

טעמו וראו

A taste of the
Rebbe's teachings

Parshat Terumah

>>

The Power of the Palpable

Abraham planted cedars in Beer-Sheba, Jacob transplanted them to Egypt, and the Israelites took them along into the desert.

Why were we dragging cedars for four-hundred years? And what does it tell us about "being Jewish at heart"?

Dedicated in honor of
Berel Raichik
for his upsherenish, 23 Adar

by his parents,
Rabbi Levi & Chanee Raichik
Athens, Ohio

Preface:

In this lesson, we will focus for the first time on a “Rashi Sicha.” It will give you the opportunity to introduce your participants to yet another facet of the Rebbe’s farbrengens—how every Shabbos, he would choose one segment of Rashi’s commentary and expound on it.

It is a good opportunity to speak about the Rebbe’s general approach to Rashi—that every word is precise and every addition or subtraction holds meaning. This reflects the Rebbe’s general approach to any Torah teaching, and even to life in general. Nothing in the world is superfluous, and nothing in the Torah is included by chance. In the case of Rashi, there is a reason he chose to include a specific teaching from our sages, and there is meaning to the fact that he decided to share the name of the teacher.

The Sicha is about the wood used for the Tabernacle. Rashi explains that wood in the desert was available because the Israelites had brought along cedars that Jacob had planted in Egypt. The Rebbe analyzes and explains Rashi’s choice to bring this interpretation.

The Rebbe also explains what was behind Jacob’s decision to plant them: the cedars in Egypt served as a source of inspiration for the People of Israel throughout their exile. On this note, we also included a segment of the Rebbe’s Sicha about Joseph’s burial in Egypt which expresses a very similar point.

The takeaway from this lesson is a message the Rebbe expressed many times: Speaking about the importance of Judaism is not enough. To ensure Jewish continuity, you need to ingrain Judaism in your children by engaging in Mitzvot in a tangible way.

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In the opening verse of the Torah portion, G-d commands Moses to obtain acacia wood for the Tabernacle. Rashi explains that wood was available to them because Jacob had planted trees in Egypt and the Israelites had taken them along. The Midrash gives even broader context: those were trees originally planted by Abraham in Beer-Sheba.

In the Rebbe's talk, he questions the premise of Rashi. Did Rashi choose the most forthright interpretation? Wasn't wood available through merchants of surrounding nations? And why does he include the name of the rabbi who proposed this explanation? (Before we proceed to the Rebbe's explanation, two segments from "Klolei Rashi" explain the premise of the Rebbe's question).

The Rebbe explains that the terminology of the verse suggests that all the items were available within the Israelite encampment and needed only to be brought to Moses. Therefore, Rashi was compelled to choose an explanation in which the Israelites were not forced to purchase it elsewhere.

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The Rebbe asks further: Why did Jacob find it necessary to bring and plant cedars in Egypt for a Tabernacle which would be built 210 years later? The Rebbe explains that the answer lies in the name of the sage, Rabbi Tanchuma, which means comfort. Jacob wanted the trees to be a source of comfort which would remind the People of Israel about their future redemption.

To better understand this segment, we bring a quote from Klolei Rashi where the Rebbe explains that whenever Rashi states a name, it provides extra context and meaning to the teaching. The idea of learning from a name is based on a fascinating Talmudic story about Rabbi Meir.

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When Jacob lay dying, he made Joseph swear that he would bury him in Israel. Yet when Joseph died, he was specifically buried in Egypt.

In a segment of a different Sicha, the Rebbe points out this contradiction and notes that the story of Joseph is the final line of Bireishit, after which we excitedly declare, "chazak..." The answer is similar to the previous Sicha: Joseph chose to be buried in Egypt to be a source of inspiration to his people throughout the two hundred ten years of exile and persecution.

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Opening

If the Torah is the book of all books, Rashi is the commentator of all commentators. Every person who studies Torah, from old to young, studies it with the close commentary of Rashi. His full name was Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki and he lived in France close to a millennium ago. The commentary he wrote—culled from the vast corpus of the teachings of our sages—quickly became a staple for every Jew.

Beginning in late 1964, after the passing of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe began dedicating a segment of his weekly Shabbos farbrengens to the study of Rashi. What soon emerged was an innovative method for both the study and analysis of the Torah's foremost commentator, and for Chumash study itself. These talks continued for more than twenty-five years.

The Rebbe presented a detailed system for the study of Rashi's commentary, which demonstrated that every word was precise and that every statement was necessary. Rashi, the Rebbe explained, doesn't stray from the basic interpretation of the text, even when it seems otherwise. His sole goal is to present the most straightforward meaning of the Torah.

The following is one such "Rashi Sicha."

A. Rashi's Conundrum

After the Giving of the Torah, G-d commanded Moses to erect a Tabernacle, where He would dwell among the people. As always, the first step in a building campaign is fundraising. G-d lists the materials necessary for the structure.

Source 1 Exodus 25:1-8

G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the Israelites and have them bring me an offering. Take my offering from everyone whose heart impels him to give. This is the offering you should take from them: Gold, silver, copper, greenish-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool, fine linen and goat's hair. Red dyed ram's skins, tachash skins, and acacia wood. Oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and the sweet-smelling incense, and sardonyxes and other precious stones for the ephod and breastplate. They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them."

Rashi:

Acacia Wood: Where did they get acacia wood in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: Our forefather Jacob foresaw through Divine inspiration that the Israelites were destined to build a Tabernacle in the desert, and he therefore brought cedars* to Egypt and planted them and directed his children to take them along when they would leave Egypt.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ־לִי
תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ
לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמָתִי: וְזֹאת
הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֲתָם זָהָב
וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֶׁת: וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים: וְעֹרֹת
אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים
וְעֻצֵי שְׁטִים: שֶׁמֶן לְמָאֵר בְּשִׁמִּים
לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים:
אֲבָנֵי־שֹהֵם וְאֲבָנֵי מְלֵאִים לְאֹפֶד
וְלַחֹשֶׁן: וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנֵתִי
בְּתוֹכָם:

רש"י:

ועצי שטים. ומאין היו להם
במדבר? פירש רבי תנחומא: יעקב
אבינו צפה ברוח הקדש שעתידין
ישאל לבנות משכן במדבר,
והביא ארזים למצרים ונטעם,
וצוה לבניו לטלם עמהם כשיצאו
ממצרים:

*) The verse speaks of a wood called שיטה, commonly translated as acacia, while Rashi uses the word ארז, commonly translated as cedar. According to the Talmud in Rosh Hashanah 23a, שיטה is a member of the ארז family.

One of the items listed was acacia wood. Rashi was compelled to ask, how did they obtain wood in middle of a barren desert? To answer this question, he cites an interesting Midrash: When Jacob came down to Egypt, he brought cedars with him and planted them in his new home and instructed his children to take them along on their journey out of Egypt.

In Midrash Rabbah on the verse describing Jacob's descent into Egypt, we discover that those cedars had an even older history: they originated from Abraham himself.

Source 2 Bireishit Rabbah 94:4

Jacob began the journey, taking all his possessions, and he arrived in Beer-Sheba.

Why did he go there? Rabbi Nachman said, he went to cut down the cedars which had been planted by Abraham, his grandfather, in Beer-Sheba.

וַיֵּסַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיָּבֵא
בְּאֶרֶץ שֶׁבַע. לְהִיכֹן הַלֵּךְ? אָמַר
רַב נַחֲמָן שֶׁהֵלֵךְ לְקוֹץ אֲרָזִים שֶׁנִּטְעוּ
אֲבִרְהָם זְקֵנוּ בְּבֵאֵר שֶׁבַע.

>> The Rebbe

Finding the Literal Interpretation

בתחילת הפרשה נימנו הדברים שנצטוו לנדב למשכן - וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם גו' ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש ועזים ועורות אלים מאדמים ועורות תחשים ועצי שטים וגו'¹.

ומפרש רש"י... "ועצי שטים - ומאין היו להם במדבר, פירש רבי תנחומא, יעקב אבינו צפה ברוח הקודש שעתידין ישראל לבנות משכן במדבר, והביא ארזים למצרים ונטעם, וצוה לבניו ליטלם עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים."

וצריך להבין:

1) פירוש זה - שכבר בירידתו למצרים הביא יעקב עמו ארזים כו' לצורך המשכן שעתידין לעשות לאחרי מאתיים ועשר שנים - הוא על דרך הַדְרָש ("פירש רבי תנחומא"), ולכאורה, מהו ההכרח לכך בפשוטו של מקרא, הרי יכולים לפרש בפשטות שלקחו עצי שטים מַתְגָּרִי אומות העולם (שהיו בקרבת מקום חנייתם), וכיוצא בזה!?

2) ידוע הכלל שבדרך כלל לא מזכיר רש"י את שם בעל המאמר, מלבד במקומות אחדים שבהם ישנו קושי מסוים המתבאר על ידי זה שיודעים מיהו בעל המאמר. ועל פי זה, דרוש ביאור והסבר בנידון דידן, מדוע מזכיר רש"י שם בעל המאמר "רבי תנחומא"?

The Rebbe asks several questions on Rashi's choice of commentary. Firstly, why does he choose an explanation which doesn't seem to be the most literal interpretation of the verse? Secondly, why does he cite the name of the rabbi who taught that interpretation?

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, G-d lists the items needed for the Tabernacle; "This is the offering you should take from them...greenish-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool, fine linen and goat's hair. Red dyed ram's skins, *tachash* skins, and acacia wood."

Rashi comments, "Where did they get acacia wood in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: Our forefather Jacob foresaw through Divine inspiration that the Israelites were destined to build a Tabernacle in the desert, and he therefore brought cedars to Egypt and planted them and directed his children to take them along when they would leave Egypt."

Rashi's commentary demands explanation. The suggestion that Jacob, on his way to Egypt, brought along cedar-wood for the Tabernacle which would be built two hundred and ten years into the future, is clearly a homiletic explanation. But why is he compelled to interpret the verse homiletically? We can suggest a far simpler explanation: The Israelites purchased acacia

wood from merchants of the surrounding nations!

Secondly: Rashi usually omits the name of the rabbi who taught the explanation. When he mentions a person by name, it is because knowing the name will help us understand some difficulty in the passage. If so, in our case—why does Rashi tell us that this explanation was proposed by Rabbi Tanchuma?

To understand these questions, we need to backtrack a bit.

In 1964, after the passing of his mother, the Rebbe began teaching Rashi's commentary in her memory. The Rebbe analyzed each of his teachings according to a singular principle: that the purpose of Rashi's commentary is to explain the pshat, the most literal understanding of the text. As Rashi himself wrote on several occasions, "I only come to explain the peshuto shel mikra, the straightforward meaning of the Scripture." The following are two rules in the Rebbe's approach to Rashi, as codified in "Klolei Rashi."

Source 3 Klolei Rashi pg. 77, 154

His Commentary is Literal

Rashi's goal is to explain the literal meaning of the text. In his own words, "I have only come to explain the straightforward meaning of the Scripture."

**פירושו הוא רק לפי דרך הפשט
בלבד**

**ענינו של רש"י הוא לפרש את
הכתובים אך ורק לפי פשוטם,
כלומר בדרך הפשט, כלשונו: "ואני
לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא."**

Rashi Doesn't Cite Sources

Although he culls his interpretations from the teachings of the sages, Rashi doesn't normally cite the name of the rabbi who proposed the explanation, because his goal is to explain the literal meaning of the text. In other words, the interpretation must grow out of the text itself—and the name of the sage is therefore irrelevant.

רש"י אינו מביא דברים בציון שם אומרם

דרכו של רש"י ברובם המוחלט של פירושויו שלא להביא דברים בציון שם אומרם זאת על אף שבמקור הדברים מוזכר שמו של בעל המאמר, משום שענינו של רש"י הוא "אני לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא", ובלימוד לפי דרך הפשט הרי כיוון שהפשט מכריח לפרש כך אין כל צורך בדיעת שמו של בעל המאמר.

>> The Rebbe

Contributions - Only From What's Available

...הביאור בפירוש רש"י:

מפשטות לשון הכתוב "ויקחו לי תרומה . . . תקחו את תרומתי . . . התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם", משמע, שכל שלושה עשר הדברים שנימנו בכתוב היו כבר בידם של בני ישראל מקודם לכן (ולא שהוצרכו עכשיו לילך ולחפש ולהשיג כו'), ובמילא, לא היתה חסרה אלא פעולת הקיחה בלבד.

כי אם תמצי לומר שחלק מהדברים לא היה בידם, אלא הוצרכו לחפש ולהשיג (לקנות מתגרי אומות העולם וכיוצא בזה) - הַנִּי ליה למימר ציווי זה בלשון כללי, נתינה או הַבָּאָה, וכיוצא בזה.

ועל כן צריך לומר, שכל הדברים שנימנו בכתוב היו כבר בידם וברשותם, ולא הוצרכה אלא פעולת הקיחה בלבד, ותוכן הציווי "ויקחו לי תרומה . . וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם" - שמכל הדברים שבידם וברשותם תקחו רק את הדברים המנויים בכתוב.

ולכן, מהדברים שרש"י צריך להסביר ולבאר כאן - שהדברים המנויים כאן היו אכן בידם וברשותם של בני ישראל, ולא היו צריכים לחפש ולהביא ממקום אחר.

Rashi deduces from the specific wording of the verse that the list of items needed for the Tabernacle were all available within the Israelite encampment.

The answer lies in Torah's choice of words: "Have them bring me an offering...take my offering...the offering you should take from them..." These verses seem to imply that all the necessary items were already among the possessions of the Israelites. These weren't items that needed to be obtained from other sources; Moses was merely commanded to 'take' it from the people.

If some items were not available within the community and needed to be obtained from the surrounding nations, the Torah should have given this command in more general terms, using words like 'obtain.'

Therefore, Rashi reached the conclusion that all the items listed in the verse were available within the Israelite encampment and needed only to be 'taken.' When G-d says, "Have them bring me an offering...this is the offering you should take from them," it means that those items should be taken from among the possessions the Israelites already own.

So, Rashi must now explain how the Israelites actually owned all these items and didn't need to obtain them from other sources.

Rashi was now left with a question: how did they have acacia wood? Therefore, he brought the commentary of Midrash Tanchuma, which explained that Jacob had commanded that they take the wood with them upon leaving Egypt.

(Note: The terminology of the verse didn't compel Rashi or the Midrash to imagine and create a new story to fit the text. Rather, the story of Jacob and his trees was passed down from generation to generation until it was transcribed by Rabbi Tanchuma in the Midrash.

Now, Rashi doesn't cite every story recorded in the Midrash. In this case, the straightforward terminology of the verse raises questions, and this story holds the key to the answer. Therefore, Rashi chose to include it in his commentary.)

This interpretation—that Jacob was Divinely inspired to bring cedar wood to Egypt—seems to be a homiletic explanation. It seems unlikely that Jacob began preparations for the Tabernacle two-hundred-ten years before G-d's commandment, bringing cedars to Egypt and planting them there so that they would grow to maturity and then be fashioned into panels ten cubits tall. It would be more logical to assume that the wood was simply purchased through merchants of the surrounding nations.

Therefore, Rashi emphasizes his question: “Where did they get acacia wood in the desert?” Meaning, all the items listed needed to be available among the Israelites themselves, without the need to search and obtain them from other sources. This brought Rashi to his question, “Where did they get acacia wood in the desert?”

He therefore came to the conclusion that “Jacob foresaw through Divine inspiration that the Israelites were destined to build a Tabernacle in the desert, and he therefore brought cedars to Egypt and planted them and directed his children to take them along when they would leave Egypt.”

B. The Message of the Cedar Wood

>> The Rebbe

Being a Source of Comfort to Israel

אמנם, עדיין נשאלת השאלה אצל "תלמיד ממולח":

מהו אמנם גודל ההכרח בפעולתו של יעקב אבינו בהבאת ונטיעת ארזים במצרים לצורך עשיית המשכן מאתיים ועשר שנים לפני הציווי דעשיית המשכן!?

והביאור בזה - מרמז רש"י (ב"ינה של תורה²) בהזכירו את שמו של בעל המאמר, "רבי תנחומא": "תנחומא" הוא מלשון תנחומין. ולכן, "פירש רבי תנחומא" ש"יעקב אבינו צפה ברוח הקודש וכו', מכיון שענין זה מְהֵרָה נְחֻמָּתָן של ישראל.

כאשר בני ישראל נמצאים בגלות מצרים, במצב דקושי השעבוד, עד לגזירת "כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו"³, וכו' וכו' - הרי, מלבד ההבטחה ד"ואנכי אֶעֱלֶךְ גם עלה"⁴, שואבים הם עידוד ונחמה בראותם בעיניהם ממש את עצי הארזים שהביא יעקב ונטע במצרים, מכיון ש"צפה ברוח הקודש שעתידין לבנות משכן במדבר", "וצוה לבניו (ובניו לבניהם אחריהם, וכן הלאה) ליטלם עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים!"

כלומר: עצי שטים לצורך עשיית המשכן גופא - היו יכולים אמנם להשיג גם באופן אחר, אבל, כדי שתהיה נחמתן של ישראל (ענינו של רבי תנחומא) - הוצרך יעקב אבינו להביא ארזים ולנטעם במצרים, ולצוות לבניו שיטלו עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים, כדי, שבמשך כל זמן גלות ושעבוד מצרים יהיו לנגד עיניהם עצי הארזים שנטע יעקב אבינו על מנת שיטלום כשיצאו ממצרים, היינו, שעצי ארזים אלה מסמלים וממחישים את גאולתן של ישראל.

ומכאן באים לענין של נחמה גם בנוגע לגלותנו זה האחרון: כשנמצאים בחשכת הגלות, "כל הגלויות נקראו על שם מצרים"⁵, ב"מדבר העמים"⁶, נחש שרף ועקרב וצמאון גו"⁷, חושך כפול ומכופל דעקבות משיחא - אומר רבי תנחומא, מנחמם של ישראל, שאין להתפעל

(5) ב"ר פט"ז ה.
(6) יהוּקָל ב, לה.
(7) דברים ח, טו.

(2) ראה "היום יום" כט שבט.
(3) שמות א, כב.ש.
(4) בראשית מו, ד.

מחשכת הגלות, מכיון שיודעים שהתכלית והמטרה היא "לבנות משכן במדבר", היינו, לעשות ממצואות ה"מדבר" משכן ומקדש לו יתברך, דירה לו יתברך בתחתונים, עד לקיום הציווי "ועשו לי מקדש" כפשוטו, בבית המקדש השלישי, שבו יתגלה גם המשכן שעשה משה, משכן המדבר.

In addition to Rashi's straightforward commentary, there is a dimension which the Rebbe called "Yeina shel Torah." Certain concepts might be too deep for the five-year-old student and are not considered integral to the straightforward reading of the text, but they are part of the "inner dimension" of Rashi's teachings and are discernable in the commentary after closer analysis. In this case, Rashi answers a deeper question by citing the source of his commentary.

A seasoned student will ask further:

Why was it so necessary for Jacob our forefather to bring and plant cedars in Egypt for the sake of a Tabernacle two hundred and ten years later?

Rashi hints to an answer by citing the source of his commentary—Rabbi Tanchuma. Tanchuma stems from the word *tanchumin*, which means consolation. Rabbi Tanchuma understood that Jacob's inspiration to plant acacia wood was a form of consolation for the people of Israel.

When the Israelites were mired in the Egyptian exile, enslaved, persecuted, and their children put to death—they recalled Jacob's promise of redemption and drew inspiration from the sight of the cedar wood which he had personally brought and planted with the vision that they would leave Egypt and build a Tabernacle in the desert!

In other words, the Israelites in the desert could have obtained acacia for the Tabernacle some other way. But to be a source of consolation to the

Jewish people, Jacob was compelled to bring along those cedars, plant them in Egypt, and instruct his children to take them along on their return trip. Thus, throughout their entire period of subjugation in Egypt, they were able to gaze at those cedars and feel hopeful. Those cedars symbolized their future redemption.

This is a message of inspiration for our exile as well. We too, live in the darkness of exile, in our own limitations, in a spiritual desert, “a place of snakes, scorpions and thirst.” This is doubly true in the final moments before the final redemption. Yet we are told by Rabbi Tanchuma, the consoler of the Jewish people, that we shouldn’t be intimidated by our situation. The ultimate goal is “to build a Tabernacle for G-d in the desert,” to transform the spiritual desert into a sanctuary for G-d, a dwelling place for G-d in our world, and then we will merit the rebuilding of a physical sanctuary, the third Holy Temple.

Shabbat Parshat Terumah 1987
Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 pg. 535

The Rebbe’s explanation is based on another rule of Rashi’s commentary— that when Rashi does include the name of a source, it is because the name or identity of the sage sheds light on the passage.

Source 4 Klolei Rashi pg. 155

When Rashi departs from his usual custom and includes the source of his teaching, it is for a specific reason: the name of the sage sheds light on some element of understanding the literal reading of the text.

כאשר רש"י חורג מדרכו ומביא
מאמר חז"ל בשם אומרו הרי
זה מצד טעם מיוחד: כדי שעל-
ידי הידיעה מיהו בעל המאמר
תתווסף הסברה, ביאור והבנה
הנוגעים לפירושו במקרא.

The idea that a name could shed light on the person's character and teachings is based on the following story related by the Talmud. Rabbi Meir, according to this story, would pay close attention to the meaning of names, and it consequently protected him from harm.

Source 5 Talmud, Tractate Yoma 83b

Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yosi were traveling together. Rabbi Meir would analyze names and thereby determine people's nature, but Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yosi would not. When they arrived at a location, they looked for lodging and were given it. They asked the innkeeper: "What is your name?" He responded, "Kidor." Rabbi Meir thought, "His name indicates he is a wicked person, for the verse states, 'For they are a generation [*ki dor*] of upheavals.'" Before Shabbat, Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yosi entrusted their purses to him, but Rabbi Meir did not. Instead, he placed it on the grave of the innkeeper's father.

The father appeared to his son in a dream and said, "Go take the purse placed at my head." The next day, the innkeeper said to the rabbis, "This is what I saw in my dream." They said to him, "Dreams during twilight on Shabbat evening have no meaning." Rabbi Meir went and guarded his money all that day and then took it.

The next day, they said to the innkeeper, "Give us our purses." He denied receiving them. Rabbi Meir said to his colleagues, "Why didn't you an-

רבי מאיר ורבי יהודה ורבי יוסי הוו קא אזלי באורחא. רבי מאיר הוה דייק בשמא, רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי לא הוו דייקו בשמא. כי מטו לההוא דוכתא, בעו אושפיזא, יהבו להו. אמרו לו, "מה שמך?" אמר להו, "כידור." אמר, "ש"מ אדם רשע הוא שנאמר כי דור תהפוכות המה." רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי אשלימו ליה כיסייהו, רבי מאיר לא אשלים ליה כיסיה. אזל אותביה בי קיבריה דאבוה.

אתחזי ליה בחלמיה, "תא שקיל כיסא דמנח ארישא דההוא גברא." למחר אמר להו, "הכי אתחזי לי בחלמאי." אמרי ליה, "חלמא דבי שמישי לית בהו ממשא." אזל רבי מאיר ונטריה כולי יומא ואייתיה.

למחר אמרו לו, "הב לן כיסן." אמר להו, "לא היו דברים

alyze his name?" They responded, "Why didn't you tell us?" He said to them, "I said one should be suspicious, but did I say that a name establishes his character with certainty?"

They brought the innkeeper to a store and plied him with wine. **They noticed lentils on his mustache, so they went and gave it as a sign to his wife**, saying that her husband had instructed that she return the purses and had provided them with the details of his most recent meal as a sign of their authenticity. **They took their purses and went. The innkeeper then killed his wife** out of anger.

This story teaches us that a person's name could reflect his character. Based on this concept, we could gain insight into various Torah teachings by analyzing the name of the author.

מעולם. "אמר להו רבי מאיר,
"אמאי לא דייקיתו בשמא?"
אמרו ליה, "אמאי לא אמרת
לן מר?" אמר להו, "אימר
דאמרי אנא חששא. אחזוקי
מי אמרי?"

משכוהו ועיילוהו לחנותא.
חזו טלפחי אשפמיה, אזלו
ויהבו סימנא לדביתהו,
ושקלוהו לכיסייהו ואייתו.
אזל איהו וקטליה לאיתתיה.

C. Joseph's Tomb in Egypt

We find a similar concept in a different Sich'a (delivered just a few weeks earlier), regarding the burial place of Joseph. The Rebbe notes that the final passage of Genesis is "And Joseph was placed in a coffin in Egypt," which emphasizes that Joseph was buried in Egypt unlike his father Jacob, who insisted in being buried in the Holy Land. If these are the Torah's final words in Genesis, the Rebbe says, it must carry some special message. But what could it possibly be?

It is a message of hope, the Rebbe explains. The Jews were about to enter a period of subjugation in Egypt. And at the very outset, they Jews were given a powerful message of hope—Joseph chose to remain with them in Egypt and wait with them for the day of their salvation.

Before the demise of Jacob, he requested that Joseph bury him in the land of his forefathers.

Source 6 Genesis 47:29-30

When Jacob realized he would soon die, he called for his son Joseph.

"If you really want to do me a kindness," he said, "place your hand under my thigh. Act towards me with truth and kindness, and do not bury me in Egypt. Let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their grave."

"I will do as you say," replied Joseph.

וַיִּקְרָבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמוֹת וַיִּקְרָא
לְבָנָו לְיֹסֵף,

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם־נָא מְצֵאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ
שִׁים־נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי וְעָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי
חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֶל־נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם:
וְשִׁכַבְתִּי עִם־אֲבֹתַי וְנִשְׂאתָנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם
וְקִבַּרְתָּנִי בְּקִבְרֹתָם,

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדַבְּרֶךָ:

Before Joseph's demise, he told the people of Israel that they should take his remains along when they leave Egypt. In the meantime, they were to bury him in Egypt.

Source 7 Genesis 50:24-26

Joseph said to his close family, "I am dying. G-d is sure to grant you special providence and bring you out of this land to the land that He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Joseph then bound the Israelites by an oath: "When G-d grants you this special providence, you must bring my remains out of this place."

Joseph died at the age of 110 years. He was embalmed and placed in a tomb in Egypt.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת
וְאֱלֹהִים פִּקֹּד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעֲלֶה
אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל-הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק
וּלְיַעֲקֹב:

וַיִּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
פִּקֹּד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעֲלֶתֶם
אֶת-עַצְמוֹתַי מִזֶּה:

וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן-מֵאָה וָעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים
וַיַּחַנְטוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיִּישְׂמוּ בָּאָרוֹן בְּמִצְרַיִם:

>> The Rebbe

Why Joseph Was Buried in Egypt

סיום ספר בראשית הוא - "וימת יוסף בן מאה ועשר שנים ויחנטו אותו ויישם בארון במצרים".

ולכאורה, נשאלת שאלה הכי פשוטה גם אצל בן חמש למקרא:

בהתחלת הפרשה מסופר אודות בקשתו של יעקב ליוסף "אל נא תקברני במצרים ושכבתי עם אבותי. . וקברתני בקבורתם", כלומר, הן מצד העילוי ד"וקברתני בקבורתם", "במערה אשר בשדה המכפלה. . שמה קברו את אברהם. . את יצחק גו', והן מצד החסרון דארץ

מצרים, "ערות הארץ", תכלית הירידה.

ואילו בנוגע ליוסף - מדגישים בסיום הפרשה והספר "ויישם בארון במצרים", היינו, לא זו בלבד שלא נקבר במערת המכפלה, וגם לא בארץ ישראל בכלל, אלא עוד זאת, בחוץ לארץ גופא - "במצרים" דוקא, ובזה גופא - "ויחנטו אותו ויישם בארון", פעולה המדגישה את ענין הקביעות. ... ונשאלת השאלה - איזה חיזוק ("חזק חזק ונתחזק") לומדים ומקבלים מסיום הספר "ויישם בארון במצרים"!?!

Why was Joseph buried in Egypt, and what did it mean to the Jews?

The conclusion of Genesis reads: "Joseph died at the age of 110 years. He was embalmed and placed in a tomb in Egypt."

This seems to raise a basic question even for a young student:

At the beginning of the Torah portion, we read that Jacob told Joseph, "Do not bury me in Egypt; let me lie with my fathers...and bury me in their grave." Clearly, there were two reasons for his request: First, he wanted to be interred with Abraham and Isaac. Second, he did not want to lie in Egypt, the most decadent society.

Yet the final passage seems to emphasize the very opposite about Joseph: "He was placed in a tomb in Egypt"— he was not buried in the cave of Machpelah and not even in the Land of Israel. Of all places, he was buried specifically in Egypt, and he was even "embalmed and placed in a tomb," emphasizing that he was there to stay.

At the conclusion of the reading, the congregation calls out "*chazak chazak venitchazek*, be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened." The question arises: What strength and inspiration are we to derive from the fact that Joseph was buried in Egypt?!

ויש לומר הביאור בזה - שחיזוק זה קשור, כאמור, עם התחלת פרשת שמות, "ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה גו":

בפרשת שמות מתחיל עיקר הענין דגלות מצרים, קושי השעבוד כו', כי, אף שהירידה למצרים היתה כבר לפני זה, בפרשת ויגש, הרי, בנוגע לתקופה ההיא נאמר "וישב (ישיבה בשלוח) ישראל בארץ מצרים בארץ גושן ("במיטב הארץ") ויאחזו בה (לשון אחוזה) ויפרו וירבו מאד", ורק בפ' שמות, לאחרי ש"וימת יוסף וכל אחיו וכל הדור ההוא", אזי, התחיל (עיקר) ענין הגלות, קושי השעבוד כו' (שהרי "כל זמן שאחד מן השבטים קיים לא הי' שעבוד"), החל מהענין ד"הבה נתחכמה לו גו".

ועל פי זה מובן שלפני התחלת הגלות וקושי השעבוד, יש צורך בנתינת כח וחיזוק מיוחד - שזה הוא ענין ד"ויישם בארון במצרים":

יוסף, המפרנס ומכלכל את ישראל - נמצא יחד עם בני ישראל, "ויישם בארון במצרים", ובאופן שמציאותו היא בשלימות (לא רק העצמות, אלא גם הבשר וכו') גם על פי טבע, "ויחנטו אותו ויישם בארון", ונמצא שם באופן של קביעות (עד ליציאת בני ישראל מגלות מצרים).

ולכן, לאחרי שמסיימים "ויחנטו אותו ויישם בארון במצרים", מכריזים "חזק חזק ונתחזק" - שזהו החיזוק להמשך ד"הבאים מצרימה", שלא להתפעל מקושי הגלות והשעבוד, מכיון שלא נמצאים בגלות לבד, אלא ביחד עם יוסף.

ובפרט - ש"יוסף" הוא גם ה"מושל בכל ארץ מצרים" (מלכות שהיתה מושלת בכיפה), עד ש"בלעדיך לא ירים איש את ידו ואת רגלו בכל ארץ מצרים", שמזה מובן, שאף אחד אינו יכול להפריע, ח"ו, לבני ישראל גם בהיותם בגלות כו'.

Joseph Remained with His Brethren

The knowledge that Joseph remained with them in exile gave them inspiration to persevere.

The answer lies in the next verse, the first verse of Exodus, “And these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt...”

Exodus begins with the story of the Egyptians’ subjugation and enslavement of the Israelites. Although the Israelites had arrived in Egypt earlier, as described in the Torah portion of Vayigash, they had lived comfortably in Goshen, the most fertile land in the region, where they had thrived and flourished. Only in Exodus, after the demise of Joseph and his brothers and the entire generation, were the Israelites subjugated, enslaved and persecuted.

Before the onset of this terrible period, the Israelites needed an extra dose of encouragement and inspiration—and that came in the form of Joseph’s burial in Egypt. Joseph, the quintessential provider of the Jewish people, remained with them in their exile, embalmed and preserved in a tomb, awaiting the day of their salvation.

Therefore, after reading that he was “embalmed and placed in a tomb in Egypt,” we announce, “*chazak chazak venitchazek*, be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened.” Before heading into exile, the Jewish people draw strength to overcome their hardships from the knowledge that they are not alone in their plight—Joseph remains together with them.

Shabbat Parshat Vayechi 1987.
Sefer Hasichot 5747 vol. 1 pg. 262

The Jewish people had two powerful sources of inspiration while in Egyptian exile. The cedar wood brought by Jacob was a powerful message that they would one day leave Egypt and build a home for G-d, and the tomb of Joseph, who insisted on remaining with them in Egypt and leaving only when they left as well.

The Takeaway

Jacob and Joseph both understood that their progeny would live in Egypt for several generations. They made sure to pass on the family traditions—they told their children about the monotheism that their grandfather Abraham brought to the world, about Isaac who had been circumcised at eight days old, and about their family's tradition of welcoming guests.

But they understood that stories and traditions wouldn't be enough. They feared that a few generations in Egypt will be enough for them to assimilate completely into Egyptian society. Therefore, Jacob planted cedar trees. He made sure that there would be a physical reminder of their origins, a place and object which would remind them about their identity. Joseph too, chose to remain in Egypt, to serve as a source of comfort and strength—something that would give them the courage to preserve their identity.

We too, when we raise our children to continue the chain of Jewish tradition, need to remember that words aren't enough. We need to provide something more real and tangible. We need to engage in Mitzvot that have a physical presence, like putting on Tefillin, giving charity and observing Shabbat. When we will leave them with a tangible Judaism, we can be confident that they will always remember their origins, and proudly pass on the torch to the next generation.

The Rebbe's Approach to Rashi

Culled from A Chassidisher Derher, magazine 25 & 28

Perhaps of all the initiatives that the Rebbe undertook in memory of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the most noted was the new, innovative addition of the famous Rashi Sichos to the regular Shabbos farbrengens.

Throughout the first year following his mother's passing, the Rebbe farbrenged each and every Shabbos afternoon. Until then, farbrengens were generally only held on Shabbos mevorchim, or on a Shabbos corresponding with a special date.

During the Rebbe's farbrengens on Shabbos he always shared insights on the weekly parsha. But at the first weekly farbrengen, on Shabbos Parshas Noach, the Rebbe discussed a Rashi on the first possuk in the parsha. He quoted the Alter Rebbe and the Shaloh both whom praise the depth of each and every word in Rashi. The Rebbe explained how Rashi's careful choice of words portrays the most basic implication of the possuk, while at the same time, it contains layers upon layers of deeper meaning.

Following the inaugural Rashi Sicha of Parshas Noach, this practice continued every week throughout the year of aveilus.

With time, the Shabbos farbrengens began to take on a unique structure. The Rebbe would begin the farbrengen with Sichos based on the time of year, after which he would deliver a Maamar. The Rebbe would then pose a host of questions on the Rashi he chose to speak about that Shabbos. He would compare Rashi's comment to its source in the Midrash or Gemara, cite other connecting comments of Rashi elsewhere in Torah, and equate it with pirushim given by other Meforshim on the same Rashi. After pausing for a niggun, the Rebbe would provide an explanation which often revealed a new "Klal" in Rashi's way of explaining Peshuto shel Mikro. The Rebbe would elucidate how every minute detail of that Rashi falls into place.

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 possuk 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.

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.

The Rebbe's approach to the study of Rashi is based on Rashi's own unequivocal statement: "אני לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא, ולאגדה המיישבת דברי המקרא דבר דבור על אופניו" [in order to explain] the basic meaning of the possuk, and to [bring] the Aggados which clarify the Pesukim in a way which fits into the words."

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. 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.

For most of the meforshei 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.

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 Gemara, 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 peshuto shel mikra.

In the very first Rashi Sicha, the Rebbe quoted the Alter Rebbe, who said that Rashi's pirush is יינה של תורה, 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, 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 יינה של תורה, often teaching a hora'a in avodas Hashem based on Rashi's precise wording.

