Shnayim Mikrah #3

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There are various combinations and questions regarding *shnayim mikra*. It is impossible to go through every single question, but the main point is simply to do it. if you have a specific question, you should contact your Rebbe.

Are Those Who Learn Full-Time Exempt?

- Rav Moshe (*Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim* Chelek 5 Siman 17) addresses those learning 14 hours a day who claim no time for *Shnayim Mikra*. Citing a *Rashba*, Rav Moshe rules there is no *heter* to skip it; it is a binding *d'rabbanan*.
- Are they exempt from the mitzvah of *milah*? As the Midrash states, *chas veshalom*!

The Gemara in Kiddushin (Daf 40b) teaches that learning is great because it leads to action (*gadol talmud shemevi l'yidei ma'aseh*). The entire purpose of our learning is to fulfill the mitzvos. A person cannot simply say, "I am learning the whole time and do not have time to do mitzvos." *Shnayim mikra* is not merely learning; it is also a mitzvah that encompasses both aspects.

- **Safek on Location:** If unsure where you are holding, *poskim* (Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Belzer Rav, Belzer Dayan,*Shevet HaKehati*) rule you return to where you are certain.
- **Standing:** Rav Chaim Kanievsky stated there is no requirement to stand; sitting is fully permitted.
- **Order:** Ideally *k'seder*, but *bedieved* valid out of order.

Methods of Recitation

The Shulchan Aruch HaRav, the Vilna Gaon (Gra), the Baal HaTanya, the Kaf HaChaim, and the Mishnah Berurah all hold that **whichever method you use, you fulfill your obligation**. You do not need to worry that one way is inherently better than another; whichever fits your routine and your comfortability is wonderful.

<u>There are three primary methods:</u>

1. **Pasuk by Pasuk:** Read each Pasuk twice, and then its *targum*. This method is brought by the Shaarei Teshuva in the name of the Arizal, and it was the custom of the Chafetz Chaim.
2. **Paragraph by Paragraph:** Read an entire paragraph (up to a *pei* or *samech* break) twice, and then go back and read the *targum* for that section. This is brought by the Magen Avraham in the name of the holy Shlah HaKadosh.
3. **Entire Parashah:** Read the entire *parashah* from start to finish twice, and then go back and read the *targum* from start to finish. This was the custom of the Steipler and of Rav Chaim Kanievsky's father.

The main thing is that you did it, regardless of the method chosen.

Using Trup and Understanding What You Read

- **Trup:** The Sefer HaYirah from Rabbeinu Yonah, along with the Magen Avraham citing the Radbaz and Kaf HaChaim, notes that while knowing the *trup* is not an absolute requirement, it is definitely better to perform *shnayim mikra ve'echad targum* using the *trup* if you know how.

What if a person does not understand what they are reading?

The primary reason *shnayim mikra* was instituted was to become well-versed in the Torah. If you do not understand the words, you are essentially reading *Tehillim*. While there is nothing wrong with reading *Tehillim*, the goal is comprehension. Therefore, poskim state that while you should try to understand it, **you still fulfill your obligation** even if you do not fully understand the language.

Targum Onkelos vs. Rashi

If you look at any decent Chumash, you will notice there are several types of *targumim*. However, **Targum Onkelos** is the universally accepted standard because he explains the text in a clear, understandable manner rather than just doing a word-for-word translation.

Should You Learn Rashi Instead or In Addition?

People often ask whether they should do Rashi instead because they understand it better and it brings fascinating Midrashim and questions.

The Shulchan Aruch rules that a **yerei shamayim should do both**—both Targum and Rashi!

This brings to mind a famous story: The Beis Halevi was once told that he was very machmir (*strict)* to which he replied that he actually had many kulos (lenient rulings). When asked for an example, he answered, *"My leniency is based on the Shulchan Aruch in Siman 285, which states that a yerei shamayim should say both Targum and Rashi. I rule leniently that even someone who is not yet a yerei shamayim is permitted to do both!"*

Rav Moshe Sternbuch: Has a major *teshuvah* noting many *shitos* hold Rashi is a better option than *Targum* if *Targum* is not understood.

Therefore, it is certainly meritorious to do both. However, if you prefer Rashi, you may choose one or the other; you do not have to do both to fulfill the basic obligation. Rashi is particularly wonderful because it aids comprehension, especially with an English-annotated Rashi.

When Should Shnayim Mikra Be Done?

Many people find it easier to complete *shnayim mikra* at night, when their schedule is a bit more relaxed after daytime learning of Gemara and Halachah. However, there is a discussion regarding this:

- **Learning Chumash at Night:** The Be'er Heitev (citing the Ari z"l in Siman 238) notes a Midrash stating that when Moshe Rabbeinu was on Har Sinai, Hashem taught him Written Torah by day and Oral Torah by night. Based on this, some suggest avoiding learning Chumash at night.
- **The Ruling:** The Pri Megadim and the Mishnah Berurah paskin that **there is no prohibition** to do it at night. If night is your only available time, or if it is much easier for you, you may certainly do it at night. While daytime is ideal, you can be lenient if necessary.
- **Friday Night:** Learning *Mikra* and Chumash specifically on Friday night is encouraged, as ruled by the Steipler in *Orchos Rabbeinu* (Chelek 1) and other poskim.

Fulfilling the Obligation via the Ba'al Koreh

1. Listening to the Ba'al Koreh on Shabbos Morning

Can you fulfill your obligation simply by listening to the *ba'al koreh* read the *parashah* on Shabbos morning, relying on the principle of hearing being equivalent to speaking (*shomei k'oneh*)?

- **The Strict View:** The Mekor Chaim, Aruch HaShulchan, Kaf HaChaim, and the Chazon Ish rule that **listening alone does not count**.
- **The Lenient View:** A group of poskim—including the Magen Avraham, Shaarei Teshuvah, Chayei Adam, Shulchan Aruch HaRav, and Ezer Yisrael—hold that *bedieved* (after the fact) you can rely on this as one of the required readings if you get stuck or run out of time.
- **Reading Along Word-by-Word:** If you read every single word **simultaneously** with the *ba'al koreh*, poskim like the Eliyah Rabbah, Chazon Ish, Mishnah Berurah, and Shulchan Aruch HaRav agree that **you fulfill one of your two required readings**. Thus, if you only managed to read the text and targum once during the week, you can complete the second reading word-for-word alongside the *ba'al koreh* on Shabbos morning.

2. During Chazaras HaShatz

Do not do it during Chazaras HaShatz! Rav Chaim Kanievsky explicitly writes in *Orchos Yosher* (page 104) that if someone recites *shnayim mikra* during *Chazaras HaShatz*, **they do not fulfill their obligation at all**. *Chazaras HaShatz* is a critical time when everyone must concentrate fully on the sanctification of Hashem's name.

Conclusion

There are many detailed questions regarding *shnayim mikra*, but the primary message is to open up a Chumash, set aside a little time each day, and make it happen. By doing so, a person becomes truly well-versed in Chumash and gains a deeper understanding of the Torah that speaks to us in every generation.