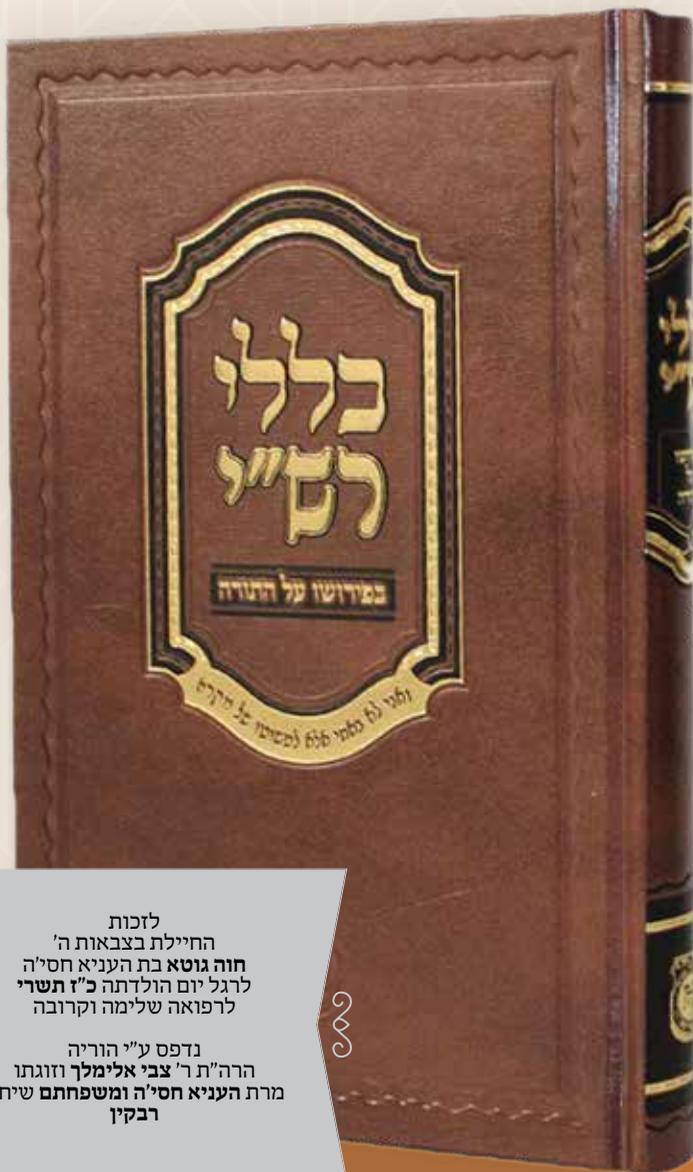


Timely Titles

KLALEI RASHI



Following the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, on Vov Tishrei 5725*, the Rebbe began a new series that would later become known as "Rashi sichos." Over decades of farbrengens, the Rebbe resolved myriads of difficulties that arise when studying Rashi and revealed an entirely new approach to the study of Rashi. Years later, after sufficient material had accumulated, a book was compiled in an attempt to codify the Rebbe's unique methodology that is "Klalei Rashi".

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חנה גוּטא בת העניא חסידה
לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ז תשרי
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' צבי אלימלך וזוגתו
מרת העניא חסידה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רבקין

Not for nothing is Rashi considered the foremost commentator on the Torah. His commentary provides exceptional clarity and insight, yet remains faithful to the precise literal reading of the text. It is for this reason that his commentary is of great aid to scholars and laymen alike. In fact, Rashi was famously dubbed “*Rabon Shel Yisroel*” (an acrostic of his initials), testifying to his influence among all Jews, from the most learned scholar to the youngest child embarking on the journey of Torah study.

This is the secret to Rashi’s success. Master of simplicity, he was able to reduce lengthy complex discussion into a concise coherent explanation that fits with the literal meaning of the verse. The Rebbe often emphasized that this is the cornerstone of Rashi’s corpus, as he himself testified: “I come only to explain the literal meaning of scripture.”¹ While every word in the Torah carries layers upon layers of meaning, Rashi’s objective was to isolate the most simple and basic understanding. He strived to make the Torah accessible to the earliest beginner who lacks previous experience, the *ben chamesh l’mikra* (a five-year-old).

Despite this apparent goal, one might be struck by many glaring inconsistencies. Often enough, Rashi does indeed resort to alternate explanations, occasionally addressing more advanced questions, which belie his simple approach and forsake his usual clarity. In some instances, he even quotes other commentaries and raises issues from additional sources. As a result, more recent *meforshim* have struggled to pinpoint Rashi’s exact metric. Why does he occasionally digress from his usual simple route?

In order to understand the exceptions, we first need to understand the rule. Once we learn how Rashi operates, these questions fall away.

Hundreds of years after Rashi’s commentary became popular amongst the masses, our perception of the classic commentary has recently been revised. For a period of 25 years the Rebbe delivered many *sichos* that shed light on the inner workings of Rashi. In his unique style, the Rebbe would introduce a particular Rashi and dissect it, asking a battery of analytical questions. Using carefully crafted principles he would proceed to reconstruct our understanding of what Rashi is attempting to accomplish and re-explain his commentary accordingly. After resolving all of the difficulties, the Rebbe generally taught an additional deeper explanation called *inyanim muflaim* and *yeyna shel Torah* that exposed the mystical dimension of Rashi’s commentary, often with a practical personal *horòah*.

Currently, there are more than 800 selections of Rashi’s commentary that have been subjected to the Rebbe’s novel interpretation. Many of these have been printed and published, primarily in Likkutei Sichos, comprising almost a third of the 39-volume set. But although many were familiar with this new genre, it had yet to be developed and consolidated into a cohesive study. Enter Rabbi Tuvia Blau, an acclaimed author and educator who made it his mission to compile such a work. Culled from the Rebbe’s teachings and talks, he presents a total of 620 principles that comprise Rashi’s methodology.

OVERVIEW

Klalei Rashi contains: a foreword, a letter from the Rebbe to the author, an introduction, and essays titled “Toras Chesed,” “Fundamental Principles,” “Principles of Rashi,” and “Examples of Principles.” The third edition also contains an overview of the history and evolution of the book from its inception.

Introduction: Here the author takes a deep dive into the role of Rashi as a commentator. What is his primary objective? Who is his commentary geared to? How does he accomplish that? Laying down the premise that Rashi’s goal is to provide the basic explanation to aid the beginner, he addresses the significance of its simplicity and explores its role in the structure of *Pardes*. Of course, this whole buildup is all to introduce the Rebbe’s revolutionary path, which sheds light on all of the above.

Toras Chesed: In this essay Rabbi Blau examines the Rebbe’s approach to navigating the dichotomy of *Toras emes* and

Toras chesed, objective truth vs. what’s kind and benevolent. Providing many examples, he paints a clear picture of the Rebbe’s ability to reconcile many concepts in Torah that seem to be mutually exclusive. Although it is somewhat relevant here, this essay is really an impressive work that encompasses more than the scope of this book and deserves recognition in its own right.

Fundamental Principles (Klalim Besisiyim): While 620 principles seem like a large number, in truth they are but offshoots and subcategories of 11 general principles. These are ideas that are frequently repeated in many Rashi *sichos* and are presented here in their raw form.

Principles of Rashi (Klalei Rashi): The largest and most important section of the book, containing 20 chapters of principles that have been culled from the Rebbe’s Rashi *sichos*. Presented in bullet form, these short paragraphs succinctly outline Rashi’s methodology. These are accompanied by

footnotes which reference the sources, enabling one to trace the principle to the original *sicha* or *sichos* from which it is derived. Besides the inherent value in assembling a structure to Rashi's commentary, studying these principles will train the reader to learn Rashi accurately. In the third edition, subtitles have been added to each individual principle. (See sidebar for a sample page.)

BACKGROUND

In the winter of 5731*, the Torah journal “*Shmaatin*” (vol. 28) ran a feature by Rabbi Blau where he introduced the Rebbe's unique Rashi learning formula to a wider audience for the first time. A premature concept, the article contained 11 principles and provided 6 examples. The piece was considered a breakthrough of sorts in certain Torah circles and garnered much positive feedback.

Shortly afterward, at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5731*, the Rebbe proposed that somebody should assemble a collection of Rashi's principles. This would serve as a learning aid and would eliminate repetition as the Rebbe would not need to reintroduce these principles in every Rashi *sicha*. The Rebbe also explained that although Rashi never explicitly wrote down his formula, it can be gleaned from his commentary.

Several months later, Rabbi Blau received a letter from Rabbi Hodakov appointing him to the task of compiling such a work. This of course, galvanized him into action and the momentous project began to form, occupying every spare moment of his time. Later, he received another letter encouraging the undertaking, this time instructing him to keep track of every Rashi the Rebbe explained.²

The Rebbe was very pleased with the initial work and would frequently reference it. He also sent a letter to the editors of “*Shmaatin*” acknowledging their recognition of the new genre.

Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe constantly urged



Examples of Principles (Hadgamos L'Klaim): Instead of only enumerating abstract principles, Rabbi Blau provides examples. To illustrate many of the above principles, he chose selections of various *sichos* and rewrote them in a way that clearly demonstrates which principles are at play. This section of the book has not yet been published in its third edition.

Rabbi Blau to increase his efforts and hurry the production of the *sefer*. In one instance the Rebbe intimated that the *zechus* might be transferred to someone else. Finally, in the winter of 5740*, he sent the first draft to the Rebbe. In a letter to Rabbi Blau, the Rebbe expressed his appreciation and noted that “*chochmah nosaf al melacha gedolah yesh kan*” (in addition to the immense labor, this work reflects impressive scholarship).

During this period, the Rebbe enthusiastically mentioned this project at several farbrengens, describing the role of Rashi's commentary and the effort required to extract his methodology. Finally, towards the end of 5740*, the first edition of Klalei Rashi was unveiled. Upon the Rebbe's instruction, the *shaar blatt* (cover page) to the *sefer* had the same border design as that of the Rebbe's other *sefarim*. This first edition contained a total of 207 principles and amounted to 130 pages. Since its release, the *sefer* has been referenced a number of times in Likkutei Sichos.

In a *yechidus* during Tishrei of 5741*, the Rebbe thanked Rabbi Blau for his efforts and advised him to write a second edition in a less scholarly language utilizing a more user-friendly design, apropos to Rashi's readership being the “*ben chamesh l'mikra*.” In addition, the Rebbe sent a letter outlining his request for a second expanded edition which would then be followed by a third. Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe continuously urged Rabbi Blau to persist in his efforts, directing him to isolate more principles to be included in the upcoming volume.

Thus, in 5751* a second edition appeared on the shelves. This edition contained 389 principles with 19 examples, and also included an introduction and an essay titled “*Toras Chesed*,” altogether amounting to 249 pages.

Most recently in 5778*, a third revised edition was published, comprising 20 chapters and an impressive 620 principles. The section of examples was removed and will soon be released as a separate volume. **T**

1. See Rashi's commentary to Bereishis 3:8, 3:24, and in several other places too.

2. These would later form the basis to the set *Biurim L'Pirush Rashi*.

A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

CHAPTER 3: BEN CHAMESH L'MIKRA

פרק ג "בן חמש למקרא"

[1] מטרתו של רש"י: לבאר את התורה גם ל"בן חמש" כיון שהתורה ניתנה כך שהתחלת הלימוד בה הוא על-ידי ילד בגיל חמש, כנאמרו "בן חמש שנים - למקרא", מסתבר שלכל דבר בתורה קיים ביאור והסבר בסגנון המתאים להבנתו של "בן חמש למקרא".¹ מטרתו של רש"י בפירושו היא לבאר את התורה בדרך הפשוטה ביותר, בה יוכל אפילו "בן חמש למקרא", שזה עתה החל בלימוד החומש, להבין את כוונת התורה.²

[2] פירוש רש"י מותאם ומובן לו לאור האמור כתב רש"י את פירושו באופן שיתאים ויהיה מובן גם ל"בן חמש למקרא",³ לפי רמת הבנתו ולפי ידיעתו את המציאות בה הוא חי ושאותה הוא מכיר.⁴

[3] גם לשונו של רש"י ברורה ומובנת לו רש"י כתב את פירושו בסגנון פשוט וברור כך שגם "בן חמש למקרא" יבין את כוונתו, מבלי נתינת מקום למענות ככוונתו של רש"י. מכך מובן שאין לפרש את דברי רש"י באופן שאינו מתאים ללשונו של רש"י בהבנה ראשונית.⁵

1. אבות פרק ה, משנה כב (לגירסת אדמו"ר הזקן בסידורו).
2. התוועדויות תשמ"ו חלק ד עמוד 351.
3. ראה לעיל פרק א, "ואני לא באתי אלא...", כללים: 1, 3, ובנספח שם. להלן כלל 45.
4. ראה להלן כללים 55-56.
5. ראה גם לעיל: מבוא, סעיף ח'. פרק א, כללים 4-5. פרק ב, כללים: 2 (בהערה 286), 3, 10, 13.
6. חלק טז עמוד 149. חלק ה עמוד 20 הערה 30 ועמוד 30. חלק ו עמוד 144. חלק ט עמוד 39 ואילך ועמוד 135. וראה גם חלק כז עמוד 38 הערה 12. התוועדויות תשמ"ג חלק ב עמוד 1022. התוועדויות תשמ"ז חלק ב עמוד 112. ובמקומות שנסמנו להלן כללים 20-24.
7. חלק ו עמוד 221. חלק טז עמוד 113 הערה 30. חלק טז עמוד 322 הערה 10. חלק כא עמוד 31. חלק כז עמוד 256 והערה 17. וראה גם להלן פרק ט, בחירת המקור ושניונים ממנו, כללים 17-14; 21.

Rashi's goal — to explain Torah even to a five-year-old:

Since the Torah is intended to be studied from the tender age of five years old, it follows that everything in the Torah can be explained in a way that is understood by a five-year-old. Thus, the purpose of Rashi's commentary is to explain the Torah in such a way.

Rashi's explanation — to suit the child's understanding:

Accordingly, Rashi's commentary is age appropriate and suitable for the child's level of maturity and previous experience.

Rashi's vocabulary — to use familiar language:

Rashi's commentary is written as such that it leaves no room for error, even for a five-year-old. Thus, Rashi cannot be saying anything that isn't understood at first glance.

RASHI'S EXPECTATIONS

95

פרק ג

התחשבותו של רש"י בו

[4] מתרץ קושיות הנובעות מידיעותיו רש"י מתרץ בפירושו קושיות המתעוררות לבן החמש בהבנת פסוקי התורה לאור ידיעותיו הקודמות.⁸

[5] מסדר את דבריו לפי רש"י מסדר את דבריו בפירושו בהתחשב עם ידיעותיו, הבנתו ואורח חייו של בן החמש, ואת גם כאשר מצד סדר הדברים אמור להיות שונה (כגון: לפי סדר הפסוקים במקרא).⁹

[6] מוסיף דברים להמחשה לעתים מוסיף רש"י דברים בפירושו כדי שבן החמש יבין את המדובר גם ממצאות חייו.¹⁰

[7] סומך עליו שיתרץ לפי ידיעותיו אין רש"י מתייחס לקושי בפירוש הכתובים כשבן החמש מסוגל להרצו בעצמו על פי ידיעותיו.¹¹

[8] אינו זקוק להוכיח כשמוכן מידיעותיו אין רש"י זקוק להביא הוכחה לדבריו כאשר הם מוכנים לבן החמש על פי ידיעותיו.¹²

[9] רש"י סומך על ידיעות בן החמש פעמים והכרחו של רש"י לדבריו הוא ממצאות החיים הידועה לבן החמש.¹³

8. חלק ט עמוד 39. חלק כו עמוד 38 הערה 12. תורת מנחם - התועדויות חלק מו עמוד 400. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק ב עמוד 491 הערה 38. התועדויות תשמ"ט חלק א עמוד 265. וראה לעיל פרק ב, "פרשנדתא", סוף כלל 3.

9. התועדויות תשמ"ג חלק ג עמודים 1459-1460; 1465, וחלק ד עמוד 1780.

10. שיחת ש"ק פרשת תשא תשמ"מ (שיחות קודש תשמ"מ חלק ב עמודים 403-404). וראה גם לעיל פרק ב, "פרשנדתא", כלל 57, ובנסמן שם.

11. התועדויות תשמ"מ חלק ב עמודים 879-880. התועדויות תשמ"ז חלק א עמוד 481.

12. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק א עמוד 440.

13. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק א עמוד 465.

Questions that arise:

Rashi answers questions that arise from *pesukim* that a five-year-old would have previously encountered.

Structure of explanation:

Rashi only addresses problems that would arise from a five-year-old's prior knowledge or understanding.

Illustration:

Sometimes Rashi adds explanation by illustrating an idea with a concept that exists in the world of a five-year-old.

Rashi relies on the child to answer his own questions:

Rashi won't address something that a child could answer from prior knowledge.

Necessity of proof:

Rashi doesn't need to prove anything that is already apparent to the five-year-old.

Rashi relies on the child's knowledge:

Sometimes Rashi may prove something based on the life experience of a five-year-old.