



# Parshanut and Polemics VII

Marty Lockshin, Torah in Motion 5781

# Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam; c. 1080-c. 1160)

Rashi's grandson

Talmudist/Tosafist

Emphasis on peshat in his Torah commentary stronger than in any other medieval commentary

(And perhaps as a result of that) commentary almost was lost. One manuscript survived, found rotting in an attic by Rabbi David Oppenheim, late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

# Genesis 49:10

לֹא יִסּוּר שֵׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה וּמַחְקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו  
עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילֹה [נְשִׁילֹה] וְלוֹ יִקָּהֵת עַמִּים

NJPS: The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet; So that tribute shall come to him And the homage of peoples be his.

King James: The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

## Rashbam Genesis 49:10 (cont.)

ופשט זה תשובה למינין, שאין כתוב כי אם  
שילה שם העיר, שאין לעז במקרא, לא "שלו"  
כתוב כאן כדברי העברים, ולא "שליח" כדברי  
הנוצרים.

אונקלוס: עַד דְּיִיְתִי מְשִׁיחָא דְּדִלְיָהּ הִיא  
מְלִכּוּתָא

Septuagint: ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ  
ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ

Septuagint in English: until that  
which is stored up for him shall  
.come

This interpretation constitutes a refutation of the *minim*. "Shiloh" that is written here is just the name of a city. For there are no vernacular words in the Bible. Nor is *shello* – his – written here, as some Jews claim, nor *shaliah* – a messenger – as the Christians say.

Vulgate: donec veniat qui **mittendus** est et ipse erit expectatio gentium

## לֹא תִרְצַח (שמות כ)

תשובה למינים והודו לי. ואף על פי שיש  
בספריהם: אני אמית ואחיה (דברים ל"ב:ל"ט)  
בלשון לטין של לא תרצח, הם לא דיקדקו.

**Vulgate Exodus: Non occides.**

**Vulgate Deuteronomy:** Videte quod  
ego sim solus, et non sit alius deus  
praeter me: ego **occidam**, et ego  
vivere faciam.

<https://www.thetorah.com/article/does-the-torah-differentiate-between-murder-and-killing>

I offered this explanation as an argument against the heretics, and they admitted that I was right. Even though in their Latin books the same verb is used to translate the verb מ-ו-ת in the phrase (Dt. 32:39) "I deal death (אמית) and I give life," and the verb ר-צ-ח in this verse, their translations are inaccurate.

# “Borrowing”? from the Egyptians

וּשְׂאֵלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכַּנְתָּהּ וּמִגֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ כְּלֵי-כֶסֶף וְכֵלֵי זָהָב  
וְשִׁמְלֹת וְשִׂמְטוֹת עַל-בְּנֵיהֶם וְעַל-בָּנֹתֵיהֶם וְנִצַּלְתֶּם אֶת-  
מִצְרַיִם: (שמות ג כב)

ושאלה אישה משכנתה – במתנה גמורה וחלוטה, שהרי  
ונתתי את חן העם (שמות ג:כ"א), כמו: שאל ממני  
ואתנה גוים נחלתך (תהלים ב:ח).

זהו עיקר פשוטו ותשובה למינים.

Each woman shall ל-א-ש from her neighbour and the lodger in her house objects of silver and gold, and clothing, and you shall put these on your sons and daughters, thus stripping the Egyptians.

[שאל here means to request] as an outright and absolute gift. That is why it says (vs. 21), "I shall dispose the Egyptians favorably to the people." Similarly [שאל means to request as an outright gift, not to borrow, in the verse] (Ps. 2:8) "Request (שאל) it of me and I shall make the nations your domain."

This interpretation is the true plain meaning of the verse and an appropriate rebuttal for the heretics.

## דברים כב ו-ז

כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּכָל עֵץ אֹ  
עַל הָאָרֶץ אֲפֹרֹתִים אֹ בַיּוֹצִים וְהָאֵם רֹבֶצֶת  
עַל הָאֲפֹרֹתִים אֹ עַל הַבְּיֹצִים לֹא תִקַּח הָאֵם  
עַל הַבָּנִים.

שְׁלַח הַשְּׁלַח אֶת הָאֵם וְאֶת הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ  
לְמַעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְהָאֲרָכָתָ יָמֶיךָ.

If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young.

Let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life.

## שילוח הקן Rashbam on

לא תקח האם על הבנים - לפי  
דרך ארץ ולתשובת המינין כבר  
פירשתי בלא תבשל גדי בחלב  
אמו וכן באותו ואת בנו שדומה  
לאכזריות ורעבתנות לקחת  
ולשחוט ולבשל ולאכול אם ובנים  
יחד:

DO NOT TAKE THE MOTHER  
TOGETHER WITH HER YOUNG: I  
already offered this explanation —  
which is both in conformance with  
the way of the world and also  
appropriate for rebutting the *minim*  
— concerning "boiling a kid in its  
mother's milk," or "[slaughtering] it  
and its young": [This behaviour —]  
either taking the mother and the  
young together, or slaughtering  
them together, or cooking them  
together — [is forbidden because it]  
appears cruel and gluttonous.



# Rashbam on בשר בחלב

וגנאי הוא הדבר ובליעה ורעבתנות לאכול  
חלב האם עם הבנים.

ודוגמא זו באותו ואת בנו (ויקרא כ"ב:כ"ח)  
ושילוח הקן (דברים כ"ב:ו'-ז'), וללמדך  
דרך תרבות צוה הכתוב.

It is disgraceful and voracious and  
gluttonous to consume the  
mother's milk together with its  
young.

This law is comparable to "it and  
its young" and to "letting the  
mother go." The text gave this  
commandment in order to teach  
you how to behave in a civilized  
manner.

# I Corinthians 9

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk?<sup>8</sup> Do I say this merely on human authority? Doesn't the Law say the same thing?<sup>9</sup> For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." **Is it about oxen that God is concerned?**<sup>10</sup> Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.<sup>11</sup> If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?<sup>12</sup> If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

# Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*

## Chapter 28:

Trypho [the Jew]: It does not seem good to me, as it does to most [Jews], only to say that it was God's will. For that is always the sly, stock reply of those who cannot answer the question.

# Rashbam on Kashrut (Lev 11:3)

ולפי פשוטו של מקרא ותשובת המינים כל  
הבהמות והחיות והעופות והדגים ומיני ארבה  
ושרצים שאסר הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל  
מאוסים הם, ומקלקלים ומחממים את הגוף,  
ולפיכך נקראו טמאים. ואף רופאים מובהקים  
אומרים כן,

Following the plain meaning of  
Scripture and as a [useful] rebuttal of  
the heretics, [it may be argued that]  
all the animals (domesticated and  
not domesticated), birds, fish, locusts  
and insects which God forbade to the  
Israelites [were forbidden] because  
they are repulsive. They damage and  
heat up the body. That is why they  
are called impure. Outstanding  
physicians also concur with this  
explanation.

# Rashbam on Impurity (Lev 11:34)

מי שרוצה לתת טעם במצות לפי דרך ארץ  
ולתשובת המינין לא הזקיק הק' טומאה למיני  
אוכלים ומשקין עד שתיקנם לצורך מאכל,  
ונתינת מים היא תחילת תיקונם ועיקר  
חשיבותם לצורך אכילה:

A person who wishes to give reasons for the commandments in a manner that conforms to the way of the world and that is appropriate for rebutting the *minim* [may explain this verse as follows]: God did not attach [the concept of] impurity to any food or drink until they have been rendered usable as food. Bringing them in contact with water is the first step in their preparation and the true way that they are to be "promoted" to the status of foodstuffs.

# Kilayim/Shaatznez (Lev 19:19)

אַתְּ חֻקֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ בְּהִמָּתְךָ לֹא תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים  
שָׂדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים שִׁעֲטָנֹז  
לֹא יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ

You shall observe My laws. You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; you shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material.

# Rashbam on Kilayim/Shaatznez

בהמתך לא תרביע כלאים – לפי דרך ארץ  
ותשובת המינין: כשם שציוה הכתוב שכל אחד  
ואחד יוציא פרי למינהו במעשה בראשית, כך  
ציוה להנהיג את העולם בבהמות ובשדות  
ואילנות, וגם בחרישת שור וחמור שהם שני  
מינים,

וגם בצמר ופשתים שזה מן בהמות וזה מן קרקע  
וגידוליו.

ולמינים אמרתי: הצמר צבוע והפשתן איננו  
צבוע, וקפיד בבגד של שני מראות, והודו לי.

[An explanation that is] in conformance with the way of the world and that is appropriate for rebutting the heretics [is]: Just as Scripture in the creation story ([Gen. 1:11](#)) commanded each species to produce fruit "according to its own kind (למינו), so it commanded that we conduct the affairs of the world in a similar manner when it comes to animals or fields or fruit-trees or ploughing with an ox and an ass (two separate species) [together].

Similarly [one should explain the restriction against wearing] wool and linen [together; it is outlawed] because [it is an illicit combination of two categories, as] the former is from an animal and the latter is from the category of things that grow in the ground.

To the *minim* I said that the text outlawed clothing of two different colors, for wool is [generally] colored, but linen is not. They accepted this explanation.

# Rashbam on the Scapegoat

לשלה אותו לעזאזל המדברה - לפי פשוטו לשלח אותו חי אל העזים אשר במדבר, כמו שמצינו בציפרי מצורע ושלה את הצפור החיה על פני השדה, לטהרו מטומאתו. אף כאן לטהר את ישראל מעונותם משלחו אל המדבר

והוא מקום מרעה הבהמות, כדכת' וינהג את הצאן אחר המדבר. ובתלמוד מדבריות בייתות:

According to the plain meaning of Scripture [this means] “to release it alive to [let it go graze with] the [other] goats in the wilderness.” This is just like what is done with the bird offerings of the “leper,” that purify him from his impurity; [concerning one of the two birds] it is written (Lev. 14:7),] “he shall set the live bird free (וְשָׁלַח) in the open country.” So here also, in order to purify the Israelites from their sins he sets the goat free in the wilderness (מדבר).

[The word מדבר means] a place where animals graze. So it is written (Ex. 3:1) that Moses “led the sheep to the מדבר.” So also in rabbinic literature [one speaks of two kinds of animals], “מדבריות and בייתיות—domesticated.”



# Epistle of Barnabas (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century)

Note what was commanded: "Take two goats, goodly and alike, and offer them, and let the priest take the one as a burnt offering for sins." But what are they to do with the other? "The other," he says, "is accursed." Notice how the type of Jesus is manifested: ... What does this mean? Listen: "the first goat is for the altar, but the other is accursed," ... Of a truth it was he who then said that he was the Son of God.