

THE NEUWIRTH EDITION

חומש
מסורת
הרב
ספר בראשית

CHUMASH
MESORAS HARAV
SEFER BEREISHIS

With commentary based upon the teachings of
RABBI JOSEPH B.
SOLOVEITCHIK

Compiled and Edited by
DR. ARNOLD LUSTIGER

Foreword by
RABBI MENACHEM GENACK


OUPRESS

INTRODUCTION

For many years beginning in the 1960s, the Rav presented a weekly *Chumash shiur* on Saturday nights at the Maimonides School in Boston. Among the regular attendees was an anonymous participant who carefully transcribed the *shiurim*, ultimately producing seven volumes of beautifully handwritten notes. Being unfamiliar with Hebrew, she painstakingly transliterated the foreign sounding words using capital letters and accent marks. While these notes reveal something remarkable about her, they reveal something even more remarkable about the Rav. The Rav was among the preeminent *gedolei hador*, an unequaled master of the Written as well as Oral Torah. Yet, in an astonishing act of *tzimtzum*, of self-contraction, he made an extraordinary effort to present Torah to the broader community on the most basic level, to create a presentation that was not only comprehensible to those with a limited background, but also so compelling that an audience of hundreds returned week after week.

On Tuesday nights, the Rav presented another weekly *shiur* at the Moriah synagogue in Manhattan, this time in Yiddish. Although it was a *Gemara shiur*, he often concluded with a *vort* on the weekly *parasha*. His audience was comprised largely of Holocaust survivors who had a particular appreciation for *drush*, so when the Rav spoke about the *parasha* in this venue, his emphasis tended toward the homiletic. Similarly, at his annual Yiddish *derashos* at the Mizrachi conventions in the 1950s and early 1960s, the Rav's presentation was based on *drush*, with prominent themes taken from the Biblical narratives of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph.

The Rav's legacy of published work was primarily on the subject of philosophy, where he often expanded on themes in *Genesis* as take-off points. *The Lonely Man of Faith* was based on the dichotomy between the first two chapters of *Genesis*, while much of *Confrontation* is a detailed

exposition of the second chapter. *The Emergence of Ethical Man* explores the moral development of man from creation through Abraham and Moses.

Over 525 comments appear in this book, drawn from these and many other sources. Over fifty published references, more than a thousand pages of unpublished notes, as well as dozens of recordings spanning the 1950s through the early 1980s were used. Chazal's maxim of *שבעים פנים לתורה*, *there are seventy facets to Torah*, is strongly reflected here, as the Rav's varying approaches to the *Chumash* text are all represented in this work. Although the transitions between *peshat*, *derush*, *lomdus* and philosophy can at times be abrupt, these very juxtapositions are but a reflection of the Rav's genius. Who but the Rav could have left such a legacy?

The Rav himself never set out to write a comprehensive commentary on *Chumash*. In his lectures, *shiurim* and publications he expounded on certain portions of the *Chumash* extensively, while other portions were not explained in nearly the same level of detail. Chazal's principle: *דברי תורה עניים במקום אחד ועשירים במקום אחר*, *the words of Torah are scarce in one section and abundant in another*, is certainly applicable here. As one example, *Parashas Bereishis* contains the most commentary, while *Parashas Noach* contains the least.

It is important to note the limitations of a running commentary format. Whether the topic in his public lectures was *Gemara*, *Chumash*, *halachah*, or philosophy, the Rav methodically and clearly developed a central thesis. He buttressed this key idea meticulously through a series of questions and answers, usually by shedding an entirely new light on an array of familiar sources. Ultimately, at the end of his presentation, he had built a dazzling and impenetrable edifice. Most of the Rav's students who have summarized his lectures, *shiurim* or *derashos* invariably comment on how inadequate the summaries are compared to the sheer majesty of the original.

This work obviously suffers from the same limitations associated with representing the Rav's oral word via the written medium. However, there is another more serious deficiency that is unique to compilations

of this type. In his *shiurim* and *derashos*, the Rav did not limit himself to brief remarks. The format of a running commentary does not allow the complete development of thought that was the Rav's hallmark.

Keeping in mind the limitations of this format, the comments here are significantly longer than in similar running commentaries. Every comment is accompanied by a reference, with complete bibliographic information appearing in the reference section. In the case of published references, the reader is encouraged to explore these sources more fully. Many comments contain cross references to allow a glimpse of how specific ideas are applied elsewhere in the commentary.

The commentary cites ideas but not always the exact words from each source. When the idea is a few sentences or a paragraph long, the comment is usually quoted verbatim. However, when the idea is pages long, it was necessary to pare it down. Most often, this is done by quoting specific sentences from the source, but also editing or adding sentences to bridge the thought. For example, it was self-evident that ideas from the Rav's most famous essay, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, which is based on the textual differences between the first two chapters of *Genesis*, must be included. However, there was no portion of the essay that could be quoted directly and remain intelligible out of context of the essay but in the context of a running commentary. Indeed, the terms "Adam the First" and "Adam the Second" that appear throughout the essay are not terms of art. Quoting a paragraph mentioning these two typologies without some parenthetical explanation would render the comment incoherent to anyone who had not previously read the essay.

A large portion of the commentary is based on a variety of recorded *shiurim* and *derashos*. The year, topic and/or location of each of these lectures, when known, are given. I am most grateful to Rabbi Milton Nordlicht, who maintains a website dedicated to making many of these tapes available to the public.

It must be emphasized that the *Chumash* translation used here is not the Rav's. The English translation is based on the Judaica Press version,

except where the Rav's interpretation suggested a different idea. There are about twenty such changes throughout the *Chumash*. Despite these changes, under no circumstances should this translation be construed as having the Rav's imprimatur.

My primary acknowledgement must be extended to Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbinic Administrator of the Kashrus Division of the Orthodox Union and General Editor of the OU Press. Rabbi Genack painstakingly reviewed the entire manuscript, and provided numerous suggestions and additions to the commentary. When these additions could not be otherwise attributed, the references are simply indicated by his name.

I must also acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Julius Berman, Esq., Chairman of OU PRESS, whose help was critical in the realization of this project. My Rav and mentor, Rabbi Yaakov Luban, continually provided the personal advice and guidance that were essential to its fruition. The invaluable support and friendship of Rabbi Steven Weil, the Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union, were also vital to this effort.

Thanks go to Rabbi Michael Taubes, Mrs. Elky Langer and Mrs. Azriela Jaffe for carefully editing the manuscript. I deeply appreciate and value my close friendship with Rabbi Dov Green, who analyzed each comment with great care, pointing out mistakes and inconsistencies, adding immeasurably to this work. My thanks are also extended to Rabbis Benjy Kramer, Gershon Klavan, and Israel Rivkin, and Drs. Shmuel Safran, Melech Press and Paul Lustiger, all of whom provided insightful comments and criticisms as well. Rabbi Simon Posner of the OU PRESS expertly reviewed and edited the manuscript before and after typesetting, while Mrs. Yocheved Goldberg did a meticulous and thorough job of copy editing. It was a pleasure to work with both of them. I also appreciate the work of Rabbi Dovid Blasbalg and Rabbi Yisroel Goldberg from Nehorah Publications, who coordinated typesetting, printing and binding. Mrs. Zippy Thumim was the graphic artist for the Chumash, expertly designing the artwork as well as the layout. Mrs. Devoiry England and Ms. Lieba Younger assisted her with the layout and painstakingly went through the

corrections. My son Noam was instrumental in designing the cover and also advised on choosing the layout candidates.

My mother and my mother-in-law each exemplify the virtues of a true *אשת חיל*. They lived through the Holocaust and Depression respectively, raised wonderful families, and more recently were both devoted and tireless caregivers for my father and father-in-law *זכרונם לברכה*. I am truly grateful for their constant support and advice. My children and their spouses are a tremendous source of inspiration to me in the sacrifices they make to learn and support Torah. I must also somehow express the inexpressible: words seem inadequate to describe the role that my wife plays in all my endeavors. Her continued patience with, and support for, her loving partner is by far the most critical element in the production of my two previous books on the Rav's *derashos*, the Mesorat HaRav *Machzorim*, as well as this *Chumash*: שלי שלה הוא.

I dedicate my work on this *Chumash* to our uncle, אהרן שמשון בן יוסף ברוך ע"ה. Aaron Goldman grew up in a small town in South Carolina during the Depression. He volunteered and served in the Navy during World War II, where he fought at Normandy Beach and in the Pacific. Subsequently, he built a successful business and was recognized by his town as its most outstanding citizen. His generosity in support of Israel, and his devotion to family and friends remain legendary.

אהרון חביב. May this *Chumash* be a *זכות לעילוי נשמת* my dear father, Samuel Lustiger, ר' שמואל בן ר' אהרן הלוי ז"ל, who was *niftar* a few months ago. Born and raised in Poland, my father experienced the Holocaust at its most destructive. Every such survivor is a revealed miracle, a *נס נגלה*, but the greater miracle can be said to occur when the survivor rebuilds a life based on Torah and *mitzvos*. My father married, had children, was *kove'a itim laTorah*, struggled to earn a livelihood, and sacrificed immensely to send his children to *yeshivos*. Ultimately *וירא* יוסף לאפרים בני שלשים: he had a unique love that only a person who had faced death repeatedly could hold for his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

One Friday night in the mid-1970s, my father and I together studied the Rav's classic work, *Al Hateshuva*, and encountered the following passage:

If one wishes to know what the significance of lei'da [experiencing God's Presence in everything] was for Jews in the past, study the words of the folk song "Du" (You) - by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. "Lord of the Universe," sang Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "let me sing a song of You (Dudele). You - are East; You - are West; You - are North; You - are South." ...This is a feeling that a Jew must personally experience; it does not lend itself to transmission via theological tractates and essays, homilies and sermons. It is a feeling - and it must be experienced! I have no idea how this feeling can be instilled in American Jewry. I may not be such a bad teacher, and I can give instruction on various subjects — but not on this.

Carried back by memories of his childhood, my father at that moment taught me the haunting song *Dudele*. Upon hearing the emotion in my father's voice, I began to understand that feeling the Rav tried so desperately to impart.

Arnold Lustiger
Edison, New Jersey
Iyar 5773/ April 2013

FOREWORD

OU PRESS is proud to present, together with Ohr Publishing and Nehorah Publications, the monumental commentary on *Sefer Bereishis* drawn from the teachings of the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. The towering rabbinic figure of the twentieth century, the Rav personified *mesorah*, the Oral Torah, passed from generation to generation in an unbroken chain stretching from that cosmic event on Mount Sinai thousands of years ago to our ultimate redemption in the future. But the Oral Torah does not exist without the Written Torah, and the Rav's profound and creative grasp of the Written Torah provides us with the understanding of the foundations of our faith.

The phrase "*lech lecha*" appears only twice in the Torah. God tells Abraham, "*lech lecha*," leave your homeland and your household on a mission that will forge the destiny of a new nation. A few chapters later, God tells Abraham, "*lech lecha*," go forth to the Land of Moriah to sacrifice your only son in a mysterious rendezvous with the Almighty, a rendezvous whose stated purpose defies human logic.

Each *lech lecha* represented a great trial for Abraham. In the first, God demanded of Abraham that he surrender his past; in the second, that he sacrifice his future. The first *lech lecha* was God's command to Abraham to go forth and join with God in forming a people. He was to build a nation without the benefit of a national history, create a culture without a rich fabric of inherited traditions and mores, form a society without a critical mass of kith and kin. How lonely Abraham must have felt; how inadequate to the task. The second *lech lecha* was God's decree that Abraham's future was an illusion. Whatever dreams and aspirations Abraham had would be permanently and irretrievably shattered. How hollow God's earlier promises of future grandeur must have seemed to Abraham when confronted with the prospect of Isaac's death. Only

Abraham's supreme faith gave him the strength to persevere and follow the divinely ordained journey of each *lech lecha*.

The Beis Halevi, the Rav's great-grandfather and namesake, comments that when Abraham says to God, "*anochi afar va'efer*, I am dust and ashes," Abraham is telling God that he has no past and no future without God's help. The *afar*, the dust, is like earth, which has no past, but has a future. It is fertile, it has potential. If the earth is cultivated, it will bear fruit. *Efer*, ashes, on the other hand, have a past but no future. The ashes are all that remain of a prior vitality, now destroyed and lifeless. Nothing can grow in ashes.

Sefer Bereishis spans the past and the future. While it contains the narrative of the founding of our nation, it is not meant merely to tell the story of the past. *Ma'ase avos siman le-banim* — the stories of our patriarchs and matriarchs are intended as models for all future behavior. It is because of the humility and sacrifice of the *Avos* that we have a great history and a glorious destiny. The Rav, as well, combined within his persona the greatness of both past and future. The scion of a great family, he was the repository of the legacy of generations of Torah study. But the past served as a gateway to the future. Those who had the privilege of learning with him could sense, as they sat in *shiur* and were immersed in the Rav's Torah, that they were participating in the creation of the next links of the *mesorah*, the great chain which unites our past and future and leads to our redemption.

The experience of sitting in the Rav's *shiur* and learning with him was a gift that we can no longer enjoy, and it is our responsibility to preserve as best we can the unique quality of the Rav's Torah for future generations. A major step in this direction is the publication of the Rav's profound commentary on *Sefer Bereishis*. We acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Arnold Lustiger for his outstanding efforts in compiling and editing the commentary in this edition. His encyclopedic knowledge of the Rav's writings, lectures, and *shiurim* served him well as he drew on numerous sources in assembling the commentary. Our thanks go as

well to my colleague at OU PRESS, Rabbi Simon Posner, for his work in reviewing and editing the manuscript and for his involvement in a myriad of aspects of the production of this edition. We extend thanks also to Yocheved Goldberg of OU PRESS for her expert copyediting and review of successive drafts of the manuscript. Further thanks are due to Rabbi Cary Friedman and Rivki Rosenblatt of OU PRESS, who reviewed portions of the manuscript.

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Menachem Dov Genack
General Editor
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