

Rashi. *A Pirush which has been studied simultaneously with Chumash ever since its inception. These seemingly-basic explanations have been accepted by all Jewish Communities. Fifty years ago the Rebbe gifted us with a crystalized view of how through Rashi we can be enlightened into the ultimate “Pshutoi Shel Mikro”.*

Over three hundred Seforim have been written alone on Rashi. What is radically different about the Rebbe’s biurim? And what took place surrounding the more than 800 Rashi’s we merited to be taught by the Rebbe?

IN THE VOV TISHREI SUPPLEMENT TO A CHASSIDISHER DERHER, WE INCLUDED AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE REBBE’S INITIATIVE IN MEMORY OF HIS MOTHER, REBBETZIN CHANA, AFTER HER PASSING IN 5725: THE RASHI SICHOS. THIS WAS PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS OF ALL THE ACTIVITIES DONE IN HER MEMORY.

TO FOLLOW UP ON THAT, WE NOW PRESENT A MORE IN-DEPTH STORY OF THE RASHI SICHOS AND HOW THE PROJECT EVOLVED THROUGHOUT THE YEARS. (THIS ESSAY IS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE A FULL-FLEDGED REVIEW OF THE REBBE’S APPROACH TO RASHI. FOR THAT, ONE MUST PROPERLY DELVE INTO THE MANY RASHI SICHOS AVAILABLE FROM THE REBBE AND IT IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS ARTICLE.)

MUCH OF THE PREVIOUS INSTALLMENT TOLD THE STORY OF REB YOSEF WALDMAN, A LONGTIME CROWN HEIGHTS RESIDENT WHO HAD THE ZECHUS OF BEING ESPECIALLY INVOLVED IN THE RASHI SICHOS, AND WAS PRIVILEGED TO HAVE RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION FROM THE REBBE IN THAT REGARD.

SINCE THEN, WE WERE SADDENED BY THE PASSING OF REB YOSEF ON YUD-DALED KISLEV OF THIS YEAR.

WE DEDICATE THIS ARTICLE IN HIS MEMORY תנצב"ה.



revolution in

כשרות

לע"נ

הרב יוסף וואלדמאן ז"ל

זכה להתייחסות מיוחדת מכ"ק אדמו"ר בקשר לאמירת ה"רש"י שיחות"
ולזכות אשתו יבלח"ט מרת מרים תחי' וואלדמן ובתם מרת חנוצא שתחי' מעט

נדפס ע"י

החברות וחברי הכתה של חנוצא בבית רבקה
לרגל התחלת שיעור קבוע ב"רש"י שיחות" לע"נ אביה ע"ה



The farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Noach 5725 began like any other farbrengen. Although in those years Shabbos farbrengens generally only took place on Shabbos *mevorchim*, the Rebbe had notified that he would farbreng every Shabbos during the year of *aveilus* for his mother. The previous Shabbos had been Shabbos *mevorchim*, when there would have anyway been a farbrengen, so this was the first farbrengen of the new initiative. By all accounts, no one could know what lay ahead, and so a perfectly ordinary farbrengen was expected.

All that changed though, immediately after the Rebbe arrived at his place. Instead of starting a *sicha* as soon as he sat down, like he usually did, the Rebbe requested a Chumash. That the Rebbe should request a *sefer* during a farbrengen was something extremely rare. It was the first indication that something unusual was underway.

The Chumash was brought, and after quoting the now famous words of the Alter Rebbe, that Rashi on Chumash is *יינה של תורה*, (lit. the “wine” of Torah), the Rebbe opened it to parshas Noach, and began reading and translating the first *possuk*. He then moved on to Rashi, reading and translating the second Rashi on the parsha.

It was a beautiful scene; hundreds of Chassidim crowding around as the Rebbe sat and taught Rashi like a *melamed* in *cheder*, first translating it, and then proceeding to ask a number of penetrating questions, cutting to the very heart of Rashi’s words.

No one realized it at the time, but this was an historic moment. The Rebbe had just—quietly and without much fanfare—launched a revolution that would accompany every Shabbos farbrengen for the next 23 years, and would change the way we look at Rashi.



THE REBBE DAVENS SHACHARIS AT THE AMUD IN THE SMALL ZAL, UPSTAIRS 770, FOLLOWING THE PASSING OF REBBETZIN CHANA ON VOV TISHREI 5725.

WHY RASHI?

Although the Rebbe never expressly explained why he chose to focus specifically on Rashi *le’iluy nishmas* his mother, Chassidim suggested some

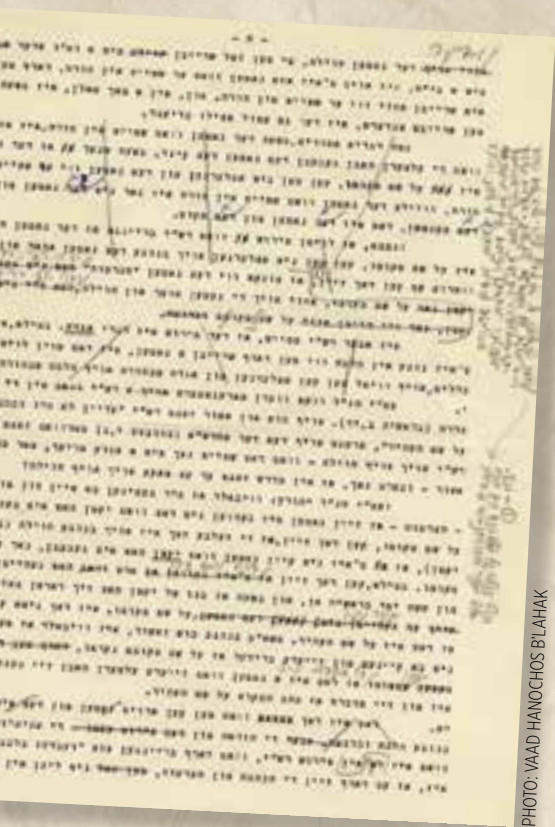


PHOTO: VAAD HANOCHOS BELAHAK

THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGOCHOS ON THE GROUNDBREAKING FARBRENGEN OF PARSHAS NOACH 5725, WHEN THE REBBE LAUNCHED THE RASHI SICHOS.

reasons. Firstly, it is said that learning Rashi in memory of a *niftar* elevates the *neshoma*. Now just imagine the countless hours spent by Chassidim studying and discussing Rashi, through learning the Rebbe's sichos, all in memory of Rebbetzin Chana. It was also speculated that Rebbetzin Chana learned Chumash

and Rashi with the Rebbe as a child, making revolutionizing Rashi a fitting memorial.¹

FULL FARBRENGEN

Following that first farbrengen of parshas Noach, the group of bochorim known as 'chozrim,' who were tasked with memorizing the Rebbe's farbrengens, gathered immediately after Shabbos with Reb Yoel Kahn to review the farbrengen. Reb Yoel then prepared a transcript, as was done every time.

The transcript was typed up, copies were made, and being that in those days there was quite a cost associated with such matters, it was distributed for a nominal fee as a "bilti-mugah" farbrengen.

At that time, *sichos* were generally not reviewed and edited by the Rebbe. Full farbrengens were only *mugah* from 5747 (with a few exceptions), so there was no reason to give the Rebbe a copy of the farbrengen before it was published. As such, the completed and already distributed product was delivered to the Rebbe's room, and nothing more was thought of it.

Imagine the surprise when this farbrengen was returned from the Rebbe's room with edits on the *hanocho*. The

writers were told that not only was the Rebbe planning on holding a farbrengen every Shabbos of the year; he also intended to edit the entire farbrengen every week!

The Rebbe instructed that on the cover of the published farbrengens a dedication should be included to honor Rebbetzin Chana. The unedited copies were quickly collected, and the new *mugah sicha* was distributed.

For technical reasons, this only went on for seven weeks, through parshas Vayishlach. These seven farbrengens, along with the dedication for Rebbetzin Chana, can be found in Likutei Sichos, in the *hosafos* to *chelek hei*.

How, at the end of each *sicha* in Likutei Sichos, the date on which this *sicha* was said appears in small print. But a glance in the beginning of *chelek hei* will leave one a bit confused. A number of Rashi *sichos* are taken from those farbrengens in early 5725; the same farbrengens which are printed in their entirety in that very same *chelek*. Why are the same *sichos* printed twice in the same *sefer*?!

To answer this question we must first expand our understanding of the Rebbe's innovation, and why this shook the world of Rashi learning to the very core.

RABBAN SHEL YISRAEL

Ever since it was written, about 900 years ago, Rashi's *pirush* on Torah has become almost synonymous with learning Chumash. A child begins learning Rashi shortly after he starts learning Chumash, and for the rest of his life, Rashi accompanies every *posuk* that he learns. Learning Chumash without Rashi is inadequate at best, and any publisher that prints a Chumash without Rashi is bound to be left with many unsold copies. The uniqueness of his *pirush* contributed to "Rashi" also being the popular *roshei teivos* for רבן של ישראל—The teacher of Israel.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

In the Rebbe's childhood, he was taught by Reb Zalmen Vilenkin of Yekatrinoslav. Being the Rebbe's *melamed*, Reb Zalmen was a frequent visitor at the home of Reb Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe's father. He related how Reb Levi Yitzchok was once expounding upon a Rashi in Chumash, bringing out the deepest concepts of Kabbalah in every nuance of Rashi. The assembled had never heard such a thing before, and someone asked Reb Levi Yitzchok if Rashi could realistically have intended all the things he was saying. R' Levi Yitzchok replied that Rashi did not necessarily have this all in mind, but since he wrote with *ruach hakodesh*, surely all that he had written is explainable *al-pi* Kabbalah.

NOT SO SIMPLE

Studying Rashi in depth is not a new phenomenon. Already the Ramban, who lived shortly afterwards, paid careful attention to every word and detail of Rashi. In his own *pirush* on Chumash he begins almost every *possuk* with a critical examination of Rashi before offering his own explanation.

Rabbeinu Tam, Rashi's famous grandson and the first of the *ba'alei hatosafos*, innovated a new method of being *mefarsh* Gemora. He looks at every *sugya* through the lens of the rest of *Shas*, and by resolving contradictions from many other *sugyos*, he brings the learner to a much broader and deeper understanding of the current *sugya*. He is known to have said: The fact that my grandfather explained the Gemora—that I can do too, but his commentary on Torah—that I cannot emulate, it is beyond my capability.²

The Ibn Ezra, also known for his *pirush* on the whole *Tanach*, even wrote a song extolling Rashi's life and *pirush*.

At first glance this seems quite unexpected; Rashi writes very little of his own, taking a large portion of his commentary from *Midrashim* and *Shas*. Perhaps it can be said, that his *pirush* is really a collection of *ma'morei Raza*³, with some French words thrown in. Additionally, Rashi himself writes on several occasions, starting right away in *parshas Bereishis*:

“אני לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא”

“I am only here to give the simple meaning of the *possuk*”

So what's the big excitement, and why were hundreds of *seforim* written on Rashi, if there is little original content there, and whatever is there, is—according to Rashi himself—simple and uncomplicated?

It is this very promise of simplicity that bothers all the *meforshim*, starting with the Ramban. There are many different and varied *Midrashim* on each *parsha*, yet Rashi generally chooses to quote only one, leaving us to figure out why he chose specifically that one; especially when the others seem to be simpler, staying closer to the actual words of the *possuk*.

The problem is amplified when Rashi does quote two opinions. Only one of them can be the simple interpretation, so why does he mention two? And sometimes he stays true to the wording of the *Midrash* he is quoting, and at other times he makes changes or adds his own details, without any explanation as to why he is doing so.

It is this issue, the contrast between Rashi's assurance that he is only concerned with the simple meaning, and the way he actually writes, that leads the Ramban to frequently offer his own explanation of the *possuk*. It also caused so many of the other *meforshai* Rashi to write so much, sometimes several pages on one *possuk*, in their attempt to answer these questions.

For most of the *meforshai* Rashi, until the Rebbe, there is one common thread. With few exceptions, notably the Maskil Lidovid, none of them took the statement of Rashi—that he only clarifies the simple meaning—as literally as the Rebbe did.

The Ramban, being a *Rishon*, simply argued with Rashi, and asserted that the correct *peshuto shel mikra* lay elsewhere. From the words of other *meforshim* it seems they believed that Rashi never intended to establish a rule which would guide the entirety of his *pirush*, and the promise of *peshuto shel mikra* applies only to those places where he says so clearly.

Another explanation is that Rashi always attempts to offer only *peshuto shel mikra*, but at times this proves impossible, or too difficult, and on these occasions he resorts to a *Midrash*.

רש"י - ישר

Early on in the period of Rashi *sichos* the Rebbe pointed out that Rashi shares the same letters as the word *yoshor*—straight. It is a testament to the holiness of the entire Torah, including *pirush* Rashi; that



CHASSIDIM GATHER AROUND IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING AS REB YOEL KAHAN LEADS THE CHAZZARA FOLLOWING A FARBRENGEN.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 141909

KLOLEI RASHI

As mentioned in previous installments, when explaining a Rashi the Rebbe would often introduce a new ‘*klal*,’ or principle, which Rashi adhered to in writing his *pirush*. By keeping these guidelines in mind we can know when to ask a question on Rashi (which would frequently be answered by a further application of this rule), and also provide answers to many questions which arise.

These rules fall into many different categories. Some examples: When Rashi quotes a certain person or source, when is the source named and when not? What sort of difficulties in a *possuk* does Rashi ignore? When does Rashi quote more than one opinion on a matter? Which words will he include in the *dibur hamaschil*, and what does that tell us about the issues he is addressing?

By the time the Rebbe had been discussing Rashi for a few years, there was a sizable amount of new *kololim* that the Rebbe had introduced. In 5731 Rabbi Tuvia Blau published an article in “*Shmaytin*”—a scholarly journal in Israel—titled “The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s New Method in Learning Meforshim on Torah.” A short while later he received a letter

from the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Hodakov, thanking him for the article, and informing him that the Rebbe had enjoyed it. Rabbi Hodakov then suggested that he look for even more *kololim*, and print them all in a book. Rabbi Blau of course agreed to work on the book, and in the introduction to Likutei Sichos *chelek hei*, which was published in 5732, readers are promised that a separate volume containing all the rules of learning Rashi will be available shortly.



For some reason, however, the project was delayed about ten years, until 5740, when Rabbi Blau was notified by *mazkirus* that the Rebbe wished for the book to be published as soon

as possible. Naturally, he immediately began working frantically on it, and in just three weeks the first edition of the *sefer* “*Klolei Rashi*” was published. In it were seventeen categories containing a total of 207 *kololim*. It is worth noting that this is one of the only books officially written by someone other than the Rebbe but is printed with the Rebbe’s *shaar blaas*.

The Rebbe expressed great appreciation for the *sefer*, writing to Reb Tuvia:

ת”ח ת”ח במיוחד על כל ששלח בקשר לכללי רש”י וכו’, וחכמה (נוסף על המלאכה גדולה) יש כאן וכו’ וכו’... דהפך בה כו’... תבוא מהדורא ב’...

“Many thanks, especially for what you sent regarding Klolei Rashi. The wisdom (in addition to the great labor) is evident... You should continue delving deeper, and surely there will be a second addition.”

In other words, the Rebbe is telling him that if he looks deeper into the *sichos* he will discover even more *kololim*, and that they should be included in a second edition of the *sefer*. In 5751 he in fact published a second edition, which this time contained twenty categories and 389 distinct *kololim*! (Rabbi Blau notes that 389 is the *gimatria* of פשט).

if Rashi says something, his words are not to be explained away or taken out of context. So when Rashi writes “אני לא מקרא” באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא, he means **only** פשוטו של מקרא, and every word of his is pure *pshat*; nothing more.

What is the definition of *pshat*? First of all, it should not be based on any outside sources. *Meforshim* often ask questions on Rashi, and they write that to answer them we must first know this *Gemora*, or this *Midrash*. Only then will we understand why Rashi wrote what he did.

This, the Rebbe says, is not ‘*pashtusdik*’ enough for Rashi; it was written as *pshat*, so from the *possuk* itself we have all the information we need to understand the Rashi. If Rashi wants us to know something, he will write it, but he will never rely on what we know from other places.

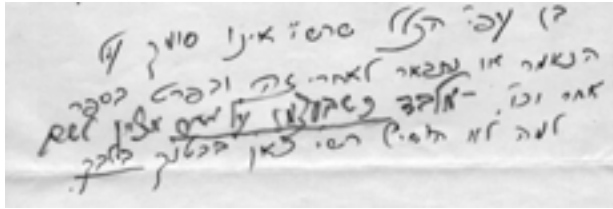
Also, Rashi always relies on the learner’s knowledge of earlier *pesukim*.

And a third point: He wrote with *seichel hayoshor*—common sense. Children, in

their simplicity, often ask questions that adults wouldn’t think of. Rashi wrote his *pirush* in a style that can be understood even by a child, addressing all his questions.

So with enough work and common sense—*seichel hayoshor*—it can be demonstrated that every single word of Rashi, even the words he chooses to put into the *dibur hamaschil*, and whether or not he finishes the *dibur hamaschil* with “*vegomer*,” is all based on the true and ultimate *pehuto shel mikra*.

The Rebbe's handwritten response on a note written by one of the *chozrim*, commenting that Rashi does not rely on what it says later in Torah.



מלבד כשבעצמו על אתר מציין לשם

Except in instances where Rashi himself refers to there

Chassidisher Derher, that when Rashi *sichos* first began, it took some time for the Chassidim to realize that the Rebbe was unveiling a new approach of looking at Rashi. The realization came when, week after week, the Rebbe discussed the first and last Rashi of every *parsha*; it became apparent that this would go on for the whole year.

Normally, even the brightest individual cannot promise to have something to say on every occasion. When there is something that needs explaining, he'll explain it. Some people will explain things in a more simplistic fashion, while

Without reading Rashi, what we would otherwise consider *peshuto shel mikra* will often overlook some basic commonsensical question. But by carefully analyzing the Rashi, taking into account the entire Chumash up until that point, it can be shown that no matter how far removed it seems to be from the literal meaning, Rashi's *peshat* is the real *peshuto shel mikra*, and it answers every question that could have arose.

A small example of this is right at the beginning, in *parshas Bereshis*. The *possuk* says:

ויקח ה' אלקים את האדם וינחהו בגן עדן

"Hashem took Adam and placed him in Gan Eden."

The obvious understanding is that Hashem physically moved Adam Harishon from his original location in and put him in Gan Eden. Rashi however, explains it differently:

לקחו בדברים נאים ופתהו ליכנס

"[Hashem] took him with kind words and convinced him to enter."

In a 5745 *sicha*, the Rebbe demonstrated how the seemingly obvious meaning of the *possuk* overlooks some basic questions; such as (1) why didn't Hashem just create Adam in Gan Eden to begin with, and (2) when exactly was Gan Eden created? Only by delving deeply into Rashi's words are all the questions of someone learning like a *ben chamesh limikra*—a five year old child—answered, and the real *peshuto shel mikra* emerges.

EVERY WEEK?!

Rabbi Leibel Schapiro, rosh yeshiva and rav of the Lubavitcher community in Miami Beach, Florida, who was part of the team of *chozrim* during that period, related in an exclusive interview with A



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 108668

a greater genius will have a considerably deeper view point.

But what if there is a passage that requires no explanation and seems too straightforward for any elaboration? Obviously he will not comment on it, and instead move on to the next challenge.

Yet, here the Rebbe was promising to elaborate on the first and last Rashi of every single *parsha*. Only one that learns Rashi in a whole new light, through lenses never before worn, can promise to do such a thing! What if one particular week there will be no questions on Rashi? And what if the answer will be so short and simple that even the greatest scholar can't uncover any additional depth?

In such a situation all of the *meforshei* Rashi are silent, letting the seemingly obvious words of Rashi speak for themselves. Yet here the Rebbe was planning on having what to say every week. This told the Chassidim that here was no ordinary *biur* on Rashi. Rather the Rebbe was going to learn Rashi in a way never before attempted, leading to every Rashi being illuminated by this new light.

An example of this is in *parshas* Korach. Early on in the year, *bochurim* looked

through the first Rashi of each *parsha* to try to discover what the year had in store. Rabbi Schapiro recalls waiting for *parshas* Korach to see what the Rebbe could possibly say about it. The first Rashi is very short, saying only פרשה זו יפה נדרשת במדרש רבי תנחומא “This *parsha* is expounded upon nicely in *Midrash Tanchuma*.” What could the Rebbe possibly add to such a Rashi?

Of course, come Shabbos, the Rebbe said a *sicha* on that Rashi. He explained that Rashi is telling us what to do when there seems to be no *pshat* to the *possuk* without resorting to *Midrashim*, and how it is possible that a *possuk* doesn't have a *pshat*.

MULTIPLE PESHOTIM

Now, if the Rebbe was going to embark on this new journey, there were many things that needed to be explained. Here is not the place for a comprehensive overview answering all the questions, but we will focus on one, which many readers may have already asked:

It is common for Rashi to explain the

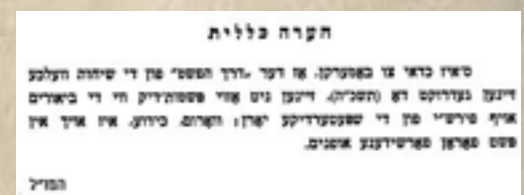
possuk in one way and then state: ומדרשו or ומדרש אגדה, and then go on to give another explanation. Meaning, the first way was *peshuto shel mikra* and now he is going to offer another opinion which is not *pshat*. How does this fit with the Rebbe's view, that every word of Rashi is only *pshat*?

The answer, the Rebbe explained, is that *pshat* has different levels. There is of course the most basic *peshuto shel mikra*. But when that won't do, for whatever reason, there are *Midrashim* which complement the *pshat*. These *Midrashim* are needed for the *pshat* itself, as they address problems inherent in the *pshat*, and as such Rashi's bringing them is not a departure from his rule.

There are also different levels in *pshat*. While every Rashi is pure *pshat*, many can also be understood using another level of *pshat*. While still considered in the realm of *pshat*, they represent דרוש רמוז שבפשט or שבפשט, and when other *meforshim* explain Rashi's words based on outside sources, they are following these lines.

In the first few weeks after his mother's passing, the Rebbe focused on a less “*pashut*” level of *pshat*. There was more of an emphasis placed on the lesson in *avodas Hashem*, and less on uncovering the real *pshat*. For this reason, the seven *farbrengens* printed in the back of *Likutei Sichos chelek hei* are prefaced by the following disclaimer:

“It is worth noting, that the method of ‘*pshat*’ in the *sichos* printed here is not as ‘*pashtusdik*’ as the *sichos* of the later years, because in *pshat* itself there are multiple methods.”



THE REBBE LEAVES 770 HOLDING THE NEWLY PRINTED VOLUME OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 14; 5 TISHREI 5738.



BOCHURIM LEARN IN THE SMALL ZAL, UPSTAIRS 770. A LIKKUTEI SICHOS CAN BE SEEN ON THE TABLE.

LEARNING RASHI – FOR EVERYONE!

The Rebbe always expressed pleasure whenever there was a ‘koch’ in Rashi sichos. But extra attention was paid when the interest came from an unexpected source.

One such occasion involved a young girl. During the farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Bo 5741, the Rebbe asked a question on a Rashi in that week’s parsha, and as was quite common, he said he would deal with the question at a later opportunity. A little over a month later, by the farbrengen of parshas Titzaveh, the Rebbe returned to the topic:

There is a question that we asked a number of farbrengens ago. Considerable time has elapsed since then, but not one person has corresponded with me concerning it.

So I waited, until finally somebody wrote to me about it. And who was it? A young girl!

All the ovdim and learned bochorim were apparently sleeping, so only a girl was concerned with this issue.

She requested—in English, as that’s

the only language she can write—that maybe we can go back and finish what we started discussing back then.

So I will now talk about it, because if I don’t, I’m afraid everyone will forget about it, even this girl.

The Rebbe went on to explain the Rashi, and then ended off:

“Again, nobody was bothered by this question besides for this girl... Surely she will get a good shidduch, especially considering the zechus she has by us speaking about it.” (Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 p. 461)

A similar occurrence took place in 5744. Rabbi Mendel Kaplan, today of Oak Park, Michigan, was then a young child who came to the Rebbe with his father, Rabbi Leibel Kaplan ע"ה, from Tzfas. At one of the farbrengens during their visit, the Rebbe asked questions on Rashi, and again, left them unanswered. Mendel thought he knew the answers and decided to write them down to send to the Rebbe. (His answers to the Rebbe were later printed by Oholei Torah, and the age and simplicity of the writer

is quite evident). He received the following response in the Rebbe’s *ksav yad kodesh*:

נהנתי במאד מקריאתו, ובפרט מהדיוק
בהפרטים וכו'

“I greatly enjoyed reading it, especially your attention to the details etc.”

The Rebbe then told him to look into an apparent difficulty with his explanation, based on another Rashi, and suggested to publish the entire overview in one of the *kovtzim*.

For an answer to be accepted by the Rebbe was not a common occurrence in those days, yet here the Rebbe not only accepted this child’s answer, he even helped him develop it by pointing him to another Rashi and encouraging him to explain the contradiction between the two.

On the following Shabbos, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Leibel Kaplan ע"ה where his son was. The Rebbe then told Mendel to say Le’chaim. Later on at the farbrengen, the Rebbe discussed the Rashi at length, remarking that most of the answers he received were not good because they were written by older learned people who brought many sources and proofs for their ideas. But really, as Rashi himself says and as the Rebbe quoted innumerable times, his *pirush* was written on a level that even a child can understand. And being that children don’t have patience for sources or theories or complicated explanations, all they want to do is understand the Rashi as quickly as possible so they can go back outside to play.³ (*Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 2 p. 952*)



FRAGMENT OF PIRUSH RASHI,
WRITTEN ON PARCHMENT.
CIRCA 13TH CENTURY.

THE DEEPER MEANING

A story is told of a certain Rabbi, who, after spending many years studying and toiling over the secrets of Kabbalah, decided to write a complete *pirush* on Torah, *al-pi Kabbalah*.

It is well known that every part of Torah can be understood in four general ways:

pshat, *remez*, *drush*, and *sod*. *Sod* is the way Torah is studied in *Atzilus*, with every *possuk* carrying deep mystical meaning, and it was this dimension that the *mekubal* wanted to write and publish with.

He put his heart and soul into this lofty undertaking, and after many years he finally had a complete manuscript. That night, he had a vision where he was instructed to shorten the work, as the

world was not sufficiently prepared for such revelations. The deeper meaning must be hidden in simpler terminology. He did so, and after completing the abridged version of his *pirush*, he had the same vision with the same message. Again he shortened it, and again he had this dream. After shortening it for the third time, he saw that what remained was a word for word copy of *pirush* Rashi.

יִינָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה

In the very first Rashi *sicha*, the Rebbe quoted the Alter Rebbe, who said that Rashi's *pirush* is יִינָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, lit. the 'wine of Torah.' Wine, the Rebbe explained, is obtained by squeezing grapes. Leaving the grapes whole will never produce wine. The same applies to Rashi. Taken at face value, the deep secrets hidden therein will remain hidden, but only by 'squeezing' it, by dissecting it and taking it apart, is the '*pnimius haTorah*' revealed. And just like wine gets stronger the longer it stays in the grape, so too the 'wine of torah'—the further it is hidden behind simple terminology, the deeper it is.

In other words, every single Rashi can be understood in two ways. There is the simple meaning, which—as we have shown before—is not so simple; and the deeper meaning, *sod*. Without arriving at the proper understanding of the *pshat*, that *sod* remains hidden.

Some Rashi's also include *remez* and *drush*, though not every Rashi can be understood on this level. *Pshat* and *sod*, on the other hand, are found in every Rashi without exception. At almost every Shabbos farbrengen, after taking care of the *pshat* aspect of Rashi, the Rebbe would turn his attention to the יִינָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, often teaching a *hora'a* in *avodas Hashem* based on Rashi's precise wording.

FOR EVERYONE

This Rebbe's interest in expanding the study of Rashi *sichos* to as broad an audience as possible was expressed on another occasion as well. In 5748, the editors of the *kovetz* of Oholei Torah wrote up a few unanswered questions on Rashi that the Rebbe had asked at a farbrengen, ending off that this question was left to the participants of the farbrengen to answer.

The draft of the questions was given in to the Rebbe to edit before it went to print. On the questions themselves the Rebbe didn't make any corrections, but on the ending the Rebbe added "כל", all the participants should attempt to answer the question.



שאלה זו ה"ה לעיונם של כל משתתפי ההתוועדות שי, ויה"ר שכאו"א מאתנו כולנו יכוון ויצליח בתירוץ שאלות וכו'

This question is for the consideration of all the participants in the farbrengen *sheyichu*, and *yehi ratzon* that every single one of us should correctly and successfully answer these questions.

JUST THE BEGINNING

On many occasions the Rebbe concluded a *sicha*—including Rashi *sichos*—with the *possuk* in Mishlei, תן לחכם ויחכם עוד, “Give to a wise man, and he will become wiser.” The Rebbe was informing the listeners that everything he says is only the beginning. But the *sicha* contains much greater depth than what is readily apparent, and he expects them to analyze the *sicha* and expand their grasp of the Rebbe’s words to its fullest potential.

There were, of course, certain “wise” individuals who said that the Rebbe’s words don’t apply to them, as the Rebbe specifically said תן לחכם, and who is arrogant enough to call himself a *chacham*? The Rebbe addressed this issue on Shabbos parshas Bo, 5744:

Since every Yid is assumed to be pure, surely everyone is on the level of ‘חכם’, being that he is part of the ‘wise and understanding nation.’ And since he was created this way, he is incapable of changing it.

Therefore, no one can excuse himself, saying that he is not a חכם, and pretend that he doesn’t understand what we want from him, because the reality is that he does know! Like the famous statement of the Rebbe Maharash, “The Aibershter certainly can’t be fooled; everyone around you is not being fooled either; so who are you fooling if not yourself?! And it’s no big deal to fool a fool.

The full extent of what the Rebbe meant is clarified with a story related by Rabbi Schapiro:



THE MANICHIM PREPARE A *SICHA* FOR THE WEEKLY LIKKUT, TO BE GIVEN IN TO THE REBBE FOR HAGAH, CHESHVAN 5736. R-L: RABBI LEIBEL ALTEIN, RABBI NACHMAN SCHAPIRO.

The year was 5730 and the *manichim* had prepared a Rashi *sicha* the Rebbe had said five years earlier for publication as a *likut*, and eventually in Likutei Sichos.

In the course of preparing the *sicha*, they encountered a difficulty. As usual in these situations, they wrote their question to the Rebbe, and they suggested a proposed answer. The Rebbe agreed with their answer, and so the question, along with the answer, was printed as a footnote in the *sicha*.

The *likut* came out for Shabbos parshas Mattos and that Shabbos there was a *farbrengen*. During the *farbrengen* the Rebbe discussed this footnote, and then asked a question on the answer given there. Then the Rebbe said, “I have been waiting five years for someone to ask this question, but because not one person came forward, I had to do it myself!”

In other words, the Rebbe expected the *sicha* to be learned in such depth, that questions should be asked not only on what was said in the *sicha*, but even on an answer that the learner would come up with on his own, to answer his own question on the *sicha*. And as the Rebbe said, the fact that he wasn’t asked such a question shows that the *sichos* are not being learned properly. That was the

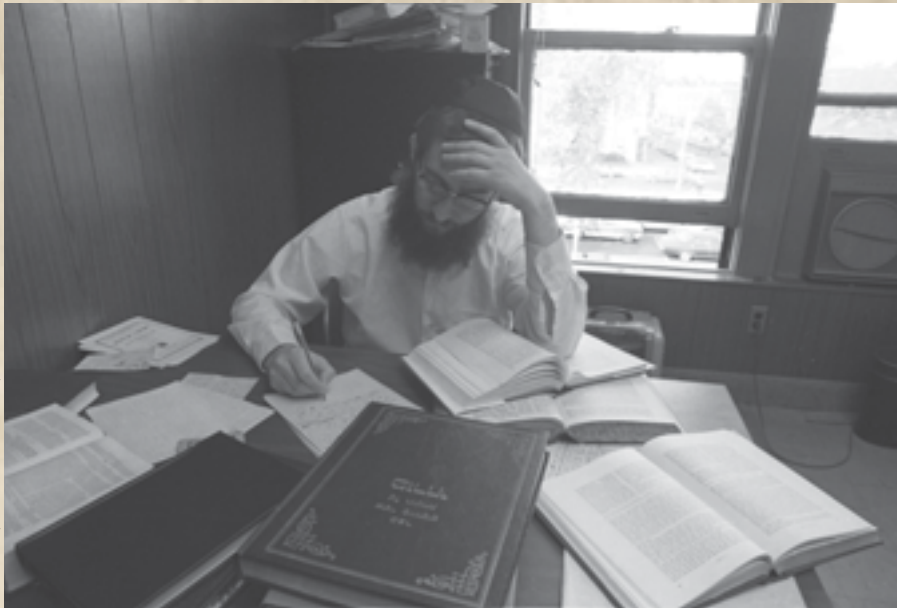
extent of the expectation of ויחכם עוד!

It is for this reason that some of the earlier *sichos* are found twice in Likutei Sichos. At first, only what the Rebbe said by the *farbrengen* was written, these are the *sichos* in the *hosafos* of *chelek hei*. Later, these *sichos* were revisited and relearned in depth, and written up in the style of פשט שבפשט. Additionally, the Rebbe frequently added new “*klolim*” of learning Rashi [see sidebar]. These *klolim* were applied to Rashis which the Rebbe had already explained, thereby shedding new light on the *sicha*.

PROPER TRAINING

As the years progressed, the Rashi sichos took on many new elements. For a full year, the Rebbe focused only on what Rashi didn’t mention, explaining that when there is an apparent question on the possuk and Rashi doesn’t address it, showing that this question is answerable using common sense and our knowledge of previous pesukim, therefore Rashi saw no need to address it.

At a later stage, the Rebbe began questioning the *dibur hamaschil* of Rashi, why he quotes specific words if he’s seemingly explaining something



else. That must also tell us something we didn't know.

The Rebbe also began leaving over questions. He would sometimes ask many questions on a certain Rashi without answering them all; sometimes not even answering any of the questions, but leaving them for the next week.

The Rebbe explained the reason for this at the farbrengen of parshas Mikeitz, 5744:

The explanation on Rashi from last week was not completed, and I had hoped that over the course of the week there would

The Rebbe's response to a question that the *chozrim* asked on a Rashi sicha:

מפליא ומתמלי' וביותר שכ"ז צריך לפרט
(לאחרי יותר מעשר שני לימוד) ובאם לא
כו'!!

It is utterly shocking and surprising that all this must be specified (after more than ten years of teaching) and if not...

be attempts to answer the questions in the kovtzim...

And again on parshas Bo:

Another reason we didn't finish last week's discussion on Rashi was to see if anyone would attempt to answer the questions; especially after last time, when I encouraged that the questions should be answered in the kovtzim...

There is a well-known *din* that a son may only begin selling his deceased father's property after he reaches 20 years of age. Only after 20 years is he mature enough to be involved in his father's business. Here the Rebbe is saying that 20 years after he introduced this *derech* in Rashi he expects Chassidim to learn Rashi this way on their own. Not just to learn the Rebbe's answers, but to answer the questions just as the Rebbe would have himself.

QUESTIONS FROM THE CROWD

This was only the beginning; in 5746 the Rebbe went even further.

Reb Velvel Rosenblum of Crown Heights relates:

After the farbrengen of parshas Beshalach 5746 I had a question on the Rashi *sicha*, so as I had done many times in past, I submitted my question to the *kovetz Ha'oros Ubiurim* of Oholei Torah.

At the next farbrengen the Rebbe responded very sharply to my question, saying that it was a 'wild question' which came as a result of using the *klolei Rashi* improperly and thinking out of context.

I was a bit shaken, but not entirely discouraged. So in the *kovetz* for parshas Vayakhel I again wrote on Rashi, this time asking my own question on that week's *parsha*. What happened next changed the face of farbrengens and the future of Rashi *sichos*.

The Rebbe came out of his room on Shabbos morning holding the *kovetz*, and pointing to my *ha'ora*, told a *bochur* who was standing nearby that this was the Rashi he would speak about this week. As soon as I came to shul, I was eagerly told what had happened, that the Rebbe would address my *ha'ora*!

I was understandably a bit apprehensive, considering what had happened just a few weeks earlier, but as it turned out I had nothing to worry about.

The Rebbe was happy with my question and said that from now on this will be the new *seder*: questions should be submitted to one of the *kovtzim*, and he will choose from there which Rashi to talk about. For the first three weeks the Rebbe used my questions. After that it was different people every week, although my questions were still addressed on occasion. The Rebbe had clearly comforted me following the rebuke of two weeks prior.

There are a number of benefits to such an arrangement:

Here is what the Rebbe said then, introducing the new system and explaining why:

As usual, we will explain a Rashi in this week's parsha, but this time we will discuss questions on Rashi that were already asked in one of the kovtzim.

In general, it would be a good idea to do this from now on. Before Shabbos, those who participate in the farbrengens should publish their suggestions for which Rashi we should discuss, along with their questions on that Rashi.

1) Since the suggestions will be only Rashis that have not yet been discussed, this will save me from having to search for such a Rashi.

2) Being that no two people are alike, it is quite possible if I choose a Rashi to discuss I will end up choosing one that everyone understands and has no difficulty with. But if the suggestion for the Rashi comes from the participants in the farbrengen, I will know for sure that this is a Rashi that people have trouble understanding.

3) Most importantly—this will certainly increase interest for everyone to pay

attention to what is being spoken at the farbrengens.

Reb Michoel Rainitz, who was then part of the *maareches* of *Ha'oros Ubiurim*, recalls that time clearly. Previously, the *kovetz* was a relatively small publication and it sometimes struggled to find content to fill its pages. But after that *sicha*, there was a sudden surge in submissions, and the *maareches* would stay up nights sorting through all the *ha'oros*, determining which ones were fit for print. On Thursday night, after



the *kovtzim* were printed, a copy was delivered to the Rebbe's home. The Rebbe would often be seen leafing through its pages during *kabolas Shabbos* on Friday night.

After a few months the Rebbe commented that people were asking on Rashis that had already been discussed over the last 20 years. So every week, the editors included a list of all the Rashi *sichos* on the next week's parsha, for the perusal of the readers.

תוכן התוספת

1. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת שמות?	10-11
2. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת ויקרא?	11-12
3. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי שנה?	12-13
4. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי חטאי?	13-14
5. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי עוונות?	14-15
6. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי מעשר?	15-16
7. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי עירוב?	16-17
8. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי שבת?	17-18
9. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי חנוכה?	18-19
10. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי פסח?	19-20
11. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי שבועות?	20-21
12. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי תענית?	21-22
13. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי סוכות?	22-23
14. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי חנוכה?	23-24
15. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי פסח?	24-25
16. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי שבועות?	25-26
17. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי תענית?	26-27
18. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי סוכות?	27-28
19. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי חנוכה?	28-29
20. למה אין חייב פירוש פרשת חיי פסח?	29-30



A LIVING LEGACY

In conclusion, it is clear that the Rebbe's Rashi *sichos* constitute an entire section of Torah that is uniquely the Rebbe's. As the Rebbe's Chassidim, it is also our privilege to learn these *sichos* with a "Koch," as the Rebbe asked us so many times to do; and to try as much as possible to adopt these methods in our own learning of Rashi. Especially considering the fact that—although of course every part of Torah was dear to the Rebbe—clearly the Rashi *sichos* were unique, as they were introduced in memory of the Rebbe's mother, and learning them undoubtedly brings immeasurable personal *nachas* to the Rebbe. **D**

1. With regards to the last reason, it would seem appropriate to quote an answer that Rabbi Leibel Schapiro received from the Rebbe: At that time, Rabbi Schapiro was preparing to publish a collection of *halochos* and *minhogim* taken from *sichos* and letters of the Rebbe, called *פסקי הלכה ומנהג*. Upon informing the Rebbe of the details of the project, he received the following answer regarding the inclusion of matters of hearsay.
 "לא לכתוב מהשמעות כי כמה וכמה מהם אינם נכונות" - כלל
 "Do not include rumors, as quite a few of them are entirely inaccurate" As we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the abovementioned speculation, there exists the distinct possibility that it is "אינו נכון כלל".
2. Shem Hagedolim by the Chida, erech Rashi
3. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 2 p. 952.