nation formed from twelve children with their own unique traits. Despite this future unity, the Kli

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link

Yakar identifies a parallel to this type of dispute: the need to have the temple built on land that was equally owned by all the tribes, as they each desired to have it built on their own territory. The midrash perhaps shares the secret to developing unity by mentioning the purpose to which Jacob chose to use the stones as well as their original use.

We are all familiar with the idiom, "a chain is no stronger than its weakest link." Each link is equally important in the formation of the chain. Similarly, when Jacob built a stone barrier for protection, the barrier was no stronger than its weakest

stone. The realization that all contributions are equally needed to achieve a common goal allows every participant to feel the importance of their contribution without the need to compete for glory. Society would fail if everyone in it only chose the "noblest" profession (whatever that may be). Diversity of talents and desires is what allows us to build a society that flourishes—and each individual is important for that goal.

The stones of the altar also testify to the ability of an individual to put their own desires and needs secondary to those of Hashem. Both Abraham and Isaac were not seeking personal aggrandizement when they prepared for the ultimate self sacrifice that was being asked of them. The realization that our unique talents are needed to partner with Hashem in improving this world allows us to put aside our desire for self promotion. This allows us to focus instead on working humbly together with others who have their own unique talents to further this common goal.

In this time where our nation continues to strengthen and demonstrate our unity, may we seek to act with a commonality of purpose and a realization of the importance of our own unique capacity to contribute.



Yeshayahu 66

Chapter 66 is the concluding chapter of the book of Yeshayahu, and it revisits two major themes from the book: 1) A call for us to prioritize heartfelt loyalty to Hashem over mitzvah actions, and 2) A prediction of ultimate punishment for the wicked and reward for the righteous.

The chapter begins with Hashem declaring that no house that human beings would build could be a “place of rest” for Hashem. Hashem created the entire universe! Rather than solely building a Beit HaMikdash and bringing *korbanot*, people should focus on taking care of the needy and listening to Hashem. This is a constant theme in the book—go back to Chapter 1 for its first appearance—but it is not a negation of the value of *korbanot*. Rather, it is a statement that despite the value of *korbanot*, ritual without religious principles is destructive (66:1-4).

Yeshayahu then quotes idolaters who declare that they are actually closer to Hashem, and their deeds bring Hashem glory. He responds that the opposite is true; the righteous will rejoice, while the wicked will be dismayed (66:5-6, per Radak).

Yeshayahu then offers an extended vision of the reward of the righteous, similar to prophecies recorded earlier in the book. There will be birth—instantaneous, and without pain. The prophet describes the birth of individual babies, but the image portends the birth of a nation. Hashem calls for Jerusalem to rejoice, and for all who mourned for Jerusalem to come celebrate. We will be nourished and carried like a nursing baby, and Hashem will comfort us as a mother comforts her son (66:7-14).

The vision then returns to punishment, describing what will happen to those

who worshiped idols. Yeshayahu invokes the image of fire repeatedly, to describe a consuming devastation that is coming (66:15-17).

Finally, those idolaters will be scattered among the nations, and their fate will testify to the failure of their gods and the truth of Judaism. Then the nations will restore to Israel the Jews who had been exiled among them; in an act compared to offering a *korban*, they will bring our nation back to the Beit HaMikdash. [This is consistent with the restoration of the Jews to Israel by Cyrus the Great.] Then all flesh will come to the Beit HaMikdash each month and each Shabbat, to worship. They will witness the fate of the wicked, and this will inspire them toward righteousness (66:18-24).



Week 1: *Derashot HaRan*

The *Derashot HaRan* is a philosophical work that covers many areas of Torah thought; it is most well-known for its discussion of a political theory of Torah. The identity of the author is the subject of much debate, as Rabbi Mordechai Leib Katzalbogen, the editor of the Mossad HaRav Kook edition of the *Derashot*, notes. Some suggested that Ran (Reish-Nun) should be expanded to Rabbi Natan (bar Yosef), a student of Ramban. However, most early references to the work expand the acronym Ran to Rabbenu Nissim. Some suggest that this is a student of Ramban, and some argue it is his son. However, as the *Derashot* cite the Ramban many times without referring to him as “my father” or “my teacher,” many rejected these early attributions. Thus, Rabbi Katzalbogen, and many others, assume that the author is the well-known Talmudic commentator, Rabbenu Nissim ben Reuven of Gerona.

He was born circa 1290 in Gerona, Spain, and died circa 1375-6. He studied with his father, Rabbi Reuven b. Nissim, as well as with Rabbi Peretz HaKohen and Rabbi Shimon b. Aderet, Rashba.

He was also influenced by Rabbi Dovid Bonfil and Rabbi Vidal de Telosa (author of *Maggid Mishna*).

He wrote a critical commentary on Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi’s (Rif) legal summary of the Talmud, one that was very influential for later authorities, including Rabbi Yosef Karo. He also wrote a commentary on the Talmud. His commentary on *Masechet Nedarim* is included in the standard Vilna Shas. He also wrote responsa as well as a partial commentary on the Torah. He acted as a judge, legal decisor, and teacher in Barcelona and fought against a weakening commitment to Jewish law. (He was temporarily imprisoned after spurious accusations were made against him during his tenure in Barcelona.)

In the coming weeks, we will focus on the eleventh drasha that presents a theory of the purpose of law, the role of the king and courts, as well as the theory’s impact on Religious Zionist authorities who attempted to articulate a Jewish legal theory for the Jewish state.



Can a Younger Sibling Get Married Before the Older One?

Question: In this week's parasha, we learn that Lavan tells Yaakov, "It is not done in our place to give the younger before the firstborn" (Bereishit 29:26). Is there really a halachic prohibition for a younger brother or sister to marry before the older sibling?

Answer: The Shach (Rabbi Shabtai HaCohen, 17th century) in Yoreh De'ah 244:13 indeed rules that if brothers or sisters are getting married, even if one is greater in wisdom than the other, they should not give precedence to marrying the younger one before the older one since the older one is greater in years. This implies that there is a restriction for a younger brother to marry before an older one.

It is worth asking: Is it possible that we follow a halachic ruling that is learned from Lavan, who said not to marry the younger sister Rachel before the older one Leah, unlike our forefather Yaakov, who thought he could marry Rachel before Leah? How could it be that we

rule against Yaakov who learned quite a few years in Yeshiva before arriving at the house of Lavan?

Some of the answers that have been given are as follows:

1. Some argue that the reason for not allowing the younger sibling to marry before the older one is to avoid dishonouring the older sibling. If the older sibling consents, it would be permissible. Yaakov thought that Leah allowed Rachel to marry Yaakov, so he believed he could marry Rachel first.
2. Others explain that Rachel and Leah converted to Judaism, and they were no longer considered sisters due to the general principle that "a convert is like a newborn child" (*Ger Shenitgayer, KeKatan Shenolad Dami*). Therefore, there was no reason for Rachel to wait for Leah, as they were no longer considered sisters in the traditional sense.

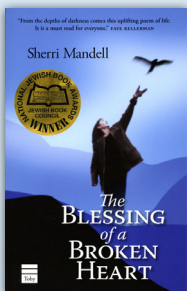
3. The most significant answer is given by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe Even HaEzer, Part 2, Siman Aleph*), and it has significant Halachic ramifications. Rabbi Feinstein believes that the rule against the younger sibling marrying first applies only when both siblings are engaged. In this case, the older sibling should marry first. However, if the older sibling is not engaged, there is no obligation for the younger sibling to wait. Therefore, Yacov was allowed to marry Rachel before Leah because Leah was not yet engaged.

Consequently, *halacha le'maase* is that there is no prohibition for the younger sibling to marry before the older one when only he or she is engaged. Only when both siblings are engaged should the older sibling get married first.

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymanntorah.com.



Week 6: Creating Blessing



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

"[My husband, Seth,] and I know that we have to do something to keep Koby's spirit alive. We cannot let his spirit die ... We decide to do something that Koby would enjoy; we decide to make a summer camp for the children in Israel whose mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers have been killed by terror." (*The Blessing of a Broken Heart*, page 204)

As her son's first yahrtzeit approached, the Mandells considered: What were they going to

do now? Recognizing that they were unfortunately not alone in their experiences and emotions, they formed the Koby Mandell

Foundation in 2001 to support families who have lost a loved one in a terrorist attack. Sherri and Seth, two bereaved parents, took their pain and created from it a blessing for others. They showed that the noblest act we can do is transform our hurt into support for others.

I hope you have found this book as inspirational as I have over the last few weeks. I invite you to join us this Sunday night for conversation and inspiration from Sherri Mandell's book, *The Blessing of a Broken Heart*. For more information and to register, check out torontotorah.com/bookclub.

The Blessing of a Broken Heart can be purchased from Koren Publishers at 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 29

(30) He came to Rachel as well, and he loved Rachel, too, more than Leah. He worked with him for yet another seven years.

(31) Hashem saw that Leah was hated and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Questions to Discuss

- Did Jacob love Leah?
- What causes a person to feel hated?
- How can we act in a way to ensure a person feels loved?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at 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

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Guttenberg
Sunday	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz and Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann and Rabbi Lax
Monday	The Torah: A Psychic Turn. Psychological Theories in the Eyes of Tanach	Zoom: tiny.cc/idanrak	2:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	University Women's Beit Midrash	Yeshivat Or Chaim	7:45 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Cancelled this week	Rabbi Sonenberg
Tuesday	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
Wednesday	Men's Contemporary Halacha	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
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDTanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Sun-Thu	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30-9:30 PM	
	Pre-Maariv Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	9:15-9:30 PM	

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Book Club: <i>The Blessing of a Broken Heart</i>	torontotorah.com/bookclub	November 26, 2023, 8:00 PM	
Shabbaton	Shaarei Shomayim	December 1-2, 2023	
Rabbi Toczyner Scholar in Residence	BAYT	December 15-16, 2023	
Rabbi Toczyner: 'I Don't Understand! A Jew Responds to Tragedy'	Shaarei Shomayim	December 16	Motzei Shabbat

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

Rabbi Yehuda Mann
ymann@torontotorah.com

Dean

Rabbi Noah Sonenberg
nsonenberg@torontotorah.com

Sponsorships & Dedications

Ronit Bendayan • (416) 630-6772 x 243
rbendayan@torontotorah.com

Maggidei Shiur Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner • Rabbi Jared Anstandig • R' Ezer Diena • Rabbi Josh Guttenberg • Rabbi Hillel Horovitz
R' Idan Rakovsky • Rabbi Bentzi Shor • Rabbi Jeff Turtel